

THE CONCEPT OF PACIFISM AND ITS IMPACT ON THE PROMOTION  
OF SOCIETAL STABILITY: CASE STUDY OF SAKI RELIGIOUS  
CRISIS IN YEAR 2000

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## ABSTRACT

Religion has dual legacy in human history regarding peace and violence. Through out the long era of human history, religion has been a major contributor to war, bloodshed, hatred, and intolerance. Yet religion has also developed laws and ideas that have provided civilizations with a cultural commitment of critical peace-related values. Every major religion of the world has expressed at some points, through his leader and thinkers, a commitment to the value of peace, both in classical texts and modern reformation. Therefore, the study. The concept of pacifism and its impact on the promotion of societal stability: A Case Study of Saki Religious Crisis in Year 2000 is to assess the concept of pacifism and its impact on the promotion of societal stability (A Case Study of Saki Religious Crisis in Year 2000). The nature of this research is historical and descriptive. The scope covers a critical investigation into the immediate and remote causes as well as the consequential effects of the crisis on Saki Community. This study in a more positive sense will be useful guide to religious activists as well as scholars on ways of co-existence within the ideal community as expressed in the sacred texts, history and practices. This study's recommendations will help in creating awareness in Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) and Religious Leaders on the need to offer themselves as instruments of joint problem solving in situations of disharmony, and on the Government in awaken patriotic spirit in the citizenry and give every religion her due need: Justice and Equity.

## 5.2 Conclusion

Religion is seen as an indispensable institution in the society despite of its positive and negative influences. However, we could conclude that religion helps to integrate not only the society, but also the personality. Religion also gives the individual a sense of identity with the distant past and the limitless future.

A careful study of the relationship between Islam and Christianity shows that instead of using the areas of common interest between them to foster better understanding, the leadership of the two religions particularly the intellectuals use considerable amount of their efforts in terms of literatures and sermons to incite or create sense of hatred and enmity among the followers. The scholars, though knowing quite well that only tolerance and the spirit of give and take can bring about peaceful

co-existence, often refuse to recognize and accept the right of other faiths to exist in the first place, and even less of giving other rights that make existence meaningful.

There is also no doubt that the leadership of the two antagonist religions (Islam and Christianity) in Saki, Oke Ogun area of Oyo State and Nigeria as a whole, cannot exonerate themselves from the present situation between the followers of the two religions, this depends on the kind of information passed down to them by their leaders.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The task of Christian concept of pacifism to crises situations require that the church, through its leaders, gets practically involved in employing and pursuing both short – term and long term strategies to address the immediate and root causes of crises.

The Local and Global processes at work in the religious crises in Nigeria should be also be noted. While there are many religious crises generated through diverse internal dynamics, there are also externally induced or influenced ones for instance, those classified as “Internal dynamics” include: shariah riots of 2000 and Organisation of Islamic Conference, (OIC) issue, while those in “external influences order” include: al-Queda in East Africa, El-Shabbab in North Africa, ISIS in Europe and Boko-Haram in West Africa. It is instructive to note, that the February 18, 2006 religious violence in Maiduguri was triggered by the external issue of the publication of the contentious cartoon of Prophet Mohammad in Denmark.

Therefore, to put an end to religious crises in Nigeria, the Church, the ecumenical bodies, the government and individuals have very important roles to play in their respective capacities as follows:

## The Church

Evangelizing the Muslim world is pertinent and imperative for the church since the redemptive plan of God through the death and resurrection of Christ is for all mankind (Muslims inclusive), failure to evangelize the Muslim world would be tantamount to taking the grace of God in vain and allowing the billions unsaved souls to go to hell. Evangelizing the Muslim community should therefore be a great concern for the church. It is therefore important to develop effective strategies to reaching this group of people.

Lily Takona suggests four different approaches that could be helpful in making Muslim evangelism more effective:<sup>118</sup>

I. Addressing Felt Need – Lily Takona, Edward R. Dayton and David A. Frazer agree that any strategy for evangelism should focus on reaching a people within the context of their needs rather than on the basis of preconceived methodologies. The approach involves identifying the core need of Muslims in a particular area and making deliberate efforts to meeting the need and ensuring that the gospel is shared with them as the benefit from the services provided. This inference was drawn from the Ministry of Jesus Christ:

He was sensitive to the need of the people and He used that to minister to people of all groups.<sup>119</sup> This approach has also been referred to as social ministry or witnessing through generosity by Ropo Peter Awoniyi.<sup>120</sup>

II. Contextualizing the Gospel - Lily Takona observed that adherents of Islam have shown resistance toward God's eternal truths as presented by both the Living and written word of God over the years. This presupposes that appropriate ways of

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<sup>118</sup>Lily Takona, *Strategies for Muslim Evangelization*, 56 *Africa Journal of Evangelical*, 56 Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology, volume 15.1, 1996.

<sup>119</sup>Dayton and Frazer, *Planning Strategies for World Evangelization*, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Won. B. Eerdmans Public Co., 1980, 63

<sup>120</sup>Peter Ropo Awoniyi, *Witnessing Families: sharing God's love with the Muslims*, NBTS, Ogbomoso: Adaba Commercial Press, Osogbo, 2013, 28

presenting the gospel to the Muslims need to be sought. Lily Takona noted that Muslims do not necessarily resist the Gospel because they think it is false or devoid of God's message (Kalima) to man. Rather, it is perceived as a threat to their culture.<sup>121</sup> The Willow bank report on Gospel and Culture by the Theology and Education Group of Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation also affirmed that the problem of the Gospel is that it is often presented to people in alien cultural forms, Mission efforts are therefore rejected because they are seen as an attempt to impose alien customs and way of life through Christianity. The use of Qu'ran is therefore suggested by Lily Takona as an initial way of reaching the Muslim.<sup>122</sup>

Donald Mc Curry also remarked that many Muslims have come to Christ by first being pointed to Him by the Qur'an. This approach of contextualization does not suggest compromise or syncretism, the major issue is that the gospel must be recognizable to Muslims within their cultural matrix.<sup>123</sup>

III. Logos Approach – This approach requires that the Christian seeking to evangelize Muslims should have the courage to cast off the “idols” of his tribe and identify with the Muslim culture. Lily Takona argued that personal identification is vital to persuasion. The Logos Approach requires two kinds of identification:-

- (a) Identification with the Muslim culture and
- (b) Identification with the truth in the Word of God. Christ though he took flesh, did not sacrifice His divinity on the altar of Judaism, Hebrew 4:15.

In the Logos Approach the Christian evangelist must be careful that the message is not compromised. The centrality of the message of Jesus Christ must take

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<sup>121</sup>Ibid. Takona

<sup>122</sup>Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, “The Willowbank Report – Gospel and Culture; Wheaton, Illinois: Lausanne Committee for world Evangelization, 1978

<sup>123</sup>Donald MC curry, “Why are Muslims So Militant?” Muslim World Pulse volume 9, No. 2, August 1980

