

The Dynamics of Religious Pluralism and Interfaith Relations in Tudun Wada, Kano 1960s - 1990

Naziru Yahaya SHUAIB

Department of History Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso

College of Advance and Remedial Studies

Tudun Wada, Kano-Nigeria

naziryahya7@gmail.com

+2347031854850

Abstract

Tudun Wada provides a fertile ground for Islam and Christianity and in the inextricably pervasive traditional religion. The concept of pluralism in this paper refers to these tripartite religions. Like other African societies, indigenous Maguzawa (pagan Hausa) of Tudun Wada had their own traditional belief before the advent of the two organised religions in the area. Traditional religion was a religion that developed spontaneously out of culture. This gives credence to the fact that the religion was not mission minded, everybody was born into. From the 14th century onwards, The Maguzawa religion was exposed to a mountain of challenge from Islam. By the second half of the 19th century, Islam had achieved maximum spiritual fulfillment in the major towns, that later constituted the district. This made the remnants Maguzawa to leave the towns for Muslims and went to places behind the towns. The Christian missionaries reached Kano nine years ahead of the British conquest in 1903. But their effort was either a total failure or with very little success in the city. This formed the basis for the Christian missionaries to focus their attention on rural and non-Muslim Maguzawa areas of which Tudun Wada constituted a part. The activities of these two monotheistic religions had been characterized by conflict, contestation for religious and economic space, and often by cooperation. This paper analysed and assessed not only the religious practices, but the level of religious tolerance and interfaith relations in the area. Primary and secondary sources were used in writing this paper.

Keywords: Traditional Religion, Islam, Christianity, Conflict and Cooperation

Introduction

Tudun Wada Dankadai is situated at the south Eastern part of Kano. According to its tradition of origin the town was founded by two brothers; Zangi and Na'ibi.¹ It appears that the most striking factor for the development of the area was its proximity from Zaria, Kano and

¹ Interview with Alh Kabiru Muhammad Wuna 3rd March, 2017

Plateau. The fertility of the area attracted hordes of immigrants mostly Muslims, to the area. With the imposition of British colonial rule in northern Nigeria, Tudun Wada appeared to have provided refuge for an impressive number of people, mostly from Zaria seeking respite from forced labour during Zaria, Bauchi, plateau light railway construction in 1907². At the commencement of the work, forced labour was employed. Any refusal was liable to fine. (Ibrahim 1995 p. 21) Thus, people left their original settlement and settle in their neighboring grounds to avoid compulsory work. Tudun Wada could be cited as example.

Hausa Maguzawa constituted the dominant group in the area, followed by Fulani. The other ethnic grouping which lately penetrated Tudun Wada Dankadai includes Kurama, Igbo, Nupe and Kanuri representing an inchoate minority. Indeed, Tudun Wada in its early days acquired a predominantly Maguzawa outlook, because of the numerical preponderance of Maguzawa elements there. From 19th Century onwards, there occurred a marked change in their history. This change was influenced by Islam. Those who embraced Islam were thus intent upon rejecting the name Maguzawa and did not consider themselves Maguzawa. The resulting considerable inward free migration and the extent of favourable ecological condition brought about substantial changes that gave a strong structural economic base, which dictated the emergence of Christian missionaries in the area. Religious pluralism in a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society like Tudun Wada Dankadai borders on different issues. The relationship between these tripartite religious, namely traditional religion, Islam and Christianity was characterized by contempt, conflict, competition and contestation for religious and economic space and often by cooperation. In view of this, the study addressed the following questions: what was the nature and scope of religious pluralism in the area? Why did conflict erupt between Muslims and Christians in the area? How did the inter-religious conflict affect the socio – economic of the area?

Conceptual Clarification

The concept of pluralism in this paper refers to the aforementioned three religions: traditional religion, Islam and Christianity. It refers to the ethnically diverse and religiously distinct society. Therefore, Tudun Wada Dankadai typifies one of the few areas in northern Nigeria that are ethnically and religiously heterogeneous in composition.

Traditional religion was the major pre-occupation of African Societies before the advent of the two organized monotheistic religions, namely Islam and Christianity. The religion was not mission minded. This is because it normally developed spontaneously out of culture. Therefore, traditional religion in Tudun Wada centered on the family cult, which constituted

² K.H.C.B/Kanprof No. 25 Vol. II Tudun Wada Gazetteer

Naziru Yahaya SHUAIB: The Dynamics of Religious Pluralism and Interfaith Relations in Tudun Wada, Kano 1960s – 1990, pp. 240 - 248

the badge of family identity. In addition, there were other cults associated with spirits, namely Kure, Dangaladima and Inna collectively recognized by all the *Maguzawa* in Hausa land. (Kruisis 1915:p.14). It was around these cults that the traditional religious life of *Maguzawa* of Tudun Wada Dankadai revolved.

Islam was introduced into Kano in the fourteen century and by the 19th century it had become the undisputed religion in Kano. With the Islamisation of Kano, Islam spread to rural maguzawa areas of which Tudun Wada Dankadai constituted a part. Historical evidence suggests that Tudun Wada had been a Muslim stronghold for over a century before the introduction of Christianity in the area. Up to the first quarter of the twentieth century, Islam was indeed the only monotheistic creed with which the *Maguzawa* were acquainted. But throughout this period, the Muslims were not formally organized for missionary campaign to the remote *Maguzawa* settlements, until the nascent Sardauna's conversion exercise in the area in 1964³.

Christianity came into the Tudun Wada Dankadai later. I.M Reuben is of the belief that the attempt started with the opening of mining activities around Tudun Wada Dankadai i.e Riruwai. The mining activities attracted a number of catholic Christians from plateau to Tudun Wada for work in the mines (Reuben 2000: p. 40). But there was no record of conversion. It seems equally well to C.M.S stationed in Zaria, who made efforts to spread the faith in the aftermath of the British Colonial occupation. Unfortunately for them the project did not prove influential due to the strong opposition from Muslim rulers and the irate dwellers especially Muslims.

Christian missionaries focused their attention on Tudun Wada due to a number of reasons, among which was the important historical factor of colonization of the Northern Nigeria by the British Colonial power. Christian missionaries reached Kano in 1894 nine years ahead of the British Colonial conquest in 1903 (Graham 1966: p. XV). Their effort was either a total failure or with very little success. This is because Kano had been culturally influenced by Islamic civilization, for over 700 years, before the advent of the Christian missionaries in Kano. Undoubtedly, this contributed to the intense hostility and opposition to Christian missionaries in Kano. An example of this was perfectly illustrated in the case of the Emir of Kano, Aliyu Babba (1894 – 1903) who turned Bishop Tugwell's Party out of Kano in 1900 (Crampton 19751 P. 45 – 6). With colonial interlude, a symbiotic relationship developed between the colonial government and Christian missionaries. This provided a politically

³ Interview with Nasiru Goma 11th Dec, 2016

peaceful and supportive environment for missionaries to focus their attention on rural and non-Muslim Hausa *Maguzawa* areas.

According to Adamu (1999), there was existence of reasonable number of pagans in the area, and the missionaries took it for granted that the rural people were more submissive. This is because Islam did not sit perfectly with the people of rural areas and if an alternative faith was given to them, they would readily accept it (Adamu 1999 P. 181).

Religious Configuration of Tudun Wada

By 1960, Islam achieved maximum spiritual fulfillment in Tudun Wada Dankadai. This made the remnant *Maguzawa* to leave and went to places behind the towns. Up to the advent of Christian missionaries, the isolated *Maguzawa* had been hobnobbing with Muslims, but preserved their primitive faith. Nevertheless, with the long interaction with Muslims, many Islamic elements had become thoroughly incorporated into their culture. For example, *Maguzawa* freely admit that Allah is the ultimate controller of the universe yet, they neither worship Him nor seek His help. His name is only heard in their oath and common expression.

It has been observed that there was inconsistency in the method and strategic hub between the Muslims and Christian missionaries. On the one hand, Islam discouraged forced conversion that was why there was absolutely no pressure exerted on the non-Muslims to embrace Islam. However, there were some ignorant Mallams who asked a convert to change his name to a Muslim one and slaughter a ram. This incident, in addition to the hatred shown to pagan Hausa⁴ by their Muslim counterparts, posed serious impediments to Islam and in turn paved a fascinating ways for Christian missionaries to use. On the other hand, Christian missionaries took it for granted that, pagan Hausa must be converted from their traditional religious way of life to that of Christianity. They therefore, emphasized humanitarian ventures to champion their course.

The most effective weapon for evangelization used by the missionaries was medical services. The missionaries established a clinic at Karefa in 1940.⁵ Here at that time, apart from Jingir hospital in Jos, then Wusasa in Zaria and the one in Kano, there was no other medical outreach than the one in Karefa. Muslims and Christians all visited the clinic.⁶ And Christians were given drugs freely. Since then Karefa became a display ground to cure diseases. Despite all this effort, the missionaries were not hurriedly welcomed by the people.

⁴ Interview with Rev. Yusuf Bako 26th Feb, 2017

⁵ Interview with Nayaro Galadima 06th Jan, 2017

⁶ Interview with Idris Aliyu V.H of Karefa 07th March, 2017

It is pertinent to note that, the villages nature, being situated at tail end of Kano, coupled with poor roads were the bases that some villages under Tudun wada did not receive Islam on time. These, in addition to time lag, prevented the Muslims from preaching the way it should have been until the Christian missionaries had started preaching in the area⁷.

The conversion of non Muslims to Islam in Kano South, undertaken by Sardauna of Sokoto in 1964, whereby about 40 thousand converts from Tudun Wada were recorded⁸, served as an immediate force militating against various the Christian organizations to Tudun Wada. The Christian missionaries in the north considered the Sardauna conversion exercise as an ethnically prosecuted revolution, which if remained unchallenged, would muffle the influence of Christianity in Northern Nigeria. Thus, in 1968, Mr. Malachy Gately employed the services of some Kurama Christians from Danladi/Pambegua area of Kaduna State to Maraku Village of Tudun Wada (Reuben 2000: p. 48). This pattern was in sharp contrast to that of Muslim immigrants in the area.

The competition for adherents and influence brought about substantial changes in the method and strategies adopted by both Muslims and Christians. For example, the Christian missionaries intended to separate the stronghold relationship between the Hausa identity and Islam and establish Hausa-Christian identity. The C.M.S and S.I.M.'s activities were clear cases in point (Smith 2004: p. 48). It has since then established that propaganda became the focal point of the Christian missionaries campaign. They, since then began to present themselves to the pagan-Hausa as friends wishing to come to their aid and liberate them from the servitude of their Muslim counterparts.⁹ This had been their main source of winning converts.

Sequel to this challenge the Muslim missionaries tried bridging their relationship with *Maguzawa* during preaching, by devising positive activities that would help us dissolve ein them the hatred shown to them by Muslims. Meanwhile, the leadership organization proved very helpful to the Ulama. It masked the possible misunderstanding among the various Islamic religious bodies in Tudun Wada.¹⁰

In its historical development, the link between Christian missionaries and the muslims majority was complicated. More particularly between 1970s-1980s when Tudun Wada inhabited large minorities of Christians from southern Nigeria (Igbo People), who have made their mark especially in the small shops which line many streets and into the large bustling

⁷ Interview with DAhiru Liman 31st March, 2017

⁸ Interview with Nasiru Goma 11th Dec, 2016

⁹ Interview Alh. Idi Dabo (Mato) 07th Feb, 2017

¹⁰ Interview with Dahiru Liman 31st March, 2017

market of the town.¹¹ This implies the establishment of various dominations in both town and rural villages thus the missionary influence had been tremendously extensive affecting, all facets of life of the people of Tudun Wada.

Notwithstanding, the proliferation of different Christian denominations did not mean that the denominations lost contact to one another. The rise of Christian strength was a factor that raised Hausa-Christian aspirations in Tudun wada. People like Nayaro Galadima, Rev. Yusuf Bako Rev. Bako Gambo were the early indigenous Christians in Tudun Wada.¹² The Christian identity in Tudun Wada gave more impetus to religious feeling among the Hausa-Muslims. It made them to become religiously determined to protect their religious integrity and cultural identity against the emerging threat of Christian influence in the area. Hence, it led to the emergence of Islamic propagation movement (I.P.M) in Tudun Wada in 1980.¹³

Moreover, after Christianity had started gaining ground, the Christian missionaries started saying to the remnant Maguzawa that did not become Muslims that anyone who died a non-Christians, would rot and would not be buried nor would his/her family receive any assistance for burial.¹⁴ This made most of the remaining Maguzawa to accept Christianity. Thus, the growing strength of both Muslims and Christians affected the structure that kept the society together.

The Nature of Interfaith Relations

At the beginning, the relationship among members of the different religious group was very cordial. In spite of the religious heterogeneity in the family there was religious tolerance and mutual respect among them. You can have parents converted to a religion different to that of their children and yet live peacefully. For example Talle Idi of Karefa converted to Islam with his wife but his daughter who did not lived with them peacefully.¹⁵ There was also intermarriage between adherents of Islam and Christianity. Although the practice was not popular, the intermarriage had been one sided, Christian girls may marry Muslim men, but Muslim girls were not encouraged. The sources available revealed that both Hausa Christians and Muslims attended many social and cultural activities of one another. This gives credence to the fact that the relationship before 1980 was that of cooperation and mutual respect.

With perceived feeling of strength, in 1980s the Christian missionaries' decided to make forays into the political terrain. Although the Christian minorities were excluded in terms of

¹¹ Interview with Hajiya Sayakulu Adamu 29th Oct, 2016

¹² Discussion with Yusuf Sani Nata'ala 25th Jan, 2017

¹³ Interview with Nasiru Ahali 25th Jan, 2017

¹⁴ Interview with Sama'ila Nakande 07th Feb, 2017

¹⁵ Interview with Nasiru Goma 11th Dec, 2016

real power into any political offices, they were not voiceless in the politics of the area. Rev. Yusuf Bako, for example, contested for a position in the local government council. In spite of the fact that he lost to a Muslim, he firmly believed that there was no manipulation in the election.¹⁶

However, from 1970s onwards, the nature of interfaith relationship in Tudun Wada Dankadai became chequered and precarious. The struggle to get converts by all possible means continued to promote and inspire conflicts and carnage in the name of religions. It has since been established that Islam and Muslims were enemies of Christians and Christianity. Therefore, by virtue of the orientation, the new Christian converts opted for the adoption of enmity to Islam and Muslims. This was the genesis of religious bigotry in Tudun Wada. In spite of growing influence of Christianity in the midst of Muslim Community there was increase in the rate of moral degeneration. Between 1980 to 1991, Muslims-Christians relationship in Tudun Wada was indeed disturbing and irritating. There were records of violence and clashes in 1985 and 1989.¹⁷

The immediate cause of the 1985 conflict between Christians and Muslims was lack of faith in the Igbo's, i.e. the Igbo were believed to increase prices on food items for Muslims, but they reduced prices for the Christians. This was what gave birth to the conflict.¹⁸ The conflict caused serious damage to lives and properties. The 1989, conflict was as a result of the conversion of a Christian to Islam. The converted Christian was searched for but could not be found. This aggravated suspicion that, it was the Christians that concealed him. Thus, the Muslims in their investigation, caused a conflict.¹⁹ The two crises left unimagineable mark in the history of Tudun Wada. It brought about certain changes in the socio-economic and political setting in the area.

Conclusion

It is clear from the forgoing discussion that Tudun Wada Dankadai is ethically and religiously a plural society. All the three major religions are represented in the area. Before 1980 the relationship among the different adherents was very cordial. It is, therefore, possible to suggest that the Christians' growing strength and their effort to get more adherents so as to challenge the Muslim strong hold, was the major factor responsible for changing the mutual relationship in to discord and chaos. Surprisingly, the messages and teachings of both religions have made it convincingly clear that neither Islam nor Christianity teaches violence. A question now that agitates the round is; what was the cause of the growing schism. One may

¹⁶ Interview with Rev. Yusuf Bako 26th Feb 2017

¹⁷ Discussion with Yusuf Sani Nata'ala 25th Jan, 2017

¹⁸ Interview with Hajiya Sayakulu Adamu 29th Oct, 2016, Rev. Bako Gambo 29th Oct, 2016

¹⁹ Rev. Bako Gambo 29th Oct, 2016

perhaps believe that the disgust is beyond the context of religion. Ethnic animosity and the minority case culminated the politicization of religion which in turn led to conflicts. Plethora of meetings and conferences with various nomenclatures were organized to promote religious tolerance and interfaith relations, but what is difficult is maintaining the honesty and efficiency of the resolutions. Muslim leaders and Christian leaders alike could not have maintained peaceful negotiation by themselves, most of them incorporated their economic benefits to religions.

The failure of religious leaders, however, merely marked the beginning of the major crises. By 1980, most of the religious leaders in Tudun Wada had closed their doors to peace. They advanced sentiments and religious fanaticism. As has already been pointed out, the only point on which the Muslims and the Christians were likely to agree was that their activities had religious undertones as was the case in Sokoto, Kaduna and Katsina. In order to provide lasting resolution to the aforementioned mutual distrust, effective response must be multilateral. Precautionary campaign with actionable measures must be taken. Government should also device certain ameliorative solution to the current economic hardship devastating the lives of our teeming population. Ethnicity or political grievances of any ethnic group should not be given religious coloring. It is conceived that for any plan of emancipation to be effectual, the government must consult at once the interest and opinions of the forces and establish operative ethics so as to synthesize it to the existing laws. Through these ways, religions should stand for justice, social justice, love, compassion, sharing peace and tolerance.

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