

THE ROLE OF SELECTED CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS IN CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION IN KADUNA AND JOS CITIES IN NORTHERN NIGERIA, 1992-2001

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ABSTRACT

Despite the research by scholars on resolving conflict in Northern Nigeria, little is known about the role of the Christian denominations in 'conflict transformation.' This study examines the involvement of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican), Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA) and Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church in transforming structural violence in Kaduna and Jos Cities using the lens of conflict transformation theory. The aims of conflict transformation are to restrain the destructive effects of social conflict and unlock the potential for well-being and growth in the person as an individual human being at the physical, spiritual, emotional and perceptual (intellectual) levels.

The thesis is multi-disciplinary, employing qualitative research. The discipline is Peace Studies, but referred to history and theology. The qualitative method consists of 57 semi-structured interviews include: 32 Church leaders and 25 community members. Other data were collected were from the National and Arewa House Archives in Kaduna, reports of Conferences and Judiciary Commissions of Enquiry set up by both the federal and state government into some of the civil disturbances in Kaduna and Jos Cities, the internet and library resources.

Historically, the study made reference to Northern Nigeria's colonial era of the twentieth century to understand violent conflicts in the period under review 1992 - 2001. All violent conflict episodes have specific history, context and background which are critical to the understanding of any violent episode. The impact of the conflict has also led to a theological paradigm shift, which has given rise to the language of violence, and another biblical interpretation of what it means to 'turn the other cheek.'

The evidence present and assessed in this thesis suggests that the indigenous Christian denominations continued the missionaries' development projects (Western education and health services) successfully and expanded the projects despite economic, social and political challenges. The projects went beyond the means for propagating the gospel to helping the subordinated ethnic groups to unlock their potential for growth, thus transforming structural violence among the marginalized in Kaduna and Jos Cities.