



**An Open Letter To  
Nigerian Muslims and Christians  
Calling On Them To Please**

**ISLAMISE AND  
CHRISTIANISE  
NIGERIA**

**Our Souls Shall Rest In Peace In Heaven  
If Our Bodies Live In Peace On Earth!**

**Prof. Sani Abubakar Lugga  
The Waziri of Katsina**

**This Open Letter establishes that, there was hitherto relative religious harmony in Nigeria from her creation in 1914 up to the last four decades. Since then, many conflicts in Nigeria were given religious colouration with resultant killings of thousands of people, displacement of millions of others and the destruction of public and private properties worth trillions of Naira. The Letter carries information that clearly shows the magnitude of the human and material losses as a result of these avoidable conflicts and crises. In addition, the Letter shows the unsavoury actions of some devilish Religious Leaders who ignite and fuel religious fires; and the efforts of some angelic Religious Leaders who quench the fires. This Open Letter also clearly establishes the closeness and similarities between Islam and Christianity, the types of which are not found between any of the other largest Religions of the World. The Letter gives details of Islam's and Christianity's very similar Laws, rules and regulations on social, economic, administrative and other worldly affairs and how to conduct these affairs peacefully and harmoniously. The Letter therefore calls on Nigerian Christians and Muslims, who make up over 90% of the Nigerian population, to please Unite and Islamise and Christianise Nigeria by practicing the virtues of love, forgiveness, peace, unity, progress, honesty, sincerity, justice, fairness, understanding, respect and all other beautiful attributes of Christian and Islamic Religions. By so doing, Nigerian Muslims and Christians would be proud of having made Islam and Christianity the Great Religions that they are!**

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**THE HOLY KA'ABA IN MECCA  
THE BIRTH PLACE OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (SAW)**



**PROPHET MUHAMMAD (SAW) MOSQUE IN MEDINA  
THE BURIAL PLACE OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (SAW)**



**CHURCH OF NATIVITY IN BETHLEHEM  
THE BIRTH PLACE OF JESUS CHRIST (ISA-AS)**



**BELOW LEFT: THE DOOR LEADING INTO THE CAVE  
WHERE JESUS CHRIST WAS BORN THAT IS LOCATED  
AT THE UNDERGROUND OF THE CHURCH OF NATIVITY.  
RIGHT IS THE EXACT SPOT WHERE HE WAS BORN**





**NEGASH TOWN HABASHA (ETHIOPIA): VENUE OF THE  
WORLD'S FIRST INTERFAITH PEACE UNION (615 AD)**



**LEFT: The Negash Mosque on the site of the first Mosque built in the World by the Migrant Muslims to Habasha during the life time of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). RIGHT: The Graves of some of the Migrant Muslims at Negash Town**



**LEFT: Waziri Sani Lugga and some Negash Compound Officials in front of the Building housing the Tomb of King Negus Armah, who was the King of Habasha (Ethiopia) to who Prophet Muhammad (SAW) sent the first Muslims on the first Hijrah in Islamic history in the Month of Rajab, 7th year Before the Hijrah to Medina; equivalent to June/July 615 AD. RIGHT: The Waziri, the Chief Imam of Negash and others offering prayers for the soul of Negus Armah and others buried at the Tomb**

**ST. PETER'S SQUIRE AND BASILICA, ROME; WHERE THE  
MODERN HAND OF PEACE WAS EXTENDED TO MUSLIMS**



The St. Peter's Squire and St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, the seat of The Pope and the spot where St. Peter was Crucified upside-down and buried in 64 AD by Emperor Nero Augustus Caesar. The Basilica was commissioned in 324 AD by Emperor Constantine, the first Roman Emperor to embrace Christianity.

**WAZIRI SANI LUGGA AT ST PETER'S BASILICA AND SQUARE**



*My Dear Nigerian Brothers and Sisters,*

All gratitude is due to Allah-God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful; the Lord of the Universe, Who created everything in the Heavens and the Earth.

Allah-God decreed that we, Christians and Muslims, should Worship Him alone and imbibe and practice the virtues of love, forgiveness, peace, unity, mutual understanding, mutual respect, progress, honesty, sincerity, justice, fairness and all other beautiful attributes of the Christian and Islamic Faiths. Islam and Christianity have outlawed all the security and other challenges that are bedevilling Nigeria today like, insurgency, militancy, murder, armed robbery, kidnapping, rustling, cultism, drugs abuse, corruption, nepotism, injustice, political assassinations, economic sabotage, oil bunkering, money laundering, electoral malpractices, unemployment, etc. Living in accordance with Islamic and Christian injunctions will therefore eliminate these evils thereby giving us the best in this World and the best in the Hereafter.

We, Nigerian Muslims and Christians, who make up more than 90% of the Nigerian population, have the ultimate duty and responsibility of making Nigeria peaceful and progressive by not only professing religiosity through Church and Mosque services, but by also putting the religiosity into practice in our daily private and public lives. This is the import of my Open Letter that I urge all to read with open, sincere and faithful minds; in the Name of Allah-God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

*Thank you my dear Nigerian Brothers and Sisters  
May Divine Peace be upon us all, amen*

**Prof. Sani Abubakar Lugga, MFR**

**The 5<sup>th</sup> Waziri of Katsina**

**MY YOUTHFUL EXPERIENCES IN NIGERIA**

My dear Nigerian Brothers and Sisters, I would like to begin my Open Letter by relating my sweet experiences with Muslims and



Christians as a youth. I was born and brought-up in Katsina, a City in Northern Nigeria that has over 900 years of Islamic history. At the time I finished my secondary school education from the then Katsina Provincial Secondary School in 1968, there were only two Churches in Katsina. One located at the colonial abode of British Officers (the infamous Government Reservation Area - GRA) and the other located at the outskirts of the City at Babbar Ruga village, a place that served as a Lepers' Colony established and ran by a Christian Mission. That was in contrast with the uncountable number of Mosques and Islamic Schools that adorned Katsina City. At that time, one could not notice the presence of Christians in Katsina due to their extremely low numbers. In fact, when I was admitted at the Secondary School there were only seven Christian Students, five of who were children of the South African expatriate teachers and two were the children of two Indian expatriate teachers.

Immediately after my passing out from Secondary School, I gained admission into the College of Agriculture of Ahmadu Bello University located in the Christian dominated Kabba Town of Kabba Province (now in Kogi State of Nigeria). I was surprised when I saw the high number of Christians trooping into the streets of Kabba Town from the numerous Churches in the city after the Sunday service, in contrast with the low number of Muslims trooping out of the only Friday Mosque located near the Obaro of Kabba's Palace! Curiosity got my upper hand and I ventured into exploring why there were such a high number of my "Black" brothers and sisters bowing in front of some few "White" Pastors every Sunday. For my two years stay in Kabba therefore, I was attending Catholic, Protestant and Anglican Churches alternately every Sunday in order to learn about what looked to me like a new religion. I also attended Christian ceremonies and got some lessons from my Christian friends who at one time gave me a gift of the Holy Bible and some Christian literature. My Christian/Muslim experience in Kabba was delightful.

**Firstly**, what I learnt of Christianity in Kabba made me to glaringly see that the difference between Islam and Christianity was exactly what King Ashamah Negus of Abyssinia (Ethiopia) rightly described it when the first set of Muslims from Mecca migrated to his country in 615 AD. After hearing the messages of Islam from the migrants, His Majesty King Ashamah Negus, the then most powerful Christian Leader in the World, described the difference between Islam and his religion of Christianity as, “*only a thin line like this*”, using the royal staff he was holding in his right hand to scratch the floor and make a thin line. I will come to this important encounter later in this Open Letter, by Allah’s Grace.

**Secondly**, Kabba Church Leaders impressed me with their wisdom, power of speech and swiftness in message delivery. They tended their Christian Flock in very articulate and calm but forceful manners, such that every Church Member attentively listened and believed the Holy Messages and trusted the Holy Messengers.

**Thirdly**, despite the fact that Muslims were the minority in Kabba, they were treated with respect and allowed to practice their religion unhindered. They were allowed access to the only two medical facilities in the town owned by Christian Missions, the St. Gerald and St. Monica Hospitals. I recalled my being invited along with three other College of Agriculture Students to donate blood to a seven year old Christian child who was on admission at St. Monica Hospital and the way her parents kept on showing gratitude to me throughout my stay in Kabba and several years after. Muslims and Christians were encouraged by leaders of both religions to mix freely, exchange gifts and visits and live harmoniously together.

**Fourthly**, I recalled that a similar atmosphere obtained back at my home in Katsina where the Christian minority enjoyed unalloyed support and friendship. For instance, the land on which the only two Churches and the Lepers’ Colony established and ran by a Christian Mission in Katsina were built, were donated respectively

by His Royal Highness the Emir, Alhaji Muhammadu Dikko and the Waziri, Sheikh Alhaji Haruna (my grandfather). In those years, no Christian in Katsina or in Kabba was casting aspersions on Islam or vigorously objecting to any form of Islamic way of life. Equally, no Muslim in Katsina or in Kabba was casting aspersions on Christianity or vigorously objecting to any form of Christian way of life.

My late 1960s Kabba memorable and sweet experiences with responsible Christian Pastors had been unfortunately tainted by the recent uncharitable, unpalatable and not so responsible outbursts and behaviours of some “commercially oriented” Church Leaders. Similarly, my 1950s to 1970s sweet experiences with responsible Imams in Katsina had been tainted by the unfortunate responses of some Imams who add fuel to the fires ignited by irresponsible Pastors instead of quenching the fires! In some instances, reverse behaviours are recorded with the Imams starting the fires and the Pastors fuelling them!

## **IN THE BEGINNING OF NIGERIA**

My dear Nigerian Brothers and Sisters, in the beginning were peace, harmony, understanding, love and respect between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria. Since the colonial amalgamation that gave birth to “Nigeria” in 1914, Nigerian Muslims and Christians lived peacefully and happily with one another; some few ethnicity and regionalism conflicts perhaps, but Religion was never a bone of contention in those days. In the 1940s, Nigerian Leaders (Muslims and Christians) united to chase away the British, a unity that culminated into Nigeria’s Independence in 1960. The Federal, Northern, Western and Eastern Regional Governments operated without any iota of religious disharmony but only contended with a few ethnic crises. In Northern Nigeria for example, the First Republic Government led by Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto, is considered up to today as the most religion-friendly government the North has ever had. The Sardauna of Sokoto, had several Northern Christians both in his Cabinet and

around him including Mr. Michael Audu Buba, Mr. George Olu Ohikere, Pastor David Lot, Mr. Jolly Tanko Yusuf, Professor Ishaya Audu and Mr. Sunday Awoniyi who was the Secretary to the Northern Regional Executive Council and was nicknamed as the “Little Sardauna” because of his closeness to the Sardauna of Sokoto. Indeed, Mr. Sunday Awoniyi once told me that it was the Sardauna of Sokoto who gave him money from his (Sardauna’s) pocket to buy his first Holy Bible when the Sardauna noticed that he did not go to Church on one Sunday because he had no Bible!

The Western Nigerian Government under Chief Obafemi Awolowo and the Eastern Nigerian Government under Dr. Nmandi Azikiwe equally operated religion-friendly governments. Chief Obafemi Awolowo was said to have established the first Muslim Pilgrims’ Board in Nigeria and one of his sisters was said to be a Muslim. A Fulani-Muslim was elected as the first Mayor of Enugu in 1956 under Dr. Nmandi Azikiwe’s Eastern Regional Government. A National Archives document shows that an announcement made on 26<sup>th</sup> March 1954 on the Nigerian Broadcasting Service, Enugu, stated that Umaru Altine, a Fulani from Sokoto and a descendant of Sheikh Usman Danfodio, contested the Enugu Urban District Council Elections against D.T. Inyang, scoring 117 votes to the latter’s 53. Another letter dated 26 March 1956 with the heading “Enugu Municipal Election” informs Umaru Altine that he has been returned unopposed thereby making him the first Mayor of Enugu.

My dear Nigerian Brothers and Sisters, those First Republic Regional Governments and the Federal Government under Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa are still respected as the best governments Nigeria ever had. Indeed, even the Military Government headed by General Yakubu Gowon was considered as religion-friendly, as its Executive Council could easily pass for an extension of the First Republic Government’s Executive Council. In actual fact, General Gowon’s Federal Government was run by First Republic Politicians as Ministers (styled as Federal

Commissioners) including Chief Obafemi Awolowo (the de-facto Deputy Head of State), Alhaji Shehu Shagari, Chief Femi Okunnu, Alhaji Aminu Kano, Mr. Joseph Tarka, Chief Anthony Enahoro, Justice Taslim Elias and several Northern, Western, Eastern and Midwestern First Republic Ministers and Political Parties' Leaders. The Regional (later States) Governments also had similar Cabinets made up of States' Commissioners who were mainly prominent politicians of the First Republic.

As I stated earlier, The Federal, Northern, Western and Eastern Regional Governments operated without any iota of religious disharmony but only contended with a few ethnic and political conflicts. Religious peace and harmony reigned at that time. Then suddenly, the vogue, "Islamising Nigeria," cropped up at the meeting of the Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC) set up by the military regime of General Murtala Mohamed in 1975. The vogue continued to a stifling level at the 1977 Constituent Assembly (CA) debates made up of elected and appointed Members under the military regime of General Olusegun Obasanjo. At those two forums, Christian Members vehemently opposed the inclusion of the Shari'ah into the Nigerian Constitution on the vulgar claim that doing so would, "Islamise Nigeria". General Obasanjo obliged them. Since then, every type of conflict in Nigeria; be it ethnic, political or even economic; was turned into a "religious conflict".

After 24 years of struggle, the Shari'ah was re-introduced in some States referred to as the "Shari'ah States" in 1999, incidentally under a Christian Nigerian President - the same "General" Olusegun Obasanjo of 1977 who transformed to "Chief" Olusegun Obsanjo. Since then, the Shari'ah has been in force in many Muslim dominated States of the country and Nigeria is not "Islamised" as a result.

My dear Nigerian Brothers and Sisters, conflicts are inevitable as long as two or more people live together and interact with one another. If properly managed, conflicts may be beneficial as they



lead to ironing out issues that would ordinarily be kept in the minds of the conflicting parties thereby leading to crisis situations. If not properly managed, conflicts could degenerate into violence that would attract other forms of insecurities. A pluralistic Nation like Nigeria that has diverse ethnic, religious, political and interest groups is therefore bound to experience one form of conflict or another. In general terms and in comparison with the last thirty years, one can safely state that, from the 1914 colonial amalgamation up to the late 1970s, Nigeria was faced with only intermittent ethnic and political conflicts; barring the 1967/70 civil war. Religious conflicts were so insignificant in those days that they hardly warranted any mention.

### **TODAY IN NIGERIA**

Since the 1975 coinage of the term, “Islamising Nigeria”, religious conflicts took a centre stage in Nigeria where conflicting parties are first and foremost defined by their religious leanings before the conflicts are assessed. Ethnic, economic, social, political, farmers/herders and all other forms of conflicts in Nigeria are today given religious coloration and are therefore never assessed in their true colours. This is a very dangerous trend that has given rise to insurgencies, militancy and militias that claim to fight for their “religions”. It is very easy to douse all forms of conflicts but it is extremely difficult to douse religious conflicts. In most cases people are wont to freely sacrifice their lives and their properties for their Religions; but almost no one is ready to freely sacrifice same for his or her tribe or political party except by accident or as a result of the influence of intoxicants.

A classical example of giving everything a “religious coloration” and turning it into a conflict devoid of responsible reasoning is that, the then President of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) vigorously opposed the introduction of non-interest banking, called “Islamic Banking”, on the claims that it would “Islamise” Nigeria; even though Christianity has also outlawed “interest taking” in cash transactions. The online edition of the

popular Lagos based PM NEWS newspaper of Monday 8<sup>th</sup> August 2011 reports that,

*The National President, Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN, Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor says the proposed Islamic Banking is an attempt to Islamise Nigeria and vowed that Christians will resist the move.*

The CAN President, who should know, mischievously called “non-interest banking” a ploy to “Islamise Nigeria” in order to create crisis by deliberately ignoring the fact that Christianity vehemently outlawed interest taking. The Holy Bible states that,

1. Exodus 22:25, *“If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shall not be to him as a usurer (interest taker), neither shall you lay upon him usury (interest)”*
2. Leviticus 25:36, *“Take thou no usury (interest) of him, or increase: but fear thy God”*.
3. Psalm 15:1-5, the Lord was asked, *“Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy Holy Hill? He answered, “He that does not put out his money to usury (interest)”*.
4. Deuteronomy 23:19, *“Thou shall not lend upon usury (interest) to thy brother”*.

Sadly enough, even the unfortunate “Boko Haram” carnage with over 80% of the victims being Muslims and the massacres in Jos, are described by some Christian Leaders as ploys by Muslims to “Islamise Nigeria!” Reverend Peter Akinola, former Primate of the Anglican Communion, was quoted on page 21 of SATURDAY PUNCH Newspaper of August 6, 2011, as having said,

*All the crises in Jos and the Plateau, it is the same; it is part of the game...so the Boko Haram thing is not a thing in isolation. It is part of the national agenda to Islamise Nigeria. Whether it is a form of Boko Haram or it is a form of Islamic Banking or it is a form of sporadic attacks on Christian Churches and buildings and all that, it is part of the same game.*

Luckily however, my dear Nigerian Brothers and Sisters, we have some sane Christian Leaders who reason in a Holy manner. The online edition of PM NEWS newspaper of Monday 8<sup>th</sup> August 2011, reports a press interview the newspaper had with a distinguished Christian Cleric and Leader, Pastor Tunde Bakare, as follows:-

*Bakare said: "The current 34% interest rate being charged by banks is too excessive and I will quickly open an account once it is introduced because it will be beneficial to me." On the criticisms trailing the Islamic banking, especially from the members of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), he said that those leaders of the Church were acting in their self interest.*

As I stated earlier, my 1960s Kabba memorable and sweet experiences with responsible Christian Pastors had been unfortunately tainted by the recent uncharitable, unpalatable and not so responsible outbursts and behaviours of some "commercially oriented" Church Leaders. Similarly, my 1950s to 1970s sweet experiences with responsible Imams in Katsina had been tainted by the unfortunate responses of some Imams who add fuel to the fires ignited by irresponsible Pastors instead of quenching the fires! In some instances, the Imams start the fires and the Pastors further fuel them!

However, I get solace in remembering that those Christian Pastors of yesteryears were men of God who lived within the confines of their Religion in the service of God and humanity. They ran Churches where Jesus Christ was supreme. But some Pastors of today run commercial Churches where Naira and Dollar reign supreme. They think the more noise they make against Islam, the more the Sunday weekly takings to their banks and the more the interest they earn on their bank deposits. With these, they can afford to maintain their private jets and the electric generators and water boreholes that adorn their luxurious mansions - at the expense of the poor Church-flocks they milk dry every Sunday! This is more so when a contrast is made between the Pastors'

castles and the slums inhabited by their Church-flocks and between the Pastors' jets and the "okada" motor cycles and buses such flocks patronise for their daily transportation to and from the search for certain or uncertain daily bread! Such Pastors are also always at the corridors of power where they serve as "prayer warriors" and commission agents to corrupt leaders.

Similarly, some Imams are also known for commercialising their preaching by twisting Islamic rules and regulations to suit those in power and their contractor-friends and to serve as "prayer warriors" to corrupt leaders. They equally amass wealth and live ostentatiously in contrast with their poor followers who sometimes unfortunately are forced into destitution and street begging. Sometimes these croaky Imams live so much like kings that they easily pass for local chiefs due to the paraphernalia and aura of authority surrounding them. Most unfortunately, some "Imams" even lead their followers into insurgency in the name of Islam.

These "commercial" Pastors and Imams misuse religion to gain worldly favours ignoring the fact that they shall account to Allah-God in the Hereafter. They use unsuspecting followers as gun-powder to ignite violence under the cover of religion. Such religious leaders normally trigger the religious conflicts from the comfort of their fortress homes and woo their ordinary followers into battle. Those who get killed or maimed or arrested by security agents are always the ordinary followers, as the planner-leaders and members of their families never take part in the actual "war"; therefore would never be victims of the conflicts they ignited!

## **THE RISE OF RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS AND A GLIMPSE AT THE ASSOCIATED HUMAN AND MATERIAL LOSSES IN NIGERIA**

My dear Nigerian Brothers and Sisters, followers of the great Religions of Christianity and Islam account for over half of the World's population and account for over 90% of the Nigerian population. Therefore, if Muslims and Christians would **Islamise and Christianise** Nigeria in particular and the World in general

by imbibing and practicing the dictates of the two great Religions on love, peace, unity, progress, honesty, sincerity, justice and fairness; humanity shall be in a Paradise on Earth!

From the colonial amalgamation of religiously and culturally diverse entities to create the Nigerian Nation in 1914 up to the early 1970s religion was never used as a calamitous tool. Pre and post Independence Nigerian Leaders and Citizens kept the Nation one despite some few sectarian crises that had no religious coloration. It was while debating the Shari'ah issue at the Constitution Drafting Committee meeting of 1975 that the unfortunate vogue, **“Islamising Nigeria”**, cropped up. Since then, every conflict or crisis in Nigeria was given religious coloration with some Christian and Muslim Clerics/Leaders igniting and fuelling the religious-fires of hatred.

As a result of the unfortunate religious coloration given to every conflict in Nigeria today, fatal violence between Muslims and Christians kept on recurring at alarming rates; with militias, militants, terrorists and other criminals creeping in and unleashing terror under the garbs of religion. The last two decades in Nigeria have witnessed an alarming spate of conflicts, violence, insurgency and all forms of security challenges and human rights violations, mostly in the name of religion. For example, over 40,000 killings were reported between 2011 and 2015 as a result of Muslim/Christian crises and ethnic and political conflicts (Premium Times quoting US Council on Foreign Relations, Nigeria Security Tracker, May 2011 to September 2015).

Boko Haram insurgency resulted into over 100,000 deaths and over 2.5 million people displaced (Borno State Governor at a Lecture in Abuja on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2017). The North-East Recovery and Peace Building Assessment Team stated that public and private properties worth over \$9 billion (about 4.36 trillion Naira at the 2016 parallel market exchange rate) were destroyed in the North-East alone between 2011 and 2015 (News Agency of Nigeria quoting Senior Special Assistant to the President on



Internally Displaced Persons, Dr Mariam Masha, on 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2016). This figure is almost equal to Nigeria's Federal Government budget of 4.65 trillion Naira for the year 2015!

The Plateau State Muslim Community compiled a list of 968 Muslim victims of January 2010 Eid (Sallah) Day attack in Jos and the Plateau State Branch of the Christian Association of Nigeria compiled a list of 99 Christian victims of a December 2010 Christmas Eve attack in Jos, which Boko Haram claimed responsibility for and further claimed that it was in retaliation for the January 2010 Eid Day attack on Muslims. That was over 1,000 people killed in one City, in only two attacks, in the “name” of Islam and Christianity! The names of the Muslim victims are carried as **Appendix XXI** on pages 596 to 620 and those of the Christian victims as **Table 4.5** on pages 134 to 136 in my published Book titled, **TOWARDS PEACE**, 2016 (ISBN 978-49202-9-2)

To cap-up these religious misfortunes, several Local Governments once fell to Boko Haram insurgents, where they declared as their “Caliphate”. Currently, the farmers/herders conflicts are taking dangerous religious dimensions that are further complicating matters with the Federal and States governments and the security agencies being roped into the conflicts. This politicisation of religion is a calamity waiting to happen with National Elections around the corner! These happenings are beyond conflicts, they are a national catastrophe that has retarded the socio-economic development of the Nation thereby making poverty to be on the increase and life to become most unbearable for the vast majority of Nigerians.

## **FLIMSY RELIGIOUS EXCUSES FOR VIOLENCE AND WAR**

*No religion is inherently peaceful or violent, nor is it inherently anything other than what its followers make it out to be;* is a popular saying that has been made more popular by the wide publicity given to it by the American based Foreign Policy Magazine edition of June 2016. Ordinarily, yes; followers of

Religions are images of their Religions and therefore their Religions are judged by their actions or inactions. However, it is important to note that if actions and/or inactions by followers of a particular Religion run contrary to the teachings of that Religion, such actions and/or inactions should be discountenanced and not to be attributed to the particular Religion but to the individual follower(s)/actor(s).

Commentators on the above popular saying argue that followers of different Religions could easily find reasons in religious scriptures either to propagate peace or to unleash terror. For example, those who wish to ignite fatal crisis or even wars in Islam or Christianity, normally misuse some of the following Verses of the Glorious Qur'an or the Holy Bible in their misdemeanour:-

**Hebrews 9: 22.** *Indeed, under the Law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.*

**Psalms 144: 1.** *Praise be to the LORD my Rock, who trains my hands for war, my fingers for battle. 2. He is my loving God and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield, in whom I take refuge, who subdues peoples under me. 3. LORD, what are human beings that you care for them, mere mortals that you think of them? 4. They are like a breath; their days are like a fleeting shadow. 5. Part your heavens, LORD, and come down; touch the mountains, so that they smoke. 6. Send forth lightning and scatter the enemy; shoot your arrows and rout them.*

**Qur'an 8: 9.** *Remember when you called your Lord for help, and He answered you: "I will assist you with a thousand angels, ranks on ranks." 10. Allah made it a message of hope, and an assurance to your hearts: (in any case) there is no victory except from Allah. And Allah is Exalted in Power, and All-Wise.*

**Deuteronomy 20: 1.** *When you go out to battle against your enemies, and you see horses, and chariots, and a people more than you, be not afraid of them: for the LORD your God is with you, He*

brought you out of the land of Egypt. **2.** And it shall be, when you come unto the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak to the people, **3.** And shall say to them, “Hear, O Israel, you approach this day battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither you be terrified because of them; **4.** For the LORD your God is He that goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you”.

**Qur'an 3: 13.** There has already been for you a Sign in the two armies that met (in combat): One was fighting in the cause of Allah, the other were unbelievers; these saw with their own eyes twice their number. But Allah doth support with His aid whom He pleases. In this is a lesson for such as have eyes to see. **Qur'an 3:123.** Allah had helped you at (the battle of) Badr, when ye were a contemptible little force; then fear Allah; thus may ye show your gratitude.

**Judges 6: 13.** And Gideon said unto the Angel, “Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befalling us? And where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? But now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. **14.** And the LORD looked upon him, and said, go in the strength you have, and you shall save Israel from the hands of the Midianites: Am I not sending thee? **15.** And he said unto him, Oh my LORD, wherewith shall I save Israel? **16.** And the LORD said unto him, surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.

**Judges 6: 33.** Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the East were gathered together, and went over, and camped in the valley of Jezreel. **34.** But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered after him. **35.** And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh; who also was gathered after him: and he sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali; and they came up to meet them. **Judges 7: 9.** And it came to pass the

*same night that the LORD said unto him, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it unto your hand.*

**Qur'an 2: 190.** *And fight in the Way of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress the limits. Truly, Allah does not like the transgressors. 191. And slay them wherever ye catch them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out; for tumult and oppression are worse than killings; but fight them not at the Sacred Mosque, unless they (first) fight you there; but if they fight you, slay them. Such is the recompense for those who are unbelievers. 192. But if they cease (to fight); then (cease to fight) Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.*

**Qur'an, 22: 39.** *Permission (to fight) has been given to those (believers) who are being fought because they have been wronged. And indeed, Allah is competent to give them victory; 40. (They are) those who have been expelled from their homes unjustly only because they said: "Our Lord is Allah". For had it not been that Allah checks one set of people by means of another, many Monasteries, Churches, Synagogues, and Mosques, wherein the Name of Allah is much mentioned, would surely have been demolished. Verily, Allah will help those who help his (Cause). Truly, Allah is Ever-Powerful, Ever-Mighty.*

My dear Nigerian Brothers and Sisters, these quotations and all similar ones in the Holy Books of Christianity and Islam have commentaries, reasons and histories behind them. They are not meant to be literally translated and they are not for general application. Muslim and Christian Scholars have all agreed that these two great Religions, with both their roots from the same source - Prophet Ibrahim/Abraham (AS) - essentially allow violence and to some extent wars only on conditions of self-defence and the defence of the Religions. Violence and wars are the last resorts after all avenues for peace have been exploited and have failed; and the other party strikes first. The key words have been, **"fight-back, defend yourselves"** and not **"fight-first"**. A careful and close look at the above Verses of the Holy Bible and

the Glorious Qur'an clearly confirm these assertions. The Verses are similar in context and have auras of history behind them as the following extremely similar Verses from the two Holy Books more clearly present:-

**Qur'an 2: 250.** *And when they advanced to meet Jalut (Goliath) and his forces, they invoked: "Our Lord! Pour forth on us patience and make us victorious over the disbelieving people". 251. So they routed them by Allah's leave and Dawud (David) killed Jalut (Goliath), and Allah gave him (Dawud-David) the Kingdom and Al-Hikmah (Prophecy), and taught him of that which He willed. And if Allah did not check one set of people by means of another, the Earth would indeed be full of mischief. But Allah is full of Bounty to the 'Alamin (mankind, jinns and all that exists).*

**1 Samuel 17: 4.** *A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. His height was six cubits and a span... 1 Samuel 17: 45.* *David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hands, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole World will know that there is a God in Israel. 47. All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give all of you into our hands". 48. As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. 49. Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground. 50. So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; without a sword in his hand he struck down the Philistine and killed him.*

Note should clearly be made of the fact that in these two great monotheistic Religions and indeed in all other Religions, the



prescription has been - peace in general and fighting in self defence only when absolutely necessary. However, mischief makers normally venture into misrepresenting and cruelly editing religious scriptures to suit their sinister purposes. For Example, **Qur'an 2:190, 191 and 192** quoted above clearly states that,

*190. And fight in the Way of Allah **those who fight you**, but **do not transgress the limits**. Truly, Allah does not like the transgressors.*

*191. And slay them wherever ye catch them, and turn them out **from where they have turned you out**; for tumult and oppression are worse than killings; but fight them not at the Sacred Mosque, **unless they (first) fight you there**; but if they fight you, slay them. Such is the recompense for those who are unbelievers. 192. But **if they cease (to fight); then (cease to fight)** Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.*

My dear Nigerian Brothers and Sisters, I have come across uncountable number of cruelly edited versions of these two Verses authored by both Muslim and Christian mischief-makers; for the Muslims to justify killing innocent people and for the Christians to castigate Islam as a Religion of violence. Such cruelly edited versions include,

**Qur'an:** *And slay them wherever ye catch them, and...slay them. Such is the recompense for those who are unbelievers.*

The above misquoted, misrepresented and cruelly edited version clearly eliminates the fact that the decree by Allah (SWT) to Muslims to fight as enshrined in the Verse emanated from the Muslims being **attacked first**; and Muslims should stop fighting if those fighting them stopped. Note that the Verse begins and ends as follows:- *And fight in the Way of Allah **those who fight you**, but do not transgress the limits. Truly, Allah does not like the transgressors... And slay them wherever ye catch them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out... But if they cease (to fight); then (cease to fight)...*

Mischief-makers mischievously removed the above important first underlined provision that allowed fighting back only in self defence as Muslims must first be fought before they defend! In addition, the second underlined provision that is also mischievously removed categorically admonished Muslims to cease fighting when those fighting them cease! Muslims are even warned in the same Verse not to transgress limits by exceeding the **Islamic Rules of War Engagement** as specified by Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Under instruction from the Prophet (SAW), the first Caliph, Abubakar (RLA), stated that,

*Muslims, please stop so that I give you ten Rules for your guidance in the battlefield. (1) Do not commit treachery or deviate from the right path. (2) Do not mutilate dead bodies. (3) Neither kill a child; (4) nor a woman; (5) nor an aged man. (6) Bring no harm to the trees, nor burn them with fire, especially those that are fruitful. (7) Slay not any of the enemy's flock, except for your food. (8) You are likely to pass by people who are devoted in the monasteries; leave them alone. (9) Do not touch non-combatant civilians. (10) Do not maltreat prisoners of war, give them food, clothing and shelter within your vicinities.*

Allah admonishes Muslims not to enforce Islam on anyone; therefore this makes a lie of the claim that Islam was spread “by the sword”. Allah says,

**Qur'an 2:256.** *Let there be no compulsion in Religion; truth stands out clear from error; whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy Hand-hold that never breaks. And Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower of all things.*

Muslim Scholars are unanimous that Muslims under the Prophet (SAW) fought only when attacked, aggressed upon or threatened beyond limits. Under these circumstances, fighting in self-defence is not only legitimate but considered obligatory upon Muslims. However, should enemy hostile behaviour cease, then the reason for engaging such enemy lapses. Muslim Scholars also aver that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was the first among the major military

figures of history to lay down rules for humane warfare that limited loss of lives and unnecessary damage to properties to the barest minimum. That laid the basis for the modern terms “**Rules of Engagement**” and “**Limiting Collateral Damage**” in today’s military parlance. It is clear that Islam and Christianity essentially allow wars (and to a minor extent violence) only on conditions of **self-defence and the defence of the Religions**. Wars and violence are the last resorts after all avenues for peace have been exploited and have failed; and the other party strikes first. The key words have been, “**fight-back**”, to defend yourselves and not “**fight-first**”. Muslims and Christians who misquote and misrepresent Islamic and Christian scriptures to unleash violence and terror are not representing Islam or Christianity, but their foolish and selfish selves!

## **THE CONCEPTS OF JIHAD AND CRUSADE**

My dear Nigerian Brothers and Sisters, Muslim and Christian mischief makers have been using the concept of “Jihad” and that of “Crusade” to justify their violence, their killing of innocent people and their destruction of public and private properties. Until recently, Jihad had been defined by non-Muslims as a holy war fought by Muslims against those who reject Islam; while Crusade had been defined as a holy war fought by Christians to reclaim the “Holy Lands” captured by Muslims in medieval times. For example, the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> Editions of the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (1<sup>st</sup> 1948, 5<sup>th</sup> 1995) defined “Jihad” and “Crusade” as follows:-

**Jihad:** *A holy war fought by Muslims against those who reject Islam.*

**Crusade:** *Any one of the wars fought by European Christian countries to recover the Holy Land from the Muslims in medieval times.*

Mischief makers held on to these concepts to justify atrocities, violence and wars in the name of Allah-God! Gladly however, the

true concepts of Jihad and Crusade have now come to the fore and the current Edition of the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary has now towed this laudable line by giving the true definitions of Jihad and Crusade as follows:-

**Jihad:** 1. *A struggle or fight against the enemies of Islam;* 2. *The spiritual struggle within oneself against sin.*

<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/jihad> (accessed 10 June 2018)

**Crusade:** 1. *A war instigated for alleged religious ends;* 2. *A vigorous campaign for political, social, or religious change.*

<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/crusade> (accessed 10 June 2018)

Certainly, the above latest definitions are great departures from the former ones. The first definitions state, "*a struggle or fight against the enemies of Islam*" for Jihad and "*a war instigated for alleged religious ends*" for Crusade. Therefore, according to these new concepts, someone has to be an enemy of Islam who attacks Muslims or Islam before the response of "self defence". Equally, the new concept clarifies that it is only an allegation on the Christian Faith to use Crusade for religious ends.

The second definitions clearly show that, Jihad and Crusade are terms meant for "*spiritual struggle within oneself against sin*" in Islam and "*vigorous campaign for political, social, or religious change*" in Christianity. Both the words "*spiritual struggle*" and "*vigorous campaign*" respectively used for Jihad and Crusade DO NOT signify or justify any violence, talk less of war!

Indeed, it is now a common terminology to use the term "**crusade**" whenever Christians are holding any mass religious gathering for spiritual re-awakening. The term "**jihad**" seems to be the one that is still misrepresented by both Muslim and Christian mischief makers. Therefore a look at what the famous Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopaedia, states on Jihad would be beneficial. Accessed on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2018, Wikipedia states that,

*Jihad* is an Arabic word which literally means striving or struggling, especially with a praiseworthy aim. It can have many shades of meaning in an Islamic context, such as struggle against one's evil inclinations, an exertion to convert unbelievers, or efforts toward the moral betterment of society... Modernist Islamic scholars generally equate military jihad with defensive warfare. In Sufi and pious circles, spiritual and moral jihad has been emphasised under the name of **greater jihad**. The term has gained additional attention in recent decades through its use by terrorist groups.

As I have earlier stated in this Open Letter on the concepts of war in Islam, there is no justification for war (or any violence for that matter) in Islam except in defensive circumstances and within Islamic Law, rules and regulations. No Muslim has the right to inflict injury, maim or kill anyone or destroy any property in the name of religious war to convert anyone to Islam or to enforce Islam or its way of life on any non-Muslim. Allah (SWT) states in several Verses of the Glorious Qur'an that, belief in the Islamic Religion is a person's own affair; and that he or she is given the choice of accepting or rejecting the Religion; accepting for his/her own good or rejecting to his/her own peril. Some quotations from the Glorious Qur'an to this effect are as follows:-

**Qur'an 2:256.** *Let there be no compulsion in Religion. Verily, the Right Path has become distinct from the Wrong Path. Whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah has grasped the most Trustworthy Hand-hold that never breaks. And Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower of all things.*

**Qur'an 18:29.** *And say: "The Truth (Islam) is from Your Lord". Then, whosoever wills, let him believe (in Islam), and whosoever wills, let him disbelieve. Verily, We (Allah) have prepared for the wrong-doers (polytheists, etc.) a Fire whose walls will be surrounding them. And if they ask for help, they will be granted water like boiling oil that will scald their faces. (How) dreadful the drink! And how terrible a dwelling!*



The first translator and commentator of the complete Glorious Qur'an in English, Sheik Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1872-1948) gives an excellent commentary on the incompatibility of compulsion with Religion in his works, "The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary", as follows:-

*Compulsion is incompatible with Religion because (1) Religion depends on Faith and will, and these would be meaningless if induced by force. (2) Truth and error have been so clearly shown by the mercy of Allah that there should be no doubt in the minds of any persons of goodwill as to the fundamentals of Faith; (3) Allah's protection is continuous, and His plan is always to lead us from the depth of darkness into the clearest light.*

The duty of the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (SAW), and following him, the duty of every Muslim; is only to deliver the Message of Islam and no more. The Glorious Qur'an states this in many Verses including:-

**Qur'an 3:20.** *If they accept Islam, then indeed they follow the right way; and if they turn back, your duty (O Prophet Muhammad) is only to deliver the message.*

**Qur'an 64:12:** *And (you people should) obey Allah and obey the Messenger; but if you turn away, the duty of Our Messenger is only to deliver the message clearly.*

**Qur'an 24:54).** *Say (to people): Obey Allah and obey the Messenger. But if you turn away, he (the Messenger) is responsible for the duty imposed on him, and you are responsible for the duty imposed on you. And if you obey him, you go aright. And the Messenger's duty is only to deliver (the message) plainly.*

**Qur'an 39:41.** *Surely We (Allah) have revealed to you (Prophet Muhammad) the Book (Qur'an) with Truth for people. So whoever follows the right way, it is for his own soul, and whoever errs, he errs only to its detriment. And you are not a custodian over them.*

**Qur'an 13:40.** *Your duty (Prophet Muhammad) is only the delivery of the Message, and Ours (Allah's) is to call (people) to account (in the Hereafter).*

So, who gave any Muslim the authority to inflict injury, maim or kill anyone or destroy any property in the name of religious war to convert anyone to Islam or to enforce Islam or its way of life on anyone?

## **THE IMPERATIVES FOR PEACE**

My dear Nigerian Brothers and Sisters, Christianity and Islam are built on a Tripod of Peace. (1) Peace with Allah-God by worshipping Him as He ordained; (2) Peace with oneself by living uprightly; and (3) Peace with other people by safeguarding their rights and dealing justly and fairly with them. I am dedicating this section of my Open Letter to quotations on interfaith peace from renowned World Muslim and Christian Leaders whose words of wisdom should touch the hearts of all genuine adherents of Christianity and Islam. If their comments that I quote in this section are not enough to justify the **Imperatives for Peace**, I do not know what would!

**His Eminence the Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar University (the oldest University in the World) and the President of the World Muslim Council of Elders, Professor Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, stated the following in a speech at the Catholic University, Lisbon, Portugal, on March 15, 2018,**

*There are no different Divine Religions; rather there is only One Divine Religion preached by all the Prophets and Messengers of Allah, from Adam (AS) through Noah (AS), Abraham (AS), Moses (AS), Jesus (AS) to Muhammad (SAW), the last of all the Prophets. The salient common elements among divine messages, besides creed, are the fundamental ethics enshrined in the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount and the admonitions in the Noble Qur'an and the other Books of Allah. Our Faith as Muslims is perfected only when we believe in the Scrolls of*

*Abraham, the Torah of Moses and the Gospel of Jesus (peace be upon them). We read in our Noble Qur'an Allah's description of the Torah and the Gospel as guidance and light. In addition, the Noble Qur'an endorses both Testaments, and all the Prophets are fellow brothers as stated by Prophet Muhammad (SAW), who noted that all Prophets are paternal brothers. The paternal brothers share the same father but they have different mothers. In this statement, father refers to the Divine Religion they all affiliate to, while their various mothers refer to their Laws, which may change over time and place. What I mentioned here is only part of the so many common grounds among the followers of the Heavenly-revealed Religions. That is why I believe that, through following the lights of revelation and Prophethood, we should start together to extinguish the fires of wars and to call for the restoration of international peace that shall be based on the morals and teachings of Religions; which shall put an end to the pools of blood that are shed without any ethical or civilised justification in the midst of that chaotic scene of death, destruction, loss of the breadwinner and displacement from homelands. We, as followers of the heavenly revealed religions have the ultimate rights and responsibilities to call people to the way of truth, mercy and equality in a manner that is best and which leads to absolute peace.*

**In a speech to an International Conference for Peace at Al-Azhar University, Cairo, on 28th April 2017, His Holiness Pope Francis stated to over 300 Religious Leaders from all parts of the World that,**

*Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders should join in building a new civilization of peace by declaring together a firm and clear 'no' to every form of violence, vengeance and hatred carried out in the name of Religion and in the name of God; and to affirm the incompatibility of violence with faith, belief and hatred. What is needed are peacemakers not fomenters of conflict; fire-fighters not arsonists; preachers of reconciliation and not instigators of*

*destruction. Religion is not meant only to unmask evil; it has an intrinsic vocation to promote peace; today perhaps more than ever before. Violence is the denial of every authentic religiosity and as Religious Leaders we are called to unmask the violence that dresses itself with presumed sacredness. Religion is not part of the problem, but it is part of the solution and as Religious Leaders we are called to denounce the violations against human dignity and against human rights, to bring to light the attempts to justify every form of hatred in the name of Religion and to condemn them as an idolatrous falsification of God, who is the God of peace. Religious and Political Leaders as well as those who are responsible for information are called by God, by history and by the future to start, each in their own field, the processes of peace.*

**His Holiness Pope John Paul II in a 1985 speech delivered to over 80,000 Muslims at a soccer stadium in Casablanca, Morocco, said:-**

*We believe in the same God, the one God, the Living God who created the World. In a World which desires unity and peace, but experiences a thousand tensions and conflicts, should not believers come together? Dialogue between Christians and Muslims is today more urgent than ever. It flows from fidelity to God. Too often in the past, we have opposed each other in polemics and wars. I believe that today God invites us to change old practices. We must respect each other and we must stimulate each other in good works on the path to righteousness.*

**His Eminence, the Sultan of Sokoto and President-General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar, CFR, mni, delivered a Lecture at Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, United States of America on Monday, 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2011, where he stated that,**

*As a military officer and diplomatic representative, I have seen the devastation of war, not only in West Africa, but in Afghanistan,*

*Iraq and other parts of the World. I have witnessed the desperate cries of widows and orphans and the exasperation of bewildered families desperately struggling to pick up the shattered pieces of their lives. As the Sultan of Sokoto and President-General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs; as well as the Co-Chair of the Nigerian Inter-Religious Council, I have also seen the pain and suffering which ethnic polarization and religious misunderstanding could bring to a Nation and its people; how ego and bigotry could conspire to deprive people of their rationality and good judgment and how religious leaders could set aside the teachings of their scriptures to lend a helping hand to these sectarian crises. But during all these, I have also seen how people of goodwill could make a world of difference; how the right word at the appropriate time could heal an old wound; how a little help to those in distress could rekindle hope in our common humanity and how people of virtue, courage and determination could set aside their fears and misgivings to work together to re-establish and strengthen the bases of mutual co-existence within their diverse communities.*

**In a Speech at the Opening Ceremony of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) National Executive Workshop on “You and Your Muslim Neighbour”, Held at Abuja on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2010, His Eminence Alhaji Muhammad Sa’ad Abubakar, CFR, mni, the Sultan Of Sokoto, and President-General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs stated that,**

*May I venture to state that the Religion of Islam places the highest premium on the establishment of strong community relations, especially the relationship between neighbours. As Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Qur’an, “Serve Allah and join not any partners with Him. And do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, the needy; Neighbours who are of Kin (and) Neighbours who are strangers, the companions by your side, the way-farer (you meet) and what your right hands possess. For Allah loves not the arrogant, the vainglorious” (Qur’an 4:36). The Prophet of Islam, Muhammad*

(SAW) was also very categorical that a person is not a true believer “whose neighbour is not secure from his evil or mischief.” The Prophet (SAW) was also reported to have said, “He who believes in Allah and the Last Day does not harm his neighbour.” Still in another tradition, the Prophet (SAW) was emphatic that Arch-Angel Gabriel “Kept recommending treating neighbours with kindness until I thought he would assign a share (of a person’s) inheritance (to his neighbour).” There are many other verses of the Holy Qur’an and traditions of the Prophet (SAW) in this regard.

I have made reference to these sources to buttress the simple point that the scriptures – Muslim and Christian – have provided us with sufficient bases to establish religious harmony and understanding and to build rancour-free Muslim-Christian relations in Nigeria. Unfortunately, it is our behaviour as Religious Leaders, the vested interests we have in maintaining the status quo and indeed our unwillingness to free ourselves from the cages that we have set for ourselves, that tend to undermine our efforts at peace-building in our dear country. Otherwise, how can we take pleasure in fanning the embers of hatred and intolerance and aggravating already fragile relationships when we are certain that these actions would result in grave consequences for our diverse communities? How could we, as Religious Leaders, treat the blood of our brothers and sisters, their honour and their livelihood as dispensable commodities which could be violated at will, without remorse and the fear of God’s vengeance? How can we, as Religious Leaders, take delight and cherish the collective misfortune of any community, Muslim or Christian, within and without our national boundaries, without the feeling of compunction and indeed the stark appreciation that we are all God’s beloved children, entitled to some basic rights which even the agnostics and the atheists amongst us readily accord to other members of society? Finally, how could we stand aside, as hapless spectators, and allow those with vested political and economic interests and questionable moral credentials, to influence the content of our religious agenda

*and push us into directions which could only negate the sacred and eternal values we have all solemnly devoted our lives to safeguard and promote?*

**On October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2012, His Eminence, Cardinal John Onaiyekan of Abuja, Nigeria's Federal Capital, was in Brussels to receive a Peace Award from a Christian Body, Pax Christi International, where he said,**

*Every report of violent bloodshed in my country Nigeria fills me with deep sorrow... It is very sad to observe that there are people who tend to define themselves in terms of where and how they differ from others. But the vast majority of people are normal and want to go about their lives in peace. Sometimes, however, this large silent majority can be led astray by a vocal minority with an extremist agenda. The challenge therefore is to build on the goodwill foundation of the majority, get the silent majority to abandon its silence and speak out and put together a vocal critical mass of peacemakers. Christianity and Islam have the largest numbers of adherents in the World. It is about time that these two Faiths assumed the special responsibility which they have for peace in our World.*

**The Vatican Insider News of 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2017 reports His Eminence Cardinal John Onaiyekan's speech at an African Theology Conference at the University of Notre Dame's Global Gateway Centre in Rome as follows:-**

*Nigerian Church leader says unless Christians and Muslims start talking "there will be no one left to worship God"; he therefore called for Catholics to embark on a dialogue with Muslims as a way of preventing religious violence.*

*Nigerian Cardinal John Onaiyekan, who is one of the African Church's most prominent figures and Archbishop of the country's Capital City, Abuja, says that when faced with extremism the Church's approach should be to start talking rather than falling back into prejudices. "I've spent 40 years having dialogue with*

*Muslims and I believe it is possible and it is fruitful,” he said during a speech at an African Theology Conference at the University of Notre Dame’s Global Gateway Centre in Rome. “Don’t expect them to respond the way you are responding, but you can make an impact: attitudes are changed and bridges are built.”*

*During his speech on Thursday the Cardinal said it was essential for Nigerian Catholics and Muslims to sit down and talk, otherwise the killings will escalate to such a level where “there will be no one left to worship God.” “We need to avoid the attitude that says Islam is just terrorism and Boko Haram. That talk is not helpful and not even true,” he said. “The number of Muslims in Nigeria is now more than in all of the Middle East, so we cannot avoid dealing with Islam.” There are around 79 million Muslims in Nigeria, a figure that accounts for half of Nigeria’s population: the other half belongs to Christian denominations with 19 million Catholics.*

*One of the areas that Cardinal Onaiyekan believes needs to be examined is the relationship between Faith and Law. “Human Laws must respect Divine Injunctions,” the Cardinal explained. “And we must discuss how Divine Injunctions affect human Law.*

## **PEACE PROVISIONS IN CHRISTIANITY**

My dear Nigerian Brothers and Sisters, below are only a few of the uncountable number of admonitions for peace in the Holy Bible:-

**Ephesians 2:14.** *For he is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us;*

**Ephesians 2:15.** *Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;*

**Ephesians 2:16.** *And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:*

**Ephesians 2:17.** *And came and preached peace to you which were a far off, and to them that were near.*



**Galatians 5:22.** *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith.*

**Hebrews 12:14.** *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:*

**James 3:18.** *And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.*

**John 14:27.** *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the World gives, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

**John 18:11.** *Then said Jesus unto Peter, “put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?”*

**Luke 2:14:** *Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth peace, good will towards men.*

**Matthew 5:9.** *Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.*

**Matthew 5:39.** *But I say unto you, that...whosoever shall smite you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also.*

**Matthew 5:44.** *But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you;*

**Matthew 26:52.** *Then said Jesus unto him, put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.*

**Romans 5:1.** *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

**Romans 12: 17.** *Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men*

**Romans 12: 18.** *If it be possible, as much as lays in you, live peacefully with all men.*

**Romans 14:17.** *For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*

**Romans 14:19.** *Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.*

## **PEACE PROVISIONS IN ISLAM**

My dear Nigerian Brothers and Sisters, below are only a few of the uncountable number of admonitions for peace in the Glorious Qur'an and the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (SAW):-

**Qur'an 25:63.** *The servants of the Most Merciful (Allah) are those who walk upon the Earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say words of peace.*

**Qur'an 28:55.** *When they hear ill speech, they turn away from it and say: For us are our deeds, and for you are your deeds. Peace be upon you, we seek not the way of ignorance.*

**Qur'an 43:89.** *So turn aside from them and say words of peace.*

**Qur'an 36:58.** *Peace, a word from a Merciful Lord (Allah).*

**Qur'an 19:47.** *Abraham said: Peace will be upon you. I will ask forgiveness for you of my Lord. Verily, He is ever gracious to me.*

**Qur'an 51:24-25.** *Has there reached you the story of the honored guests of Abraham? When they entered upon him and said: We greet you with peace, so he answered: I greet you with peace, a people unknown.*

**Qur'an 8:61.** *If the enemy inclines to peace, then incline to it also and rely upon Allah. Verily, it is He who is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.*

**Qur'an 4:90.** *So if they remove themselves from you and do not fight you and offer you peace, then Allah has not made for you a cause for fighting against them.*

**Qur'an 6:108.** *Do not revile (insult) those (idols, their gods, etc.) that they call upon (worship) besides Allah, lest they revile Allah out of spite in their ignorance.*

Aisha (RLA) reported that, the Messenger of Allah (RLA) would invoke peace while sitting in prayer saying, "O Allah, You are

*Peace and from You is Peace. Blessed are You, O Majestic and Generous One". (Sahih Muslim 592)*

Abu Huraira (RLA) reported that, the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, *"You will not enter Paradise until you believe and you will not believe until you love each other. Shall I show you something that, if you did, you would love each other? Spread peace between yourselves". (Sahih Muslim 54)*

Abdullah ibn Umar (RLA) reported that, a man asked the Messenger of Allah (SAW) "Which Islam is best?" The Prophet (SAW) said: *"To feed the hungry and to greet with peace those you know and those you do not know". (Sahih Bukhari 28)*

Ali ibn Abu Talib (RLA) reported that, the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: *"Verily, after me there will be conflicts, so if you are able to end them in peace, then do so". (Musnad Ahmad 697)*

Abu Ad-Darda (RLA) reported that, the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said to his Companions: *"Shall I tell you about what is more virtuous in degree than fasting, prayer, and charity? They said, "of course, tell us!" The Prophet (SAW) said: "It is reconciliation between people. Verily, corrupted relations between people are the razor. I do not say that it shaves hair, but rather it shaves the Religion". (Sunan At-Tirmidhi 2509)*

Abdullah ibn Salam (RLA) said, when the Messenger of Allah (SAW) came to Medina, the people rushed towards him. The first thing he said was: *"O you people, spread peace, feed the hungry, and pray at night when people are sleeping and you will enter Paradise in peace". (Sunan Ibn Majah 1334)*

Abdullah ibn Amr (RLA) reported that, the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: *"Worship the Most Merciful (Allah) and spread peace. (Sunan Ibn Majah 3694)*

Abu Umamah (RLA) reported that, the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: *"Verily, the best of the people to Allah are those who begin the greeting of peace". (Sunan Abu Dawud 5197)*

The great Muslim Scholar, Sheik al-Islam Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim (1292-1350 AD/691-751 Hijrah), said: *"The Prophet never forced the Religion (of Islam) upon anyone, but rather he only fought those who waged war against him and fought him first. As for those who made peace with him or conducted a truce, then he never fought them and he never compelled them to enter his Religion (of Islam)".* (Hidayat Al-Hayara 237)

## **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY**

My dear Nigerian Brothers and Sisters, Islam is the only non-Christian Faith that believes in the miraculous birth of Jesus Christ (Isa AS) by the Virgin Mary, his raising of the dead, his healing of the blind and the lepers by the authority of the Powers of God; and his ascension to the Heavens.

Christianity and Islam are different only in some Faith issues that relate to the relationship between adherents of these two Religions and their Creator, Allah-God. However, both Religions are quite similar in all issues regarding relationships among all people. In reality, there are no differences between the two Religions regarding the way that people of different Religions should treat each other. This, logically and spiritually, calls for all Christians and Muslims to live together in love, peace, harmony, understanding and mutual respect.

Islam made the belief in all the Prophets of Allah, all the Books of Allah and all the Angels of Allah as part of one of the fundamental Pillars of Islam. Allah states in the Glorious Qur'an that,

*The Messenger (Muhammad) believes in what has been sent down to Him from his Lord; and (so do) the (Muslim) believers. Each one believes in Allah, His Angels, His Books and His Messengers. They (Muslims) say, "We make no distinction between one another of His Messengers"; and they say, "We hear, and we obey. (We seek) Your Forgiveness, Our Lord, and to You (everyone) shall return".* (Qur'an 2:285)

Allah also states in the Glorious Qur'an that,

*Say (O Muslims), "We believe in Allah and that which has been sent down to us and that which has been sent down to Ibrahim (Abraham), Isma'il (Ishmael), Ishaq (Isaac), Ya'qub (Jacob), and to Al-Asbat (the twelve sons of Ya'qub), and that which has been given to Musa (Moses) and Isa (Jesus), and that which has been given to the Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and to Him we have submitted (in Islam). So if they believe in the like of that which you believe, then they are rightly guided, but if they turn away, then they are only in opposition. So Allah will suffice for you against them. And He is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower. (Qur'an 2:136-137)*

The Holy Bible, Jesus Christ (Prophet Isa-AS), his mother Mary (Maryam), Christianity and Christians receive principal and respectable mentions in the Glorious Qur'an and in other Islamic literature. Specifically, the Glorious Qur'an has a long narrative on Jesus Christ (Prophet Isa-AS) and his mother, as contained in the Chapter of the Qur'an named after the Mother of Jesus, Mary (*Surat Maryam*, i.e. the Chapter of Mary); which is Qur'an Chapter 19. Verses 16 to 34 of this Chapter of the Glorious Qur'an state that,

**16.** *And mention in the Book (the Qur'an, O Muhammad), the story of Maryam (Mary), when she withdrew in seclusion from her family to a place facing east. 17. She placed a screen (to screen herself) from them; then We (God) sent to her Our Ruh (Angel Gabriel), and he appeared before her in the form of a man in all respects. 18. She said: "Verily! I seek Refuge with the Most Beneficent (God) from you, if you do fear God". 19. (The angel) said: "I am only a Messenger from your Lord, (to announce) to you the gift of a righteous son". 20. She said: "How can I have a son, when no man has touched me, nor am I unchaste?" 21. He said: "So (it will be), your Lord said: "That is easy for Me (God): and We (God) shall appoint him (the son) as a sign to mankind and a Mercy from Us (God), and it is a matter (already) decreed, (by*

God)". **22.** So she conceived him (Isa-Jesus), and she withdrew with him (the pregnancy) to a far place (i.e. Bethlehem valley). **23.** And the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a date-palm. She said: "Would that I had died before this, and had been forgotten and out of sight!" **24.** Then (a voice) calls her from below her, saying: "Grieve not! Your Lord has provided a water stream under you. **25.** "And shake the trunk of the date-palm towards you; it will let fall fresh ripe-dates upon you. **26.** "So eat and drink and be glad, and if you see any human being, say: "Verily! I have vowed a fast to the Most Beneficent (God) so I shall not speak to any human being this day". **27.** Then (after giving birth) she brought him (the baby) to her people, carrying him. They said: "O Mary! Indeed you have brought a thing "Fariya" (an unheard of, mighty thing). **28.** "O sister of Haroon (Aaron - not the brother of Moses)! Your father was not a man who used to commit adultery, nor was your mother an unchaste woman." **29.** Then she pointed at him (the baby). They said: "How can we talk to one who is a child in the cradle?" **30.** He (the child, Isa-Jesus) said: "Verily! I am a servant of God. He has given me the Scripture and made me a Prophet. **31.** "And He (God) has made me blessed where ever I be, and has enjoined on me Salat (prayer), and Zakat (poor-dues), as long as I live. **32.** "And (God instructed me to be) dutiful to my mother, and (He) made me not arrogant, unblessed. **33.** "And Salaam (peace) be upon me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I shall be raised alive (in the Hereafter)!" **34.** Such is Isa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary). (It is) a statement of truth, about which they (unbelievers, pagans) doubt (and/or dispute over).

The above is the incredibly detailed and highly honourable narration of the miraculous birth of Jesus (Isa AS) in the Glorious Qur'an.

The Holy Bible narrates the birth of Jesus Christ in Matthew 1:18-25 as:-

**18.** Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. **19.** Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privately. **20.** But while he thought on these things, behold, the Angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. **21.** And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. **22.** Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, **23.** Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. **24.** Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the Angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: **25.** And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

My dear Nigerian Brothers and Sisters, The excellent relationship between Muslims and Christians has roots during the time of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as narrated in the Glorious Qur'an as follows:-

**Qur'an 5:82.** ..You will find the nearest in love to the believers (Muslims) are those who say: "We are Christians". That is because amongst them are priests and clerics, and they are not proud. **83.** And when they (who call themselves Christians) listen to what has been sent down to the Messenger (Muhammad), you see their eyes overflowing with tears because of the Truth they have recognised. They say: "Our Lord! We believe; so write us down among the witnesses. **84.** "And why should we not believe in Allah and in that which has come to us of the Truth (Islamic Monotheism)? And we wish that Our Lord will admit us (in Paradise) along with the righteous people".

**Qur'an 3:64.** Say: *“O people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians): come to a word that is just between us and you, that we Worship none but Allah, and that we associate no partners with Him, and that none of us shall take others as lords besides Allah”*.

The relationship between Muslims and Christians was so close that, not only did Islam decree the freedom for Christians (and indeed for Jews and all other non-Muslims) to practice their Religions freely, but also decreed that they be treated justly. Warning against the abuse of Christians, Jews and other non-Muslims, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said,

*Beware! Whoever is cruel and hard on a non-Muslim minority, curtails their rights, burdens them with more than they can bear, or takes anything from them against their free will; I (Prophet Muhammad) will advocate against this person on the Day of Judgment.* (Sunan Abu Daud)

## **CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM ARE FULFILMENTS OF THE LAWS OF MONOTHEIST PROPHETS BEFORE THEM**

My dear Nigerian Brothers and sisters, the Holy Bible and the Glorious Qur'an respectively state that Jesus Christ (Isa AS) and Prophet Muhammad (SAW) have come to **fulfil** the Laws and Messages of the Monotheist Prophets before them, thereby making the Laws and the Messages of Christianity and Islam very similar to, for example, those in the Scrolls of Abraham/Ibrahim (AS), the Psalms of David/Dawud (AS) and the Torah of Moses/Musa (AS).

The Holy Bible states that,

(Jesus said) *“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them”*  
(Matthew 5:17)

The Glorious Qur'an states that,

*He (Allah) has revealed to you (Muhammad) the Book (Qur'an) with truth, verifying that which is before it, and He revealed the*



*Torah (of Moses) and the Gospel (of Jesus) before this as guidance for the people. And He sent the Criterion (of judgment between right and wrong) (Qur'an 3:3-4)*

The Old and the New Testaments of the Holy Bible have contents of the Gospel (of Jesus), the Psalms (of David) and the Torah (of Moses). Indeed, the Holy Bible constantly makes references to Jewish Laws in the Gospels that came before it. And the Glorious Qur'an has contents that are similar to those of the Gospel (of Jesus), the Psalms (of David), the Torah (of Moses) and the Scrolls (of Abraham).

It should be reemphasised that the similarity in contents of the Books of the Monotheist Religions were a result of their divine natures having been revealed to the various Prophets of Allah-God through inspiration. Therefore those Books that came after have the contents of those Books that came before them. That accounts for many Verses of the New Testament of the Holy Bible having a lot in common with those of the earlier Gospels that came before it. The Glorious Qur'an has a similar nature, having a lot in common with the earlier Books that came before it.

The Monotheist Prophets lived hundreds of years (and in some cases even thousands of years) apart, but their messages have been constant and very similar. The messages of the Glorious Qur'an and those of the Holy Bible are however the closest, even though their revelations were over five hundred years apart.

Both Jesus Christ (AS) and Prophet Muhammad (SAW) were many a times revealing the Divine Messages instantly in front of their Disciples/Companions thereby eliminating any insinuation of someone else teaching them from some older texts. For example, authentic and verified religious and historical records have amply demonstrated that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was "unlettered" therefore did not know how to read or write; and even the pagan enemies of Islam of his time and beyond have not been able to ascribe any Jewish or Christian teacher to him. In addition, the revelations of Allah's Messages in the Glorious Qur'an came by

divine inspirations to the Prophet (SAW) either in seclusion (in his residence or Mosque), or in the presence of his Companions and/or his Family Members.

Therefore the miraculous similarities between the Glorious Qur'an and other Monotheistic Holy Scriptures (especially the Holy Bible) were purely revelations from Allah (SWT) to His Prophet, Muhammad (SAW). Jesus Christ (Isa AS) had exactly the same attributes, as he was revealing God's Messages instantly to his disciples in many cases at public gatherings through inspirations. Therefore the Holy Bible and the Glorious Qur'an are Divine Messages of very pure Divine Origins that have come to FULFIL DIVINE MONOTHEISTIC MESSAGES BEFORE THEM.

## **THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM**

My dear Nigerian Brothers and sisters, men and women of peace wonder whenever Muslims and Christians dispute over religious and mundane matters. In some cases the disputes degenerate into full scale conflicts resulting into violence with resultant loss of lives and destruction of properties. People of peace wonder; because both Islam and Christianity recognise the Oneness of Allah-God and provide for peace, unity and progress. In addition, all the major Christian and Muslim Laws, rules and regulation on social, economic, governance, justice, fairness and moral affairs; and all the provisions on how to conduct these worldly affairs peacefully and harmoniously are either the same or very similar. As the two Religions prescribe the same or very similar Laws and codes of conducts, sane people are wont to ask; why the rancour and the disputes? Why the loss of innocent and valuable lives and the destruction of properties?

The **TABLE** that follows shows the glaring similarities between Christianity and Islam. These similarities that come direct from Allah-God justify for absolute peace, love, understanding and mutual respect between adherents of these two greatest Religions of the World.

## **TABLE OF SIMILARITIES BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM**

### **THE CONCEPT OF ALLAH-GOD**

Christians and Muslims have the same concept of Allah/God. Both believe in monotheism; that is the worship of one God. They do not ascribe any other gods to Him and they denounce idolatry in all its forms and ramifications. Indeed, setting up partner-gods with Allah/God is the biggest sin in both Islam and Christianity.

<b>GOD IS ONE</b> And Jesus answered him, The first of all the Commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is One Lord: And thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first Commandment. (Mark 12:29-30) <b>DO NOT ASCRIBE PARTNERS TO GOD</b> Thou shall have no other gods before me. Thou shall not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shall not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God... (Exodus 20:3-5) <b>DO NOT MISUSE GOD'S NAME</b> You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. (Exodus 20:7)	<b>ALLAH IS ONE</b> Say: He is Allah, the One and Only; Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; He begets not, nor is He begotten; And there is none like unto Him. (Qur'an 112:1-4) Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him. (Qur'an 17:23) <b>DO NOT ASCRIBE PARTNERS TO ALLAH</b> Verily! Allah forgives not (the sin of) setting up partners in worship with him, but He forgives whom He pleases sins other than that, and whoever sets up partners in worship with Allah, has indeed strayed far away. (Qur'an 4:116) <b>DO NOT MISUSE ALLAH'S NAME</b> And Allah's are the best names, therefore call on Him thereby, and leave alone those who violate the sanctity of His names; they shall be requited for what they did. (Qur'an 7:180)
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### **CREATION OF THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH**

The Oneness of Allah/God in Islam and Christianity translates to His exclusive power in the creation of the Heavens and the Earth and all that exists in them. The majestic natures of the creations have been substantially explained in both the Holy Bible and the Glorious Qur'an.

### **CREATION OF THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH**

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. (Genesis 1:1-2)

And God said, Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear. And it was so. God called the dry ground land, and the gathered waters he called seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds. And it was so. The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. (Gen. 1:9-12)

And God said, Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth. And it was so. God made two great lights; the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. (Genesis 1:14-18)

Thus the Heavens and the Earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done. (Genesis 2:1-3)

### **CREATION OF THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH**

Allah is He Who raised the heavens without any pillars that ye can see is firmly established on the throne (of authority). He has subjected the sun and the moon (to his Law). (Qur'an 13:2)

And it is He who spread out the earth, and set thereon mountains standing firm and (flowing) rivers: and fruit of every kind He made in pairs, two and two: He draws the night as a veil over the Day. Behold, verily in these things there are signs for those who consider! And in the earth are tracts (diverse though) neighbouring, and gardens of vines and fields sown with corn, and palm trees - growing out of single roots or otherwise: watered with the same water, yet some of them We make more excellent than others to eat. Behold, verily in these things there are signs for those who understand! (Qur'an 13:3-4)

He merges Night into Day, and he merges Day into Night, and he has subjected the sun and the moon (to his Law): each one runs its course for a term appointed. Such is Allah your Lord: to Him belongs all Dominion. And those whom ye invoke besides Him have not the least power. So He completed them as seven firmaments in two Days, and He assigned to each heaven its duty and command. And We adorned the lower heaven with lights, and (provided it) with guard. Such is the Decree of (Him) the Exalted in Might, Full of Knowledge. (Qur'an 35:13)

We created the Heavens and the Earth and all between them in Six Days, nor did any sense of weariness touch Us. (Qur'an 50:38)

## CREATION OF ADAM AND EVE-HAWWA

As explained in the Holy Bible and the Glorious Qur'an, the Lord of Islam and Christianity created the first man, Adam (AS) from ground dust/clay; and his female partner, Eve (Hawwa), was created from the ribs of the man, Adam (AS). From the two, Adam (AS) and Eve (Hawwa), generations upon generations of humans were begotten culminating into the present estimated 2018 World population of 7.6 billion.

CREATION OF ADAM AND EVE	CREATION OF ADAM AND HAWWA
<p>The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. (Genesis 2:7)</p> <p>And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman (Eve), and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. (Genesis 2:21-23)</p>	<p>Behold! Thy Lord said to the angels: "I am about to create man from sounding clay from mud moulded into shape; when I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of My spirit fall ye down in obeisance unto him". (Qur'an 15:28-29)</p> <p>And God said: 'O Mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Adam) and from Him (Adam) He created his wife (Hawwa-Eve)... (Qur'an 4:1)</p> <p>Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, O Muslims! I advise you to be gentle with women, for they are created from a rib, and the most crooked portion of the rib is its upper part. If you try to straighten it, it will break, and if you leave it, it will remain crooked; so I urge you to take care of the women." (Bukhari)</p>

## JUDGEMENT IN THE HEREAFTER

Belief in the Judgement by Allah-God in the Hereafter is central to both Christianity and Islam. Indeed, the whole human life, whether spiritual or temporal, is hinged on doing what the Creator says should be done and how it should be done; and in not doing what the Creator says should not be done. Muslims and Christians believe that, as all are born into this World, so shall all die and meet the Creator in the Hereafter where fair and just judgment shall be passed on every soul. Everlasting life in Paradise shall be for the righteous and Hell shall be the abode of the wrongdoers.

**JUDGEMENT DAY**

And you can be sure that on the Judgment Day everyone will have to give account of every useless word he has ever spoken. Your words will be used to judge you – to declare you either innocent or guilty. (Mathew 12:33)

But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars – their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. (Revelations 21:8)

This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 13: 41-43)

**HEARING THE VOICE**

...All who are in their graves will hear his Voice and come out – those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned. (Mark 5:28-29)

**JUDGEMENT DAY**

Everyone shall taste death. And only on the Day of Resurrection shall you be paid your wages in full. And whoever is removed away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise, he indeed is successful. The life of this world is only the enjoyment of deception. (Quran 3:185)

And We shall set up balances of justice on the Day of Resurrection, and then none will be dealt with unjustly in anything. And if there be the weight of a mustard seed (of good or bad), We will bring it. And Sufficient are We to take account. (Quran 21:47)

**HEARING THE TRUMPET**

And the Trumpet will be blown, and all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth will swoon away, except him whom Allah wills. Then it will be blown a second time, and behold they will be standing, looking on (waiting). (Quran 39:68)

**WORSHIPPING ALLAH-GOD**

In order to attain felicity in this World and felicity in the Hereafter, the Worship of One Deity, Allah-God, is essential in both Christianity and Islam. This Worship should be done as ordained in the Scriptures and not as one personally deems fit. There is communal Worship and private Worship, all towards the attainment of the pleasure of the Almighty Creator.

**DO NOT WORSHIP IDOLS**

You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. (Exodus 20:4)

**THE NEED TO ESTABLISH PRAYERS**

Very early in the morning, while it was

**DO NOT WORSHIP IDOLS**

They call on such deities, besides Allah, as can neither hurt nor profit them: that is straying far away indeed (from the Right Way)! (Qur'an 22:12)

**THE NEED TO ESTABLISH PRAYERS**

Verily! I am Allah! None has the right to

<p>still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he Prayed. (Mark 1:35)</p> <p>Continue steadfastly in Prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. (Colossians 4:2)</p> <p><b>CLEANING BEFORE PRAYERS</b></p> <p>And he set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and put water there, to wash withal. And Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet thereat: When they went into the tent of the congregation, and when they came near unto the altar, they washed; as the LORD commanded Moses. (Exodus 40:30-32)</p> <p><b>TAKING OFF SHOES IN HOLY PLACES</b></p> <p>And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush. When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the LORD came unto him; Saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold. Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou stand is Holy Ground. (Acts 7:30-33)</p> <p><b>PROSTRATION IN PRAYER</b></p> <p>And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him... (Genesis 17:3)</p> <p>Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and says unto the disciples, sit you here, while I go and Pray yonder... And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and Prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. (Matthew 26:36 and 39)</p> <p>Oh come, let us worship and bow down;</p>	<p>be worshipped but I, so worship Me, and perform Prayers for My Remembrance. (Quran 20:14)</p> <p>And seek assistance through steadfastness and Prayer, and most surely this is a hard thing except for the humble ones. (Qur'an 2:45)</p> <p><b>CLEANING BEFORE PRAYERS</b></p> <p>O you who believe! When you rise up to Prayer, wash your faces and your hands as far as the elbows, and wipe your heads and your feet to the ankles; and if you are in a state of impurity (i.e. had a sexual discharge), purify yourself (take bath); ...Allah does not desire to put on you any difficulty, but He wishes to purify you... (Qur'an 5:6)</p> <p><b>TAKING OFF SHOES IN HOLY PLACES</b></p> <p>When he saw a fire, he said to his family: "Wait! Verily, I have seen a fire; perhaps I can bring you some burning brand there from, or find some guidance at the fire-place". And when he came to it (the fire), he was called by name: "O Musa (Moses)! Verily! I am Your Lord! So take off your shoes, as you are in the Sacred Valley, of Tuwa (at Mount Sinai)". (Qur'an 20:10-12)</p> <p><b>PROSTRATION (SUJUD) IN PRAYER</b></p> <p>O You who believe! Bow down, and prostrate yourselves and Worship Your Lord and do good that You may be successful. (Qur'an 22:77)</p> <p>(The Angel said) O Maryam (Mary mother of Jesus)! "Submit yourself with obedience to Your Lord and prostrate yourself, and bow down (in Prayer) along with those who bow down". (Qur'an 3:43)</p> <p>Surely those who are with your Lord are not too proud to serve Him, and they declare His glory and prostrate in humility before Him. (Qur'an 7: 206)</p>
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<p>let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker! (Psalms 95:6)</p> <p><b>IN PRAISE OF GOD</b></p> <p>You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for You created all things; by Your will they exist, and came to be. (Revelation 4:11)</p>	<p><b>IN PRAISE OF ALLAH</b></p> <p>Allah! None has the right to be worshiped but He, the Ever Living, the One Who sustains and protects all that exists. Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him. To Him belongs whatever is in the Heavens and whatever is on the Earth... (Qur'an 2:255)</p>
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## THE MAJOR COMMANDMENTS

Perhaps the most interesting similarities between Christianity and Islam are the in the "Commandments" entailing the "does" and the "don'ts" in daily living. It is equally very interesting to note that it is not only the Commandments that are similar, but even the punishments prescribed for those who do not obey them are very similar.

<p><b>DO NOT COMMIT MURDER</b></p> <p>Thou shall not commit murder. (Exodus 20:13)</p> <p><b>Punishment for Murder</b></p> <p>But if he thrust him of hatred, or hurl at him by laying of wait, that he die; Or in enmity smite him with his hand, that he die: he that smote him shall surely be put to death; for he is a murderer: the revenger of blood shall slay the murderer, when he meets him... Moreover ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death: but he shall be surely put to death. (Numbers 35:20-21 and 31).</p> <p>Whoever takes a human life shall surely be put to death. Whoever takes an animal's life shall make it good, life for life. If anyone injures his neighbour, as he has done it shall be done to him, fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; whatever injury he has given a person shall be given to him. Whoever kills an animal shall make it good, and whoever kills a person shall be put to death. (Leviticus</p>	<p><b>DO NOT COMMIT MURDER</b></p> <p>Nor take life which Allah has made sacred. (Qur'an 17:23)</p> <p><b>Punishment for Murder</b></p> <p>O you who believe! The Law of Equality in punishment is prescribed for you in case of murder: the free for the free, the slave for the slave, and the female for the female. But if the killer is forgiven by the brother (the heir or next of kin) of the killed against blood-money, then adhering to it with fairness and payment of the blood-money to the heir should be made in fairness. This is alleviation and a mercy from your Lord. So after this whoever transgresses the limits (i.e. kills the killer after taking the blood-money), he shall have a painful torment. (Qur'an 2:178)</p> <p><b>DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY</b></p> <p>Nor come near to adultery: for it is a shameful (deed) and an evil, opening the road (to other evils). (Qur'an 17:32)</p> <p><b>Punishment for Adultery</b></p>
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<p>24:17-22).</p> <p><b>DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY</b></p> <p>Thou shall not commit adultery. (Exodus 20:14)</p> <p><b>Punishment for Adultery</b></p> <p>If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shall thou put away evil from Israel. If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shall put away evil from among you. (Deuteronomy 22:22-44)</p> <p><b>DO NOT COMMIT HOMOSEXUALITY</b></p> <p>Thou shall not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is an abomination. (Leviticus 18:22)</p> <p><b>Punishment for Homosexuality</b></p> <p>By the time Lot reached Zoar, the sun had risen over the land. Then the LORD rained down burning sulphur on Sodom and Gomorrah - from the LORD out of the heavens. Thus he overthrew those cities and the entire plain, destroying all those living in the cities - and also the vegetation in the land. (Genesis 19:23-25)</p> <p>If a man also lies with a man, as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them. (Leviticus 20:13)</p> <p><b>DO NOT STEAL</b></p> <p>Thou shall not steal. (Exodus 20:15)</p> <p><b>Punishment For Stealing</b></p>	<p>The woman and the man guilty of fornication/adultery; flog each of them with a hundred stripes: ...And let a party of the Believers witness their punishment. And those who accuse chaste women and they do not bring four witnesses, flog them, (giving) eighty stripes, and do not admit any evidence from them ever; and these it is that are the transgressors. (Qur'an 24:2 and 4-5)</p> <p>Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said: Receive teaching from me, receive teaching from me. Allah has ordained a way for those women. When an unmarried male commits adultery with an unmarried female, they should receive one hundred lashes and banishment for one year. And in case of married male committing adultery with a married female, they shall receive one hundred lashes and be stoned to death. (Muslim)</p> <p><b>DO NOT COMMIT HOMOSEXUALITY</b></p> <p>Verily, you practice your lusts on men instead of women. Nay, but you are a people transgressing beyond bounds (by committing this great sin). (Qur'an 7:81)</p> <p><b>Punishment for Homosexuality</b></p> <p>So when Our Commandment came, we turned (the Towns of Sodom) upside down, and rained on them stones of baked clay, piled up; marked from Your Lord, and they are not ever far from the evil-doers. (Qur'an 11:82-83)</p> <p>Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said: "Whoever you find doing the action of the people of Prophet Lout (Lot) (i.e. homosexuality), execute the one who does it and the one to whom it is done". (Tirmidhi)</p> <p><b>DO NOT STEAL</b></p> <p>And do not swallow up the property of each other by false means; neither seek to gain access thereby to the Judges, so that</p>
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<p>If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep. If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he dies, there shall be no bloodshed for him. If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be bloodshed for him; for he should make full restitution; if he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep; he shall restore double. (Exodus 22:1-4)</p> <p><b>DO NOT GIVE FALSE TESTIMONY</b></p> <p>Thou shall not give false testimony against your neighbour. (Exodus 20:16)</p> <p><b>DO NOT COVET (BE JEALOUS)</b></p> <p>Thou shall not covet your neighbour's house. Thou shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour. (Exodus 20:17)</p>	<p>you may swallow up a part of the property of men wrongfully while you know. (Qur'an 2:188)</p> <p><b>Punishment For Stealing</b></p> <p>Cut off (from the wrist joint) the (right) hand of the thief, male or female, as a recompense for that which they committed, (and) a punishment by way of example from Allah. And Allah is All-Powerful, All-Wise. (Qur'an 5:38)</p> <p><b>DO NOT GIVE FALSE TESTIMONY</b></p> <p>And cover not truth with falsehood, nor conceal the Truth when you know (it is the truth). (Qur'an 2:42)</p> <p><b>DO NOT COVET (BE JEALOUS)</b></p> <p>And in no wise covet those things in which Allah hath bestowed His gifts more freely on some of you than on others. (Qur'an 4:32)</p>
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## ALLAH-GOD IS MOST FORGIVING AND MOST MERCIFUL

Punishments are prescribed for offences in Christianity and Islam; and such punishments may be for either this World or the Hereafter. However, it should be noted that no matter the magnitude of the punishments (caning, imprisonment, death penalty, etc); Allah-God is Most Forgiving and Most Merciful. Repentance and seeking for the Lord's forgiveness are most encouraged in Islam and Christianity as ways of atonement, expiation or remission of one's sins and offences.

<p><b>REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS</b></p> <p>...The angels of God rejoice over one sinner who repents (Luke 15:10)</p> <p>Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in Prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. (Mark 11:24)</p>	<p><b>REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS</b></p> <p>...And the Angels exalt the praise of their Lord and ask forgiveness for those on Earth; now surely Allah is the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful. (Qur'an 42:5)</p>
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<p>Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known. (Jeremiah 33:3)</p> <p>Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, (Acts 3:19)</p> <p>Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. (Jeremiah 29:12)</p> <p>The Lord is not slow to fulfil his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 2 Peter 3:9</p> <p>From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 4:17)</p> <p>If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)</p> <p>Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. (James 5:16)</p> <p>He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him. For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust.( Psalm 103:10-14)</p> <p>And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38)</p>	<p>And when My servants ask you concerning Me, then surely I am very near; I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me, so they should answer My call and believe in Me that they may walk in the right way. (Qur'an 2:186)</p> <p>Except those who repent after that and amend, then surely Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most-Merciful. (Qur'an 3:89)</p> <p>But whoever repents after his iniquity and reforms (himself), then surely Allah will turn to him (mercifully); surely Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most-Merciful. (Qur'an 5:39)</p> <p>And when those who believe in Our Messages come to you, say: "Peace be on you", your Lord has ordained mercy on Himself, (so) that if any one of you does evil in ignorance, then turns after that and acts aright, then He is Ever-Forgiving, Most-Merciful. (Qur'an 6:54)</p> <p>...Therefore if you repent, it will be better for you, and if you turn back, then know that you will not weaken Allah; and announce painful punishment to those who disbelieve. (Qur'an 9:3)</p> <p>O my people! Ask forgiveness of your Lord, then turn to Him; He will send on you clouds pouring down abundance of rain and add strength to your strength, and do not turn back as evil doers. (Qur'an 11:52)</p> <p>And ask forgiveness of your Lord, then turn to Him; surely my Lord is Most-Merciful, Most-Loving. (Qur'an 11:90)</p> <p>But there came after them an evil generation, who neglected prayers and followed and sensual desires, so they will plunge into the valley of evil. Except for those who repent and believe and do good, these shall enter the Garden (Paradise), and they shall not be wronged in any way. (Qur'an 19:59-60)</p>
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## MARRIAGE AND THOSE PROHIBITED IN MARRIAGE

Chastity is fundamental in Islam and Christianity. Adultery, fornication all forms of sex outside marriage have been outlawed in both Christianity and Islam. Therefore for the human race to continue to exist in accordance with the Lord's divine injunctions there must be marriage. Those who do not marry for one genuine reason or the other are free not to marry, but as per Christian and Islamic Laws, they must maintain their chastity. When Allah/God created the first man, Adam (AS), He clearly stated in the Bible and the Qur'an that He created a "wife" (not a girl friend or anything else) for Adam (AS) from Adam's ribs. This clearly signifies the importance of marriage and that accounts for elaborate provisions in both Islamic and Christian religious scriptures on the subject. As the two Religions specify marriage, they also specify who a man can marry and who he cannot marry in order to maintain a proper and respectable order of the family system.

### ADMONITION FOR MARRIAGE

Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. (1 Corinthians 7:1-3)

### THOSE PROHIBITED IN MARRIAGE

No-one is to approach any close relative to have sexual relations. I am the Lord. Do not dishonour your father by having sexual relations with your mother. She is your mother; do not have relations with her. Do not have sexual relations with your father's wife; that would dishonour your father. Do not have sexual relations with your sister, either your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, whether she was born in the same home or elsewhere. Do not have sexual relations with your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter; that would dishonour you. Do not have sexual relations with the daughter of

### ADMONITION FOR MARRIAGE

And marry those among you who are single and those who are pious and fit among your male slaves and your female slaves; if they are needy, Allah will make them free from want out of His grace; and Allah is Ample-giving, Knowing. And let those who do not find the financial means for marriage keep themselves chaste, until Allah enriches them of his Bounty... (Qur'an 24:32-33)

### THOSE PROHIBITED IN MARRIAGE

And marry not women whom your fathers married, except what is past: It was shameful and odious, an abominable custom indeed. Prohibited to you (for marriage) are: your mothers, daughters, sisters; father's sisters, mother's sisters; brother's daughters, sister's daughters; foster-mothers (who

<p>your father's wife, born to your father; she is your sister. Do not have sexual relations with your father's sister; she is your father's close relative. Do not have sexual relations with your mother's sister, because she is your mother's close relative. Do not dishonour your father's brother by approaching his wife to have sexual relations; she is your aunt. Do not have sexual relations with your daughter-in-law. She is your son's wife; do not have relations with her. Do not have sexual relations with your brother's wife; that would dishonour your brother. Do not have sexual relations with both a woman and her daughter. Do not have sexual relations with either her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter; they are her close relatives. That is wickedness. Do not take your wife's sister as a rival wife and have sexual relations with her while your wife is living. (Leviticus 18:6-18)</p>	<p>gave you suck); foster-sisters; your wives' mothers; your step-daughters under your guardianship, born of your wives to whom ye have gone in, no prohibition if ye have not gone in; (those who have been) wives of your sons proceeding from your loins; and two sisters in wedlock at one and the same time, except for what is past; for God is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful; Also (prohibited are) women already married, except those whom your right hands possess. Thus hath God ordained (prohibitions) against you. Except for these, all others are lawful. (Qur'an 4:22-24)</p>
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## CHARITY AND ZAKAT

Islam and Christianity prescribe charity, which to some extent is considered as compulsory. In both Religions, there is the compulsory charity classified as **Zakat** in Islam and **Tithe** in Christianity. On the other hand, there is the general charity regarded by both Religions as “alms” giving to the less privileged and the destitute and assistance to the kith and kin. Faith in Islam and Christianity is considered incomplete if someone does not love for his brothers and sisters what he loves for himself.

<p><b>CHARITY GENERAL</b></p> <p>And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. (1Peter 4:8)</p> <p>But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the Faith and is worse than an unbeliever. (1 Timothy 5:8)</p> <p><b>CHARITY ON CROPS</b></p> <p>Thou shall truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, which the field brings forth year by year. (Deuteronomy 14:22)</p>	<p><b>CHARITY GENERAL</b></p> <p>If you give alms openly, it is well, and if you hide it and give it to the poor, it is better for you; and this will do away with some of your evil deeds. Qur'an 2:271)</p> <p>And My Mercy embraces All things. That (Mercy) I shall ordain for those who are the pious and give Charity. (Qur'an 7:156)</p> <p><b>CHARITY ON CROPS (ZAKAT)</b></p> <p>... Eat of its fruit when it bears fruit, and pay the due (Zakat) of it on the day of its reaping... (Qur'an 6:141)</p>
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## FASTING

Islam and Christianity strongly decreed for fasting as a means of getting very close to the Almighty Creator. Fasting is embarked upon at anytime especially whenever someone or a society is in problems like sickness, disasters, insecurity, etc. However the Lent Period (40 days before Easter) in Christianity is specifically earmarked for Special Fasting. In Islam, the Month of Ramadan (29 or 30 days) is made a Month of Compulsory Fasting.

FASTING	FASTING
<p>“Yet even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with Fasting, with weeping, and with mourning”. (Joel 2:12)</p> <p>Then I proclaimed a Fast there, at the River Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from Him a safe journey for ourselves, our children, and all our goods. For I was ashamed to ask the king for a band of soldiers and horsemen to protect us against the enemy on our way, since we had told the king, “The hand of our God is for good on all who seek Him, and the power of His wrath is against all who forsake Him.” So we Fasted and implored our God for this, and He listened to our entreaty. (Ezra 8:21-23)</p> <p>For forty days, being tempted by the devil; and he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry. (Luke 4:2)</p> <p>So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights. He neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote on the Tablets the Words of the Covenant, the Ten Commandments. (Exodus 34:28)</p> <p>Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with Fasting and sackcloth and</p>	<p>O you who have believe, decreed upon you is Fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous. (Qur'an 2:183)</p> <p>(Fasting for) a limited number of days. So whoever among you is ill or on a journey (during those days) - then an equal number of days (are to be made up). And upon those who are able (to Fast, but with hardship) – is a ransom (as substitute) of feeding a poor person (each day). And whoever volunteers excess - it is better for him. But to Fast is best for you, if you only knew. (Qur'an 2:184)</p> <p>The Month of Ramadan (is that) in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for the people and a clear proof of guidance and a criterion. So whoever sights (the new moon of) the Month, let him Fast it; and whoever is ill or on a journey - then an equal number of other days. Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship and (wants) for you to complete the period (of Fasting) and to glorify Allah for that to which He has guided you; and perhaps you will be grateful. (Qur'an 2:185)</p> <p>... And eat and drink until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct to you from the black thread (of night). Then complete the Fast until the sunset... Thus does Allah make clear His ordinances to</p>

<p>ashes. (Daniel 9:3)</p> <p>And when you Fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their Fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you Fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your Fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. (Matthew 6:16-18)</p> <p>But I, when they were sick - I wore sackcloth; I afflicted myself with Fasting; I prayed with head bowed on my chest. (Psalm 35:13)</p> <p>As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued Fasting and praying before the God of Heaven. (Nehemiah 1:4)</p>	<p>the people that they may become righteous. (Qur'an 2:187)</p> <p>Indeed We have revealed it (Qur'an) in the Night of Power (in the Month of Ramadan). And what will explain to you what the Night of Power is? The Night of Power is better than a thousand months. Therein descends the Angels and the Spirit (Angel Jibreel) by Allah's permission, on every errand: (they say) "Peace" (continuously) till the rise of Morning!" (Qur'an 97:1-5)</p> <p>We sent it (Qur'an) down on a blessed Night (in the Month of Ramadan). Verily, We are ever warning (mankind of Our Torment). Therein (that Night) is decreed every matter of ordainment. A Command (on every matter) from Us. Verily, We are ever sending (the Messenger). (As) a Mercy from your Lord; surely He is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower." (44: 3-6)</p>
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## MORAL/ETHICAL BEHAVIOURS

Moral/Ethical behaviours are the behaviours that differentiate between intentions, decisions and actions that are proper and those that are improper. In Christianity and Islam, moral/ethical behaviours are a body of standards or principles derived from religious codes of conduct that are synonymous with "goodness" or "rightness". Islam and Christianity place a lot of premium on moral/ethical behaviours the flouting of which render a follower as an outcast and in some instances attract punishment or even banishment. Such moral/ethical behaviours include respect for parents, decent dressing, control of actions and speeches, treating others as one would like others to treat him/her, etc.

<p><b>RESPECT FOR PARENTS</b></p> <p>Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honour your father and mother, this is the first commandment with a promise; that it may be well with you and that you may live long in the land. Fathers, do not provoke your</p>	<p><b>RESPECT FOR PARENTS</b></p> <p>And We have enjoined on man doing of good to his parents; with hardship did his mother bear him and with hardship did she bring him forth; and the bearing of him and the weaning of him was thirty months; until when he attains his maturity</p>
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<p>children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:1-24)</p> <p>Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. (Colossians 3:20)</p> <p>Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not your mother's teaching, (Proverbs 1:8)</p> <p>The eye that mocks a father and scorns to obey a mother will be picked out by the ravens of the valley and eaten by the vultures. (Proverbs 30:17)</p> <p>Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. (Proverbs 22:6)</p> <p>If one curses his father or his mother, his lamp will be put out in utter darkness. (Proverbs 20:20)</p> <p>Listen to your father who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old. (Proverbs 23:22)</p> <p>Cursed be anyone who dishonours his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, "Amen". (Deuteronomy 27:16)</p> <p><b>DECENT DRESSING</b></p> <p>Likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire. (1Timothy 2:9)</p> <p>A woman shall not wear a man's garment, nor shall a man put on a woman's cloak, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD your God. (Deuteronomy 22:5)</p> <p>But every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonours her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven,</p>	<p>and reaches forty years, he says: "My Lord! grant me that I may give thanks for Thy favour which Thou hast bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I may do good which pleases Thee and do good to me in respect of my offspring; surely I turn to Thee, and surely I am of those who submit (to Islam)". (Qur'an 46:15)</p> <p>And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honour. (Quran 17:23)</p> <p>And lower unto them (parents) the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say: "My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was small". (Quran 17:24)</p> <p>But if they (parents) strive with you to make you join in worship with Me others that of which you have no knowledge, then obey them not, but behave with them in the World kindly, and follow the path of him who turns to Me in repentance and in obedience... (Quran 31:15)</p> <p><b>DECENT DRESSING</b></p> <p>Tell the believing men to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts, etc.). That is purer for them. Verily, Allah is All-Aware of what they do. And tell the believing women to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts, etc.) and not to show off their adornment except only that which is apparent (like palms of hands or eyes for necessity to see the way, or outer dress like veil, gloves, head-cover, apron, etc.), and to draw their veils all over them (i.e. over their bodies, faces, necks and bosoms, etc.) and not to reveal their adornment except to their husbands, their</p>
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<p>let her be covered. (1 Corinthians 11:5-6)</p> <p>The LORD said: Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet. Therefore the LORD will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will lay bare their secret parts. In that day the Lord will take away the finery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their headbands, and their round tires like the moon. The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers... And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle - a rent; and instead of well set hair - baldness; and instead of a stomacher - a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty. (Isaiah 3:16-24).</p> <p><b>SHUNNING SLANDER AND MALICE</b></p> <p>So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander... Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. (1Peter 2:1 and 2:17)</p> <p>Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye", when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. (Matthew 7:3-5)</p> <p>Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-21)</p>	<p>fathers, their husband's fathers, their sons, their husband's sons, their brothers or their brother's sons, or their sister's sons, or their women (i.e. their sisters in Islam), or the (female) slaves whom their right hands possess, or old male servants who lack vigour, or small children who have no sense of the shame of sex. And let them not stamp their feet so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment. And all of you (should) beg Allah to forgive you all, O believers, that you may be successful. (Qur'an 24:30-31)</p> <p>And stay in your houses, and do not go out displaying yourselves in dazzling adornments like that of the times of ignorance, and perform Prayers, and give Zakat (alms) and obey Allah and His Messenger... (Qur'an 33:33)</p> <p><b>SHUNNING SLANDER AND MALICE</b></p> <p>Woe (Hell-fire) to every taunting slanderer, scandal-monger and backbiter. (Qur'an 104:1)</p> <p>O You who believe! Let not a group scoff at another group, it may be that the latter are better than the former; nor let (some) women scoff at other women, it may be that the latter are better than the former, nor defame one another, nor insult one another by nicknames. How bad is it, to insult one's brother after having Faith...O You who believe! Avoid much suspicion, indeed some suspicions are sins. And spy not, neither backbite one another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would hate it (so hate backbiting). And fear Allah. Verily, Allah is the One who accepts repentance, Most Merciful. (Qur'an 49:11-12). The Prophet (SAW) said, "The disease of envy and hatred for one another, is trying to afflict you. I am not saying that the disease shall shave off your hairs, no, but I am saying that it will shave off your religion". (Tirmidhi).</p>
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## ABSTAINING FROM PROHIBITED FOODS AND DRINKS

Christians and Muslims have been banned by the two great Religions from eating and/or drinking certain foods and drinks. Interestingly, all the foods and drinks that have been religiously banned over two thousand and over one thousand four hundred years ago respectively by Christianity and Islam, have now been medically certified to be very harmful to human health. In addition, some, like alcohol and drugs, have not only been certified as harmful to health but have been established as the primers of conflicts and criminality. Intoxication, whether via alcohol, harmful drugs, harmful smokes or with whatever substance, is strongly prohibited in Islam and Christianity as those who die by them are considered as dwellers of Hell.

PROHIBITED FOODS	PROHIBITED FOODS
<p>You are a people Holy to the LORD your God... You shall not eat any abominable thing. These are the animals you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the goat, the deer, the gazelle, the roebuck, the wild goat, the ibex, the antelope, and the mountain sheep. (Deuteronomy 14:2-5)</p> <p>However, you may slaughter and eat meat within any of your towns, as much as you desire, according to the blessing of the LORD your God that he has given you. The unclean and the clean may eat of it, as of the gazelle and as of the deer. Only ye shall not eat the blood; ye shall pour it upon the earth as water. (Deuteronomy 12:15-16)</p> <p>And the swine... It is unclean to you. Of their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch; they are unclean to you. (Leviticus 11:7-8)</p> <p>You shall not eat anything that has died naturally. You may give it to the sojourner who is within your towns, that he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner. For you</p>	<p>Made lawful to you this day are good lawful foods, which Allah has made lawful (meat of slaughtered eatable animals, etc., milk products, vegetables and fruits, etc.). The food (slaughtered cattle, eatable animals, etc.) of the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) is lawful to you (Muslims) and yours is lawful to them... And whosoever disbelieves in the Oneness of Allah and in all the other Articles of Faith (i.e. Allah's) Angels, His Holy Books, His Messengers, the Day of Resurrection and Divine Preordainments; then fruitless is his work, and in the Hereafter he will be among the losers. (Qur'an 5:5)</p> <p>Forbidden to You (for food) are: the dead meat (of dead animals and birds that have not been slaughtered), blood, the flesh of swine, and the meat of that which has been slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allah, or has been slaughtered for idols, etc., or on which Allah's Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering, and that which has been killed by</p>

are a people Holy to the LORD your God. (Deuteronomy 14:21)

That you abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if you keep yourselves, you shall do well. Fare ye well. (Acts 15:29)

But I have a few things against you, because you have there those that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols... (Revelation 2:14)

### **PROHIBITED DRINKS**

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18)

Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise. (Proverbs 20:1)

Envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:21)

Woe to those who rise early in the morning to run after their drinks, who stay up late at night till they are inflamed with wine. They have harps and lyres at their banquets, tambourines and flutes and wine, but they have no regard for the deeds of the LORD and no respect for the work of his hands. (Isaiah 5:11)

Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-21)

Do not look at wine when it is red, when it

strangling, or by a violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by the goring of horns - and that which has been (partly) eaten by a wild animal - unless you are able to slaughter it (before its death) - and that which is sacrificed (slaughtered) on stone altars. (Qur'an 5:3)

...But if someone is forced (to eat prohibited meat) by necessity without wilful disobedience nor transgressing due limits (like being hungry to the point of death and not finding any food), then there is no sin on him. Truly, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. Qur'an 2:173)

### **PROHIBITED DRINKS**

O you who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows, are an abomination of Satan's handiwork; eschew such (abomination), that you may prosper. Satan wants only to excite enmity and hatred between you with intoxicants and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of God and from the prayer. So, will you not then abstain? (Qur'an 5:90-91)

The Prophet (SAW) said, "Alcohol is the mother of all evils and it is the most shameful of evils. (Ibn Majah)

The Prophet said,, "Every intoxicant is *haram* (forbidden)." (Muslim)

The Prophet (SAW) said, "If a large amount of anything causes intoxication, a small amount of it is prohibited." (Abu Dawud)

The Prophet (SAW) said, "God's curse falls on ten groups of people who deal with alcohol. The one who distils it, the one for whom it has been distilled, the one who drinks it, the one who transports it, the one to who it has been brought, the

<p>sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly. In the end it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder. (Proverbs 23:31-32)</p> <p>But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. (Luke 21:34)</p> <p>Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)</p> <p>But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. (Luke 21:34)</p> <p>For you have spent enough time in the past doing what the pagans choose to do – living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. (1 Peter 4:3)</p> <p>It is not for kings, Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, not for rulers to crave beer; lest they drink and forget what has been decreed, and deprive all oppressed of their rights. (Proverbs 31:4-5)</p>	<p>one whom serves it, the one who sells it, the one who utilizes money from it, the one who buys it and the one who buys it for someone else.” (Ibn Majah)</p> <p>The Prophet (SAW) said, "There are three who will not enter Paradise: one who is addicted to wine, one who breaks ties of relationship, and one who believes in magic." (Ahmad)</p> <p>The Prophet (SAW) said, "He who commits adultery, fornication, or drinks wine, Allah removes that person's Faith from him in the same way as one takes off one's clothing." (Al Hakim)</p> <p>The Prophet (SAW) said, "He who dies and has not abstained from intoxicants, Allah will make him drink from the river of <i>Al-Ghota</i> (a river flowing from the sex organs of the prostitutes) in Hell." (Ahmad)</p> <p>Abu Hurairah narrates that the Prophet said, "The drinker of wine is like the worshipper of idols." (Ibn Majah)</p> <p>Abdullah ibn 'Umar (RLA) said the Prophet (SAW) said, "Do not sit together with drinkers of wine, nor visit them when they are sick. Do not even attend their funerals. The drinkers of wine shall come on the Last Day with black faces, their tongues leaning on one side and saliva coming out of their mouths. Anyone who sees their filthy appearance will know that they were the drinkers of wine."</p> <p>Umm Salamah (RLA) said, the Prophet (SAW) said, "Allah did not make the cure of the illness of Muslims from what is <i>Haram</i> (unlawful)".</p>
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## LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Christianity and Islam place great premiums in quality leadership. The two Religions teach the importance of good leadership and its

benefits; and also teach the misfortunes of having bad leadership. In addition, Islam and Christianity teach their adherents the qualities of good leaders and what is expected from both leaders and followers in any community or nation that wishes to live in peace and prosperity.

Islam and Christianity admonish leaders that they must be just and fair as they shall account to Allah-God on all their actions and inactions while in leadership positions. The Holy Bible states that *“For they (leaders) keep watch over you as they who must give an account (to God)”* (Hebrews 13:17). Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, *“A leader is a steward in respect of those who are placed under him...and is accountable (to Allah) for those people and things placed under his care”* (Bukhari and Muslim).

Equally, followers are admonished by the two Religions to respect and obey their leaders and support their good works.

<p><b>LEADERSHIP IS GOD’S AUTHORITY</b></p> <p>For there is no Authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the Authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not terrors to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. (Romans 13:2-5)</p> <p><b>JUSTICE, FAIRNESS AND ACCOUNT BEFORE GOD IN LEADERSHIP</b></p> <p>When justice is done, it is a joy to the righteous but terror to evildoers. (Proverbs 21:15)</p>	<p><b>LEADERSHIP IS ALLAH’S AUTHORITY</b></p> <p>Say: O Allah! Possessor of the Kingdom (Authority)! You give the Kingdom to whom You please, and You take the Kingdom away from whom You please. And You exalt whom You please and downcast whom You please. In Your hand is the good; surely, You have power over all things. You make the night to pass into the day and You make the day to pass into the night; and You bring forth the living from the dead and You bring forth the dead from the living. And You give sustenance to whom You please which cannot be counted... Whether you hide what is in your hearts or manifest it, Allah knows it, and He knows whatever is in the Heavens and whatever is in the Earth, and Allah has power over all things. (Qur’an 3:26-29)</p> <p><b>JUSTICE, FAIRNESS AND ACCOUNT BEFORE ALLAH IN LEADERSHIP</b></p> <p>Surely Allah enjoins the doing of justice and the doing of good (to others) and the giving to the kindred, and He forbids</p>
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<p>So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin. (James 4:17)</p> <p>Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven. (Colossians 4:1)</p> <p>Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that He who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him. (Ephesians 6:9)</p> <p>You shall not pervert the justice due to your poor in his lawsuit. (Exodus 23:6)</p> <p>For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. (Matthew 7:2)</p> <p>This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you... For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, Holy, and disciplined. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it. (Titus 1:5-9)</p> <p>The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach... sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. (1Timothy 3:1-3)</p> <p>Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, and princes will rule in justice. Each will be like a hiding place from the wind, a shelter from the storm, like streams of water in a dry place, like the shade of a</p>	<p>indecent and evil and rebellion; He admonishes you that you may be mindful. (Qur'an 16:90)</p> <p>O you who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah as just witnesses; and let not the enmity and hatred of others make you avoid justice. Be just: that is nearer to piety; and fear Allah. Verily, Allah is Well-Acquainted with what you do. (Qur'an 5:8).</p> <p>...That you show them kindness and deal with them justly; surely Allah loves the doers of justice. (Qur'an 60:8)</p> <p>...And if you judge, judge between them with equity; surely Allah loves those who judge equitably. (Qur'an 5:42)</p> <p>And We made them leaders, guiding by Our command; and We inspired them to do good works, and to observe the prayer, and to give out charity. They were devoted servants to Us (Quran, 21:73)</p> <p>Surely Allah commands you to make over trusts to their owners and that when you judge between people you judge with justice; surely Allah admonishes you with what is excellent; surely Allah is Seeing, Hearing. (Qur'an 4:58)</p> <p>O you who believe! be maintainers of justice, bearers of witness of Allah's sake, though it may be against your own selves or (your) parents or near relatives; if he be rich or poor, Allah is nearer to them both in compassion; therefore do not follow (your) low desires, lest you deviate; and if you swerve or turn aside, then surely Allah is aware of what you do. (Qur'an 4:135)</p> <p>Say: My Lord has enjoined justice, and set upright your faces at every time of prayer and call on Him, being sincere to Him in obedience; as He brought you forth in the beginning, so shall you also return (to Him). (Qur'an 7:29)</p> <p>And the word of your Lord has been</p>
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<p>great rock in a weary land. Then the eyes of those who see will not be closed, and the ears of those who hear will give attention. The heart of the hasty will understand and know, and the tongue of the stammerers will hasten to speak distinctly. The fool will no more be called noble, nor the scoundrel said to be honourable. (Isaiah 32:1-5)</p> <p>The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel: To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight, to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity. (Proverbs 1:1-3)</p> <p>So David reigned over all Israel. And David administered justice and equity to all his people. (2 Samuel 8:15)</p> <p>So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. (1 Peter 5:1-4)</p> <p>If you follow My decrees and are careful to obey My commands, I will send you rains in its season, and the ground will yield its crops and the trees of the field their fruit. Your threshing will continue until grape harvest and the grape harvest will continue until planting, and you will eat all the food you want and live in safety in your land. I will grant peace in the land, and you will lie down and no one will make you afraid. (Leviticus 26:3-6)</p> <p>If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land. (Isaiah 1:19)</p>	<p>accomplished truly and justly; there is none who can change His words, and He is the Hearing, the Knowing. (Qur'an 6:115)</p> <p>And, O my people! give full measure and weight fairly, and defraud not men of their things, and do not act corruptly in the land, making mischief: (Qur'an 11:85)</p> <p>...And say: I believe in what Allah has revealed of the Book, and I am commanded to do justice between you: Allah is our Lord and your Lord; we shall have our deeds and you shall have your deeds; no plea need there be (now) between us and you: Allah will gather us together, and to Him is the return. (Qur'an 42:15)</p> <p>O you who are divinely committed! Why do you say that which you do not practise yourself? The worst of you in the sight of Allah is he who says that which he does not practise (Al-Qur'an 61:02-3).</p> <p>The Prophet (SAW) said, "Any man who Allah has given the authority of ruling some people and he does not look after them in an honest and just manner, will never feel even the smell of Paradise". (Muslim)</p> <p>The Prophet (SAW) said, "The just shall be on the brightly-lighted first-rows in front of Allah (on the Day of Judgment). Those are the ones who were just in their dealings with their families and in running that which was entrusted to them as leaders. (Muslim).</p> <p>And whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, and is a believer. We shall surely give him a goodly life in this World, and We shall reward such according to the best of their deeds. (Qur'an 16:97)</p> <p>Then how will it be when We shall gather them together on a day about which there is no doubt, and every soul shall be fully paid what it has earned, and they shall not</p>
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<p><b>OBEDIENCE TO LEADERSHIP</b></p> <p>Let every person be subject to the Governing Authorities. For there is no Authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the Authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. (Romans 13:1-2)</p> <p>Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the Emperor as supreme, or to Governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honour everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the Emperor. (1Peter 2:13-17)</p> <p>Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you. But I want you to understand that the Head of every man is Christ, the Head of a wife is her husband, and the Head of Christ is God. (1Corinthians 11:1-3)</p> <p>Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the Prophets. (Hebrews 1:1)</p> <p>Yet he sent prophets among them to bring them back to the LORD. These testified against them, but they would not pay attention. (2Chronicles 24:19)</p> <p>Why do you call me "Lord, Lord," and do not do what I tell you? (Luke 6:46)</p> <p>Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the Word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their Faith. (Hebrews 13:7)</p>	<p>be dealt with unjustly? (Qur'an 3:25)</p> <p><b>OBEDIENCE TO LEADERSHIP</b></p> <p>O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger (Prophet) and obey those in Authority among you. And if you dispute over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is best, and a most excellent determination. (Qur'an 4:59)</p> <p>(Remember) the day when We (Allah) will call every people with their Imam (Leader); then whoever is given his Book in his right hand, these shall read their Book (happily)... (Qur'an 17:71)</p> <p>So be patient for the decision of your Lord, and do not obey the sinner or the blasphemer. (Qur'an 76:2)</p> <p>The Prophet (SAW) said, "It is obligatory upon a Muslim to listen (to the Ruler) and obey him whether he likes it or not, except when he is ordered to do a sinful thing; in such case, there is no obligation to listen or to obey." (Bukhari and Muslim)</p> <p>The Prophet (SAW) said, "...Whosoever wishes to be removed from the Hell Fire and be admitted to Paradise should die with Faith in Allah and the Last Day; and he should treat others as he wishes to be treated. He who swears allegiance to a Leader, he should give him the pledge in ratification and the sincerity of his heart. He should obey him to the best of his capacity". (Muslim).</p> <p>When some news of security or alarm comes their (people's) way, they broadcast it. But had they referred it to the Messenger or to those in Authority among them, those who can draw conclusions from it would have comprehended it. Were it not for Allah's blessing and mercy upon you, you (people) would have followed the Devil, except for a few. (Qur'an 4:83)</p> <p>Their Prophet said to them, "Allah has appointed Talut (Saul) to be your king."</p>
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<p>Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. (1Peter 5:5)</p> <p>Obeys your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. (Hebrews 13:17)</p> <p>Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. (John 13:16)</p> <p>But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the Rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many". (Mathew 20:25-28)</p> <p>And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. (1Peter 5:4-6)</p> <p>Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work. (Titus 3:1)</p> <p>Whoever has my Commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him. (John 14:21)</p>	<p>They said, "How can he have authority over us, when we are more worthy of authority than he, and he was not given plenty of wealth?" He (their Prophet) said, "Allah has chosen him over you, and has increased him in knowledge and stature." Allah bestows His sovereignty upon whomever He wills. Allah is Embracing and Knowing. (Qur'an 2:247)</p> <p>O you who believe! Obey Allah and His Messenger and do not turn back from him while you hear. And be not like those who said, "we hear", and they did not obey. (Qur'an 8:20-21)</p> <p>It is not for a believer, man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter that they should have any opinion in their decision. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he has indeed strayed in plain error. (Qur'an 33:36)</p> <p>Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allah (Prophet Muhammad) an excellent exemplar (an example to follow) for him who (has good) hopes in Allah and the latter day and remembers Allah much. (Qur'an 33:21)</p> <p>Thus it is due to the mercy from Allah that you (Prophet) deal with them (people) gently, and had you been rough, hard hearted, they would certainly have dispersed from around you. Pardon them therefore and ask pardon for them (from Allah), and consult with them in the conduct of affairs; so when you have decided, then place your trust in Allah. Surely Allah loves those who trust in Him. (Qur'an 3:159)</p> <p>Say (Prophet Muhammad) to mankind, "If you really love Allah, then follow (and obey) me. Allah will love you and forgive you your sins, and Allah is the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful. (Qur'an 3:31)</p>
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## WORK, BUSINESS AND MUTUAL DEALINGS

Christianity and Islam decreed that work, business and mutual dealings must be done by adherents in honest, just and fair ways. Idleness is not permitted in the two Religions. Allah-God does not change the bad condition of an individual, a community or a Nation for a good condition; unless the person, the inhabitants of the community or the Nation change their bad habits and embrace good work diligently. The Glorious Qur'an 13:11 states, *"Verily, Allah will not change the condition of a people as long as they do not change their state themselves"*. The Holy Bible - James 2:17) states that, *"Even so, Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by works, is dead"*. In a similar vein, Islam and Christianity do not permit laziness and begging. *"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, "And it is more blessed to give than to receive"*. (Acts 20:35). Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, *"The upper hand is better than the lower hand, the upper hand being the one that gives and the lower hand being the one that receives"*. (Muslim)

Most interesting is the fact that Islam and Christianity provide for very similar Laws, rules and regulations on work, business transactions and mutual dealings; be they at individual, community, National or International levels. The key points in these provisions are, justice, fairness, honouring trusts and agreements, mutual understanding, mutual respect and peaceful coexistence.

### WORK, BUSINESS AND MUTUAL DEALINGS

You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth; that He may confirm his covenant that He swore to your fathers, as it is this day. (Deuteronomy 8:18)

If you make a sale, moreover, to your friend or buy from your friend's hand, you shall not wrong one another...

### WORK, BUSINESS AND MUTUAL DEALINGS

O you who believe! Do not devour your property among yourselves falsely in vanities, but let there be among you traffic and trade business by mutual good-will: nor kill (or destroy) yourselves: for verily Allah has been to you the Most Merciful!30. And whoever does this aggressively and unjustly, We will soon cast him into fire; and this is easy for Allah. (Qur'an 4:29)

<p>(Leviticus 25:14-17)</p> <p>The traders of Sheba and Ramah, they traded with you; they paid for your wares with the best of all kinds of spices, and with all kinds of precious stones and gold. (Ezekiel 27:22)</p> <p>Even so, Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by works, is dead. Yes, a man may say: you have Faith, and I have works: show me your Faith without your works, and I will show you my Faith by my works. (James 2:17-18)</p> <p>And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Colossians 3:17)</p> <p>For the LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He knows your going through this great wilderness. (Deuteronomy 2:7)</p> <p>You shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in meter-yard, in weight, or in measure. You shall have just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin; I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from the land of Egypt. You shall thus observe all My statutes and all My ordinances and do them; I am the LORD. (Leviticus 19:36-37)</p> <p>A merchant, in whose hands are false balances, He loves to oppress. (Hosea 12:7)</p> <p>Behold, then, I smite My hand at your dishonest gain which you have acquired and at the bloodshed which is among you. (Ezekiel 22:13)</p> <p>If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shall not be to him as a usurer (interest taker), neither shall you lay upon him usury (interest)” (Exodus 22:25)</p> <p>Take thou no usury (interest) of him, or increase: but fear thy God. (Leviticus</p>	<p>Surely Allah commands you to return what you hold in trust to their owners and that when you judge between people you judge with justice; surely Allah admonishes you with what is excellent; surely Allah is Seeing, Hearing. (Qur'an 4:58)</p> <p>O you who believe! Be not unfaithful to Allah and the Messenger, and be not unfaithful to your trusts while you know. (Qur'an 8:27)</p> <p>(Believers are) those who honour their trusts and their contracts. (Qur'an 23:8)</p> <p>O you who believe! When the call is made for prayer on Friday, then hasten to the remembrance of Allah and leave off trading; that is better for you, if you know. But when the prayer is ended, then disperse abroad in the land and seek of Allah's grace, and remember Allah much, that you may be successful. And when they (unbelievers) see merchandise or sport they break up for it, and leave you (Muslims) standing. Say: What is with Allah is better than sport and (better) than merchandise, and Allah is the best of Sustainers. (Qur'an 62:9-11)</p> <p>That no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another. And that man shall have nothing but what he works for. And that his work shall soon be seen. Then shall he be rewarded for it with the fullest reward. (Qur'an 53:38-41)</p> <p>The Prophet (SAW) said, “Begging is not lawful except for one of three cases: a man who is in heavy debt, so begging is permissible for him until he pays it, after which he must stop; a man whose property is destroyed by a calamity, so begging is permissible for him until he can support himself; and a man who is afflicted by poverty attested to by three astute members of his people, so begging is permissible for him until he can support himself. Besides these three begging is forbidden and the beggar consumes what</p>
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<p>25:36)</p> <p>The Lord was asked, “Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy Holy Hill? He answered, “He that does not put out his money to usury (interest)”. (Psalm 15:1-5)</p> <p>Thou shall not lend upon usury (interest) to thy brother. (Deuteronomy 23:19)</p> <p>A Psalm of David. O LORD, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your Holy hill? He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in his heart; who does not slander with his tongue and does no evil to his neighbour, nor takes up a reproach against his friend; in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but who honours those who fear the LORD; who swears to his own hurt and does not change; who does not put out his money at interest and does not take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved. (Psalm 15:1-5)</p> <p>Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain. (1 Corinthians 15:58)</p> <p>In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive. (Acts 20:35)</p> <p>Behold! The wages of the labourers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. (James 5:4)</p> <p>Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labour, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. (Ephesians 4:28)</p> <p>Calling ten of his servants, he gave them</p>	<p>is forbidden. (Muslim)</p> <p>The Prophet (SAW) said, “By Him in whose hands is my soul (Allah), it is more desirable for one of you to take a rope and go to the forest to collect fire-wood and sell it, in order for Allah to guard his honour than for one to ask other people to assist him (with money or other things). (Bukhari and Muslim)</p> <p>Surely those who recite the Book of Allah (Qur’an), establish regular Prayer, and spend (in charity) out of what We have provided for them, secretly and openly, hope for a commerce that will never fail. (Qur’an 35:29)</p> <p>Do not usurp one another’s property by unjust means, nor offer it to the judges (as bribe) so that you may devour knowingly and unjustly a portion of the goods of others. (Qur’an 2:188)</p> <p>Give full measure when ye measure, and weigh with a balance that is straight; that is the most fitting and the most advantageous in the final determination. (Qur’an 17:35)</p> <p>Woe to those that deal in fraud, those who, when they have to receive by measure from men, exact full measure, but when they have to give by measure or weight to men, give less than due. Do they not think that they will be called to account on a Mighty Day? A Day when (all) mankind will stand before the Lord of the Universe? (Qur’an 83:1-6)</p> <p>And the firmament has He (Allah) raised high, and He has set up the Balance (of Justice), in order that ye may not transgress (due) balance. So establish weight with justice and fall not short in the balance. (Qur’an 55:7-9)</p> <p>But those who devour usury (interest) become like the one whom Satan has bewitched and maddened by his touch. They have been condemned to this condition because they say, “Trade is just like usury, whereas Allah has made trade legal</p>
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<p>ten minas, and said to them, "Engage in business until I come". (Luke 19:13)</p> <p>The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, while the soul of the diligent is richly supplied. (Proverbs 13:4)</p> <p>For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12)</p> <p>In all toil there is profit, but mere talk tends only to poverty. (Proverbs 14:23)</p> <p>And to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one. (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12)</p> <p>Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us. (Titus 2:7-8)</p> <p>You shall give to him freely, and your heart shall not be grudging when you give to him, because for this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. (Deuteronomy 15:10)</p> <p>They that go down to the sea in ships, doing business on the great waters; they saw the deeds of the LORD, his wondrous works in the deep. For he commanded and raised the stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea. They mounted up to heaven; they went down to the depths; their courage melted away because of trouble; they reeled and</p>	<p>and usury illegal. Henceforth, if one abstains from taking usury after receiving this admonition from his Lord, no legal action shall be taken against him regarding the usury he had devoured before: his case shall ultimately go to Allah. But if one repeats the same crime even after this, he shall go to Hell, where he shall abide forever! Allah deprives usury of all blessing and develops charity, and Allah does not like an ungrateful, sinful person. (Qur'an 2:274-6)</p> <p>O you who believe! do not devour usury, making it double and redouble, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah, that you may be successful. (Qur'an 3:130)</p> <p>...O my people! Worship Allah, you have no god other than Him; clear proof indeed has come to you from your Lord, therefore give full measure and weight and do not diminish to men their things, and do not make mischief in the land after its reform; this is better for you if you are believers. (Qur'an 7:85)</p> <p>(The Servants of Allah are) those who, when they spend, are not extravagant and not stingy, but hold a just balance between those extremes" (Qur'an 25:67).</p> <p>And they (Muslims) have been commanded no more than this: to worship Allah, offering Him sincere devotion, being true in Faith. To establish regular prayer and to give <i>Zakat</i> (money and property charity). And that is the religion right and straight (Qur'an 98:5).</p> <p>Your riches and your children may be but a trial. Whereas Allah, with Him, is the highest reward. So fear Allah as much as you can, listen and obey, and spend in charity for the benefit of your own souls. And those saved from the selfishness of their own souls, they are the ones that achieve prosperity. (Qur'an 64:15-16).</p> <p>The Prophet (SAW) said, "The merchants</p>
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<p>staggered like drunken men and were at their wits' end. Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he brings them out of their distresses. He makes the storm to calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then they are glad because they be quiet; so he brings them unto their desired haven. Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! (Psalm 107:23-31)</p>	<p>will be raised on the Day of Resurrection as evildoers, apart from those who fear Allah and are sincere and honest". (Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah)</p> <p>The Prophet (SAW) said, "May Allah have mercy upon a man who is easy-going when he sells and when he buys and when he asks for payment". (Bukhari)</p>
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## **THE CONSTITUTION OF MEDINA AND THE COVENANT OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (SAW) WITH THE MONKS OF SINAI**

My dear Nigerian Brothers and Sisters, The most classical documents that show love, mutual respect, peaceful co-existence and the firm guarantee for safety and religious freedom given to Christians, Jews and indeed to all non-Muslims by Islam, are (1) **"The Constitution of Medina"** and (2) **"The Achtname of Muhammad"** that is popularly called the **"Covenant of Prophet Muhammad to the Monks of Sinai"**.

The first Covenant in Islamic history was the Constitution of Medina that granted peace, security and freedom of Religion to the Jewish, Christian and Muslim communities of Medina. The Constitution was drawn-up immediately after the Hijrah (migration) from Mecca to Medina in the first year of the Hijrah (1 Hijrah - 622 AD).

The second Covenant was that granted to the Monks of St. Catherine Monastery located at Mount Sinai (in present day Egypt). The Covenant was made to be applicable to all Jews and Christians universally and it was granted in the Muslim Month of Muharram 2 Hijrah (July 624 AD).

The Covenant granted to the Monks of St. Catherine Monastery is reproduced as an **APPENDIX** at the end of this Open Letter and as translated by John Davenport (1789-1877) in his book *"An Apology for Mohammed and the Koran"*, published by Dryden

Press, London in 1869 and a copy made available to many websites by the Princeton Theological Seminary Library. An electronic copy of this Book is available for free download on Google Book Platform and on several other Platforms.

A copy of another Covenant that was granted by Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to the Assyrian Christians is available as translated and cited in a book by John Malech (1821-1861) that was published after his death by his family in 1910. A book by Professor John Andrew Morrow titled, **The Covenants Of The Prophet Muhammad With The Christians Of The World**, published by Angelico Press/Sophia Perennis, USA in 2013, also carries this Covenant. In addition, this Covenant is available on many Websites and Platforms.

### **THE COVENANTS OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (SAW) WITH THE CHRISTIANS OF THE WORLD**

My dear Nigerian Brothers and Sisters, The Constitution of Medina and the Covenant with the Monks of Sinai gave rise to a series of several other Covenants and related correspondences that had universal application. In October 2013 a book by Professor John Andrew Morrow (Ilyas Abd al-Alim Islam) appeared titled, **The Covenants Of The Prophet Muhammad With The Christians Of The World**, published by Angelico Press/Sophia Perennis, USA. Professor Marrow rediscovered the Covenants of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) with various Christian Communities in obscure Monasteries and collections.

All the Covenants rediscovered by the Professor uniformly state that Muslims **should not** attack peaceful Christian Communities, or rob them, or stop Churches from being repaired, or tear down Churches to build Mosques, or prevent their Christian wives from going to Church and taking spiritual direction from Christian priests and elders, etc. In the Covenants, the Prophet (SAW) **commands** Muslims to actively protect these Communities “until the End of the World.” In order to publicise this very important Book, an initiative was started:

**THE COVENANTS INITIATIVE**, which invites Muslims to subscribe to it with a firm Declaration, part of which states that:-

*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the World. We, the undersigned, hold ourselves bound by the spirit and the letter of the Covenants of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) with the Christians of the World... As fellow victims of terror and godlessness, and that of militant secularism and false religiosity that now abound in the World, we understand your suffering as Christians through our suffering as Muslims; and gain greater insight into our own suffering through the contemplation of your suffering. May the Most Merciful of the Merciful regard the sufferings of the righteous and the innocent; may He strengthen us, in full submission to His will, to follow the spirit and the letter of the Covenants of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) with the Christians of the World in all our dealings.*

In reviewing the Book, Barbara Castleton (writer, author, English as a second language instructor, editor, traveller, etc) gave an incisive analysis of the Book's very important contents in a December 23, 2017 article posted in The Covenants Initiative website. Barbara Castleton states that,

Even with so much information bombarding every one of us all day every day, it is still a rare moment when we can legitimately stop and say, "Wow! I didn't know that!" Such was my reaction when a co-author and friend, Prof. John Andrew Morrow asked me to review his Book ***"The Covenants of the Prophet Muhammad with the Christians of the World"*** pre-publication. A rigorously researched book, *The Covenants* ... details documents composed by the Prophet Muhammad in the early days of his Caliphate which granted unheard of rights to non-Muslims, including Christians and Jews.

Wait! Aren't we told almost daily that Muslims despise these two groups? Certainly, some may think so, either out of true belief or politically driven agendas, but just as our plantation-owning



southern forefathers thought slavery was a condition approved by God and promoted in the Bible, the modern reigning view of Islam has a not a few fallacious quirks as well.

As much as Muhammad was the Prophet of God and the receiver of divine instruction, he was also the soul and architect of the Islamic State, or *Ummah*, a body of influence, culture, religious strength, and expansion that had more to do with acculturation than subjugation. His connections with the ultimate wisdom enabled him to see both the societies of the Middle East and beyond with clarity and pragmatism, but also to construct a vision of what steps would produce a society in which all were safe and received in brotherhood. Says Prof. Morrow, *“A visionary long-term planner, the Prophet understood that the spread of Islam could take centuries. What he sought to create were the conditions under which the seeds of Islam could be planted and watered, thus enabling Muslim seeds to sprout, grow, and spread. If a population preferred to remain heathen, Christian or Jewish, they were entitled to do so as long as they entered into a Covenant with the Islamic State as protected people.”*

The Book began with the Constitution of Medina, one of the first governmental texts of its kind in World history. Muhammad and around 75 disciples and family members were invited to Medina to be a catalyst for peace and civility within a complicated population. Composed within months of his arrival in Yathrib (Medina), in 622 CE, the Constitution of Medina detailed an administrative and governmental structure and specific rights and benefits of all citizens. Al-Waqidi, a historian writing 200 years after, explains that,

*When the Messenger of God arrived in Medina, the Jews, all of them, were reconciled with him, and he wrote an agreement between him and them. The Prophet attached every tribe with its confederates and established a protection between himself and them. He stipulated conditions to them, among which it was stipulated that they would not help any enemy against him.*

In addition to this, the Constitution of Medina drew up Laws that took the *Ummah*, the Islamic Nation State, from a mere theocracy, or even a strictly political entity, into a social construction that had never before been attempted, a hybrid State in which a benign umbrella was spread over all, regardless of whether they were Muslim, Christian, Sabeen, or Jew, all monotheists in the Abrahamic tradition. As Islam spread among the people of Yathrib and the Arabian Peninsula, the Prophet went further, reaching out to multiple communities with an eye to achieving a mutually beneficial relationship. Two of the first recipients were the Christian Community in Najran, in what is now the southern part of Saudi Arabia, and strangely, the Monks who occupied the Monastery of St. Catherine, located far away at the base of Mount Sinai.

Tradition as well as ancient religious writings place Muhammad on the Sinai in his early years, accompanying his uncle on caravans that took them far and wide. It is said that the Abbot of the Monastery spotted an eagle circling young Muhammad's head as the cleric looked down from the Abbey's heights. He prophesied that the young man would become a great leader, and when, in fact, that is what happened, the leadership of the Monastery asked Prophet Muhammad to honor their long-term relationship. The resulting Covenant, signed with Muhammad's palm print, served to protect the Abbey, the Monks, the service workers, and all the physical structures as long as the "*sea wets the shells*."

All the Covenants mentioned in the Book laid out a system of behavior, rights, privileges, and expectations for both parties; the Islamic State and its Muslim adherents, and other members of the community. Prime among these was the ongoing respect and protection of the religious institutions of the non-Muslim citizens. In document after document, the same phrases appear, anchoring these concepts. In the **Covenant with the Monks from the Monastery of Saint Catherine**, written in 2 AH, or 624 CE, the dictated treaty stipulates that,

*No Bishop is to be driven out of his Bishopric. No Monk is to be expelled from his Monastery. No changes will be made with regards to their rights and sovereignty or anything in their possession provided that they remain friendly (towards Islam and Muslims). They will perform the rights incumbent on them. They will not be oppressed nor will they oppress.*

**The Covenant with the Christians of Najran**, written in 3 AH or 625 CE, echoes these ideas as follows:-

*To the Christians of Najran and its neighboring territories, God's protection and the pledge of His Prophet extend to their lives, their Religion, and their property. It applies to those who are present as well as those who are absent. There shall be no interference with the practice of their Faith or their religious observances. There will be no change to their rights and privileges. No Bishop shall be removed from his Bishopric; no Monk from his Monastery, and no Priest from his Parish. They shall all continue to enjoy everything they previously enjoyed great or small. No image or Cross shall be destroyed. They will not oppress or be oppressed.*

Finally, in the, **The Covenant of the Prophet Muhammad with the Christians of the World**, we can read,

*Never should any Christian be subjected to tyranny or oppression in this matter. It is not permitted to remove a Bishop from his Bishopric, a Monk from his Monastic life, or Anchorite from his vocation as a Hermit. Nor is it permitted to destroy any part of their Churches, to take parts of their buildings to construct Mosques or the homes of Muslims. Whoever does such a thing will have violated the pact of Allah, disobeyed his Messenger, and become estranged from the Divine Alliance.*

In treaty after treaty, these core promises were transcribed onto parchments and upheld, with rare exceptions, for centuries as each successive Muslim Caliph honored the Prophet's intentions by rewriting verbatim the original texts as they aged, flaked, cracked, and gradually disintegrated.

Prof. Morrow has authenticated over a dozen covenants, documents written for communities that crisscrossed what was then the Islamic World, and in every one, the terms resonated with acceptance, community, and tolerance. Just a portion of the Covenants researched and verified include:

The Covenant of the Prophet Muhammad with the Monks of Mount Sinai

The Covenant of the Prophet Muhammad with the Christians of Najran

The Covenant of the Prophet Muhammad with the Assyrian Christians

The Covenant of the Prophet Muhammad with the Christians of Persia

The Covenant of the Prophet Muhammad with the Armenian Christians

The Covenant of the Prophet Muhammad with the Jews of Maqna

The Covenant of the Prophet Muhammad with the Yemenite Jews

The Covenant of the Prophet Muhammad with the Zoroastrians

The Covenant of the Prophet Muhammad with the Coptic Christians of Egypt

The Covenant of the Prophet Muhammad with the Syriac Orthodox Christians

The Covenant of the Prophet Muhammad with the Samaritans

## **THE WORLD'S FIRST INTERFAITH UNION**

My dear Nigerian Brothers and Sisters, above discusses the COVENANTS OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (SAW). I intend now to give a brief on an earlier "COVENANT" that accounted for the WORLD'S FIRST INTERFAITH UNION. I visited Negash Town that is located in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia twice to collect data for my now published Book titled, **HIJRAH TO NEGASH: The World's First Inter-Faith Union That Established The World's First Free Muslim Community.**

An Agency of the Ethiopian Government has indicated interest to translate the Book into their local Amharic Language due to its importance to interfaith dialogue; especially between Muslims and Christians.

The first Muslim Hijrah (migration) from Mecca to Negash in today's Ethiopia marked the World's First Inter-Faith Union, between the Founder of Islam, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and the most powerful Christian King in the World at that time, King Negus Armah of Habasha (today's Ethiopia). As a result of that Hijrah, the World's First Free Muslim Community was established not in Arabia, but in Africa. That event deserves some mention in this Open Letter for the benefit of those who are not conversant with it.

As it had been with the advent of every Monotheistic Religion, the declaration of the message of Islam in Mecca by Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was met with stiff resistance by the pagans of Mecca. They saw Islam that preached the Oneness of Allah (SWT) and that decreed for justice and fairness to all irrespective of creed, social or economic status as a challenge to their 365 gods and as an onslaught to their social, economic and political interests. They instituted violence and horrible tortures on the Muslims.

But the fear of violence and torture or even execution by the opponents of Islam did not deter heroic and noble people, the lowly and the highly, males and females, the young and the old, from accepting Islam. As the persecution became intense, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) decided that his followers needed to go on Hijrah (migration) to a safe place until Islam grows stronger, by the will of Allah. He therefore commanded the first batch to go on Hijrah to the Land of Habasha (today's Ethiopia) saying,

*You should go to the Land of Habasha, for therein is a Christian King before whom none is treated unjustly and it is a Land of honesty, until such a time as Allah shall relieve us from the distress we are in.*

**The first Hijrah** took-off with 15 Muslims under the leadership of Usman Bin Affan, who later became the third Caliph in Medina and who went along with his wife, Rukayya, the daughter of the Prophet (SAW). Those first migrants in Islamic history travelled in the Islamic Month of Rajab, the 7<sup>th</sup> year before the commencement of the Muslim calendar that is based on the Hijrah from Mecca to Medina (i.e. they travelled in June/July, 615 AD).

On arrival in Habasha, and having narrated their story, the 15 migrant Muslims were well received by the Christian King Negus Armah (*Ashama ibn Abjar al-Najashy* in Arabic) who was a fair and a just King. His hospitality was shown to the 15 Muslim migrants by giving them land in the Town of Negash where they settled. The migrants sent words home to Mecca on how well they were settled in Negash, thereby forming the first free Muslim Community in the World; not in Arabia, the cradle of Islam, but in a mountainous region of an African Kingdom!

Meanwhile, the persecution of Muslims in Mecca continued with greater vigour. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) once again told his followers, who were now in hundreds, to migrate to Habasha, the now Muslim safe haven.

**The second Hijrah** had 162 migrants, who arrived in Negash and were also well received by King Negus Armah. They joined their brothers and sisters in Negash Town where they built their houses and had their farms. The migrants of the second Hijrah had a letter from Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to the King. When the letter was read and translated to the King by the Palace interpreters, he expressed his happiness that a religion had emerged in Arabia that preaches the Oneness of God just as his religion of Christianity does. He stated that he preferred to interact and deal with those who believe in, and worship one God than with those who believe in, and worship hundreds of gods that they “created” themselves!

My dear Nigerian Brothers and Sisters, the migration of the Muslims to Habasha and their warm reception by Kingdom frightened the pagan Arab Rulers of Mecca. They entertained the

fear that the Muslims might grow in strength or find powerful allies, and then, some day, might return to Mecca to take over from them. They further expressed the fear that the acceptance of the Muslims by the King of Habasha would give credence to the new religion of Islam and legitimise it. To ward-off these potential threats, they finally decided to send emissaries to the King who would persuade him to extradite the Muslims back to Mecca.

The Mecca emissaries arrived at Habasha under the leadership of Amr bin al-As, a friend and trading partner of the King. They gave the King very expensive gifts and told him all sorts of lies against the Muslims who they described as fugitives that were wanted in Mecca. The emissaries forgot that Habasha was the first Kingdom in Africa and the third in the World to proclaim Christianity as its official State Religion in 333 AD; and the King they met was a devout Christians who worship One God and ruled with justice and fairness. As such, the King sent for the Muslim migrants and asked them to narrate their own side in the presence of the Mecca emissaries after asking the emissaries to narrate their demands in front of the migrants. The King and his Clerics were impressed and satisfied with all that the Muslims stated as they tallied with what was in the Holy Bible.

However they were worried by what the pagan Mecca emissaries told them that, the Muslims utter enormous lies about Jesus Christ and that the Muslims call him a slave of God and not the son of God. Therefore, the King, as his final question, asked the Muslims to narrate what they say about Jesus Christ. Ja'afar bin Abu Talib (RLA), the Muslims' spokesman answered that,

*We say of Jesus what our Prophet brought to us from God, that he is the servant of God and His Messenger and His Spirit and His Word which He cast unto Virgin Mary.*

The King kept silent for a while, and then he picked his Royal Stick and drew a thin line on the floor with it and said,

*Jesus Christ exceeded not what you have said by the length of this stick. Your Religion and mine are only as thinly apart as this thin line! Therefore you are safe in my Kingdom of Habasha. Stay as long as you like. We are not handing you over to these pagans.*

The Muslims stayed in Habasha happily after that encounter while the pagan Mecca emissaries returned home disappointed and dejected. Many of the Muslim migrants stayed in Negash even after Islam took over Mecca and the whole of Arabia.

Today, their descendents run the Muslim Compound in Negash where the graves of the migrants, the first Masjid (Mosque) in Africa and other historical relics pertaining to the Hijrah are preserved. Interestingly, the leader of the Muslim migrants, Usman Bin Affan (RLA) and his wife, Rukayya the daughter of the Prophet (SAW) returned to Arabia when the Muslims migrated from Mecca to Medina where he later became the third Caliph after the demise of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Also, the leader of the pagan Mecca emissaries to Habasha, Amr bin al-As (RLA) later converted to Islam and became the first Muslim Ruler of Egypt.

My dear Nigerian Brothers and Sisters, the most significant lesson of the Migration to Negash is not its historical relevance, but in understanding the wisdom in the peaceful natures of both Islam and Christianity. This is devoid of the unfortunate manner in which both Muslims and Christians respond to each other today in the event of conflicts. Muslim and Christian responses today are often characterised by contempt and hatred leading to unnecessary hostilities that result in the loss of valuable lives and properties.

The first and the second Muslim migrations to Negash and the third migration to Medina were all as a result of Muslims' persecutions in Mecca. Those foundation Muslims, led by Prophet Muhammad (SAW) himself, did not resort to violence, no, they peacefully migrated to other Lands because of the peaceful attributes of the Islamic Faith. Equally, Jesus Christ (AS) was known to have peacefully migrated from one part of the Land of Canaan to another with his followers with a view to avoiding



violent confrontation with idolaters and their leaders. As Muhammad (SAW) preached peace and love, so did Jesus Christ (AS); therefore, the two religions are clearly and fundamentally built on peace and love.

Muslim and Christian men and women of peace wonder on why some misguided Muslims and Christians unreasonably resort to violent confrontations with each other at the slightest provocation. They wonder, because both Islam and Christianity recognise the Oneness of Allah-God and they are built on peace and unity. All the major provisions of the Islamic Law and codes of conduct are either the same with, or very similar to those of Christianity. Why the rancour and the disputes? Why the loss of innocent and valuable lives and properties?

Muslims and Christians of knowledge and wisdom know full well that the two Monotheistic Religions are closer to each other in the conduct of **worldly affairs** than they are with any of the other World Religions. Both religions are different only in some **faith-based issues** that concern the modes of worship of Allah-God. Therefore, one could understand the differences in the modes of worship but one cannot understand the reasons behind the wanton destruction of lives and properties in the name of Islam or Christianity.

It is of paramount importance therefore for Christians and Muslims to recognise and understand the similarities in their two Religions and embrace them; and to recognise and understand the differences in them and respect and accommodate them.

### **THE MUSLIMS' AND THE CHRISTIANS' DISUNITY PROMOTES FATAL RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM**

My dear Nigerian Brothers and Sisters, the assertion that, **“Muslims’ and Christians’ Disunity Promotes Fatal Religious Extremism”** may seem strange and unbelievable, but the fact is that religious extremism that leads to terrorism and/or insurgency is born and bred not by the squabbles within a particular religion but

by the external disunity between two or more religions. If Muslims and Christians, for example, live in harmonious unity within a particular community or Nation, they will jointly check the excesses of their members thereby eliminating extremism. But when Muslims and Christians in a particular community or Nation are in perpetual conflict with each other, they will have no time to check their members and in effect, they will consciously or unconsciously be promoting the emergence of extremists who shall be claiming to be defending the interests of their religions. At the end, such extremists shall not only fight the perceived enemies in other religion(s) but shall turn against members of their own religions who do not agree with them and cause havoc.

Fatal religious extremism in Islam and in Christianity is promoted by a very minute percentage of the adherents because the vast majority of moderate adherents have shunned unity and therefore allowed the minute minority to have a united front that metamorphoses into extremism, terrorism and/or insurgency.

The few extremists that have been causing havoc in the World today are the products of the disunity of the vast majority. This disunity leads to interreligious conflicts that take away the attention of the majority thereby allowing the minority extremists to grow to dangerous levels. How many were pioneer members Al-Qaida, or Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS); or Al-Shabab in Somalia; or Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Region? The disunity of the vast majority of Muslims and Christians in those areas made the few extremists to grow into terrorists and insurgents who now unleash monstrous havoc with impunity. Perhaps, a brief on Chad Basin's Boko Haram suffices here to buttress this important assertion.

### **THE BOKO HARAM UNFORTUNATE EXAMPLE**

The Terror Group, *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lidda'awati Wal Jihad*, widely known as "Boko Haram", has been the most complex and destructive security challenge that was ever faced by Nigeria, Cameroon, Republic of Chad and Niger Republic; countries that are located in the Lake Chad Region.

Global Terrorism Index 2015 classified Boko Haram as the World's deadliest Terrorist Organisation in 2014, "***largely due to Boko Haram's expansion***". This expansion could be attributable to the fact that Muslims and Christians, who constitute over 90% of Nigeria's population of over 190 million people, have been in perpetual conflicts with each other instead of uniting to contain the Boko Haram threat.

The perpetual Muslims/Christians conflicts took away the attention of the Muslim and Christian population that would have united to assist the government in fighting the Boko Haram terrorists. While those conflicts were on, Boko Haram used that opportunity to recruit its deadly membership. The government and its security forces also had their share of laxity for not doing enough to contain Boko Haram at its infancy.

Therefore the government and its security agencies to some extent; and the Muslim and Christian disunited population to another extent; contributed to the growth of Boko Haram. If the Muslim and the Christian population had united, they would have checkmated Boko Haram's drive for membership thereby giving the Security Forces the leeway to contain the few militant ones at the early stages of their growth.

One of the deadly tactics used by Boko Haram was the deceitful manner they cajoled Muslim Youths into believing that they (Boko Haram) were fighting on behalf of; and for Islam. That boosted their membership drives. For example, Boko Haram fighters have at different times made references to some incidences where Muslims were attacked, got killed and their properties destroyed to justify their attack on Christians. Boko Haram Leaders would then claim that they did so as reprisals on behalf of the Muslims. They used the Kafanchan, Tafawa Balewa, Yelwan Shendam and Jos crises as references. In some instances they even used video footages of some deadly scenes where alleged Muslim human flesh was being roasted and eaten.

A specific case was that of the attack on Muslims during the January 2010 Eid (Sallah) celebration in Jos where the Plateau State Muslim Community compiled a list of 968 Muslim victims. The Plateau State Branch of the Christian Association of Nigeria compiled a list of 149 Christian victims of a Christmas Eve attack in the same year (December 2010) in Jos, which Boko Haram claimed the responsibility of; and further claimed that it was in retaliation for the January 2010 Eid Day attack on Muslims. With such deadly approaches and the disunity of Nigerian Muslims and Christians, Boko Haram had field days.

My dear Nigerian Brothers and Sisters, one of my books titled, **TOWARDS PEACE** (published in 2016) gives a detailed account on the formation and the growth of Boko Haram; the summary of which follows. Boko Haram claims to be an Islamic organisation but it purely performs un-Islamic acts like other terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda, Al-Shabab and ISIS. Its name, *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lidda'awati Wal Jihad*, which translates to, "Brethren of Sunni Muslims Committed to the Propagation of Islam and the Conduct of Holy War", was coined to deceive unsuspecting Muslim youths. It was locally called "Boko Haram" in the Hausa language, which means, "Western education is illegal" because of the intense opposition of its members to Westernisation.

The group emerged in the year 2000. Its foundation membership consisted of a small group of youths of less than 100, under the leadership of late Mohamed Yusuf who was assisted by Abubakar Shekau, its present leader. That group of youths made up the bulk of the students studying under Sheikh Faisal who was based at London-Chiki area of Maiduguri town in Borno State of Nigeria. The youths were attracted and motivated by Sheikh Faisal's opposition to Westernisation, particularly Western Education and Western Cultures, which they claim are directly against Islamic values. From their sermons, lectures and publications, particularly a booklet written by its leader, Mohamed Yusuf, titled "*Hazhihi Aqidatu-na*" (This is Our Ideology), the main belief of the Sect is

that Western cultures and values are un-Islamic and therefore must be eradicated from Muslim societies. They assert that change from the infidel Western systems and beliefs to Islamic ones should be through preaching and other peaceful means, but where these are made impossible, arms could be taken against the State and against all those who serve as stumbling blocks to the change.

The Boko Haram ideology was preached freely for several years to unsuspecting youths as a result of negligence by Nigerian security forces and the continued religious disunity between Nigerian Muslims and Christians who constitute over 90% of the Nigerian population of over 190 million people. Therefore, some few hundred Boko Haram extremists continued to freely mobilise for membership for several years unhindered in a population of over 190 million people simply because the vast majority of Muslims and Christians were disunited and fighting each other thereby creating an avenue for the very minute number of Boko Haram extremists to grow and unleash terror on other Muslims and on Christians who they view as “infidels”.

Boko Haram tactfully intensified recruitment drive for followership from 2001 to 2003. They deceitfully recruited young people through indoctrination with their own brand of “Islam”. The recruits were usually unemployed but energetic youths within the age bracket of 13-18 years. Most of them feel dejected, frustrated and unwanted in the society due to lack of proper religious or vocational education and due to lack of any form of gainful employment. Such young persons were easy to brainwash and train both physically and mentally to believe that the existing State and administrative structures and even the society itself were not serving their interests.

Many extremist and un-Islamic ideas were planted in their hearts and brains making them believe that those ideas were truly Islamic and the best ways to worldly and eternal salvation. Boko Haram young followers have been so indoctrinated as to believe that death in Boko Haram service is the surest way to Paradise. That was why

in most cases they were more willing to die while on an assignment than to return home or to their camps.

With the government not taking any serious action and the majority Muslim/Christian citizens in perpetual conflicts, Boko Haram established a militants' camp at a virgin forest-land near Kanama Town in Yunusari Local Government of Yobe State, Nigeria, where they settled and called the place "Small Medina". The Sect members attacked the nearby Kanama and Geidam Police Stations on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2003, where they carted away some arms and ammunitions.

The group attacked and destroyed Dapchi and Babban Gida Police Stations in Busari and Tarmuwa Local Government Areas. A joint Military/Police operation was then carried out where some of the group members escaped while others were arrested and detained at the Damaturu, Maiduguri, Bauchi and Gombe Prisons, in Yobe, Borno, Bauchi and Gombe States of Nigeria respectively. In June 2004, the group attempted to break into the Damaturu Prison with a view to freeing their detained members, but the attempt was foiled by security forces.

On September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2004, the group attacked Police Stations in Goza and Bama Towns in Borno State where they killed some Policemen. They were later repelled by a joint Police/Military operation and they moved into Goza hills and set up training camps there. The group attacked a police convoy at the Goza area on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2004 where they abducted 12 Policemen, who they later killed. Boko Haram continued with their atrocities, seemingly unabated.

In early 2005, they moved their headquarters back to Maiduguri metropolis from where they spread their recruitment drag-net to other States of Nigeria, particularly to Yobe, Adamawa, Bauchi, Gombe, Kano, Kaduna, Plateau, Niger and Kogi States. When they started to openly preach their unwholesome ideology in Borno State, the government banned their activities at the end of 2006; but they continued to preach and propagate their ideology illegally.

The Group members were made to be more hardened and more resolute in resisting warnings by government and security agents. Members were indoctrinated to imbibe the spirit of “hard struggle” against the authorities and all those who oppose their teachings, Muslims and Christians alike.

The years 2007 and 2008 were used by the dreaded group for further membership recruitment. In 2009, Borno State Government set up a Joint Task Force with a view to enforcing the use of crash helmets by motorcyclists in the State and the Task Force embarked on its assignment on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2009. Boko Haram members refused to use the helmets thereby leading to a confrontation with security agents. That seemingly minor skirmish in Maiduguri, the Borno State capital, on July 29<sup>th</sup> 2009, later turned into full scale “war”. Boko Haram members emerged with sophisticated weapons including improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

They surprised and almost overwhelmed security agents with their arsenals that they used in launching deadly attacks on seven Police Stations, Police Staff Quarters, Prison Yard, three Primary Schools, Electoral Commission Office and eleven Churches. Reports indicated that over 1,000 innocent civilians, Policemen and members of their families and Boko Haram members lost their lives in the two days fracas.

The Military had to be called in to quell the crisis as a result of which they arrested the Boko Haram leader, Mohamed Yusuf, and handed him over to the Police in whose custody he was allegedly extra judiciously killed. That minor incidence on **“helmet wearing”** became a catastrophe that opened the Pandora box of heinous attacks by Boko Haram on security formations, government establishments, public infrastructure, motor parks, markets, places of worship, innocent citizens, etc. Those attacks have so far resulted into the loss of over 100,000 lives and the destruction of over \$9 billion worth of public and private properties and about 2.5 million refugees.

## **THE MUSLIM AND CHRISTIAN DISUNITY THAT BRED BOKO HARAM**

My dear Nigerian Brothers and Sisters, the very important point being made here is that, while Boko Haram was busy mobilising and growing, Nigerian Muslims and Christians were busy fighting each other. Within that period, serious religious conflicts ensued particularly in Kaduna, Plateau, Benue, Taraba, Kano and Adamawa States of Nigeria. Thousands of lives were lost and properties worth billions of Naira were destroyed in the crises. Within that period, the security forces' attention was diverted away from Boko Haram to the sporadic Muslim/Christian conflicts all over the Nation, which consumed thousands of lives and billions of Naira worth of public and private properties. The list below gives a glimpse of such Muslim/Christian conflicts from the emergence of Boko Haram around 2000 to its full growth in 2011, when it was declared as an international terrorist organisation (sourced from my published Book, **TOWARDS PEACE**, 2016):-

**2000 January to May:** Thousands of people were killed in Northern Nigeria as non-Muslims opposed to the introduction of Shari'ah (Islamic Law) fought Muslims who demanded its implementation in Kaduna State.

**2001 September:** Christian-Muslim violence flared after Muslim prayers in Jos, Plateau State, with Churches and Mosques set on fire. According to a September 2002 report by a panel set up by Plateau State Government, at least 1,000 people were killed in the rioting.

**2002 February:** Some 100 people were killed in Lagos, Lagos State, in clashes between the Hausa from mainly-Islamic North and ethnic Yoruba from Christian Southwest.

**2002 November:** More than 200 people were killed in four days of rioting triggered by Muslim fury over the planned Miss World Beauty Pageant that was to take place in Kaduna, Kaduna State, in December 2002. The event was relocated to London, Great Britain.



**2003 August:** Inter-communal/religious violence in the Niger Delta town of Warri killed about 100 people and injured about 1,000.

**2004 May 4:** Hundreds of people, mostly Muslims of the Hausa and Fulani tribes, were killed by Christian Tarok tribe militia in the Central Nigerian town of Yelwa, Plateau State. Survivors say they buried over 630 corpses. Police say hundreds were killed.

**2004 May 12:** Muslim and Christian militias fought street battles in the Northern city of Kano, Kano State. Christian community leaders say 500-600 people, mostly Christians, were killed in the two days of rioting.

**2006 February:** At least 157 people died in a week of rioting by Muslim and Christian mobs. The violence began in the North Eastern city of Maiduguri, Borno State, when a Muslim peaceful protest against Danish cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) ran out of control.

**2008 November:** Clashes between Muslim and Christian gangs triggered by a disputed local government election killed at least 700 people in Jos, Plateau State, according to the US-based Human Rights Watch.

**2009 February 21:** The Governor of Bauchi State imposed a night curfew on Bauchi on February 22, a day after clashes killed at least 41 people. At least another 58 people were seriously wounded and several houses, Churches and Mosques were burnt down.

**2009 December:** At least 40 people were killed in clashes between security forces and members of an Islamic sect armed with machetes in the Northern city of Bauchi.

**2010 January 17:** On the Muslim Eid celebrations of January 17<sup>th</sup> 2010, nine hundred and sixty eight (968) Muslims were massacred at the open Eid Prayer Ground in Jos, Plateau State of Nigeria by suspected Christian militia.

**2010 March:** Hundreds of people were killed in clashes between Muslim pastoralists and Christian villagers in the mostly Christian villages of Dogo Nahawa, Zot and Ratsat, South of Jos, Plateau State. The State Government said more than 300 people were killed.

**2010 July 17:** A Church was burnt down and eight people hacked to death in an attack by Muslims on Christians in Mazzah village, located 14 km from Jos, Plateau State.

**2010 December 24:** Suspected Muslim militia attacked Gada Biyu Area of Jos on Christmas Eve, 24<sup>th</sup> December, 2010, in Jos, Plateau State, and at COCIN Church Headquarters Jos that resulted into 149 Christian victims. The attack was said to be a reprisal attack for the attack on Muslims on Eid festival on January 17<sup>th</sup> 2010 of the same year by suspected Christian militia in the same Jos.

**2011 January:** Several days of violence between Christians and Muslims flared up killing at least 200 people. Various places of worship were targeted, while religious rioting and arson attacks continued on the streets in the cities of Jos, Plateau State and Tafawa Balewa, Bauchi State.

**2011 May 30:** Bomb blasts hit Abuja, the Federal Capital, and some few other cities killing about 122 people. The attacks came less than 24 hours after the inauguration of Goodluck Jonathan as President of Nigeria.

**2011 August:** At least 70 people were killed in clashes in Central Plateau State. The violence started when Christian youths attacked Muslims gathering to celebrate end of Ramadan Fasting in Jos (i.e. the Eid or Sallah).

With these very few examples, it is pathetic to state that, when Boko Haram came out in full force to fight Nigerians and the Nigerian State, the fabric of Muslim/Christian unity that would have contained them had been torn to shreds. Even when the Nigerian Government mobilised its security forces to fight Boko Haram insurgency, Nigerian Muslims and Christians were at each

others' throats. The Nigerian Inter-Religious Council, created to bring about Muslim/Christian harmony, went dead because the equal number of 25 Muslims and 25 Christians in it could not perform their functions effectively!

Members of hundreds of Muslim and Christian organisations continued to attack each other verbally in the Churches and in the Mosques; and physically fighting on the streets resulting in thousands of deaths and the destruction of public and private properties!

The two major Religious Organisations, the Christian Association of Nigeria and the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, were rendered incapable of containing the crises. Therefore, Boko Haram grew and grew as no significant attention was given to it by the warring Muslims and Christians!

## **THE NEGASH AND COVENANTS FORMULAS TO THE RESCUE**

My dear Nigerian Brothers and Sisters, the above rendition on Boko Haram clearly shows that, if Nigerian Muslims had been united, Boko Haram would not have grown to be such a deadly monster. Similarly, if World Muslims and Christians had united, Al-Qaida and ISIS would not have become the dreaded monsters that they are! Unfortunately for the World today, Muslims see the “war against terror” as a conglomeration of powerful Christian and Jewish States fighting the weak Muslim States.

On the other hand, Christians and Jews see the “war against terror” as a legitimate war against “Islamic terrorism” who are out to eliminate Jewish and Christian States.

### **The Negash Formula**

As I discussed earlier in this Letter, at the infancy of Islam, followers of the Religion found themselves facing persecution in the hands of the pagans of Mecca. The persecution reached such an intolerable level that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) told his followers to migrate, in July 615 AD, to Habasha (modern day Ethiopia)

under the protection of the Christian King Negus Armah (*Ashama ibn Abjar al-Najashy* in Arabic). The persecuting pagans of Mecca pursued the migrant Muslims and attempted to bribe the Christian King into handing them over to them. They even appealed to the King's Christian Faith declaring that,

*"Your Majesty the King, the migrants from Mecca have abandoned their own local Mecca religion and have not accepted yours of Christianity; and have invented a new Faith which neither you nor us know"*.

Being a Ruler who was leading with the Christian spirit of justice and fairness, King Negus called the Muslims into his presence and asked them to speak of their Faith. After hearing what they had to say, the King declared that he would never hand them over and that they could remain in his Kingdom in safety as their Religion of Islam is so close to his Religion of Christianity; while that of the pagans of Mecca is nowhere near the two monotheistic Religions.

### **The Covenants' Formula**

Interestingly, about a decade after the migration to Negash, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) offered similar protection to Christians. In July 624 AD, he wrote a document that has come to be known as the **"Achtiname of Muhammad"** or the **"Covenant of the Prophet Muhammad with the Monks of Mount Sinai"**.

The Covenant, carried in this Open Letter as **APPENDIX III**, details a list of freedoms, justice, fairness, peace and security to be guaranteed to the Christians. The Covenant also states that Christians are not to be unfairly taxed or burdened in any way. They are not to be compelled to leave their Faith and that if a Christian woman marries a Muslim man, she should not be hindered from practicing her Christian Faith.

### **The Two Formulas To The Rescue**

The best panacea to today's Muslims/Christians crises is the application of the Negash and the Covenants formulas of love, peace, unity, understanding, respect and accommodation of each

others' Religions. If these two formulas had been applied within the last four decades, the World would have been saved from religious terrorism and insurgencies. However, it is better late than never, as the formulas could still be implemented to give the World the much needed peace and security.

The Allah-God of Muhammad (SAW) and Jesus Christ (AS) is a Loving God and not a God of violence, therefore no one has the right to kill or maim human beings and destroy private and public properties in the name of the One Omnipotent God-Allah!

A solid foundation for peaceful co-existence, respect and love between Muslims and Christians was laid at the infancy of Islam and the maturity of Christianity with the **Hijrah to Negash**. That solid foundation was consolidated with the several **Covenants of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to Christians**.

Whatever happened to the “buildings” that were erected on those “solid foundations” that are making the buildings to be crumbling today should be rectified. Today's Muslims and Christians, who make up more than half of the World's population, have a responsibility to provide an enabling environment for peace to prevail in the World. Peace is the only catalyst for progress and development to the present generation and the guarantee of an enduring legacy of hope for the future generations.

## **LET US MASSIVELY EDUCATE OURSELVES ON RELIGION**

My dear Nigerian Brothers and Sisters, religious conflicts are mainly caused by shallow religious knowledge or lack of it at all; and by the lack of understanding and respecting each other's religion rather than the more universal dictum of “religious tolerance”. This is because understanding and respecting each other come from the heart while tolerating each other is a mere open compromise which is not deep rooted in the heart, therefore could flop at any given moment.

In such cases, conflicts arise mainly due to misunderstanding or misinterpretation of religious injunctions relating to legal, social or economic matters. Religious extremists take religious messages to the extreme and insist on imposing their viewpoints on their fellow believers, the followers of other sects within the same religion and the followers of other religions. Fear of domination by one religious sect or group over the other is yet another possible cause of such conflicts. Sometimes this fear may be directed towards the State or its Agencies, thereby making every move by the government or its security agencies to douse a conflict to become suspect especially by those who seem to have lost more in the conflict.

Lack of proper education and/or proper information leads to mob actions by irate youths who attack innocent persons in their homes or even while on transit on the highways and roads. All these lead to people taking the Laws into their hands, which is illegal, un-Islamic and un-Christian. Proper education and proper information are therefore very essential in curtailing violent conflicts and crises.

My interactions with Muslims and Christians at all levels exposed me to the shallow knowledge by both Muslims and Christians of the true dictates of Islam and Christianity pertaining to peace, understanding and mutual respect. For example, within the last one year, when the idea of this Open Letter came to my mind, less than 10% of the Muslims I discussed with have some knowledge of the Covenants of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), but almost all were aware of the Hijrah to Negash because it has been mentioned in several Islamic literature. On the other hand, less than 2% of Christians I discussed with have some knowledge of the Covenants and nearly all have no knowledge of the Hijrah to Negash.

Indeed, it has been proven time and again that violent religious extremism to a large extent is a result of ignorance on the parts of both Muslims and Christians who do not know or understand the original true dictates of their respective Religions; and to some

extent on their lack of inter-religious knowledge. Therefore vulnerable Muslims and Christians (mostly the very young ones) were taught new extremist/fundamentalist dictates. Just like what the President of the National Regional State of Tigrai, Ethiopia, His Excellency Abey Woldu Hagos, told me when we were on a flight from Makele to Addis Ababa in November 2015. He said,

*The problems between Muslims and Christians in the World today, are caused by **new Muslims and new Christians**. Muslims and Christians who know and practice the original true dictates of the two great Religions would never fight and kill each other; nor destroy each other's properties in the name of God. The God of Jesus Christ and Prophet Mohamed is a just and peace-loving God.*

Nothing could describe the situation Muslims and Christians all over the World are in today more than which President Hagos stated above. Muslims and Christians need to be educated on the true tenets of the two great Religions and on the closeness and similarities between them. Inter-Religious dialogue should be established between Muslims and Christians with a view to **understanding and mutually respecting** each other rather than **tolerating** each other.

The Negash and the Covenants Formulas; and indeed all aspects of the true teachings of Christianity and Islam need to be taught to the adherents of the two great monotheistic Religions.

I would like to, at this stage, stress the importance of **Religious Studies** that have been carelessly abandoned in public and private schools in Nigeria. Up to the time the Federal Government abolished Islamic and Christian Religious Knowledge (IRK and CRK), these subjects were compulsory up to the Secondary School level.

That meant by the time boys and girls graduated from Secondary Schools at an average age of about 18 years, they at least have a fair knowledge of the true principles and practices of Islam and/or

Christianity. That made it impossible for religious bigots to inculcate in them their own brand of Islam or Christianity. That was why religious bigots mainly sprang up in Nigeria after the abolishing of IRK and CRK in the Nigerian school system. The result was that, Boko Haram and similar bigot-groups in Christianity were given the opportunity to teach young boys and girls their own brand of Islam and Christianity that are violent in nature.

In addition to the study of IRK and CRK, the study of **History** goes a long way in teaching good-old values to the young ones, thereby inspiring them to form the habit of choosing local role models after who they will shape their good lives. It is therefore imperative for Government to make IRK, CRK and History compulsory subjects up to Senior Secondary School levels. One wonders why English Language is made a compulsory subject at all academic levels in Nigeria while Religious Knowledge and History are relegated to the background!

My dear Nigerian Brothers and Sisters, on a universal scale, interfaith-education could be most beneficial as it would eliminate a lot of misconceptions in one's mind about the other's Religion. This has been beautifully stated in the GUIDELINES FOR INTERFAITH EVENTS AND DIALOGUE formulated by the Bishops of the Church of Ireland in May 2007 as follows:-

*Without dialogue between people of different Faiths, the vacuum in communication and understanding can quickly and easily be filled by gossip, mistrust, prejudice, bigotry and racism. Bigotry is fed by fear and ignorance. Without dialogue and mutual respect, extremism and hatred can grow. A proper approach will embrace learning about what adherents of a particular World Faith say about their own Faith rather than relying on what is alleged by others on their behalf. When interfaith co-operation works well, all of our lives are enriched. The knowledge and understanding of others enhances our lives, helps us to understand differences, gives*



*substance to our belief and points us towards lives rooted and grounded in love and peace.*

## **LET US SUSTAIN CURRENT INTERNATIONAL AND LOCAL CHRISTIANS' AND MUSLIMS' EFFORTS TOWARDS PEACE**

Throughout history, Christians and Muslims have both fought wars and have made peace. Our concerns today are for peace. I have earlier discussed in this Open Letter the historical foundations laid for peace by both Islam and Christianity in the **Hijrah to Negash** and the **Covenants of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)**. I will therefore, at this juncture, discuss the modern-day efforts towards Muslim/Christian peace at international and local levels. I will however restrict the discussion of these Muslim/Christian peace efforts to events of the last half a century that witnessed the most escalation of the Christian/Muslim fatal conflicts.

### **INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS**

#### **The Lumen Gentium**

I would like to begin my discussion of the international efforts with the “Lumen Gentium” that is normally referred to as the “Dogmatic Constitution of the Church”. His Holiness Pope Paul VI promulgated this important document on November 21<sup>st</sup> 1964, the provisions of which centre on peace within the Church and between the Church and other Religions, particularly with Islam. Chapter II, Section 16 of the Lumen Gentium states that,