

**THE PLACE OF RELIGION
IN THE DEVELOPMENT
OF NIGERIA**

Edited by

I. A. B. Balogun

P. Ade - Dopamu

R. A. Akanmidu

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CHAPTER 1

MISSIONARY PROPRIETORSHIP OF POST-PRIMARY INSTITUTIONS IN KWARA STATE: ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE STATE.

I. O. OLOYEDE

1. INTRODUCTION

Provision of education is a basic duty of the state towards her citizens. This notion probably underlined the provision of the 1979 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, section 18(1) which states:

Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels.

Sub section 18(3) of the 1979 constitution states that:

Government shall strive to eradicate illiteracy and to this end Government shall as and when practicable provide:-

- (a) Free Compulsory and Universal Primary Education.
- (b) Free Secondary education.
- (c) Free University education; and
- (d) Free adult literacy classes.

These provisions and the National Policy on Education confirm that provision of sound education is a primary responsibility of the Government. That notwithstanding, the individual citizens and groups equally have to go into partnership with Governments to make the educational objective of the state a reality. In Nigeria, various bodies are known to have gone into the venture of providing education for the citizens with varied purposes and goals. There is the need, therefore, for the Government to co-ordinate and channel the educational activities of these various private bodies towards national development.

educational development of Kwara State. Enormity of materials, limitation of fund and time, restrict the scope of this paper to the activities of only the religious bodies in this regard. While illustrations of private intervention in education, shall be drawn largely from missionary proprietors; where inevitable, other private proprietors shall be used in illustrating or driving home our points. Attention shall be called to issues that need be thoroughly addressed if participation of religious bodies in the educational duties of the government shall not become an instrument of social disorder, religious acrimony and sabotage of educational efforts of the Government.

2. GROWTH OF PRIVATE PROPRIETORSHIP OF POST PRIMARY INSTITUTIONS IN KWARA STATE

The chart below gives the growth in the involvement of private bodies and communities in the educational activities at the post primary school level.

1	ASA	BOR GU	EDU	IFELO DUN	ILO RIN	IREPO DUN	KOGIMORO	JOKE HI	JOKE NE	OYI OYUN	TOTAL
UP TO 1960											
Govt. School			1		3				2	1	7
Comm.						1				1	2
Chris.				1	1	2				2	6
Muslim											0
TOTAL	0	0	1	1	4	3	0	0	2	3	15
1961-1966											
Govt School								1			1
Comm.											0
Chris.				1	1	2	1			4	10
Muslim											0
TOTAL	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	1	0	4	11
1967-70											
Govt School					1	1					2
Comm.		1	2	2	1	4			1	2	14
Chris.				2	2	2				2	9
Muslim						1					1
TOTAL	0	1	2	4	4	8	0	0	1	4	26
1971-1975											
Govt.		8	2		1	4	3	2	1	2	24

	ASA	BOR GU	EDU	IFELO DUN	ILO RIN	IREPO DUN	KO GI	MO RO	OKE HI	OKE NE	OYI	OYUN	TOTAL
Comm						4			2		1	1	8
Chris		1									2	1	4
Muslim				1	1							1	3
priv													0
TOTAL	0	4	2	1	2	8	3	2		2	5	7	39
1976-1979													
Govt.	1	2		1	1	1	1	1			2		10
Comm.	1			3	1	4				1	3	2	5
Chris.							1						2
Muslim										1	1		0
priv								1					
TOTAL	2	2		4	2	8	2	1			6	2	28

	ASA	BOR -GU	IFELO -DUN	IFELO RIN	IREPO -DUN	KOGI	MO RO	OKE III	OKE NE	OYI	OYUN	TOTAL
1980-1983												
Govt. School	6	8	2	14	2	2	5	6	11	11	2	72
Comm.	1		9	10	25	2	1	7	5	31	7	109
Chris.			2		4				1	2	2	11
Muslim	1		1	4	7	1				2	5	22
Priv.				2(Pu)					1(Pu)			3
TOTAL	8	8	13	18	28	38	5	13	18	46	16	217
1984/1987												
Govt. School	1		1	3	2	1	1	2				11
Comm.			1									1
Chris.										1		1
Muslim												
Priv.												
TOTAL	1		2(Com 1 Mus)	2 Mus						1(Com)		6
GRAND TOTAL	11	15	18	33	45	68	12	10	19	70	29	355

☐ = Number of schools with disputed proprietorship.

(Mus) = Muslim mission schools.
 (Chr.) = Christian Mission schools.
 (Est) = Schools owned and fully funded by Public establishments.
 (Com) = Community Schools.
 (Pub) = Public Schools.
 Source: Kwara State Educational Management Board, the Kwara State Ministry of Education and other Kwara State Government sources as at 1984/1987.

SUMMARY OF PROPRIETORSHIP OF POST -
PRIMARY INSTITUTIONS IN KWARA STATE 1987

	ASA	BOR	EDU	IEELO	ILO-	IREPO-	KOGI	MORO	OKE	OKE	OYI	OY	GR
				DUN	RIN	DUN			TH	NE		UN	TOTAL
Govt. School	8	13	6	4	23	10	1	9	10	15	16	6	127
Comm. 5 "	2	1	11	18	13	38	2	1	9	7	38		140
Chris. "		1		63	4	101	2			1	13	52	42
Muslim 6 "	1		1	5	3	10	1			1	3	6	31
Public Estab-			11		2					1			3
ishment													
G TOTAL	15	18	33	45	68	12	10	19	25	40	29	355	

Note

- Three of the Muslim Schools are not grant aided.
- Three of the Community Schools are not grant-aided.

Source: Kwara State Ministry of Education and the Kwara State Education and Management Board.

The civil war and the fact that the state was newly created are probable reasons for the fact that only two Government schools were established within the period- (1967-1970). Despite this it should be noted that within three years of the establishment of Kwara State, twenty six post-primary schools were established. Incidentally all post-primary schools from time immemorial up to 1967 were twenty-six.

The chart shows that within the first three years of Kwara State (1967-1970) the post-primary schools increased by 100%. The Kwara State Government in 1973 started to give grants to private proprietors vide the Kwara State Education edict of 1973. This grant-aiding, rather than causing an increase in the establishment of missionary schools it retarded it. There are indications that Christian proprietors opposed the intervention of Government in the running of schools established by Christian missions. However, a noticeable improvement in the number of Christian Missionary schools took place between 1980 and 1983. It is also visible from the chart that more than 50% of Government schools were established between 1980 and 1983. The period also occasioned a rapid increase in the number of Community Schools which rose from 39 in 1979 to 148 in 1983. Muslim Missions established twenty-two of their thirty-one schools within this same period. All these have both social, educational and political implications in the development of Kwara State.

The era up to and including 1960, the year of Nigerian Independence, showed an almost stagnant position in the number of post-primary schools in the area that later became Kwara State.

The period between 1961 and 1966 was the time when a little less than a quarter of the 42 Christian mission schools in Kwara State were established. While the number of Christian schools continued to grow between 1967 and 1970 when Christian Missions had twenty five institutions, there was only one Muslim

Mission school. It is to be noted in passing, that something must have gone wrong in the State Ministry of Education between 1967 and 1970 because four of the nine Christian Mission schools established during the period later generated serious controversies and conflicts between Christian proprietors on the one hand and Communities and Muslim bodies on the other hand. This shall be examined more critically later in this paper. It is also noteworthy that one of the ~~for~~ ^{fourteen} community schools which were established during the period remains a subject of controversy up till today. While communities blame certain top ministry officials for exploiting them to further the religious interest of the said officials, it was not possible to get the re-action of the concerned ministry officials to this allegation.

In the period between 1971 and 1975 there was a fall in the rate of increase in the number of community and Christian Mission schools. The Muslim Mission schools increased from one to four during the period. The decrease in the rate of increase in Christian and Community schools might not be unconnected with 1973 education edict in Kwara State. More than 60% of the thirty nine schools established during the period were Government schools.

Between 1976 and 1979, establishment of schools by Communities got an impetus. While only one school was built by a Christian Mission during the period the Muslim Missions too established only two schools.

The rapid rate of increase in the number of Muslim schools within the period of 1980-1983 was to the Muslims an indication that they had, prior to that time, been suppressed. A letter circulated by the Muslim Community of Kwara State on the 18th of December 1980, in reaction to the publication of the Christian Association of Nigeria in the West Africa Magazine of 17th November 1980 contains:

Muslims recall their patient suffering in the face of educational policies tilted towards the minority

Christian population during the twelve years of military rule in the state. The Military administration turned a deaf ear to the complaints of Muslims against its lop-sided educational development where the bulk of tax payers were Muslim majority and the beneficiaries were Christian minority. An evidence of the manouvres of the Christian missionaries in the establishment of secondary schools and the view of the Muslims that the military administration made Muslims in the State to hold the horns of the cows and allow the Christians to milk the cows for twelve long years.

The Muslims further pressed their claim thus:

Within a year (1979-'80) of liberal educational policy, which encouraged self-help in the state, Muslims have over 10 secondary schools to their credit.

The Christians disagreed with the reasons given by the Muslims and stressed that the rise in the number of Muslim schools was only an indication that Muslims had started to appreciate the value of Western education. For what-ever reason, the fact is that there was a rapid growth in the number of Muslim

schools between 1980-1983. The rise in the number of Muslim schools during the period was largely from Irepodun, Oyun and Ifelodun Local Government Areas.

Muslim bodies in Asa, Borgu, Edu, Ilorin, Kogi, Moro, Okehi and Okene Local Government Areas have not done sufficiently well in the provision of Muslim mission schools despite the fact that a large percentage of the indigenes of the Local Government Areas are Muslims. The level of participation of Christian proprietors in the establishment of schools in Muslim dominated areas had been tremendous. However, there is no Christian Mission school in Asa,

Edu, Moro and Okehi Local Government Areas. Religious bodies established about 21% of the 355 post-primary schools in Kwara State. Muslim missions and communities have three private colleges each.

3. THE LAWS GOVERNING PRIVATE PROPRIETORSHIP OF POST PRIMARY INSTITUTIONS IN KWARA STATE

The laws of Northern Nigeria 1963 cap 36 was the educational law that was in force in Northern Nigeria and later Kwara-State until it was repealed by section 50 of the Kwara State Education Edict 1973 (Edict 2 of 1974). The edict is, with minor modification, re-enactment of the provisions of the Northern Nigeria Education laws of 1963. The Kwara State Education Management Edict of 1984 (Edict 8 of 1984) was enacted in 1984. Except sections 23; 24; 25; 26; 27; 28; 29 and 30 of the 1973 education edicts which were repealed, all other section of the 1973 Education edict remain in force till now

Sections 45 and 48 of the 1973 education edict vest the power to make regulations on the smooth running of government and grant aided schools in the commissioner for Education. Aside these regulations, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1979 is also another legal document, concerning administration of schools in Kwara State.

Both the repealed 1973 Education law and the 1973 Education edict made provision for the establishment of an educational advisory Board Known as Board of Education in the Kwara State Ministry of Education

Section 6 of the 1973 Education Edict specified that the Board shall have among its members four members appointed by the Roman Catholic Mission, four members appointed by protestant Missions and Churches and eight members who shall be proficient in Islamic learning appointed by the Commissioner for Education.

Sections 17 and 38 of the 1973 edict gives the

power to approve the establishment or grant-aid a school to the Commissioner for Education "in his absolute discretion". Section 16 of the Edict provides a list of information which an intending proprietor shall provide. These are:

- (a) (i) The name and address of the proprietor
- (ii) The name and address of the manager
- (iii) The situation of the institution and the plan of the buildings.
- (iv) The type of institution, the number and type of classes and the medium of instruction proposed.
- (v) The numbers, qualifications and nationality of the staff.
- (vi) The nature of the interest in or tenure of the land to be possessed by the institution.

Section 31(3) of the 1973 edict provides that:

Religious instruction shall continue to be given in a transferred school in accordance with the custom of the school and subject to any regulation which the commissioner may make from time to time.

Section 31(4) accords the proprietor of a transferred or grant aided school the power:

To inspect the school at anytime for the purpose of examining the religious instruction given in such schools.

Section 32 of the same edict of 1973 provides that. "A reasonable period of religious instruction shall be given in every institution."

From the provisions of the laws cited, it is clear that the Government, while grant aiding schools, accords a very prominent position to the religion of the proprietor. However the laws allow the

Commissioner for Education to make general rules for the schools. The Commissioner for education has provided certain rules and regulations in accordance with the provision of the edicts. Some of such rules are contained in the "Articles of Government" which was issued by the Kwara State Ministry of Education.

Section 2(b) of the said articles gave the proprietor the right to choose either or both of Islam and Christianity as the mode of religious observance and instruction in the institution but subject to sections 32, 33 and 34 of the 1973 edict. The sections provide for the teaching of religious instruction, prohibit discrimination in admission or attendance of an institution on the basis of religion; and make allowance for every student to receive a religious instruction of the choice of his parent or guardian, if need be, outside the school. Section 10 of the articles emphasised that religious instruction in the institution shall be in accordance with the dictate of the proprietor and subject to sections 32, 33 and 34 of the 1973 edict. These provisions are very ambiguous and susceptible to misinterpretation.

These provisions were being applied in missionary schools until the Government of Kwara State, in 1979, decided that all schools that were funded by Government shall allow the teaching of Islam and Christianity. We shall at the appropriate section discuss the policy and its aftermath.

Another major regulation issued by ministry of education governs the relationship between the Board of Governors the proprietor and the Principal. Section 1 of the regulation states that "The curriculum of the institution shall conform with the objectives of the proprietor."

This Provision has also generated a lot of disagreements between the government and christian proprietors who insisted that their primary objective in establishing schools was evangelisation"¹⁰

Government insists that since the schools were funded from public purse, students cannot be discriminated

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against on the basis of religion. We, therefore, feel that there is the need for the Kwara State Government to consider the issue on the basis of her educational objective and section 35 of the 1979 constitution.

Section 21 of the 1973 edict gave the power to unite existing schools to the Commissioner for Education. If the rationalisation of educational institutions which Kwara State Government is currently examining¹ is to be effected, the Government, in our view, needs to repeal section 21 (3) (a) (b); (4) and (5) of the 1973 edict. This apart, the Government should² also address herself to certain socio-political issues which such rationalisation will raise.

4. MISSIONARY SCHOOLS AND MODE OF PROPRIETORSHIP:

Long before independence, Christian Missions established schools in Nigeria. Prominent among such pre-independence schools are Methodist Boys High School, Lagos (1879); St Gregory's College Lagos (1880); C M.S. Grammar School Lagos (1859) and St. Andrews College Oyo (1896). In Kwara State such pre-independence Christian Mission schools included Titcombe College, Egbe (1951) ECWA Girls Secondary Schools, Omu-Aran (1948) and Bishop Smith Memorial College Ilorin (1957).

When the various state Governments were taking over private schools in the early 70s, they seem to have made no critical examination of the facts involved, before regarding some bodies as the original proprietors of the schools. In Kwara State, secondary schools were aided in 1973 and in accordance with the 1973 Education Edict, the proprietors of each of the voluntary agency schools were given certain rights and duties.

Our investigation reveals that there are a number of schools which have official proprietors that are different from the actual owners and financiers of the

schools. Examples of such schools which raise the question of identification of the genuine proprietors are cited as follows:

(a) Baptist Grammar School, Igbaja:

The school was established in Igbaja in the Ifelodun Local Government Area of Kwara State in 1969. The idea of the establishment of the school was mooted around 1966 by members of the Igbaja progressive Union (I.P.U.) in Lagos.¹³ Prominent among the members of the Union were Alufa Jimoh Idi-odo, Mr David Ogundele and Alhaji Jimoh Amuda Bale who was the Secretary of the Union.¹⁴

Community leaders in Oro, Ajase and Omupo who had established schools were contacted. The Igbaja progressive members were reportedly told that the Community would either have to deposit about £20,000 or obtain the sponsorship of any registered organisation. The Union sent a delegation to the Kwara State Ministry of Education in 1967 and were advised to seek guarantee of a religious body. Jimoh Ogundele and Bale approached the Sudan Interior Mission (S.I.M.) in Igbaja which had earlier established a teachers College at Igbaja, for guarantee. A copy of the letter requesting S.I.M. Jos to be the guarantor of the I.P.U., and which was signed by one Paul Iranloye and Mr. Amuda Bale was seen in the course of our investigation. According to our informants, the S.I.M. replied in 1968 and turned down the request. Despite this rejection, individual members of S.I.M. still continued to support the effort to establish the community school. Then, the Baptist Mission was contacted by David Ogundele who was a Baptist member, through Rev. A. A. A. who was the reverend in charge of the campus (Lagos) Church of the Baptist. Thus the application form was obtained and signed by the Baptist Mission. A photo-copy of a cheque of £9,000 which was signed by one Joseph B. Adediji and Alhaji Bale on behalf of the I.P.U. as deposit for the running of the school and which was made payable to the Baptist Mission

was shown to the present writer by Alhaji Amuda.¹⁶

¹⁷ According to an informant, all adult members of the Igbaja community went to clear the site of the school. The defaulters were made to pay some amount of money as fine. Individuals on the basis of age-group contributed certain amount of money. It was while the levy was being collected that S.I.M. members indicated their unwillingness to continue to participate even at the individual level, in the venture because "the school would bear the name of the Baptist Mission."

¹⁸ According to our Muslim informants, the name of the school was to be Akusi Grammar School. A Christian informant¹⁹ however, said that the I.P.U. initially accepted that the name of the school should be Baptist Community Grammar School. He stressed that the acceptance that the Grammar school shall bear Baptist Mission was a condition for the consent of the mission. He emphasised that the Baptist accepted to be the official proprietor and not a mere guarantor as being suggested by our Muslim informants. He said the issue of name was an after-thought on the part of the Muslims. The Igbaja Muslims, according to sources,²⁰ contacted Muslim Government officials at Ilorin.²¹

Muslim informants claimed that they contacted Ahmadiyya Mission in Lagos which they proposed as their new guarantor since the Baptist refused to change the name. Ahmadiyya too gave a condition that the school shall bear the name of the Ahmadiyya mission,²² so the idea had to be abandoned. While, according to Muslim sources, majority of the Muslims, only withdrew from participation in the running of the school, Christian sources²⁴ said that some Muslims in 1971 even manipulated the forces of thunder²⁵ to destroy the school; and that few buildings had to be re-built by the financiers of the school who by then, were made up of few Muslims such as Alhaj Jimoh Eko, Buremo Buruji of Ile Elemeso; a person identified as "yellow" of Iya Oba house and members of the Baptist Mission.

Muslims engaged the services of one legal practitioner Mr. Lawal to claim the ownership of the school but according to Chief Morohunfola the lawyer abandoned the case when he realised that the Muslims had no case.

In 1980 the Muslims in Igbaja established another school - Muslim Commercial Secondary school Igbaja as a reaction to the incident. Igbaja being a predominantly Muslim town, the number of students at Baptist Grammar School has been seriously reduced since then.

(b) FATIMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE.
EKAN-MEJE/ARAN ORIN

The College was established in 1967 in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara State. According to sources the Communities of the seven villages that constitute Ekan Meje and Aran-Orin contributed fund to establish the school. The Muslims and non-Catholic Christian members of the Communities claimed that the school was a Community school.²⁷

Our Muslim sources claimed that the name Fatima was thought by them as the name of the daughter of prophet Muhammad and that was why according to them, they accepted the name. They emphasised the fact that all the adult members of the communities paid levies which were spent in the establishment of the College, and that individuals across religious lines also made voluntary donations. The Muslims, especially of Aran-Orin believe that the fact that the then leader of the Aran-Orin Community Late Chief James O. Adeoye was a Catholic and the fact that the then Commissioner for Education, Chief J.T. Obaoye was a Christian from Ekan-Meje contributed greatly to the ease with which the Community school was turned into a Catholic institution.²⁸

Catholic sources confessed that the Communities contributed to the money spent in the establishment of the College, they, however, asserted that the college was basically a catholic college.

The principal of the school showed to this writer, on the 13th of April 1987, the copy of original master-plan of the school which, though drawn in 1970, refers to the school as Fatima Secondary Technical College, Ekan-Meje/Aran-Orin whereas the Fatima Community College had started in 1967.

The Muslims claimed that it was when Muslim students' request for a mosque site was turned down in 1980 that the Muslims got to know for the first time, that the college was a catholic college.

(c)

OTHER SCHOOLS

Communities and individual Muslims have also raised some questions on the Christian proprietorship of some other schools in Kwara State. They include Idofian Grammar school, Oyun Baptist High School, Ijagbo, and Anglican College of Commerce Offa.³⁰

Chief Josiah S. Olawoyin confirmed to the present writer that Anglican College of Commerce was originally a community Girls' School but that the community unanimously agreed to donate it to Anglican Community in Offa in sympathy with the Offa Anglican Community on the removal of Bishop Smith Memorial College from Offa to Ilorin by the Anglican Church.

Our Muslim sources³¹ at Offa, however felt that the most vocal and the upper echelon of the Offa Community were Christians and that was why a Community school was given out to a section of the community - The Anglican

Chief J.S. Olawoyin told the Governor of Kwara State at a meeting which the Governor recently held with leaders of Oyun Communities, that Oyun Baptist High School Ijagbo belongs to the Communities of Ipee, Ajase-Ipo, Igosun, Erin-Ile and Offa.³² A Baptist informant³³ said that it was the Baptist Communities in the said towns that build the school. Muslims, however, maintained that the school was a community school.

Another dimension to the issue of proprietorship of mission schools was introduced by the Islamic study Group³⁴. The Group stated that:

The following schools were built completely by various Governments with Government finance either on state-land or land donated by the Missions:

C.M.S. Grammar School, St. Finbars' College, Akoka, Birch Freeman High School, Surulere Ansar-Ud-Deen High School, Surulere and Zumratul Islamiyya Grammar School Yaba.

This view, became our concern, if considered along with the repeated claim of the Muslims in Kwara that:

...Most of these (Christian) schools were actually built by predominantly Muslim Communities, but fraudulently propertied by Christian Missions, with active connivance of Christian preists who were in control of the Kwara State Ministry of Education for almost twelve years.³⁵

and that:

A good number of the schools which the Christian Association of Nigeria... today claims to be "legally owned" by the christians, were founded by Muslim communities. Igbaja Community, which is largely Muslim, planned and funded what is today called Baptist Grammar school, Igbaja. Other predominant Muslim Communitiesare Omupo.....and Ijagbo.....³⁶

The ambiguity surrounding the real ownership of some schools is a factor that militates against the expansion and smooth running of such grant-aided schools in Kwara State. Our investigation reveals that the connections which some Muslim and Christian bodies have with some schools reportedly owned by these bodies were limited to the name of the school and Government recognition of the bodies as proprietors. Actual financiers of some schools are not members of the religious bodies which are, for the purpose of Government recognition, the 'owners'

Of the schools. This trend poses some management problems for the principals of such schools, since the genuine owners of the schools, who almost invariably were members of the immediate communities are being marginalised in official dealings with the Government.

5. PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH MISSIONARY PROPRIETORSHIP OF SCHOOLS IN KWARA STATE:

Religious missions have contributed greatly to the establishment and development of education at the post-primary school level in Kwara State. There are however some peculiar problems which ownership of mission schools poses to effective administration of post-primary institutions in the state. It should be noted that most of the problems emanate from the conflict in objectives of the Government, Christian Missions and Muslim Missions for the establishment of their respective schools.

The Christian proprietors have emphatically stated theirs as evangelisation and "conversion" of the students to Christianity.³⁷ Government, however, establishes schools and grant-aids private schools with a view to providing "equal and adequate opportunities for" the citizens.³⁸ While the Muslims have not articulated clearly their objective, their activities and individual Muslim opinions reveal that their main purpose was to wrestle Muslim Students from Christian-orientation which most non-Muslim schools, including Government schools give to their children.

One of the major problems in Kwara schools, until very recently, was the issue of mode of morning devotions in schools. While Muslim schools have not been known to be opposed to christian devotions in Muslim schools; the christian Missions insist that morning devotion in schools originally established by Christian bodies shall be at all times in accordance with the Christian Faith. Christians point to the earlier mentioned articles of Government and provisions of the Education Edict of 1973. The Christians relied mostly on section 31 (3) (a) of the Edict. The Government calls attention to a fact that

the section contains a clause "Subject to any regulations which the commissioner may make from time to time". The problem degenerated to the level of posing problem of indiscipline in Christian Mission Schools. The Muslim students in such schools started to demonstrate against imposition of Christian observance of morning devotion on all students irrespective of their faith.

The Ministry of Education issued a circular with the topic: "Morning Devotion During Assembly In Post Primary Schools" on the 19th of March 1985. The directive states that "realities..... when comparative percentage of Christian and Moslem Students now attend the same schools" called for a policy that would reflect "our changing times." The circular directed that, with immediate effect, principals should have separate devotions for Muslims and Christians before a joint Assembly. On the 20th of April 1985,

the Kwara State branch of the Christian Association of Nigeria (C.A.N.) issued a counter directive to principals of all Christian Mission schools and emphasised that "Principals should continue with the traditions of their proprietors until further notice."

C.A.N. also sent a letter of protest to the commissioner for education and called the attention of the commissioner to the fact that the said circular of the Ministry "contravenes the provisions of the articles of Government" and emphasised that Christian Mission Schools were for both teaching and evangelisation. C.A.N. stated that any Muslim Student who is not pleased to participate in Christian observance in Christian Mission Schools should withdraw from the schools; and that the Christians detest the observance of Muslim devotions either separately or in joint assembly in any Christian Mission School. The Muslim students in many grant aided schools refused to join any assembly in which christian observance was being held. The principals were at a fix. The ministry prepared another circular to revoke its earlier circular. Muslim students' Society of Nigeria, Kwara State Area Unit sent a circular dated 1st of May 1985 to all its branches asking Muslim students not to partake in "morning devotions in any school funded wholly or partly by the Government". It was then obvious to the Government

that a deadlock had been reached. The ministry then invited some Muslim and Christian leaders to a meeting on the 30th of May 1985. At the meeting, efforts made by the then Commissioner for Education to convince the Muslims to accept the revocation of the Ministry circular of 19th March 1986 were futile. The Muslim insisted that all schools funded by Government are public schools and that the adherents of each of the two religions have the right to practise their religion. To support their stand, Muslims quoted Section 35 (1) of the 1979 Constitution of Nigeria which states that:

No person attending any place of education shall be required to receive religious instructions or to take part in or attend any religious ceremony or observance if such instruction, ceremony or observance relates to a religion not approved by his parent or guardian.

It is relevant to mention here that in 1980 when Government sent preachers of both Bible Knowledge (B.K.) and Islamic Religious Knowledge (I.R.K.) to each of the schools grant-aided by the Government, C.A.N. issued a letter of warning to all teachers of I.R.K. sent to Christian Mission schools. C.A.N. advised the teachers to leave "our school in your own interest". The Government quoted section 35(1) of the constitution to support its stand to allow and enforce the teaching of I.R.K. and B.K. in all schools established by Muslim and Christian missions. The position of the Kwara State Government was also maintained by the Oyo State Government which had christians as both the Commissioner and the Permanent Secretary of its Ministry of Education.²⁹

Unlike the 1980 episode when the Muslim Commissioner For Education Kwara State insisted on the enforcement of section 35(1) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; in 1985, the Christian Commissioner For Education bluntly rejected the view that the constitutional provision was applicable to "mere morning devotions". The deadlock created a high degree of indiscipline in schools where Christian principals refused to grant the Muslims the right to abstain from morning devotion. Where Muslims were excused from Christian observance of morning devotion, but were not allowed to carry out separate Muslim morning devotion, Muslim students

boycoted the joint Assembly after devotion. This was the confused chaotic situation in such institutions until March 1987 when the Ministry issued a circular banning religious devotion in school-Assembly.⁴⁰

Related to the issue of morning devotion and teaching of the two religions in schools was the refusal of Christian Missions to allow Muslim Students in their schools to organise any Muslim religious activity. Few examples shall be given to illustrate this issue.

On the 11th February 1981, the Muslim Students of Mount Carmel College Ilorin sought and obtained the approval of the Principal to hold a ceremony to mark the birth-day of prophet Muhammad on the College premises on the 1st of March 1981. A day to the programme, the Catholic Bishop of Ilorin Diocese, Bishop W. Mahoney made an announcement over Radio Kwara to cancel the programme which according to the Bishop was offensive to the proprietor. The Muslim students insisted and held the programme, even after the principal had, based on the directive of the proprietor, withdrawn his earlier approval. This, again was a threat to school discipline.

Muslim students at Baptist Grammar school, Igbaja; Fatima Community College Ekan-Meje/Aran-Orin also made unsuccessful requests for the provision of mosque sites on the compound of their respective schools. The wave of religious tension in those two schools was particularly high, Probably due to the realisation of Muslims that the Schools were established by Communities.

It is not a surprise that Muslim missions in Kwara State did not oppose teaching of B.K. or religious activities of Christian students in Muslim Mission Schools. Such issues were not in conflict with the Muslims' objectives for the establishment of schools. In addition, the Muslims in Christian Mission Schools were far more than the number of Christian in Muslim Mission Schools. Infact, christian in Kwara State hardly send their children to Muslim Schools which are, of course, less in number than the christian mission schools.

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These problems call for urgent and objective analysis on the part of the Government and a high sense of patriotism and understanding on the part of Christians.

It is pertinent to quote the view of a distinguished Christian scholar Dr. J.A., Ilori on the issue of tolerance in schools:

Freedom of Religion must exist in our schools. True freedom demands that each individual is guaranteed the God-given right to practice without interference or pressure.... Every child in your school has a right to worship God in the Church of his/her choice without any hinderance and to equally receive religious instructions accordingly.... The believes of the children and their parents must be respected and every opportunity must be given to the practice of religion in its proper setting in the school.

Section 29 of the 1979 constitution illegalises discrimination in any establishment funded by the Government. The eleventh Session of United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) - General Conference held in Paris between the 14th and 15th of December 1960 adopted a declaration on "Convention Against Discrimination in Education".

Section 35(1) of the 1979 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria was unequivocal in its prohibition of religious discrimination in educational institutions in Nigeria.

In not less than two times C.A.N. in Kwara State, has issued circulars to repeal authorities and instructions given to principals by the Kwara State Ministry of Education. This development raises the question of who has the superior control over the members of staff of the grant aided schools. The Government could easily assert that the Government which pays the salary of the members of staff has the right to discipline them. Section 4(b) of the 1974 education edict vests the power to appoint, dismiss and discipline members of staff of the grant aided

schools, in the Kwara State Education Management Board.

It is our candid view that there is need for the Government to re-enact the suspended section 24(4) of the 1973 Education edict which stipulates in clear terms that.

The provision of this section (which vests in the Board the power to discipline and control members of staff of grant aided schools) shall have effect notwithstanding anything contained in any rules of management or articles of Government of any institution in respect of teachers over whom the State Schools Board has power of appointment and discipline.

Unless, this or similar provision is made in Kwara State education laws, Government would continue to rely on section 4(b) of the 1973 education edict while the proprietors would continue to derive their power to control members of staff of their schools from various regulations and articles which Government has issued at one time or the other.

There is the need for a clear cut position of Government on whether or not grant aided schools are public schools. The missions could take advantage of section 35(3) of the 1979 constitution which stipulates that:

No religious Community or denomination shall be prevented from providing religious instruction for pupils of that community or denomination in any place of education maintained WHOLLY by that community.

This constitutional provision supports the stand that as long as Government funds grant aided schools, the schools should not be used to discriminate against any citizen of the state.

Muslims in Kwara State, presently have three private post-primary schools maintained wholly by the

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proprietors while the christians have none of such private post-primary schools. Government should not allow that such Muslim Private schools discriminate in admission, practice of religion or religious instructions, against non-Muslim students. In our candid view such schools, if on account of being wholly funded by a religious group are allowed to admit only adherents of the religious group, would breed students with a false impression that members of a religious group could live in absolute isolation of other religious groups. The reality of the Nigerian situation is that it is a multi-religious nation. Any educational policy which creates a contrary impression is clearly in conflict with promotion of national integration and peaceful co-existence of adherents of different religious groups.

6. ACCURACY OF GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS:

Investigation reveals that Government documents in some cases, contain dangerous mistakes. For instance Oyun Baptist High School which, as noted earlier, is presently a subject of controversy was printed in 1986 and 1987 Kwara State Government official diaries as Baptist High School, Ijagbo. The controversy over the erasure of Oyun from the name of the school is so hot that the school, as at present, cannot display the name of the school at its gate. We could have agreed with the suggestion from certain quarters that Government has been manipulated to quietly change the name of the school, if we have not got the opportunity to interview the Chief Supritendent of Secondary schools of the Kwara State Educational Management Board who confirmed that the name as contained in the official diaries was an error.⁴² Similarly the same diaries have the name of Fatima Community College, Ekan Meje/Aran-Orin as Fatima Commercial College, Ekan-Meje. While the error of commercial instead of community could be easily over-looked the omission of Aran-orin from the name of the school could inflame the suspicion of Aran-Orin Community, that Ekan-Meje Communities had succeeded

in edging Aran-Orin out of the ownership of the college. Moreso when Aran-Orin Community has established its own college primarily out of the Suspicion that F.C.C. had been snatched from the Aran-Orin Community. Similarly Ajumoni secondary school which in the 1976 diary was printed as Secondary Grammar School, Omode has serious socio-political implications. This apparent inadvertent error could lead to mistrust and brake-down of peace and order in the communities that felt that Ajumoni (joint ownership) was the appropriate name of the school. The Ministry of Education needs to ensure that inadvertent errors or deliberate mischief of its officer (s) does not create an avoidable confusion.

The participation of religious bodies in the provision of Education to inhabitants of Kwara States has been beneficial to both the state and the religious bodies. The rancour and counter-productive elements generated by the participation have been identified for objective and patriotic resolution. The extent of Government's preparedness to address itself squarely to problems emanating from missionary proprietorship of schools, in our opinion, would determine the rate at which the intervention would become more meaningful to the citizens. Suspicion, deceit and manipulation of Government policies for sectarian and selfish considerations, need be avoided.

The followings are steps which we consider necessary for channelisation of the efforts of missionary proprietors towards the educational goals and aspirations of the state.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- (a) The Government needs to ammend the discriminatory provision of section 6(i) of the 1973 edict to allow Muslims. as it is the case with Christians, to appoint their representatives on the Board of Education. This should be done even if

the Board of Education is presently non functional.

- (b) Guidelines and articles of Government on private proprietorship of schools need be reviewed in line with the educational objective of the Government and in consistency with existing education Laws and the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
- (c) Government should watch very closely the activities of its officers with a view to avoiding the use of public offices to further sectional interests. Careless and dangerous mistakes which are inimical to peaceful co-existence among communities should be avoided.
- (d) Government should increase her efforts to promote sense of patriotism and duty among its officials.
- (e) A well articulated objective for post-primary Education should be laid down by Government. Pre-requisite for establishment of post-primary institution should be clearly stated. The conditions should be realistic and necessary for actual running of the school. The present practice which allows a Commissioner for Education to, on flimsy excuse, disallow the establishment of a school should be discontinued. Experience has proved the possibility of a Commissioner's undue refusal to approve a school which belongs to an interest which rivals the sectional interest of the Commissioner.
- (f) The right to freedom of practice of religion and receipt of religious instruction of the choice of the students in any institution wholly or partly maintained from public fund should be ensured.
- (g) The Government should grant aid the three private Muslim Mission schools and the three private Community colleges that are, at present,

not grant aided. This, in our view, should be done before the Government, as we shall propose in the following paragraph, makes a firm and definite regulation concerning grant-aiding of post-primary schools,

- (h) The Government should hence forth declare periodically the places at which it needs the establishment of grant-aided schools. Any voluntary agency which establishes a private school at any place in which the Government does not need a school should not be grant-aided. Indiscriminate grant-aiding has led to a situation where certain schools continue to be funded by Government despite the fact that there are enough schools within the same area which can adequately contain the pupils from the area.
- (i) Government should set out clear and well-thought guide-line which shall ensure that private proprietorship does not inhibit school discipline.
- (j) The Government should set up a commission to determine the actual proprietors of schools and, where possible, ensure that it is the real owners that are recognised as proprietors.

NOTE AND REFERENCES

1. Though there was no area known as Kwara State then, the data covers the area which now falls within the present Kwara State.
2. Government schools include Local Government Schools and schools established by the Federal Government.
3. Schools established by Government but were later scrapped are discountenanced.
4. These are schools that are wholly financed by private bodies and which receive no grant or any

form of assistance from the Government.

5. These include three private community schools.
6. These include three private Muslim mission schools
7. Bishop Onaiyekan, the Catholic Bishop of Kwara State expressed this opinion at a meeting held on 30/5/85 between the Ministry and religious leaders.
8. One of the officials is dead while efforts to reach the other were futile.
9. A letter written to the Military Government of Kwara State by C.A.N. on the 23rd of December, 1980
10. This view was further expressed by the Catholic Bishop of Kwara State Bishop J. Onaiyekan at a meeting with the Kwara State Commissioner for Education Mr. Abraham Goshi on the 30th of May 1985. The present witer was in attendance. A letter written by C.A.N. to the Kwara State Commissioner for Education on "morning devotion in schools" in May 1985 also contains this assertion.
11. As recently announced by the Military Governor of Kwara State.
12. See Section 5 below.
13. According to an interview held with Alhaji Jimoh Imosu, A Muslim farmer at Igbaja on the 21st of March 1987. AGE: 65 and confirmed by Paul Arinde in an interview held with him at Igbaja on the 8th of march 1987 at Igbaja. He is a Christian civil servant. Aged 49 years.
14. Interview conducted with Alhaj Amuda Bale a 55 years old trader at ~~lagos~~ on the 23rd march 1987.

He was the Secretary of the Union.

15. Interview with Alhaji Amuda Bale; A trader, aged 55 years at Lagos on 23/3/87.
16. Interview with Alhaj Amuda Bale; Aged 55 years at Lagos on 23/3/87
17. Alhaj Jimoh Imosu, A Muslim farmer. Aged 65 at Igbaja on 13/3/87.
18. All Muslims interviewed on the issue at both Igbaja and Lagos.
19. Interview with Chief Morohunfola, the first principal of Baptist Grammar School Igbaja, at present a permanent member Kwara State Civil Service Commission, at Ilorin 14/3/87.
20. Interview with Alhaji Amuda Bale at Lagos on 23/3/87. Other Muslims confirmed the assertion.
21. Alhaj Yusuf Idi-aro and M. Akanbi Oniyangi were mentioned as Muslim officials who then confirmed that the official position was that the school was a Christian school.
22. Interview with Alhaji Amuda Bale, a Muslim trader aged 55 years at Lagos on 23/3/87.
23. Alhaj Amuda Bale, Alhaj Imosu and Alhaj Jimoh Eko, a trader at Lagos, interview at Lagos 23/3/87
24. Interview with Chief Morohunfola, a permanent member of the Kwara State Civil Service Commission at Ilorin on 14/4/87. He is aged 56 years.
25. Interview with Chief Morohunfola, a permanent member of the Kwara State Civil

Service Commission at Ilorin on 14/4/89.
He is aged 56 years.

- 26, Interview with Alhaji Salami Olajide Awayewaserere, a Muslim trader, Farmer and a Community leader, at Aran-Orin on 13/4/87. He is aged 56 years.
- 27, Interview with Mr. Ezekiel Ajibade Ajiboye, a Christian trader Aran-Orin on 2/10/86. His age was about 50 years. Alhaji S.O. Awayewaserere also confirmed the report.
- 28, Whereas, as explained by Mr Idowu, the principal of Fatima Community College in an interview at the College premises on 13/4/87. it was taken from our lady of Fatima; and that Fatima is a town in Portugal.
- 29, Bishop W. Mahony, the then Catholic Bishop of Kwara State confirmed the financial involvement of the communities at a meeting at the Bishops house in December 1980. The present writer was present. Catholic members at Aran-orin also confirmed the report but said the communities were fully aware that the school would bear the name of the Catholic Church and that official propreitor shal be the Catholic mission.
- 30, Muslims have in many letters to successive Governors of Kwara State repeatedly made this allegation.
31. Alhaj R.A. Adegboye, a prominent Muslim Offa indigene made this assertion at an interview at Offa in January 1987. Other Muslims have at different times expressed this view.
32. This writer has a recorded tape of the proceedings of the meeting relayed over Radio Kwara on 5/2/87 at 7.30 a.m.

33. Interview with Chief Morohunfola a Baptist leader in Oyun L.G.A. and a permanent member of the Kwara State Civil Service Commission on 14/3/87.
34. Vide pamphlet published by Islamic study Group, Lagos in 1981. The pamphlet was entitled "Religious Education in Lagos State."
35. Page 5 of a memorandum submitted to the Kwara State Commissioner for Education by the Muslim Community of Kwara State, dated 8/6/85.
36. Pages 3 and 4 of a document published by Muslim Community of Kwara State in November 1980.
37. Reverend Canon Professor E.C.O. Ilo. "The impact of Christian Education in Nigeria in the Past" in The Source. Vol. ix, P. 10
38. Section 18(1) of the 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
39. Vide Oyo State Government circular of 19/4/84 Ref. No. Edu 107/412.
40. Vide Kwara State Government circular of 30/3/87 Ref.No.CDN/2.23/Vol.11/187.
41. J.A. Ilori: An Address to the National Association of Bible Knowledge Teachers of Nigeria in The Course, Op. cit., P. 3.
42. Chief M.A Gbacebo, in an interview at Ilorin on 16/4/87.