

**THE GROWTH AND IMPACT OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN NUPELAND,
1903-2009**

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**BEING A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIONS,
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ATTESTATION

I, SAMUEL, Zubairu Josiah attest to the fact that this project work is original to me and I did not copy or plagiarize the research work of anyone, either living or dead.

Signature

Date

CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned Internal Examiners, hereby certify that SAMUEL, Zubairu Josiah (98/15CJ017) has satisfactorily effected all the corrections pointed out to him during the Oral Examination of this thesis, titled: The Growth and Impact of the Anglican Church in Nupeland 1903 - 2009, held on ----- and recommended that he be awarded the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Christian studies

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my dear father, Late Rev. Samuel Yisa Zubairu who slept in the Lord on 11th January, 2005.

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ABSTRACT

The Church Missionary Society (CMS) came as the pioneer Christian mission to Nupeland. After several years of attempts, the CMS was able to plant Churches in the nooks and crannies of the land. Despite this fact, Christianity is observed to be making a very slow progress in Nupeland after almost two centuries of its existence. The aim of the study were to: (i) identify the impact of the Anglican Church in Nupeland between 1903-2009 (ii) examine the response of the Nupe people to the Christian Gospel within the time of study, (iii) analyse the efforts of the indigenous missionaries who worked to establish the mission and (iv) explain the factors responsible for the epileptic growth rate and expansion of the Anglican Mission in Nupeland.

The research methods adopted for this study were historical and analytical. These methods were utilized for enquiry into the past and to have a better analysis of the data gathered in this work respectively. The theoretical frame-work used was that of Andrew Walls: the Indigenization and Pilgrimage Principles.

The findings of the study were that:

- (i) The arrival of the Anglican Church in Nupeland has impacted Nupeland in the areas of religion, economy, agriculture, socio-culture, politics, education and health;
- (ii) The response of the Nupe to the Christian Gospel is largely dependent on social and cultural factors such as the Nupe world-view, communal life, linguistic considerations, respect for elders and traditional rulers, etc;
- (iii) Many Anglican Churches were established in Nupeland through the efforts of the indigenous missionaries such as Samuel Ajayi Crowther, Abraham Akon, Daniel Akerele, Nda Jeremiah, Josiah Alhassan, Daniel Tijiko, Solomon Yisa, etc
- (iv) The Anglican Church has not been able to spread beyond its present borders due to various challenges such as sickness, death of some missionaries, socio-cultural and political factors, unfavourable environmental conditions, influence of the Pentecostal Churches, Schism within Anglican Church, among others.

The study concluded that the Anglican Church in Nupeland has not paid much attention to the socio-cultural life of the Nupe people. This accounts for slow growth rate of the Anglican Church in Nupeland. The work therefore, recommended that the Nupe indigenous missionaries should be recruited more and encouraged to live among the people, among whom they ministered.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Long before the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate, the Nupe people had organized themselves into a Kingdom and had their system of governance under-different kings. The United Kingdom started under the leadership of Tsoede who is believed to be the progenitor of the Nupe.¹

The Nupe were very religious in their traditional modes of worship prior to the coming of both Islam and Christianity. They had a clear idea of the Supreme Being,² divinities and spirits.³ Their religious and socio-economic activities show their belief in the world of the spirits. Through their priests, passages of rites were observed. Almost all aspects of their lives were influenced by their religious beliefs.

The great evangelical revival of the 18th century was to spur the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in visiting Nupeland to open it up to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This evangelical revival had both immediate and long term effects on Europe, America and Africa respectively. Part of the immediate effect of this revival was the formation of different mission bodies or societies out of which the CMS grew in 1799.⁴ The coming of the CMS was premised on an attempt to end the slave trade in Africa and to also preach the Gospel. This is in consonance with the command of Jesus to His disciples in Matthew 28:18-20 to preach the Gospel to all the nations of the world and make disciples for Him. In order to play these roles, the CMS came to the Niger Area in 1841.⁵

Nupeland falls between the territory of the Rivers Niger and Kaduna. The event which brought the Christian Gospel to Nupeland was an expedition to the Niger area. The expedition was collaboration among the CMS, the British Government and commercial agents. Prominent among the explorers were Reverend J.F. Schon and Samuel Ajayi Crowther, among others.⁶ This was the beginning of the evangelistic efforts of the CMS in Nupeland.

At the initial stage, the Church was faced with diverse challenges which made the work of evangelism very difficult. Among difficulties encountered as will be seen in this work include slave raiding, effect of powerful kings, ill - health and death.⁷The greatest of these challenges was Islam. Despite these challenges, the Church became established in Nupeland. Despite the slow growth of the Anglican Church, it has impacted Nupeland in a number of ways. These include conversion, education, civilization, economic growth, among other things. However, this is not to say that the Anglican Church in Nupeland has summonted all her problems. There are still some challenges which the Church is grappling with today.

Presently, Anglican Church is not the only Church in Nupeland, there are orthodox or mainline churches, but it is the pioneer mission in Nupeland with a definite mandate. It has spread to some parts of the Nupeland but at the same time, its growth has been grossly limited in other areas. This work therefore, attempts to bring to limelight some of the achievements of the Anglican Church and its impacts on the people since its inception. It seeks to find out the factors which made for success and limitations. The work will among other things explain how the Anglican Church got to Nupeland, its activities since inception, the challenges it faced between 1903 and 2009; the strategies adopted in making conversions, its contributions, and analysis of its chance of continuous survival in Nupeland.

This work on the growth and impacts of the Anglican Church in Nupeland attempts to document the chronological history of the Anglican Church in Nupeland. It explains the challenges of the Church. This work will help the Church and other missions to improve on their strategies to evangelism for better results. Hence, Anglican Church has existed for over a century in Nupeland. The study covers a period between 1903 and 2009. 1903 was the year the CMS established the first Anglican Church in Bida, the headquarters of Nupeland while 2009 was the year Doko Diocese was carved out of the old Bida Diocese.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Nupeland, which forms a significant part of Northern Nigeria, has CMS as its pioneer mission. Nupeland has had contact with Christianity close to two centuries now, yet the rate of growth and expansion of the Church is drag - footing in some parts of the land. This has resulted in the small percentage of Christians than places which were evangelized half a century later.⁸

This region of Northern Nigeria attracts our attention due to the general observation of the epileptic nature of Christian growth in Nupeland regardless of the number of years the missionary minded Churches like the CMS have existed there. In the preface written by Ike Nwachukwu et al., it was reported that:

There are not more than 4% Christians among the Nupes: This figure has been hotly contested by some people as being too low. But what has not been contested is that the total Christian population is less than 10% of the total population. By the time we look for those who are born again they can't be up to 1%. Is this cheering news for a hundred years of preaching Christ in Nupeland?⁹

While we may not confirm these figures because of the paucity of statistical data to prove this assertion, we need to appreciate the fact that this writer may not be very far from the truth. Available evidences show that Nupeland has a smaller percentage of Christians than some areas of the North evangelized much later, e.g. Tivland and Idomaland. The land was a beneficiary of the first Niger Expedition in 1841.¹⁰ Hence, this research has gone into the reasons responsible for the slow progress of Christianity in Nupeland from the perspective of the Anglican Church.

There are various degrees of concentration of Christianity in different parts of the Northern Nigeria. Since the inception of Christianity in this region, the expansion of Christianity and especially the missions which established it differ from one place to the other. This is due to many and diverse factors. The growth and expansion of Christianity in

Northern Nigeria is a theme that easily attracts the attention of any Church historian. The reason is that Northern Nigeria is believed to be the cradle of Islam in Nigeria. Moreso, it is assumed that the adherents of Islam are more in number than Christians in that region. Therefore, since Islam arrived earlier one will wonder how Christianity was able to penetrate Northern Nigeria especially Nupeland. Unfortunately, there are not many literatures where the efforts of many of these mission bodies responsible for the evangelization of the region are recorded. Gaiya observes in Crampton's book: *Further Reflections on Christianity in Northern Nigeria, 1975-2000*,

Christianity in Northern Nigeria is about a century and a half old. This means Christianity is old enough in this part of the country to be regarded as a traditional religion of the peoples of Northern Nigeria. In spite of how long christianity has been in this area (which is a third of the size of India), the only book length account of the history of its presence is E.P.T. Crampton's *Christianity in Northern Nigeria* published in 1975. An account of further developments in the Church in Northern Nigeria is highly needed, particularly since the handing over the mission churches to nationals in the 1970s.¹¹

Gaiya's comment is revealing. It corroborates the position of the researcher that there is a dearth of historical literature on the history of the Anglican Church and ultimately Christianity in Nupeland. This gap is adequately filled by this work.

There were other attempts made by the CMS to open up Nupeland to the Gospel after the first Niger Expedition. CMS which metamorphosed into Anglican Church has existed in Nupeland for over a century now.

Therefore, this work seeks to answer questions such as: How has the Anglican Church made steady impact in Nupeland? Has the Anglican Church succeeded in planting Churches in various parts of Nupeland despite many challenges? How has the Anglican Church able to establish herself in some parts of Nupeland? What are the reasons for success or failure of the Anglican Church in Nupeland?

Times are changing and the society is facing new challenges everyday. Therefore, for the Church to remain relevant to the Nupe society, there must be new strategies to evangelism in the 21st Century. The identifications of these challenges will help the Church to make a better impact on the society. Thus, this work attempts to identify the challenges facing the Anglican Mission and suggests strategies needed for effective evangelism in Nupeland.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to (i) analyze the genesis of the CMS and by extension, Christianity in Nupeland,(ii) examine the impacts of the Anglican Church in Nupeland within the period of study, (iii) identify the roles of the indigenous missionaries who collaborated with or took over from the white missionaries and established the Anglican Churches in Nupeland (iv) evaluate the response of the Nupe to the Christian Gospel within the time of study,(v) explain the factors responsible for epileptic growth rate and expansion of the Anglican Mission in Nupeland.

1.4 Scope and Limitations of the Study

There are many missions in Nupeland today. Apart from the Anglican Church, there are other mainline Churches, African Independent Churches, Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal Churches. However, out of these numerous Churches, our study will focus on the Anglican Church because of the pioneering roles it played in the Christianization of Nupeland. Furthermore, much of the emphasis will be on Anglican Churches in Niger State since there is a concentration of Anglican Churches in the area. History has it that Niger State is the original home of the Nupe people. It is expedient to also note that CMS began to have a breakthrough in Nupeland in 1903 when the first Anglican Church was established in Bida, the capital of Nupeland. This achievement came to the peak when the Anglican mission established the third Anglican diocese in Doko in 2009. This explains one of the reasons for

choosing to study Anglican mission within a specified time eventhough the mission activities started long before this time.

1.5 Justification

Many erudite scholars have done commendable work on the history of Christianity in West Africa but little or nothing has been done on the growth of Anglican Church in Nupeland. Therefore, this work provides a very good chronicle about the efforts of the Anglican Church in bringing the Gospel into Nupeland. It explains the challenges they faced and are still facing in the course of their operations.

The value of this work also lies in the fact that it intimates the present day missionaries on the strategies adopted by the Anglican Church to evangelize Nupeland. This will help them to know how to improve on these methods and strategies for better results. Also, the work is relevant in the sense that it will serve as an eye opener to the modern day missionaries to know challenges facing Christianity in Nupeland. This will help the Anglican Church to restrategize to make better impact on the society. Other denominations can also borrow a leaf from this in order to advance the course of the Gospel in Nupeland. Finally the work will indicate whether the Anglican Church is growing and making progressive impacts on Nupeland or not.

1.6 Research Methodology

In order for us to achieve the aims of this work we shall depend on both secondary and primary research sources. In using the secondary sources, we shall depend largely on the historical method. Historical method is necessary in this kind of work to get the correct information about the Church and the society under consideration. This will lay a solid foundation for the proper analysis of the data collected.

Interpretative research method is a necessity in this work. This becomes pertinent for interpreting the historical information collected in the face of the present reality. Interview was used as a tool for collecting data on the growth and impact of the Anglican Church in Nupeland. The interviews were conducted among the clergymen, Church leaders and laity.

1.7 Literature Review

History shows that the Nupe Kingdom was one of the powerful Kingdoms in sub-Sahara Africa.¹²The Nupe have done great exploits in politics, economics, technology, religion, trade relations, culture and so on. Despite the great feats achieved in the past, the Nupe can be said to be under-researched when compared to tribes like Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo. The little research done is largely in the area of their historical, socio-economic and political developments as against many works on the history and impact of Christianity in Nupeland. Some of the works done on the Nupe include the ones written by Ohiare A.J., *Nupe Relations with her Southern Neighbours: The case of Ebira* in Idris A.A. and Ochedu Y.A. (eds); *Bida and Umaru Majigi Dynasty* by Ndayako, H. , *The Nupe and the Origins and Evolution of the Yoruba C. 1275 – 1897* by Jimada I.S., *Foundations of the Bida Kingdom* by Manson, M., *Nupe in History: 1300 to date* by Ismaila, D. , *Nupe and their Neighbours* by Ibrahim, S. , among others.

An anthropologist of note, S.F. Nadel did a thorough work on the Nupe. For many decades now, his books: *A Black Byzantium*¹³ and *Nupe Religion*,¹⁴ have been points of reference to many researchers and authors. These books are good sources of information on the Nupe of Nigeria. Describing the environment of the Nupe country, he states:

The people who call themselves Nupe live in the heart of Nigeria, in the low basin that is formed by the valley of the two Rivers Niger and Kaduna, between 9° 30' and 8° 30' N.L. A line drawn from Leaba, on the Niger, eastward to Kataeregi marks the northern boundary of Nupeland, another line drawn eastward from Shari (or Tsaragi) to Abugi and on to the Niger South of Baro the Southern boundary. The Niger flowing almost straight north – South between Leaba and Jebba, divides Nupe country from Yoruba in the West, the slowly rising country, east of Lapai and Gidi, sloping upward towards the hills of Gbari country, forms the eastern boundary of Nupe.¹⁵

Nadel's description of the Nupe country is a very good one. The language used is apt, concise and descriptive of the geographical reality of the Nupe country at least to a very large extent. He acknowledges the fact that sections of Nupe have always lived outside its boundaries and that other tribal sections other than Nupe have formed the nationals of the Nupe country. Considering the way many Nupe subtribes settled down in Nupeland and the way they became acculturated or absorbed, one will surely agree with Nadel. There are also some Nupe immigrants scattered around other regions of Nigeria other than the Nupe country, e.g. there are some Nupe settlements in the present Ifelodun Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria whose settlements predate the work of Nadel. Such settlements include Ganmu-Aliheri, Ndatsu, Jiboye, Alawon, Bankole-Yebo-Soko, just to mention a few of them. These Nupe settlements are in Yorubaland.

The same author draws a tribal map of the Nupe country. He writes;

In the north the neighbours of the Nupe are Kamberi, Kamuku and Hausa, in north-east and east lies Gbari country, in the south, on the river, the country of the Kakanda, and west of the River, Yagba (a section of the Yoruba) and Ilorin Yoruba and in the north-west, finally the people of Borgu and Bussa.¹⁶

History justifies the submission of Nadel here, even with the creation of new states in Nigeria in recent years; some of these tribes are either carved to be in the same state with the Nupe e.g. the Gwari or Gbari in Niger State, or still sharing the same geographical boundary with them. Another example of this is seen where the Nupe live adjacent to and in some cases among the Yoruba in Kwara State as stated earlier.

The author under consideration identifies Nupe language as belonging to the group of Sudanese language and it falls in the category of the “Kwa” language family. Here, in this, he has identified five different dialects. He opines thus:

Nupe language belongs to the group of Sudanese language, and within this category forms together with Ibo, Edo, Ijo, Andoni and Yoruba, the “Kwa-group of West African languages Nupe is related more closely in structure and vocabulary to Gbari and Kakanda... a dialect which we will term Nupe proper and the dialect of Ebe, Zitako, Bassa and Kupa.¹⁷

A study of this group of languages shows that they are related in structure and vocabulary. Certain words have similar meanings in some of the languages referred to above. Consequently, they point to a common origin which this area of study covers.

In classifying Nupe into their sub-tribes, Dauda Ibrahim groups them under two broad categories. According to him, “Nupe can be classified into two groups: by dialect and location. However, neither of the classes can be regarded as neighbours of Nupes but pure Nupes.”¹⁸ Dauda’s submission is relevant here because the work studies the Anglican Church among the said people. In the contribution of Nadel, he observes that the Nupe identify eleven or twelve subtribes of Nupes. He asserts that the tradition of Nupe states that during the time of Tsoede, the cultural hero of the Nupe, there were five original subtribes. He identifies those eleven or twelve subtribes thus:

The Nupe count eleven or twelve such tribal sections or, as I propose to call them sub-tribes. Here are the names: Ebe, Gbede or Gbedegi, Kusopa, Benu,

Beni, Dibo or Zitako (also known as Gana-Gana among the Hausa) Kyedye or Kede, Ebagi, Bataci, Kupa, Cekpa and perhaps also Gwagba.¹⁹

The contribution of Nadel lies in the fact that these subtribes are still seen scattered all over Nupeland today. It is this group of people that this work seeks to study. Quite interestingly, each of these tribes is aware of his or her history and origin. A research carried out by the Research Department of the Calvary Ministry among the Nupe shows that just like other African tribes, portions of the Nupe are still involved in the traditional worship of their religion called *Kuti*²⁰. “Quite a portion of the Nupe are still involved in their traditional worship or *Kuti* Religion. Superficially, it would appear as if *Kuti* has been routed by Islam or Christianity but we discovered that this is not the case.”

This agrees with the view of the High Priest Ifayemi Elebuibon who states that despite a large scale war by Christianity and Islam against the African Religion, they have not been able to win a war against it. According to him,

Up till today in Yoruba land in my experience, many Christians and Muslim leaders, such as Imams and Pastors, still go to Ifa priest (babalawo) for divination. Many Pastors use herbal medicines, including magical soap. Some Imams and Alfas still come to make spiritual work for their clients with assistance of a babalawo.²¹

Some of the deities worshipped among the Nupe include *Gbaraba, Fitakun, Ndakogboya, Tsufa* and *Nnokwu Watson, Gboya, Yagi and Yasu, Momo Ndabazunma, Tsako, Ndaduma, and Nnako*. In the research carried out by the Calvary Ministries, the Bini alone “used to worship up to 63 different deities”²² If there are as many as this number among the Bini alone, by the time deities among other Nupe tribes are summed up, it is likely to exceed the total number of about 700 divinities among the Yoruba. This stresses the fact that the Nupe, like their African counterparts, are highly religious. The research work of this department adds value to this work by telling us the level of growth and development of the Nupe religion before the coming of the Anglican Church to Nupeland. However, it did not discuss

in detail these deities. This work will study some of the deities to appreciate the religious understanding of the Nupe before the coming of Christianity.

In the Nupe religious structure, Nadel in another book, *History of Nupe Religion*, identifies Soko – the Supreme Being as the most basic concept of Nupe theology. In his opinion, the Nupe draw a clear line of demarcation between the sacred and profane by the use of expression, “nya Soko” (“of God or belonging to God”) He expresses it vividly thus:

But the relationship between God and the created world is once more viewed as a dichotomy. And in this final context only the forms of religious action which bear on the living active powers of the deity are “of God” while all others, having become part of his completed creation, are classed with the “things in the world.”²³

Nadel identifies four entities that make up the Nupe universe: *Yizhe* (the created world) which is identical with *kin* (earth), sky which is identified with God himself, as the name Soko (God) literally implies “God - the - sky”. However, he comments on the nature of this deity as saying that the Nupe believe that “Soko lokpa”²⁴ meaning God is transcendent and immanent.

In another development, he was quick to bring to the fore the Nupe belief that God is present always and everywhere. He exemplifies this in a song he records: “God is in front, He is in the back.”²⁵ The author, despite his attraction to the concept of God’s closeness to man, was drawn into the temptation of the mistake of some European researchers who claim that God, to an African, is far removed from his creature. The researcher disagrees with this conclusion. When the Nupe say *Soko lokpa* (God is far away), they are only emphasizing the intermediary and other helps provided by the Supreme Being for the use of man. The Supreme God of the Nupe cares for his creation. The Nupe substantiate this when they say *Soko tsoba gan epa nakan yi* - meaning God is closer to us than the skin on our body. However, the value of his work lies in the fact that the Nupe had a clear concept of the existence of the Supreme Being before the coming of the Anglican Church to Nupeland. This

concept must have helped the Anglican Missionaries in their work of evangelism among the Nupe, since the concept of the Supreme Being forms a foundation for the understanding of the Christian God.

Varieties of names by which Satan is known in Nupe include “Abili”, “Jibililu” and “Shietan”. The word “Shietan” seems to be an Arabic word. In the same vein the Nupe name *Jibililu* is equivalent to the Arabic word *Jibril* – an angel. “Abili” could be an original word or a further corruption of *Jibril*. The researcher guesses that the name *Abili* may be a corruption of the word “Iblis” in the Qur’an. That notwithstanding, it should be noted that these loan words do not negate the fact that the Nupe had their original concept of the devil, *jinns* and spirits. *Jinns* and spirits could function both in good and bad ways. In the Nupe creed, the people have a perfect knowledge of how the devil works, the Nupe regard him as one of the creatures of *Soko* – God. He is associated with every form of evil and disagreements which happen in any society. However, they still believe that he cannot be active except he is permitted by *Soko*. P. Ade Dopamu in *Esu: The Invisible Foe of Man*, while quoting a song by the Nupe explains the belief about Satan among the Nupe thus:

The implication of the Song is that God is everywhere and is the only one that can do all things. He is the Powerful One, the Source of power for all other things visible and invisible. The Nupe, like the Yoruba accept the reality and presence of evil in the world but maintain that God is Omnipotent and good.²⁶

Much of Dopamu’s work here is essentially focused on the Yoruba concept of Satan without giving a detailed explanation on the Nupe belief on Satan. This work seeks to fill such gap but beyond that the Nupe belief before the advent of the Anglican Church shows the level of understanding on these concepts among the people.

Witchcraft is a menace to be fought since it affects the common good of the society and the existence of a community depends on how well it is able to curb the activities of the

evil people. One of the methods through which the Nupe addressed this issue was Ndakogboya.

Ndakogboya, a Nupe cult, is a compound word consisting of two principal words: *Ndako* (grand-father) and *gboya*. Tsado Samson explains this further:

The name *Ndako* means “Grand Father” and *Gboya* means “Ancestor” or the disappearing of the ancestor. But to some people “*Ndako*” in terms of the practice means the “long father” which brings respect to the Masquerade. Among the Nupe, it is the most powerful weapon of its kind and since its inception, probably several generations ago, it seems to have overshadowed all other anti-witchcraft measures.²⁷

Parrinder, also observes that:

The cult has been merged with the main rituals of Nupe the “*Gunu*” when “*Dako Gboya*” mask appears during the vigil in the bush it is to frighten the novices, warn the youths to obey their elders, and whip offenders.²⁸

Awalolu and Dopamu in their book, *West African Traditional Religion* are down to earth in their description of Ndakogboya. According to them, there is

the existence of the ancestors in the society who are not visible. He is hailed as *Gunuko* or *Ezo gunu Kuti*, whenever it appears on the ground. It is always a taboo to identify the person inside the mask, it is never disclosed to non-members. Anybody that does so would be seriously beaten. In reality it is very difficult to reveal the secrets in the practice of Ndakogboya. It is always an influential intermediary between man and God.²⁹

It will not be out of place to say that Ndakogboya is the most popular cult among the Nupe today. This may be because of the multiple purposes it is serving in the society. It is an anti-witchcraft and at the same time an entertaining cult. The actor in a tube-like cloth represents the spirit of *gboya*. The establishment of the Anglican Church in Nupeland shows that the presence of Christianity has made this cult unpopular. Some practitioners have been converted into Christianity.

The Nupe are not very different from their African counterparts in the use of magic. In the words of Dopamu, “The practice of magic and medicine is both an art and a science in

the sense of utility and verification of results”.²⁸This agrees with Idowu’s assertion.

According to him,

Magic and Medicine are used by man to conquer his environment. They are used to procure what cannot be obtained in the ordinary way. They can be used for good as well as bad ends.³⁰

The Nupe have been able to put their environment in check through the use of magic. In line with the view of Dopamu, since magical results are verifiable, people in Nupeland learn the art of magic since it is open to anybody to learn, at least for those who are interested. While some people acquire it through learning, others inherit it. In either case, it is used for both good and bad ends depending on individuals. The works of Samson, Parrinder, Awolalu and Dopamu show a serious societal problem which Christianity had to contend with at the coming of the Anglican mission in Nupeland. However, the said authors did not show how this has been a challenge to Christianity in Nupeland.

The Nupe believe in divinities as comprehensively shown in Ndakogboya above. Awolalu and Dopamu in their book, *West African Traditional Religion* explains that:

Divinities are generally referred to as “Kuti”. The Nupe holds that Kuti is a ritual given them by “Soko” the Supreme Deity to serve as intermediary between men and God. They regard “Kuti” as a means of communicating with “Soko”. They further hold that there are many “Kutis” each has an identity and power of its own. Each also has its individual name.³¹

The authors did not provide comprehensive information about different categories of Kuti in Nupeland. This blurs the level of religious commitment of the Nupe prior to the coming of the CMS. *Sogba* is one of such cults. History shows that it is alien to the Nupe but has been adopted because of its relevance to the Nupe society. More importantly, Awolalu and Dopamu’s assertion that *Kuti* is an intermediary between men and God finds relevance in the Anglican theology of Christ as an intermediary and mediator between man and God.

There are several views about the origin and progenitor of the Nupe. A source identifies the progenitor of the Nupe with Ugban bn Nafi. According to Saidu Ibrahim,

Ugban bn Nafi... was said to have migrated from across North-East Africa to Nubia and then to Nupeland. (This is however a hypothesis which needs to be researched into by historians and scholars). Whatever the case those now known as the Nupes eventually came to inhabit their present home as a result of the mass movement down south by various people during the desiccation of the Sahara.³²

This opinion is not a popular one among the Nupe. The researcher agrees with the author who says it is a mere hypothesis and needs a deeper research if it must be established as a historical fact. Saidu's submission is very significant because it attempts to trace the origin of the people among whom the Anglican mission worked.

Mallam Dendo was a personality to change the course of history in Nupeland. The long awaited opportunity came at the death of the 19th King of Nupe, *Etsu Ma'azu*. In the words of Johnston, he says:

Towards the end of the eighteenth century there appeared on the scene a Fulani called Mallam Dendo. He was a member of the Toronkawa Clan and until then his home had been in Kebbi. He was a scholar, not a pastoralist, and he seems to have gone to Nupe as a preacher and missionary of Islam and to have established himself, even before the Jihad, as a man of influence.³³

Johnston gives a very useful hint on a powerful reformer of Islam in Nupeland. His work in Nupeland explains why there is still a concentration of Islam in that region. However, this author does not explain how Islam got to Nupeland. This work is conceived to fill this gap in order to appreciate the effort of the Anglican Mission in that land.

Mohammed Kuta Yahaya agrees with Johnston's assertion. According to him,

Under *Etsu* Ma'azu, the nineteenth King of Nupe, Nupe Kingdom reached its greatest power. During his reign about 1810, Mallam Dendo also called Manko, "Great Mallam" a Fulani from Kebbi, who was destined to change the whole fate of the Nupe Kingdom is said to have first appeared in Nupe country as an itinerant preacher, diviner and seller of charms.³⁴

The assertions of Johnston and Yahaya show that the activities of Mallam Dendo laid a solid foundation for the proper Islamization of Nupeland. Despite very useful information about the interregnum in the Nupe religious life, the authors failed to explain how Christianity made an in-road into Nupeland which this researcher attempts to do. Islam was to pose a very serious threat to the growth and survival of Christianity in Nupeland at its inception. Islam is still a hard nut to crack for the Anglican mission today in Nupeland. This work intends to analyse how Christianity and Islam have been relating with each other since the inception of Christianity in Nupeland. The successors of Mallam Dendo still constitute a major challenge to the spread of Christianity in Nupeland today.

The above quotation explains to a large extent why Mallam Dendo was a successful preacher. The combination of divination and selling of charms is congruent to the traditional practice and religion of the Nupe. Even though the conversion may be superficial; that notwithstanding, people were easily attracted to the new religion. This further explains the

beginning of syncretism noticed among some Christians in Nupeland which is part of the challenges confronting the Anglican Church in Nupeland. Mallam Dendo came to the fore after the death of *Etsu* Ma'azu. Two claimants: Jimada and Majiya II were struggling for the throne. However, Majiya II connived with Mallam Dendo and got Jimada killed. According to Hadiza in *The Evolution of Etsu Dynasty*;

the inability of the Nupes to resolve the conflict between Majiya and Jimada, in order to sustain Nupe Kingdom under a united *Etsu* as created by Tsoede was a stepping stone for the Fulani invasion of the Kingdom.³⁵

This was the beginning of the Fulani dynasty in Nupeland. While some are of the opinion that Mallam Dendo only occupied the position of the spiritual leader of the Nupe Kingdom, others assert that he actually became the first *Etsu* Nupe of the Fulani descent. After his death, his children continued to occupy the seat of power. Therefore, till today in many Nupe towns, the principal Kings are of Fulani descent. Hadiza provides useful information about how the descendants of Mallam Dendo, who would relate with the Anglican missionaries came to assume a position of prominence in Nupeland.

Mallam Dendo was a man of vision. His coming to Nupeland was driven by a vision. Alfa defines a vision as “the ability to think about or plan the future with great imagination or wisdom.”³⁶ Before his arrival in Nupeland, he was pregnant with ideas and he was just waiting for the opportunity to give birth to his vision. In explaining what Dendo's vision was, Alfa says;

Once a vision is defined, then a mission plan is drawn to achieve that vision. Mallam Dendo was an emissary of the Fulani Jihad. He came to Nupeland with the sole purpose of gaining ever-increasing followers to Islam. The resistant nature of the Nupe denied him an easy penetration, and when he finally did, he requested for a flag from Gwandu to sustain it.³⁷

Through Alfa's work, we are able to understand how the Nupe people reacted to the reformation of Islam in Nupeland. The same resistance was put up at the inception of the Anglican mission in Nupeland.

Mallam Dendo's activities in Nupeland were off-shoots of Uthman Danfodio's Jihad which ultimately divided the Northern Nigeria into the Sokoto and Gwandu Caliphates. Nupeland fell under Gwandu Caliphate. Mallam Dendo's vision was not in any way different from Uthman Danfodio's aim: to Islamize the Hausa States and rule them through the instrumentality of the Sharia legal system. As early as 1841, in the view of Salami, Christian missionaries have shown up in Nupeland as noted in the Niger Expedition. Salami in the *Christianity in West Africa* says,

Similarly, the *Etsu* of Nupe at Rabba, a capital town, was also favourably disposed towards the missionaries. One of the ships on the Niger Expedition went as far as Eggan. It was from this place that an Arabic Bible was sent to the *Etsu* who showed interest in the missionaries.³⁸

Through Salami's work, we are able to get the accurate year when the CMS made an attempt to Christianize Nupeland and the response of *Etsu* to the Gospel.

Although the details of the activities of the missionaries were not given, one of the aims of the expedition was to explore the possibility of missionary work. According to Madugu, "It was at Eggan, a Nupe slave market that Rev. Schon preached the Gospel of Christ and explained the sinfulness of slavery to the slave tractors."³⁹ Madugu's work shows that at the coming of Christianity to Nupeland, slave trade was still in vogue. The work also shows that Christianity was opposed to slave trade. Madugu's work supports the argument of the researcher that slave trade was a challenge to the spread of Christianity in Nupeland. The activities of the CMS missionaries who were among the contingents of the Niger Expedition of 1857 were more revealing in Nupeland. Ogbu Kalu attests to this fact in his book: *Christianity in West Africa: The Nigerian Story*,

Some members of the expedition went on to Nupe country. The wreck of their vessel, the Dayspring, at Jebba forced them to remain at Rabba for a year. There they met the Reverend M. Clark, a Baptist Missionary who had journeyed overland from Abeokuta. From Rabba, Crowther visited the *Etsu* Nupe Usuman Zaki. He spoke very diplomatically and succeeded in making a good impression on Usuman.⁴⁰

Ogbu Kalu describes a picture of the problem encountered by the members of the expedition. His literature is valuable in the sense that it tells us about the earliest attempts of Christian mission to reach Nupeland. However, the author did not give a comprehensive detail about how Christianity took root in other villages and towns in Nupeland.

Since the arrival of the Gospel in Nupeland, Christianity has impacted the land positively. Christianity used tools such as medical services, establishment of schools (education), provision of social amenities to achieve their aim. However, this is not to say that Christianity was not without its challenges. In the words of Madugu, in his book, *The History of First ECWA Patigi*, Nupeland has been predominantly Muslim and as such it was resistant to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. During the early stages of the missionary work in this area, there was not much fruit until later in the 1930s.⁴¹ This indicates that the Sudan Interior Mission (S.I.M.) also had a share of the difficulties to the spread of Christianity in Nupeland which the CMS had been facing. The implication of Madugu's assertion is that the Sudan Interior Mission in Nupeland did not make any significant progress until the said period. However, Anglican Church seemed to record an earlier and faster success than their counterpart missions in the other parts of Nupeland. Abaya lamented that despite efforts by various mission bodies in the last one century, Christianity still finds it difficult to penetrate the whole of Nupeland. He says: "The Gospel of Christ has been preached for over 100 years in the Nupeland and it has not gone beyond the areas the missionaries left it, despite various evangelistic efforts".⁴²

Abaya's comment can be regarded as an over reaction. It will not be totally correct to say that the Gospel has not moved beyond the areas where the missionaries left it. This work disproves this claim by giving details of how the Anglican mission has penetrated some areas especially through the efforts of the black missionaries. Going by Abaya's comment, it will only be correct to say that despite huge human and capital resources expended on the propagation of the Gospel in Nupeland, by the Anglican Church and other Missions, the results have been minimal. There are various reasons for this but Jiya has identified Islam as one of the reasons. According to him, "the greatest hindrance to the conversion of a Muslim is the fear of what the parents, fellow Muslims and the traditional authority will do to him".⁴³ Jiya has observed rightly because Islam has had a very strong footing in Nupeland before the advent of Christianity. Islam, as earlier mentioned, has got a stronghold upon the land and has penetrated the custom and social rules of the Nupe people. This is one main challenge that Christianity has to grapple with especially the Anglican Mission in Nupeland.

It can be surmised that opposition against conversion into Christianity is largely because of the fear of the authority. Right from the outset, the Islamic Religion in Nupeland is associated with kinship and elitism, hence any deviation from this constitutes a rebellion to the authority and working against the cohesive element of the society.

Aside the Anglican mission, there are other Orthodox, African Independent Churches, Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal Churches in Nupeland. According to the Calvary Ministries;

in order to bring about revival in the major churches in Nupeland, some prominent Nupe Christians have come together under the Nupe Christian Fellowship (NCF). This interdenominational Fellowship, which brings together evangelically-minded Christians from the Anglican, ECWA and UMCA denominations, was started at Zaria in 1975 by Nupe Christian Students.⁴⁴

This quotation shows the co-operation between the Anglican Mission and other Christian bodies in Nupeland to promote the Gospel of Christ. It is also an indication of the attempt of

the Anglican Church to co-operate with other Christian missions in order to evangelize Nupeland.

In the work of Turaki, *Tainted Legacy*, he attributes and identifies the underlying factors responsible for the current crisis in the Northern Nigerian society to the historical impact of Islam. He explains the nature and significance of Islamic colonialism and slavery in West Africa and how their evil influence was established by the British colonial administration. According to him, these practices have handed down a tainted legacy of discrimination and cruelty to the Christians in Northern Nigeria. Turaki affirms,

During the creation of provinces, district and Native Authorities, the British Colonial administration subordinated some non-muslim groups to the rule of Muslim emirs. The same action was taken in Abuja, Adamawa, Bauchi, Bedde, Biu, Borgu Borno, Dikwa, Fika, Gombe, Ilorin, Jamaare, Keffi, Kotangora, Lafia, Misau, Muri, Nassarawa, Ningi, Nupe, Patigi and Wuse emirates.⁴⁵

Turaki also identifies colonial views on education and Christianity as a threat to their administration because they were powerful agents of social change. They therefore discouraged them by all means. Turaki asserts,

In many areas of the Middle Belt the British refused to allow Christian missions to establish mission stations or schools for fear of conversion and the effects of education. Some British colonial rulers incited the local people to reject Christian missionaries who came into their areas. Some advised the Muslim rulers not to allow Christian Missionaries into their emirates. Some British colonial officers destroyed Christian places of worship and denied permits to Christian Missionaries.⁴⁶

Turaki's work identifies problems which militated against the growth and spread of Christianity at its cradle in Northern Nigeria. However, post-colonial events in the Northern part of Nigeria reveal that the legacy bequeathed by the colonial administration is still seriously working against Christianity in that region of the country, especially Nupeland. The author under review discusses northern states generally without giving an indepth study of

how the identified challenges to Christianity affect Nupeland in particular. The researcher hopes to fill this gap in the current study as well.

Despite the challenges that Christianity is facing in Nupeland, one cannot shy away from the fact that there are indigenous Christians in Nupeland. This is the hope of the future Anglican Church in Nupeland. In other words, regardless of the challenges faced by the Anglican Church, Christianity is a growing religion and is spreading gradually, even though slowly, across Nupeland. This spread is premised on the concept of the Great Commission. The Great Commission which is a task to preach the Gospel all over the world was first given to the Apostles of Christ. After their time, the Church automatically inherited the assignment. While some theologians believe that the task was only meant for the immediate successors of Jesus Christ (Apostles), others believe that it is an all time command and commission. Boer writes,

The Great Commission played a powerful role in the missionary witness of the early church from the day of Pentecost to the present. It can be said that it always has been, is now, and always will be the heart and soul of all true missionary witness.⁴⁷

This Great Commission is what Bruce Milne refers to as witnessing and traces its origin to the final instructions to the Apostles in Acts 1:8. Bruce Milne says, “The Church of today stands in Spiritual succession to the first generation of believers only as it commits itself to similar witness.”⁴⁸ It is this mandatory responsibility of the church which informs the introduction of Christianity in Nupeland by the Anglican Church.

Since the arrival of Christianity, it has impacted Nupeland. This has been in the areas of medical services, education, agricultural and industrial services. The most outstanding impact is in the area of disseminating the Gospel message. This is very true of the Anglican Mission in Nupeland.

E.P.T. Crampton's *Christianity in Northern Nigeria* documents the genesis of Christianity in Northern Nigeria from the coming of the first Christian Missions to the establishment of the indigenous and self supporting churches of today. He shows how Christianity grew particularly in the non-Muslim areas of the central belt. Crampton argues that Christianity could have made inroads into the Muslim territories of Northern Nigeria but for the colonial government policy of excluding missionary activities. At the time the missionaries were finally given the right to enter into such places, they were only permitted to provide social services and not to make conversion into Christianity. However, the missionaries refused to obey this order; rather they provided social services and also made conversion.

Crampton in his view states,

The areas round the River Niger were presented with Christianity by the early African Missionaries over 100 years ago, but they contain a smaller percentage of Christians than Tivland and Idomaland which were first evangelized half a century later.⁴⁹

Crampton's assertion lends credence to the fact that Christianity is facing a lot of challenges in this axis, the bulk of which is Nupeland. The author identifies emphasis on education and raising an indigenous ministry as the most important factors which have made or marred the establishment and growth of Christianity in that region.

While Crampton gives a good general overview of the origin of Christianity in Northern Nigeria, he did not give a comprehensive attention to the growth of Christianity in Nupeland, especially the activities of the Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion. Hence, the researcher hopes to study the activities of the Anglican Church Mission in Nupeland and to determine the factors that made for its growth, success and failures.

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CHAPTER TWO

INDIGENOUS ANTECEDENTS

2.1 Geographical Location of the Nupe People and Climate

Nupe language is one of the main languages spoken in the northern states of Nigeria. According to Awolalu and Dopamu, the dialects among the Nupe do not pose any major problem since any of the dialects is easily understood by all the Nupe.¹ Nupeland which lies in the heart of Nigeria, falls within the low basins formed by Rivers Niger and Kaduna which is between 9°30' and 8°30'N.L.²

According to Idrees, the land covers a distance of about 11,200sqkm³ The River Niger traverses the length of Nupeland into almost two equal halves. A point drawn on River Niger from Leaba to the east of Kataeregi forms the Northern boundary while another point drawn eastward from Tsaragi in Edu Local Government of Kwara State to Abugi through to the South of Baro in Niger State along River Niger forms its Southern boundary. The River Niger which flows straight north-south between Leaba and Jebba separates Nupeland from their Yoruba neighbours in the West, while the eastern boundary is a slowly rising land east of Lapai and Gidi, which flows upward towards the hills of the Gbari country⁴.

Describing the general features of the Nupeland, Nadel explains that it is a low-lying softly undulating country which heights are not more than 200 feet above sea level in most places⁵. There are also a few rocky hills which stretch out in a rib-like form from river valleys. These hills are flat-topped and interlockingly

is such that there are thin forest, shrub and orchard – bush alternating with beautiful open park-land. Wherever these features exist, the characteristics of these vegetation zones appear. As will be expected, the crops which tally with the climate of these vegetation belts are found in these areas. This explains why crops like palm trees, kola-nut trees, and banana are cultivated along the thick grooves and water courses. Crops like yam and maize are also cultivated. In the hinterland, the following plants can be found: the locust bean trees, the shea-nut trees, the indigo trees or vine, indigo grass, baobab, silk cotton trees, date palms, and mangoes. The Nupe also cultivate the following edible crops: bulrush-millet, late millet, guinea-corn, cassava, maize, groundnuts, rice, sugar-cane, onions, sweet potatoes, beans, ground-beans, and red pepper. With the introduction of mechanization in Nupeland, these crops have been produced in commercial quantities. Crops like cotton, henna, hemp, rope, and gourds, were planted for the native industry but because of modernization, there has been a drastic reduction in their production. Some of these plants have found their ways into Nupeland due to culture contact. Nadel gives convincing proofs of this when he writes:

Some of the plants and crops mentioned have been adopted comparatively recently and introduced into Nupe from the north and south. As the Nupe names for hemp, henna or cassava are borrowed from Hausa the plants themselves represent “borrowed” cultural goods.⁸

Onion is an example of such crops coming from the Hausa. Also, the original cultivation of yam is alien to the Nupe. In his opinion,

...first, that the Nupe north and east of the Niger are unfamiliar with certain important ways of preparing yam common in all ‘real’ yam countries, e.g. the drying of yam; and second, that yam, though today an important staple food, has still no place in their sacrifices, ritual meals, and first-crop ceremonies; only corn and millet may be used for these ritual offerings.⁹

This further goes to prove that coupled with the natural condition, culture contact has affected the physical environment of Nupeland. Owing to the transitional position of Nupeland, it is

one of the hottest and at the same time most humid zones of Nigeria. Nupeland exhibits a tropical climate thereby experiencing both wet and dry seasons. The rain starts in April and ends in October. Usually, the rain is heaviest between July and September. The temperatures of Nupeland can be compared to that of Borno in the far north and humidity almost equal to that of the rain forest zone of the south¹⁰.

The soil is rich and fertile in most parts of Nupeland especially in the sparsely populated areas, west of the Kaduna River. This is a place Alfa calls trans-Kaduna which still has large areas of virgin forest.¹¹ Due to a heavy population in the eastern part of River Kaduna and an intensive cultivation, the land around this area has been rendered depleted in nutrients infertile and this explains why organic manure is used in this area to replenish soil nutrients. It is called Cis-Kaduna. This area covered places like Bida, Doko, among others. The soil in this part of Nupe country is light in colour. There are some districts in Cis Kaduna which have pure white sand which is very fertile. This is around places like Sakpe and Lemu

Madugu refers to Goertz as saying that because of the extreme climatic conditions in Nupeland, health problems arise. There are plenty mosquitoes which carry malaria and the forests are infested with tsetse flies. The water courses are polluted with bilharzias and the swamp regions have plenty sand flies which cause a great deal of inconveniences to the people¹²

2.2 Origin of the Nupe

This section shall examine various stories about the possible origin of the Nupe race. Many of these stories are in the oral tradition of the Nupe folk from timeless beginning.

The Yisa Tradition

Yisa or Isa was a Christian who established a great kingdom on the banks of the River Niger with a beautiful capital city. Abdullahi quoted Professor Leo Frobenius to have written thus:

His city and castle and wealth must have been wonderful indeed! The city lay by a great water in which there was neither crocodile, nor serpent, nor river-horses... On the water there were only great ships with wings-with wing? – Yes, with wings! Like a crane, or a pelican, or some other bird. The town rose up at the edge of the water, and its houses and walls were built of Sui-Lantana (red jasper) stone. And the roofs of these stone houses were not made of straw and of leaves, but of Chinkall (a Sort of home-made bronze). They were chased in the same way the Nupes today hammers their water jar and food dishes, their various basins and ewers.¹³

The story concludes by saying that the empire built by Yisa was the greatest in the history of Black Africa. El Bakri, an Arab historian made reference to this greatest Nupe empire as early as 1068AD. He also came to conclusion by saying it was the greatest kingdom in the entire Black Africa. El-Bakri calls this empire *El-Denden*, a word interpreted by Ndagi to be an Arabic corruption of *Edudu* or *Edu* which is another name for River Niger among the Nupe.¹⁴

The word Yisa was the same word used for God among the Kisra people. The Kisra were emigrants from the Mediterranean, Southern Europe, the Arabian Peninsula and Asia Minor. This group of people fled to West Africa and settled in the Niger-Benue valleys as a result of the collapse of the Sara world religion which eventually resulted in the emergence of religions such as Judaism, Mithraism, Christianity and Islam¹⁵

The Kisra or Ki-Sara people were said to have practised an ancient Christianity called Sara and their choice of new settlement was premised on their belief that Nupeland was the original homeland of the Sara religion which, once upon a time, spread all over the whole world.

As events unfolded, the Kisra adopted the name Yisa for their kings and emperors. With time, the name was used to refer to the entire section of the Nupe. This was the name by which the Nupe survived right into historical times. Consequently, with the coming of the Fulani Jihadist, the Nupe nation had been divided into two: the *Yisazhi* and the *Gwagbazhi*.

Maltese Cross was the symbol used by the *Yisa* to all his vassal states, the more reason some people believe he was a Christian. According to Ndagi,

The story of Yisa the Christian Emperor with a Paradisiacal Empire on the banks of the river in *Kin Nupe* Spread to Europe and generated great interest when the Europeans concluded that the Nupe Emperor Yisa must be the same with the legendary Prester John who was said to have been an European who disappeared into the heart of Africa and to have established an El Dorado paradisiacal Christian Kingdom somewhere in the heart of Black Africa. Soon the Europeans began to send their missionaries and explorers to locate Prester John in West Africa.¹⁶

This submission corroborates the earlier belief of some people who think *Yisa* was a Christian. This tradition does not gain wide acceptance among the Nupe. This story clearly suggests that Christianity had entered into the Nupeland long before Islam. This assertion can hardly be true; if it were true, there should be traces of elements of Christianity in Nupeland before the actual spread of Christianity in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in the area. For instance, there were no Christian names (unlike Islamic names which some Nupe kings were bearing before the introduction of Islam in Nupeland, no places of worship (church buildings), no Christian missionaries, etc.

Abdul Al-Nafiu Tradition

Another source identifies the origin of the Nupe with Abdul Al-Nafiu. The story states that one Abdul Al-Nafiu who was from a town in the Sahara wandered about and in the process founded the Nupe Kingdom. This story too does not have a strong base among the Nupe. This may be one of the various forms of stories which claim that the progenitor of the Nupe came from the Sahara. One of the weak points in this story is that no specific location

was mentioned as a home for Abdul Al-Nafiu. Furthermore, the name is Islamic. If this man was a Muslim by religion, it is expected that Islam should have taken a more proper grounding in Nupeland before the coming of the Fulani *Jihadists*. There is hypothesis which identifies the origin of the Nupe with the Kashan migrants, most of whom were calvaries, hunters and blacksmiths. The Kashan were said to have led the Caravans southwards looking for market for their wares in the early 15th century. The Kashna are today known as *Katsinawa*.¹⁷ There is a very strong indication among both the Nupe and the Katsina as *dzomanchi* (playmate), it is a practice where having seen each other, both tribes make fun of themselves and can joke on any issue. However, aside this practice, there are no further proofs of common ancestry.

Egyptian Tradition

A tradition associates the origin of the Nupe with *Misra* or *Massar*, Egyptians as well as from the early followers of prophet Muhammad¹⁸. This tradition, like the others discussed earlier, did not present enough proof to show its historical genuineness. However, the adherents of this view try to prove the authenticity of their belief by pointing to the presence of the descendants of the Egyptians in their quarters called Masaga in Bida. History has it that the glass work industry in Bida today was introduced by the Egyptians. Seventeen artisans from Masar (Egypt) came into Nupeland about 500 years ago. These artisans first settled in a village called Masaga before proceeding to Gbara.¹⁹ Another school of thought says that these artisans were in search of a suitable earth for making glass but could not find any until they reached Nupeland. At their arrival, they were received by Tsoede. People have observed that the ancient type glass work industry can only be found in Masaga, Bida and its original root, Egypt. Massaga is the corruption of the word Massar.²⁰ In an attempt to link the Nupe with Egypt, Dauda Ibrahim states,

This hypothesis reveals how the Arabs (founders) of the industry traced their long time missing brothers from their history: the phrase of slogan protecting

this hypothesis is always sung especially by the descendant while at work: “Daga Massaga sai Massar” meaning “...if not Massaga it must be Egypt...”²¹

Looking at the above quotation, the adherents of this view have a basis where they anchor their claim because of this apparent perfect coincidence. However, this coincidence is not enough proof to substantiate such claim which is of paramount significance.

Nubia Tradition

The origin of the Nupe has also been traced to Nubia. A man called Ugban bn Nafi who hailed from Nubia is said to be the progenitor of the Nupe. After the desiccation of the Sahara, its inhabitants moved southwards and finally settled in the low basin formed by the valleys of the two major rivers in the present Nupeland: Rivers Niger and Kaduna.²² Consequent upon the change in pronunciation of different Nupe words and transformation of the Nupe language in general, the word Nubia got corrupted and came to be called Nupe.

Bayajidda Tradition

There is a tradition among the Hausa which traces the origin of the Nupe to Bayajidda, otherwise known as Abuyazidda. Bayajidda was a prince from Baghdad. He was a refugee and settled in Kanem in Borno where he married a daughter of the Mai. However, after a brief period, he fled westwards to escape the treachery of his father-in-law, the king of Borno who became jealous of the growing power of Bayajidda.²³

Bayajidda abandoned his wife at Biram-ta-Gabas where she gave birth to her son. When Bayajidda got to Gaya, he met some blacksmiths who forged a special sword for him and it was this same sword which he used to kill the python the evil snake, “Sarki” which lived inside a well and prevented the people of Daura from fetching water except on Fridays. Consequently, he was given Queen Digerea of Daura to marry, as a mark of appreciation; thus becoming the ruler of the state. The story further says that Bayajidda’s legitimate descendants founded seven states which bore their names. They included Biram, Daura,

Katsina, Zaria, Kano, Rano and Gobir; these are called the Hausa Bakwai or pure Hausa states,²⁴ Each of these Hausa families was allotted a special task. In addition to the seven legitimate children of Bayajidda, he also had seven illegitimate children by a slave girl called Gwari. It was these illegitimate sons who founded the states of Zamfara, Kebbi, Gwari, Yauri, Nupe, Yoruba and Kwararafa. These are the *Banza Bakwai* or impure (inferior) Hausa states.²⁵

This tradition is not a popular one among the Nupe. Considering the history of the Nupe, this story lacks credence. There is no proof to uphold the claim. As stated in chapter one of this work, this tradition appears to have political motivation. Ndagi Abdullahi supports this view when he writes,

With the supremacist Hausa Bakwai Banza Bakwai theory the Hausa historians, and later the white colonial administrators, were able to propagate the racist claim that the Arabs and Fulanis, who are deemed to be Caucasians, are racially superior to the Nupe, the Gbagyi, the Jukun, the Igala, the Igbira and other Negroid peoples of Middle Belt Nigeria. The Middle Belt Nigerians are then deemed to be racially superior to the pure Negro peoples of southern Nigeria²⁶

This author criticizes this theory with passion showing its weaknesses. Renown scholars have also disclaimed this theory. Such scholars include Abdullahi Smith, W.K.R. Hallam, Michael Crowder, J.E.G. Sutton, Nagendra Kr Singh, among others. They all denied that Bayajidda was from the Middle East or Asia Minor.²⁷ Part of the criticism against this theory is that the lists of legitimate and illegitimate states are not consistent. Also, the scholars observed that stories similar to the Hausa Bakwai-Banza Bakwai are found among many other ancient Nigerian people; therefore, it could not have been a story originating from the Hausa since the Hausa race is the “youngest” of all the races and people of ancient Nigeria.²⁸ The writing of Sultan Bello shows that Bayajidda was not a Hausa man.

Benin Tradition

There is a tradition which links the Nupe with the Benin. In 1486, Joao Afonso de Aveiro, a Portuguese sailor and slave trader arrived in Benin Kingdom in search of the kingdom of Prester John who was believed to have established a super power Christian kingdom on the banks of the River. Afonso was commissioned by the King of Portugal to carry out the task. At Benin, Afonso discovered that the level of civilization of the people and physical development of the area was more advanced than those of Lisbon and London.²⁹ When Afonso asked the King of Benin about any almighty emperor with a super power kingdom to the interior of ancient Nigeria, the King replied by saying that the Benin kingdom was a vassal to an almighty emperor called *Ogane* whose kingdom was located to the north of Benin somewhere around the general area called Nupeland in modern times. *Ogane* is

believed to be synonymous with *Eginu* or *Ganni* or *Gunnu* which are names for the Almighty God among the Nupe in the ancient times.

The headquarters of *Ogane* was Agarani, Ayane (Agaie, in the present Niger State, Nigeria). The King of Benin explained to Joao Afonso de Aveiro that since Benin was under the sovereignty of Ogane, the Nupe Empire, the Benin people would not recognise their king until he was able to obtain the regalia of kinship from the Ogane. Such regalia included the maltese cross. To lend credence to this story, Ndagi appeals to the work of Captain Hugh Clapperton who claims that both the Benin and Nupe are one people as recent as 1820s. He puts it thus:

As Captain Hugh Clapperton travelled from the south to the north of ancient Nigeria he was continuously confused by the term ‘Bini’ which was synonymously used to refer to the Nupe people in *KinNupe* and the Edo Benin people in Benin kingdom. This problem was only resolved when Captain Clapperton was told by Benin people themselves that the people of Benin and Nupe are one and the same people and that the kings of Benin pay tribute to the Nupe emperors.³⁰

Ndagi faults the belief in some quarters that the foundation of Benin race was laid by the Yoruba of Ile-Ife. Rather, he claims it was the Nupe who laid the foundation of the Benin kingdom. He appealed to the authority of Alan Ryder who said there was never any association of the Benin people with the Yoruba in the form of the former being founded by the latter. Archaeological discoveries and scientific investigations also showed that while Benin City was already a flourishing kingdom before the 15th century, the foundations of the modern city of Ile-Ife were not laid until well after the 16th century.³¹

From the above submission, there is ample evidence that there has been a very close relationship between the Benin and the Nupe. Up till today, the name by which a section of the Nupe (those regarded as the ancient and pure or original Nupe) is called is “Beni.” This speaks much about the tie of the Nupe with the Benin people.

The last tradition which will be explained is the Tsoede tradition. This is the most famous tradition among the Nupe, the detailed explanation about this tradition is found in section 2.6 of this work.

2.3 Nupe Ethnic Groups

Suleiman and Ndagi argue in favour of a Nupe nation and propose that the Nupe should be tagged Nupe Nation because it is more than an ethnic group. According to them,

Nupe cannot be classified as a tribe either because it is not a sub-group of a different race which could be described as the main stock. It is in fact self-evident that to the best of the present state of knowledge, other dialects are spoken within the Nupe fold, not the other way round.³²

It is explicit from the above argument that the belief in some quarters that Nupe is a sub-group of the Hausa and any other tribe cannot be correct. The reason is that Nupe is a unique language with its own sub-groups which is a paramount characteristic of any nation. Essentially, these groups are predominantly located in the North-Central Zone of Nigeria in states such as Niger, Kwara, Kogi, Nasarawa, Benue and the Federal Capital Territory. A minority of them is also located at Yauri, Kebbi State in the North West Zone.³³

Despite the common language, Nupe is a complex whole which is made up of the component parts. The Nupe were divided into various sub-groups, each of which comprised territorial and cultural unit which was in most cases identifiable by its economic pursuits. The sub-groups were the Bini, (Beni) the Kyada (Kyedye/Kede) the Batachi, the Chekpan, the Ebangi, the Kusopachi, the Gbedegi, the Ebe and the Bido or the Zhitako, the Gwagba, and Benu Kupa.

The Bini represents the oldest section of the Nupe sub-groups. They occupy a land area between the Rivers Kaduna and Gbako, stretching from the northern border to the River Niger. This group of Nupe refers to themselves only as Nupe or Nupe Zam meaning “Pure Nupe.”³⁴ The Bini comprised the twelve main towns which formed the nucleus of the Nupe Kingdom. The towns include: Gaba, Doko, Tafyan, Nupeko, Bida, Eda, Ewu, Egbe, Esa, Yesa, Towagi and Pandzur. However, some of the towns mentioned have today gone into extinction. Binis in modern times can be found in the following emirates: Agaie, Bida, Lafiagi, Patigi Tsaragi, Eggan and Tsonga.³⁵ This class of Nupe does not have a dialect. Rather, they regard themselves as an independent cultural unit which has emerged independently. The Bini are further divided into Red Bini (*Bini Dzuru*) and Black Bini (*Bini Zhiko*) *Bini Dzuru* are believed to be the first settlers and joined later by the *Bini Zhiko*. This assertion is however, denied by the latter.

The Kyadya share a common culture with the Batachi, both of who are riverine people. However, while the Kyadya are canoemen and fishermen; the Batachi are mashland rice farmers and fishermen. The Kyadya are located around the left bank of the Rivers Niger and Kaduna and can be found in places like Bida, Agaie, Lapai and Kotongora, Districts.³⁶ Ismaila says some of the Kyadya lived in the Ilorin provinces.³⁷ There were also a few of them who lived in Koton- Karifi Division of the Province and Lokoja area. Kyadya consisted of ten villages with Muregi as the headquarters. The Kyadya is said to have helped Tsoede while he was coming from Idah. Consequently, he rewarded them by giving them the first title of *Kuta*. Having come with Tsoede from Idah, he established them as the Lords of water and local rulers over the aboriginal inhabitants who were the Batachi.³⁸ The Batachi, as indicated earlier live on the marsh land. The Batachi are also part of the Bini because they have no dialect of their own except the pure Nupe. They are classified thus because of their geographical settlement. The word Batachi is a Nupe word from “bata” (Marsh land) and “chi” (occupant or inhabitant). Other tribes which earn their names and classifications as a result of their geographical settlement and occupation include Kyadya, Kusopachi, Gbedegi and upland Binis.³⁹ Essentially, Kyadya, Batachi and Kusopachi are all said to be Bini.

The Batachi, as their name implies, live on the marshy land. The main occupation of the *Batachi* is rice farming. They also engage in fishing in pools and back waters of the Niger. Since they inhabit the bank of the River Niger, their towns include Batagi, Mambe, Sosa, Egaji, Fokpo, Koso and Kpanje, all in Lavun Local Government Area of the current Niger State.

The Kusopachi is a combination of “Kuso” (forest) and “pachi” (tender). As their name suggests, they live around the plantation or forest region of the Nupe kingdom. They live around Labozhi, Kudu, Yeti and Bokanni districts. They are the largest producers of

Kolanut and palm oil. The Kusopachi and the Gbedegi were believed to be formed after the coming of Tsoede.

The Gbedegi, like the Kusopachi originated after the coming of Tsoede. Its origin is not clear but it is one of the oldest subgroups. This group of Nupe says their full name is “Gbere-Edegi” meaning descendants of Edegi. They do not eat crocodile because they believe it once protected them from their enemies.⁴⁰

However, another tradition holds that during the reign of the first *Etsu* Nupe, Tsoede, who formed a united Nupe kingdom, introduced inter tribal trade. Gbedegi was therefore formed at the border areas of Nupe and Yoruba, essentially for commercial reasons. Hence, the Gbedegi are believed to have originated from the Yoruba. They have migrated from their original habitat, so also the Nupe, to meet at the boundary areas around Mokwa and Jebba for commercial purposes. At the initial stage, both tribes had their independent languages but as time went by, their offsprings started speaking an intermediate language. It was from this that they earn a new name “Gbedegi” – a corruption of the Yoruba phrase “Eniyan to Gbede” meaning people who understand (two) languages.”⁴¹ Furthermore, Gbedegi was formed where slaves of the Nupe and the Yoruba were kept together. As such, this brought about two different accents of Gbedegi. Similar example of this kind of development is the Nupe of Lapai and the Nupe of other emirates of Nupeland. The Gbedegi are located in Zugurma district which is within Jebba and Mokwa areas. Whatever may be their origin, with time, they became absorbed into the Nupe tribe. Their main occupations are trading, and fishing and canoeing.

The Dibo is another section of the Nupe which was assimilated into the Nupe kingdom in the late 1931.⁴² There are other names by which they are called by the other sub-tribes. These names include Zhitako and Ganagana. The Bini call them Zhitako, from the word *Zazhitakochizhi* meaning the people of the valley, while the name Ganagana was given

to them by the Hausa. This name sprang from the Hausa because of the expression of the Dibo who were fond of saying *Agamua-Agamua* meaning “he is going,” “he is going”. Therefore, the word or expression was corrupted to be Gana-gana.⁴³

The Dibo lived in the eastern part of the Bini, extending from the River Gbako as far as beyond Lapai. They can also be found in the Southern- most parts of Lafiagi and Agaie. Other areas which host Dibo include the extreme north of Koton- Karifi and the eastern slope of the Guarara valley, north of Kunama-Okya watershed, Umaisha and Toto districts of Nasarawa emirates and in Ashar of Abuja emirate.⁴⁴ The main occupation of the Dibo is farming and trading. In the present Niger State, the Dibo occupies two Local Government Areas: Eza (Literally meaning discussion) and Kintako (valley).

The Dibo can further be sub-divided into the following classes: Kana, Abachi, Abwa and Kami. The towns occupied by these classes of people include: Koroka, Zago, Guregi, Fogbe, all in Kintako Local Government Area of Niger State), Evunti, Kagbodu, Dagbaje, Pelemi Gurugudu, Faru, Avu, Gulu, Kpada, Gbedako, Ewugi, Zabbo, Ebo, Kuchi, Puzhi and Bachi all in Eza Local Government Area of Niger State.⁴⁵

The Benu were apparently aliens who eventually came to settle in Nupeland. They have a very clear history in the tradition of the Nupe. The Benu are the people of Kutigi and Enagi of today, the towns which were originally Beni owned towns but inhabited by the Yagbas until the time of *Etsu Muazu*’s second reign in 1790.⁴⁶ The Benu originated from Kukawa, the ancient capital of Borno. The word Benu is the Nupe corruption of Bornu.⁴⁷

Nupe history has it that *Etsu Muazu* had a servant called Ndayasan who was a hunter but offended the king and consequently he was excommunicated by the king. Ndayasan decided to camp on one of the mountains in Kutigi together with his wife, Nnadankun since he was not allowed to live in the town. However, one day, he observed the coming of a group of turbaned men riding on animals with long necks (carmels) advancing towards the ancient

shrine of Kutigi. Ndayasan and Nnadankun were afraid to report the matter to the King therefore, they resolved to inform the Ndacheke (the chief hunter) and urged him to report this development to the King, perhaps it would be an avenue through which they could receive the King's pardon. Having relayed the message to the King, the king was pleased with them and granted them pardon. The *Etsu* decided to send his royal servant, Gabi Sayedi to ask the strangers about their mission to Nupeland. Gabi met these caravans at River Toro in Kutigi, where their Carmels were drinking water and he delivered the King's message to them. They responded by saying that their mission was not to fight any race, they were only passing by before their animals stopped to drink water. As a mark of their sincerity of purpose, they sent some gifts to the King, more so, for the hospitality accorded them. *Etsu* Muazu who was happy and pleased with them requested that they should settle in his land. This brought about a very strong relationship between Zanna, the head of the caravan and *Etsu* Muazu. The latter was assisted by the former both physically and spiritually in many wars which were fought. The Benu settled down in the land and became "Nupeized".

The major occupations of the Benu were trading and farming, and this accounted for the reason they were given permission by Muazu to settle in those areas so they could share their agricultural and trading techniques with the indigenes. They specialised in the growing of onion and rearing of horses and cattle but they later disappeared because of Tsetseflies. Having been absorbed into the Nupe culture, the only identification items still traceable to them is their ancient traditional title of Zonkwa and their traditional scarification which is a mark which cuts across their foreheads.⁴⁸ The Ebangi occupy places like Matokun, Tankpafu and Rafiu areas around Ilorin Province. History says they are the descendants of a dynasty overthrown by the Fulani in Ilorin. Fishing is their main occupation.

The Ebe is a Nupe sub-group whose origin is difficult to trace. They have their own dialect, which is quite different from the pure Nupe, hence, it is doubtful whether they are

real Nupe. The Ebe have their marks, a scar on each cheek from the nose to the corner of the mouth. Another tradition traces their origin to Yorubaland. They settled in Nupeland long time ago and became Nupeized. The Ebe can be found in Kotongora province in towns and villages like Safo, Fazhi, Beji, Mandzwaka, Mule, Kwoso and Idanbut. They can also be found around Sabon-Rami and Makera towns. Their major occupation is farming. The Chekpan is found on the West bank of the River Niger. This Nupe sub-group comprises main upland farmers and craftsmen. Their settlements include Kpada, Echi, Duro, Koro, Mamba, Wako, Gakpan, Rogun, Kajita, and Kusogi. Their speech has some slight variation from the other Nupe groups in Kwara State, especially the Ebangi and Paduntu.

The Kupa or Gopa is believed not to be part of the aboriginal Nupe Kingdom from 15th century to the end of 19th century. The presence of this sub-group has been noticeable in the southern bank of the River Niger around Eggan and part of Buru district since early 18th century. They are also found in Lapai Emirates and in Koton Karifi district of the old Kabba Province. The Kupa who had first lived among the Beni gradually escaped from the threats of the old Nupe kings. Despite that fact, by the time they settled in their new place, they found it difficult to gain the freedom they were searching for and eventually found themselves subject to the Nupe kings. When Usman Zaki later established Bida Emirate, he sent his war general to add Kupa to his emirate. The Kupa accepted to remain under the Bida Emirate without offering any form of resistance. Hence, they continued to pay tributes to Bida Emirate until Bida was defeated in 1897.⁴⁹

The Kupa has not only been within the Nupe for decades, they speak fluent Nupe. The first place of settlement of the Kupa is said to be Abugi which incidentally remains the headquarters of the Kupa kingdom up till today. The leader or head of the Kupa is called *Etsu* Abugi or Mayaki Abugi. In addition to the places mentioned above, the Kupa can also be found in Miza, Awumi I, Awumi II, Ebwa

I, II, III, IV, and Ebwa V, Mima Laggan, Guciddan and various parts of the present day Kogi State in Nigeria.⁵⁰

There is a tradition which tends to explain the name Kupa. The Kupa are said to be originally part of the Ebe who have crossed the Kotangora River called Eku around 1800 during the big Nupe wars of conquest. To say one crosses the River Eku in Nupe language, one will express it thus: “La’ku pa”. Therefore, it was from expression such as this that Kupa emerged.⁵¹

The *Gwagba* is a derogatory nomenclature given to a section of the Nupe who were involved in the Nupe war of succession. Literally, the word *Gwagbachi* means the disadvantaged or those who threw up their hands or the defeated. This was a section of the Nupe Zam who were followers of *Etsu Majiya* that fled to Zugurma from Raba, during the war between him and Jimada. Today, the term is used to refer to all the Nupe who are living within Zugurma town. According to Ismaila, the *Gwagba* is made up of the Ebe and Bassa.⁵²

There are some other sub-groups apart from the ones mentioned above. While a few of them are spread over a fairly large geographical area many of them are only limited to a village where they are spoken while some of these sub-groups have been dispersed from their original parent tribe due to several circumstances and factors, others were not originally Nupe but got absorbed into the Nupe. Such tribes include Kakanda, Konu group, Bassa Nge, Gbiztsani Sokun, Egba, Gupa, Rakapa. Kakanda in Nupe language means a wanderer.

The Kakanda for a very long time was under the political influence of the Nupe. They are said to have had a very good relationship with the Nupe and as a result of that, Tsoede in the 15th century brought them under the Nupe political sovereignty. During *Etsu Masaba*’s reign, the Kakanda were very useful for transporting his men on military expeditions. The Kakanda remained under Bida Emirate until the British conquest in 1864. As a result of the good rapport between Bida and the Kakanda, during the Fulani reign, they did not participate

in the British attack against Bida. They can be found around the banks of the River Niger and north of its confluence with the Gurara River. They are heavily concentrated in Lokoja, at the same time hundreds of them reside in Onitsha.⁵³

They are also found in villages in Eza L.G.A. in Niger State e.g. Muye, Baka I and II, Yawa, Rigido, Rakabu, Arah and Gbami; they can also be found in Buddan in Kogi State. The Kakanda speak Nupe language and much of their cultural traits are gradually being taken over by the Nupe culture. These include marriage, burial rites, architecture, titles, feasts, dances, games and even traditional religion. This is why some people are divided into two main camps in their categorization of the Kakanda. While some believe that they are a different ethnic group apart from Nupe because of the vivid noticeable cultural variations, others believe that they are part and parcel of the Nupe because many of their cultural traits have been “Nupeized”. The head of Kakanda is called Aganku of Kakanda. He lives in the headquarters of the Kakanda Kingdom, Buddan.

Many tribes categorized as Nupe today are originally aliens leaving in the Nupe country but became acculturated. Among groups which have such origin and are hardly distinguishable today are the Konu, meaning the prisoners of war or the captives. Konu has Fulfude colouration and it means war. The adoption of this term reflects cultural conditions in the early time of the Fulani regime, when the rulers still used their own language.⁵⁴

The Konu are also known by the name Eyagi-Nupe. Eyagi is a term by which the Nupe refer to the Yoruba. Therefore, the term has the connotation of the “Yoruba-Nupe”. This category of people is a descendant of slaves captured in the wars of the Fulani Kings of Nupe against the Yoruba. The ex-slaves were later freed and were ordered by the king to settle in various districts of the kingdom. Many people in this group are believed to have come from the Yagba area in the present day Kogi State. At their arrival, they introduced the Yoruba art of weaving and indigo-dyeing. This group of Nupeized people can be found in

places like Bida, Kutigi and Mokwa. This class is not limited to the Yoruba alone, the people in the northern boundaries of the Nupe Kingdom, essentially the Gwari, also fall into this category. They are called Gbari Bauta meaning Gbari slaves. They comprised the original Gwari population of an area conquered by the Nupe and absorbed into the Nupe kingdom about 1800.⁵⁵

The Basa Nge is a group of the Basa. The Basa is grouped into two: the Basa Komu and Basa Nge. The Nupe tradition has it that the Basa Nge was an original part of the Nupe but had migrated from the Nupe long before the Fulani conquest. Initially, they occupied the right bank of the River Niger but with the establishment of modern day Lokoja, they had to relocate to the left bank of the River which is their present location. The migration of the Basa Nge is said to have occurred because of the annoyance and grievance when Nupeland was about disintegrating during political wars. Therefore, they left their original location and settled in a “nice and good place” which is the meaning of *babo tsa u ma ge*, hence the expression was corrupted as Basange.⁵⁶

Another minor sub-group is Gbitsani. They are found in a village called Gbachinku, a place about three kilometres from Baro. The dialect is spoken in this village alone. Other villages where it was spoken have since gone into extinction. Gbachinku is in Eza Local Government, of Niger State.

The Sokun is another Nupe-sub-group. The dialect takes its name after the village where it is spoken. They are also found in Eza Local Government Area of Niger State, a few kilometres from Ebo. Sokun is the only village where this dialect is spoken.⁵⁷ Egba, like the Sokun, bears the same name with the village where it is spoken.

2.4 Political Organization in Ancient Nupeland

Prior to the time when Edegi came to limelight in the 15th century, Nupeland appeared not to have a universally uniform political system. However, oral traditions and the

available records show that three distinct political systems existed in Nupeland before the 15th century when Tsoede came to unify the Nupe kingdom under one central government. These involved the Bini confederacy, the riverine polity of the Kyadya and Batachi and the independent village council system. Each of these shall be discussed accordingly.

The Bini confederacy was made up of twelve towns with Tafyan as the *primus inter pares* but the degree of primacy or otherwise of Tafyan in confederacy may not have been much.⁵⁸ In the confederacy, Tafyan, Bakama (his brother) succeeded him at Nupeko. After his demise, the position went to Mamma Gana at Doko. The available sources do not give a comprehensive account on the Bini confederacy; rather, they merely mention the royal and civil titles in the confederacy without necessarily indicating the functions of each title holder. Be that as it may, it can be inferred that these title systems were inherited by past Edegi era.

The royal titles are further sub-divided into two. The royal titles from which the overall head was selected which included Shaaba, Kpotun, Benu, Nakorji and Makun. There are elements of dynasty here because any of these titles could only be conferred on people who came from this lineage. The second group were advisers to the *Etsu*. They assisted the *Etsu* in the administration of the confederacy. These royal titles included Ndeji, Tsadza, Sonkyarya, Tsowa and Lusa.

One interesting feature of the ancient Nupe confederacy was the fact that it was not highly centralised. Each member-town had its own *Etsu* probably to check the excessive power of the *Etsu* at Tafyan who was the symbol of the confederacy. The confederacy had an external relationship with the Attah of Igala. The Nupe United Kingdom was said to have paid tribute to the Attah based on Attah's effective control over trade and traffic on the Niger and Benue. Below the confluence, there were indications that Attah merely collected regular annual tributes from Nupeland which was reciprocated by a guaranteed movement on the Niger and Benue below the confluence⁵⁹.

The second political system which had its foundation in the pre-Edegi time did not fully mature until the era of Edegi. This system of government had its root in the economic activities of the ancient Kyadya and Batachi. The founding fathers were Normadic hunters of Hippopotamus along the river banks of Niger. The Kyada tradition states that this group of people were highly organized under the leadership of Kuta. This led to the evolution of a more elaborate political system which had a state-like structure. The Kyadya later abandoned the hunting of hippopotamus for a more lucrative fishing activity. Consequent upon this, the old system gave rise to a state-like sedentary structure and the introduction of some functional titles. Aside the title of Kuta which was the only title before the economic revolution, with this development, other offices created with specific assignment included Egba, Tswadya, Kofyna, Nnabaki, Lifiti, and Ekpan.⁶⁰ More offices were created in the 19th century but were exclusively royal titles reserved for the members of the Kuta royal lineage. These title holders carried out a supervisory work on behalf of Kuta in their surroundings.

There is a disparity between the Kyadya and Tsoede traditions as regards the origin of the riverine polity. While the Tsoede tradition states that the title of Kuta was created by Edegi as a complement for a man who assisted him to escape from his brothers, the Kyadya tradition claims that the Kyadya fishermen had been organized before the emergence of the Edegi dynasty. Here, each tradition seeks to show its independence and superiority over the other. Mention must be made at this juncture that the Kyadya polity thrived and expanded until the second half of the nineteenth century when it collapsed under the pressure of the Jihadists from Bida and the British imperialists⁶¹.

The third type of government practised in pre-Tsoede era was the independent village political system. The settlements of the Nupe were in large villages or towns called *ezhi* in both cases. This term *ezhi* has synonyms in words like *emi*, *tunga* or *kangi*, *edota*, *katamba* and *efu* depending on the size of the settlement. A one- compound village was described as

emi, *tunga* or *katamba* but where a village consisted of several compounds, it was called *ezhi* or *edota*. However close a Nupe settlement was to another settlement, there was a strict principle of non-interference among them, meaning that each settlement was a sovereign political entity. The *Zhitsu* was at the helms of the affairs in the village because he was believed to own the village. He had the responsibility of managing the land resources, arbitrating and mobilising the community for collective actions in the interest of the village. Even though he was not the religious head of the community, he organized and partly financed certain religious titles connected with the chieftainship. The *Zhitsu* administered the village through the assistance of the village elders known as *nunsazhi* – old ones (elders) otherwise known as *tichizhi* – Titled ones. According to Nadel,

They are the heads of families or of groups of families which live together in one compound or one *efu*. Their appointment to the position of an elder is expressed in the titles which the chief confers upon these members of his council⁶².

It must be noted that the primary function of these officials was to offer useful advice to the chief. Nadel further stresses that out of this advisory council a few titles existed which reflected the economic pursuit of these elders. For instance, some council members held the titles of *Ndacheko* (head hunter), *Etsudzan* (head, drummer), *Majin Kimpa* (head leather works) *Majin Tswata* (head blacksmith) and *Sonkyara-Gozan* (chief barber).⁶³

In conclusion, during the pre-Edegi era, more than half of Nupeland was under a non-administrative machinery.⁶⁶ Therefore, there was no all-embracing political authority concentrated under a single monarch before the coming of Edegi. This was the situation on ground before and at the emergence of Edegi dynasty.

2.5 Socio-Economic Structure of the Nupe

The economic system of Nupeland was divided into four major sectors: agriculture, transportation, commerce and industry. The major determinants of the economic pursuit of

the Nupe were centred around the land area occupied and the climate of the environment. The presence of many rivers and streams made it possible to practise agriculture on a large scale and also enhanced the growth of fishing and transportation industries. The major rivers were the Niger and the Kaduna. Aside these major rivers, there were also big streams which formed tributaries to the Niger. They included Gbako, Gazun, Kampe, Dukku, Egwa and Nalli⁶⁴. Agriculture, which was the pre-dominant occupation of the Nupe, was practised at both peasant and commercial levels. Therefore, the economy of the Nupe rested essentially on agriculture. These agricultural activities included farming, fishing, hunting and animal husbandry.

Both riverine and semi-riverine people cultivate the fertile marshy lands most especially around Rivers Niger and Kaduna. The major crop grown was rice, and up till today, the Nupe remain one of the largest producers of rice in Nigeria especially in the swampy areas along Rivers Niger, Kaduna and Gbako in the provinces of Niger and Kwara. Also, the semi-riverine folk added fishing to farming. The Kyadya and the Batachi were the most renowned fish farmers and smoked fish formed one of the most important articles of trade in Nupeland.

Apart from rice which formed a staple crop in Nupeland, other upland crops were also cultivated. Some of the grown crops were introduced into the Nupeland through contact with other tribes. Other crops which were cultivated in Nupeland included grains like bulrush millet, guinea-corn, beans, sorghum, wheat and maize. Root and tuber crops such as sweet potatoes, cassava, cocoyam and yam were cultivated. Melon and ground-nut were and are still widely cultivated in Nupeland. Mention must also be made of common crops in Nupeland such as cotton, bambara, cassava, tobacco, pepper and indigo. The pride of a Nupe farmer is said to be his millet, sorghum and yam because he believes that cassava and maize

grow everywhere, and anybody, farmer or no farmer, can grow them⁶⁵. Other crops which were grown in small scales included banana, kolanut, okro, etc.

As stated earlier, the rivers in Nupeland, especially the major rivers served as a source of transportation for the movement of both people and cargoes. Most Nupe towns were located very close to river sides because of their purpose. This was why sacrifices to river gods were common practices. They made sacrifice to the river gods for protection, blessing and appreciation. For many centuries, the Kyada who were canoe men effectively monopolized traffic and controlled trade on the rivers Niger and Kaduna.⁶⁶ The Kyadya, until the second half of the 20th century served as a bridge between the people of the south and west and their Northern counterparts. The Kyadya were involved in a very lucrative ferry service on and across the Niger, carrying people and goods from one point to the other in their canoes of various sizes⁶⁷. Up till today some Nupe settlements depend largely on their rivers for the transprtation of people and goods to different parts of Nupeland and beyond.

Right from the ancient times, the Nupe have been involved in trade and commerce. The commercial activities were hinged on the available rivers. There were river ports where different markets were located. These markets had international status because foreign folks from different places converged to transact business. Such markets included Raba, Katsa, Eggan, Gebba (Jebba), Gudu, Gbaradogi, Kpatagban and Elah⁶⁸. Others included Baro, Koton Karfi, Bida, Gbajibo, Mokwa, Doko, Muregi Lewu and Kutigi. Some of these markets still maintain their *status quo* as international markets, others have also been added to them. For instance, Gbugbu, a very big international market located in the terminus between Lafiagi and Patigi, along Tsaragi-Zambufu road in Kwara State is a market which hosts people from different parts of Nigeria and beyond. Goods traded in the market include essentially food commodities, wears and other related materials. It serves as a good source of income both to the state and local governments.

The Nupe markets were attended by Arabs, and people from Timbuktu in Mali, Tripoli, Gonja in Ghana, the Hausa, the Yoruba, the Igala, the Ebira, the Yagba, the Idoma, the Benin, and the Calabar, among several other people.⁶⁹ Mention must also be made that there were markets in the hinterland where various commodities were displayed for sale and services rendered. Each market had a specific day when people converged to transact business. The market day depended and still depends on the day agreed for convergence. It varies from one place to the other. While some were attended bi-monthly, others were either every nine, eight, five or four days as the case might be. The Nupe women were most involved in these commercial activities. Goods traded included yam, onion, millet, rice, animals, indigo, slaves, etc.

Since the economy of any society depends largely on the strength of its bank, the Nupe had their banking systems to aid their commercial activities. There were two kinds of banking systems: self banking and co-operative banking. After the introduction of money, self banking emerged. It was a situation where an individual kept his or her money in greeneries, wells, big pots, roof-tops, etc such that when it was needed, either for business or private use, it was easily accessible. The co-operative type is known as *dashi*. It was a contribution by a group of people headed by the leader of the group called *Etsu dashi* (King of *dashi*). He or she would prepare a roster on the walls with symbols differentiating the contributors and duration of the contributions which normally used to be on market days.

In explaining how this system worked, Dauda draws a chart to illustrate this.

Contributor	Amount Contributed	Number of Market Days Contributed
I	III III III	I I I I
+	III IIII III	I I I I
0	II II II III	I I I I
□	III IIII III III II	I I I I
Δ	III IIII III III	I I I I

Key:

I = Kolo

+ = Yisa

0 = Tswanya

□ = Tsado

Δ = Gana

A Roster of Five Different Contributors for Five Market Days.⁷⁰

As the key shows, Kolo, who is the first contributor, contributed four cowries on the first market day, four on the second market day, the same amount on the third and fourth market days, thereby contributing sixteen cowries in all. Yisa is the second contributor. He contributed three cowries on the first market day, five on the second market day and four cowries on the third market day; bringing his total contribution to twelve cowries.

Tswanya, the third contributor has two cowries in his account in three successive market days and three on the fourth market day, thereby bringing the total number to ten cowries. Tsado, who is represented by a rectangle on the wall, has four, four, three and two cowries in the first, second, third and fourth market days respectively. He has the total of thirteen cowries in all. Gana is the last contributor. In the first market day, he contributed four cowries; he also contributed four cowries in the second market day. He has three cowries on

the third market day and four cowries on the last market day, therefore having the sum of fifteen cowries in his co-operative account. This large sum of money was kept in different sacks called *jika* (sack) in a secured room or bank. The *Etsu dashi*, who was the bank manager saw to the security of the fund and proper disbursement to the appropriate quarters at the right time. These banking systems formed the foundation for business activities in the ancient Nupeland.

Another important economic sector which put the ancient Nupeland on the world map was a number of medium and large scale industries which were available in their various sizes and locations in Nupeland. The major industries were those of weaving, blacksmithing and glass work. In the pre-Tsoede era, the most important industries were those of mat-weaving, hat weaving and cloth weaving also known as *edekpa*.⁷¹ However, the Nupe tradition has it that the emergence of Tsoede facilitated the introduction of other industries like blacksmithing, brass-smithing, aluminium works and other industries seen in the Nupe country today. There is a school of thought which believes that the weavers were originally slaves brought from Kano and Yorubaland to share their weaving skills with the aboriginal Nupe and with time, these aliens became Nupeized⁷². Some of these occupations are handled by specialists from one generation to the other. For instance, there are specialists in mat-weaving, hat-weaving and hand-held fans. According to Manson, when the Europeans arrived in the 18th century, the Nupe were the best producers of clothes of esteem quality.⁷³

The blacksmiths are of two categories: those who specialise in the making of hoes and other iron equipment and those who specialise in the making of spoons and native cutleries. While the first group are found in almost every village in Nupeland, the second group are found in Bida, where they have chains of workshop in an area called *Tswata Mukun*. Some of them can also be found in Katcha. The blacksmiths found market for their products from farmers, hunters and royal families. The sale of their products was highest during the rainy

season when farmers needed implements such as hoes, axes, cutlasses, knives, among others and during wars when the *Etsu* needed their services. The market for their products was not limited to the Nupeland alone. It was open to people from other ethnic nations e.g. Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo. The blacksmiths used to form a guild, headed by *Dokodza*.

One important industry in Nupeland, but which was restricted to Bida in Nupeland is the glass industry. The unwanted bottles and glasses were made into beautiful beads which men and women wear. Those who brought this industry to Nupeland are said to have come from Egypt over 500 years ago⁷⁴ where they were received by Tsoede. The Bida glass-work was and is a secret which is not open to anybody outside the family and cannot be practised elsewhere apart from Masaga in Bida. Beads of various colours were sold to various people from various parts of the countries and beyond. The sale was both in wholesale and retail forms. The end-product of Masaga glass work was in necklaces, bangles, waist wears and so on.

Brass smith industry was another key industry in Nupeland. This industry was also found mostly in Bida. The raw materials used by the brass smiths included among others silver coins, copper, aluminium and brass from rifle cartridges. These raw materials were subjected to an intense heat, after which the liquefied product was shaped into diverse end products in the form of copper sword-hilts, horse-trappings, bows, cups, kettles, jugs, trays, laddles and receptacles, silver bangles, hair-pins, chains and ornamentation of the surfaces of various objects.

Other products of the brass smiths were the end result of a crude technique of *cire-perdue* casting and the making of small brass figures of animals. Some of these products were bought by the Hausa from the north who, in turn, sold them to the Europeans who used them for indigenous arts and decorations. History has it that when local spoons made from calabash was used in Nigeria, the Nupe were already using aluminium spoons.⁷⁵ There were

also other brass products made of silver or aluminium bangles which were manufactured in Nupeland and were on high demand, most especially in the Northern parts of Nigeria like Jos, Kaduna, Kano, Sokoto, and Kebbi.⁷⁶ The brass smith also had a guild and a guild master called *Shaba-Mukun*. One thing which distinguished the Nupe industry and has kept it alive to modern times is that it follows fashion and modernization closely. Therefore, it can be said that it is the need of the society which dictates what will be produced.

Bead industry is also worth mentioning. The bead workers bought crude beads and refined or polished them for sale. Leather work is another industry which thrived in Nupeland. The workers formed themselves into an association. The head of such an association was called *Magaji*. His duty was to organize, control group production and act as an intermediary between the craftsmen and the king, who happened to be their most important customer. The leather workers supplied products like saddler and leather shields, sword sheaths and quivers for arrows. Others included bags, sewing case for charms, shoes and so on; which might be of different colours.

Other industries which thrived in Nupeland were things like mat making, hat making, pottery of different sizes, dyeing, woodwork, barbing, neck marking, music and so on. All of these indicate that long before the coming of the Arabs and Europeans, Nupeland was a highly industrialized country and a point of civilisation for other kingdoms and people. The technological development of the Nupeland in the pre-Fulani conquest and pre-European invasion was at an advanced stage.

2.6 Establishment of the Nupe Kingdom

The establishment of the Nupe Kingdom is traced to Edegi, otherwise known as Tsoede. Tsoede was born by the son of the third Atta Gara. Ayegba, the son of Idoko came on hunting expedition to a village called Nku in Nupeland where he fell in love with a young widow, Mama who was the daughter of the Chief of Nku. Mama, the Princess, had been

married to a Prince, the son of Jegu, the King of Tafyan. However, the Prince died shortly after their marriage. The tradition has it that it was a taboo to marry a widow princess, especially if the late husband was a Prince or a King.⁷⁷

However, Ayegba met with the Princess' father and the father consented to the relationship. Not long after that, news reached him that his father was ill, therefore, he had to leave behind his heavily pregnant wife to see his dying father. Before he left, he gave a royal bangle and ring to his wife to keep for the unborn child. Shortly after the arrival of Ayegba, his father, Attah Idoko of Igala, died. Ayegba was appointed the next King after his father. Meanwhile, the relationship between Nupe and Igala continued even after the death of the king of Nku, the father of his wife.

Mama's brother became the next King of Nku, he had been a close friend of Ayegba. While Ayegba was away, Mama gave birth to a baby boy in the year 1429.⁷⁸ Since he was too young to wear the ring and the bangle left for him by his father, his mother sewn them on his cloth. His mother always wanted her son by her side so as to personally monitor the secrets on the cloth. Therefore, whenever anybody was playing with the boy, the mother (Mama) would exclaim "*Tswa-Edegi ya mi*" meaning take care of the cloth for me. It is this expression which earned him the nickname 'Tsoede or Edegi'.

Since Nupe was a tributary to Idah, a matured young man must be donated as a slave to the King of Idah. When it was time to donate a slave to Idah, the king of Nku decided to choose Tsoede. At this time he was already thirty years old and has started wearing his ring and bangle. Immediately he got to Idah, his father recognised him and instead of making him a slave on his farm, he decided to treat him as one of his sons.⁷⁹

One day, Tsoede's father took ill and when the oracle was consulted, the response was that the only fruit from a certain tall tree could heal him. All other sons of the king and well-wishers attempted plucking the fruit but all to no avail. However, Tsoede also made an

attempt and he succeeded. This made his father to like him the more but this generated a lot of rivalry and hatred among his half brothers. When Edegi was sixty years old, his father took ill again. His father, knowing his death was imminent, called Tsoede and advised him to return to his mother to save him an impending trouble with his half-brothers. His father gave him badges of kinship, such as a bronze canoe, twelve slaves, a bronze *kakaki* (trumpet), state drums hung with brass bells and heavy iron chains and feathers.⁸⁰ All of these items represent royal insignia.

Some days after this, the King of Idah died and that very night Tsoede made an escape back to his mother's land. His brothers pursued him across the River Niger until they could no longer trace his whereabouts. In the course of his flight, Tsoede met two Kyadya men who assisted him. The first man sat on a stone called *Kuta* while the second one was collecting *giginya* fruit at the confluence of Rivers Niger and Kaduna. This man put Tsoede and his team in a canoe and hid them in a nearby bush at the river bank. When Tsoede pursuers asked him of their where about, he misdirected them and they left in frustration. Another tradition says that when Tsoede met the two men at the bank of River Kaduna, they gave him a powerful magic which turned Tsoede and his group to creeks and sunk his bronze canoes in the river. These two men were compensated by Tsoede by making them first and second in command of Kyadya territory respectively. He also built a town called Muregi which today is the capital of Kydaya people.

The first place where Tsoede alighted was at Nupeko. He conquered the town and also went ahead to conquer Nku, a town ruled by his uncle. He consequently became the king of Nku with the royal title of *Etsu Nupe*. He assumed his influence of government over the entire Bini confederacy with the capital at Nupeko. Tsoede also compensated those twelve slaves given to him by his late father by making them chiefs of the Bini confederacy.

Tsoede embarked on confederating Nupe towns and it was during his tenure that Nupe became a separate kingdom from Idah. He also embarked on the expansion of the Nupe kingdom by conquering his neighbours and other people. He went as far as Akoko in the South, and Kamuku in northeast. Tsoede reigned for over sixty eight years and died during a war expedition at the old age of a hundred and eighty years.⁸¹

2.7 Nupe Traditional Religious Structure and Culture

In an attempt to define what African Religion is all about, Awolalu and Dopamu, appeal to the work of Awolalu J.O. on “Sin and its removal in African Traditional Religion” in *Journal of the African Academy of Religion*. According to him,

... it is the religion that has been handed down from generation to generation by the forebears of the present generation of Africans. It is not a fossil religion (a thing of the past) but a religion that Africans today have made theirs by living it and practising it...⁸²

The above quotation describes the Nupe religion. The people come by it through their experience of the divine knowledge which they got through revelation and interaction with nature.

Many scholars have written about what they think should be the structure of the West African Religion. Among them is P.A. Talbot. In his own view, four elements go into the making of the religion of the people of Southern Nigeria. These include: Polytheism, anthropomorphism, animism and ancestor worship.⁸³ E.G. Parrinder proposes four elements which are: a Supreme God or Creator, the chief divinities, the cult of divinized ancestors and the charms and amulets.⁸⁴ Idowu’s proposal seems to be the most acceptable especially with African scholars like Awolalu, Dopamu and others. Idowu proposes five fold classifications. These include: belief in God, belief in divinities, belief in spirits, belief in ancestors and the practices of magic and medicine.⁸⁵ These are in line with the Nupe religious structure.

As observed from the classification, God is the most important factor in the religious order. He is the main element and other things exist in consequence of him. The divinities who also derive from God help him in daily theocratic administration, control and maintenance of the universe and also serve as intermediaries between man and God.⁸⁶ The Spirits are separate entities which can inhabit natural phenomenon. They are separable from this phenomenon; the phenomena are just mediums through which divinities are approached.

Nupe's belief in ancestral spirits is very strong. After the demise of these one time human beings, they transit to the spiritual world. However, they still play active role in the running of affairs of the various families they belonged while still on earth. The Nupe believe that these ancestors re-incarnate into the family in the form of children born into their various families. Names of such departed individuals are given to the newly born children in such families. Christianity and Islam have not been able to erase this cultural practice in Nupeland.

The last stage is magic and medicine. The Nupe believe that magic and medicine are procured through the personal efforts of man in an attempt to control his environment. It is a means by which what cannot be obtained ordinarily is acquired by means of magic and medicine.

2.8 Belief in God

Conception of God by Africans is enshrined in the names they call him. Through these names, one is able to understand the African's concept of God.⁸⁷ These names reveal his nature, attributes, work and purpose. As far as they are concerned, God is the most important being in both physical and spiritual worlds.

The Nupe name for God is *Soko*. *Soko* is a combination of two words; *So* and *Ko*. "So" implies the skyey heaven and "ko" means something big, great and undimensional.⁸⁸ The ideas behind the name is that God inhabits the heavens, he is great and unlimited in power, glory and authority.

Another name by which God is known among the Nupe is *Tsochi*.⁸⁹ *Tsochi* is equivalent to the Yoruba word, *Oluwa*. It has the sense of the owner, controller, master, lord, maker and source. The word is loaded with deep meanings which is real to the Nupe. The word describes God as the creator, owner and cherisher of all that exist. This is expressed in the Nupe creation story which holds that men came from a leg or knee belonging to some other being.⁹⁰ That Being, of course, must be God.

Other ideas are found in their wise sayings or proverbs, songs, myths and tales. An instance of a famous story among the Nupe is the one that states that there was once a medicine man who made a chain which reached up into the sky with the intention of seeing God. After three years of fruitless search he came back declaring to those who were anxiously waiting for him that God is far away, each person should worship what is close to him.⁹¹ Some European researchers have taken this to mean a withdrawn God. They have interpreted it to mean that Africans believe that after the creation, God withdrew from what he created and showed no concern for it. This is not true from the Nupe, and indeed African perspectives. When the Nupe say *Soko lokpa* (God is far away), they are emphasising the transcendent nature of God. The underlying meaning is that God is separable from his creation. The Nupe believe that although God is inseparable, he is also immanent. This is clear in their song which says: “God is far away. God is in front, He is in the back.”⁹² The implication of this song lies in the fact that God is present in his creation always and everywhere. The Nupe substantiate this when they say *Soko tsoba gan epa nakan yi* meaning: “God is closer to us than the skin on our body.” The sociological understanding of the people explains why God is not just visible anyhow.

Nupe theology indicates that God is a righteous judge. This is why he has put in place some anti-wickedness divinities. One of such divinities which represent the wrath of God is *Sokogba* which is meant to inflict punishment on the offenders in the society. Despite the

transcendent nature of God, the Nupe are constantly and consistently aware of his presence. His names are always on their lips on all occasions. Whatever happens, whether good or bad, they believe that it has been brought about by God. Hence, the expression: *Soko de!* Meaning “It is (only) God!”

God’s love is believed to be manifested in his provision. There is a common expression in Nupe which illustrates this: *Soko na sa’mi na, a te wun a* – this literally means that God who created mouth will not close it. This is the belief that God will continually provide what his creature will eat. Other attributes of God include Omniscience, Omnipresence and Omnipotence. He is also a Spirit. This explains the reason there is no image of him in any form. He is believed to be eternal.

Nadel says “any thought of gaining more precise knowledge of the deity is regarded as absurd and may well be ridiculed, as in this somewhat slangy proverb: the thing that conceals God, go and buy it.”⁹³ The point the Nupe is trying to make here is that the knowability of God is dependent on how much of him He wants to reveal to anybody. This is in line with the Christian belief about cosmogony or revelation. He is also believed to be the Creator.

Belief in Spirit

There are certain religious concepts which are basic to all African societies. One of such concepts is the belief in Spirits. The African world is populated with spirits which are of various categories⁹⁴These spirits exist in consequence of the Supreme Being since they emanated from Him. The spirits have the characteristics of the Supreme Being and are said to be God's offsprings.⁹⁵

Basically, as in other African societies, spirits among the Nupe are divided into three categories. One of the divisions is the primordial spirits or divinities. These are the spirits who were with the Supreme Being from the timeless beginning in heaven.⁹⁶These divinities are meant to help God in the daily administration of the theocratic world. *Gunnu* is an example of such Spirits.

In the list of the spirits is the category of the deified ancestors. The spirits in this category were once mortal beings but because they lived mysterious and extra ordinary lives, they became deified after death.⁹⁷An example of this type of divinity is *Sokogba*, an equivalent of the Yoruba *Sango*. Ordinarily, when a person dies a good death, he or she joins the ancestors where he/she is reincarnated.

The third category is the personification of natural phenomena and objects. Such spirits inhabit hills, mountains, trees, rocks, rivers, forests, caves, etc. These natural objects only house them, they are not in themselves the spirits. They become sacred because of the presence of the spirits. *Ndaduma* (River Niger) is worshipped in many parts of Nupeland. The Nupe believe in the *Jenu* (jinns). These are the spirits which inhabit some natural phenomena. They can be good or bad. They are ubiquitous and much dreaded. Although they are spirits, they can decide to show themselves to people. There are some hours of the day when they move about. They move about very early in the morning before day break, some move between 12:00noon and 3:00pm while some move about in the dead of the night. This is why

pregnant women are advised not to move around during these periods so as not to be attacked by them.

On the general note, spirits carry out the will of God. This is the reason for their existence. Each of them has a portfolio and they help in the day to day administration of the universe. They also serve as intermediaries between God and man. They accept worship and sacrifices on behalf of God. They are highly revered as agencies through whom God can be reached. Nevertheless, they cannot exist in isolation of the Supreme Being.

2.9 Belief in Satan

Nadel records some fantastic ideas about the Nupe's concept of Satan but one wonders why he at the same time makes some contradictory statements to an earlier established fact. This may be due to some of the pre-conceived ideas which some European scholars had had about African Religion and culture. For instance, he states that "the Nupe do mention Satan or the devil; but they only just mention him and no more."¹⁰² However, he states again that "Nupe firmly hold that the devil exists, that he is behind many (though not all) evil things and that there is only one devil (while there are many evil spirits)."⁹⁹

The first statement made by Nadel indicates that Satan is passive in Nupe Religion while the second statement shows that he is an active figure in the world of *Soko* (God). This is gross inconsistency. The Nupe name for Satan is *Shetan* or *Abili* or *Ibili*. As stated earlier in chapter one, Nadel believes they are loan words from the Arabic Language. The word *Shetan* may be a direct translation from the word "Satan". As indicated from the Chapter one of this work, *Abili* or *Ibili* may be a corruption of the Arabic word *Ibilis*. These words may not be unconnected with the early contact of the Nupe society with Islam. That notwithstanding, the word *bili* or *elibi* in Nupe language connotes evil, wickedness or something bad or not correct. Hence, the Nupe can say of someone *u bili* meaning he or she is wicked. The word is from the fusion of *eli* and *bi*. *Eli* means behaviour (which can be good or

bad). When it is good, it is *eli wangi*, when it is evil, it is *eli bibichi* or *eli dede*. The most important word in *bibichi* is *bi*. Perhaps, this is where the Nupe get the idea of “ebi” (faeces) to explain the idea that such item is not “good” or needed. Therefore the Nupe name for Satan may have come from this idea.

On the other hand, *abili* could mean trouble or riot. It is a state of chaos or unrest. All of these words and ideas are reminiscent of who Satan or the devil is to the Nupe. In the belief of the Nupe, some unexpected evil turn of events are attributed to Satan. For instance, when a truthful person suddenly becomes a liar or when two jolly friends suddenly become enemies, people will say *Abili* is at work.¹⁰⁰

Abili or *Shetan* (Satan) is God’s creature and cannot do anything except he is permitted by *Soko* (God). This is a further proof to show that God is actively involved in the day to day theocratic management of the universe. The Nupe concept of Satan is very similar to that of biblical Satan. People do not worship him but can offer sacrifices to God through other divinities to ward him off. When an evil thing happens especially to an evil doer through the agency of divinities saddled with the task of carrying out God’s righteous judgment, such act is not credited to Satan; rather, to a righteous act of God.

The Nupe concept of Satan differs considerably from the Yoruba concept of *esu*. While *esu* sometimes can be employed to act in a positive way, the Nupe *Ibili* is by nature and persistently evil. For instance, when a necessary sacrifice is offered, *esu*’s influence can be appeased and the victim could give birth to children and such children are named after him. This is not so with the Nupe *Ibili*. Other divinities like *Sogba* or *Gunnu* can be appeased this way and the request will be granted.

2.10 Nupe Cults

Prior to the coming of Islam and Christianity, there were many cults in Nupeland. However, with the coming of Islam and Christianity, some of these cults have disappeared.

Nevertheless, there are still some pockets of these cults seen scattered around in Nupeland. Therefore, in this section, a few of them will be discussed.

Sogba

Sogba is a divinity which carries out the justice of God. It is from *Sokogba* as explained in chapter one. *Sokogba* or *Sogba* is the god of thunder and has all characteristics of the Yoruba *Sango*.¹⁰¹ According to Yoruba oral tradition, Sango was a son of Oranyan, the son of Oduduwa who is the progenitor of the Yoruba race.¹⁰² Oduduwa went on expedition to Nupeland and the North of the River Niger. On getting to Nupeland, Oduduwa married a Nupe woman who then gave birth to Sango. Therefore, Sango was of Ife and Nupe parentage. The tradition goes further to state that Oya, the wife of Sango became River Niger. According to Idowu, “and if this is so, the name of Sango who has become a popular hero and a cult object, would not be unknown and unrevered in those parts which could proudly establish some blood relationship with him”¹⁰³

The Yoruba tradition identifies it with one of the primordial divinities. In the words of Idowu, “This is one of the divinities who are “of the heavens” because the Ife will say emphatically that he neither came to live on earth nor has any images here”.¹⁰⁴ *Sogba* is not only a divinity which carries out the divine justice, he is also a divinity of fertility. A barren woman approaches *Sogba* through his priest and prayers for the gift of children are made. When *Sogba* answers such prayers, children born in consequence of the divinity belongs to him. As soon as such children are born, *Sogba* is informed by a means of sacrifice through the priest.¹⁰⁵

Children who are given by *Sogba* take their names after him. Usually the suffix *Nda* or *Nna* is added to *Sogba* to differentiate a male child or female child, he or she is called *Tsubeyan*. This is a contrasted form of the expression: *Etsu* (king) shortened as *Tsu*, *Soko* (God or god) *Sogba*, *be* (add) *miyan* (I have more or increase). The sense here is that *Sogba*

adds more children to me. In the case where a third child is born, such child is also believed to have been given by *Sogba*. Such child is named *Yebo Sogba*. This literally means thanks to *Sogba*. This can also be differentiated by either *Nda Yebo* or *Nna Yebo* depending on the sex.¹⁰⁶

Ndakogboya

Ndakogboya, no doubt, is one of the principal divinities in Nupeland, there are myths regarding its origin in Nupeland. A source says there was a particular king of Nupe whose mother used to interfere in the affairs of the state, such that the king was reduced to a passive ruler. In the end, the king consulted a diviner for help. The diviner instructed the king to bring ten lengths of cloth which the diviner later sewed in the form of a tall hollow tube. As a result of the substance applied on the cloths by the diviner, the cloth rose up through the air and eventually dropped on the king's mother, covering her completely. The tall tube-like thing then carried the king's mother up into the sky and she was never seen again.¹⁰⁷ The implication of this myth is that the cult of Ndakogboya is closely connected with kingship.

Another legend attributes the genesis of Ndakogboya to *Etsu Shago* during whose reign *chigbe* (medicine) was discovered. This Shago is the same King Sango who ruled in the old Oyo. At a point in time, people became very lawless to the level that they refused to listen to the Great Men. For instance, men would snatch other people's wives and also commit adultery, the older women were more troublesome in the sense that they quarrelled to the point that the peace of the society was compromised and when challenged such women instead of feeling remorseful, replied with insolence.

Consequently, a young man of great strength went into the bush and covered his head with cloth. When he got to where the women were formenting trouble, he yelled at them "Yi i i"- this is the sound of Ndakogboya. All the women fled in fear when they heard the sound but an old woman who was among them refused to run. The man and the other young men

did all they could to scare her but she refused to be intimidated. At last the old men said “ezo, ezo” – this is the greeting for Ndakogboya, and she was caught and killed with an iron rod called *sanyi*. The men justified her killing on the fact that she saw *kuti* and yet refused to run away.¹⁰⁸ An illicit sexual relationship with another member’s wife is forbidden. Members of the guild are also prevented from marrying another member’s wife on the ground of divorce. It is believed that holding on to these moral principles enhance effectiveness in their performance and outings.

Before we conclude on this subject, it is essential to say that song is an important aspect of this cult. Although it is basically a male cult, women take active part during its festivals. The women sing, dance, clap and touch the shakers. These songs are stimulants which goad the participants to have an excellent performance. The Ndakogboya song is called *alugbe*. When it is sung, the performer may be moved to climb to the roof top, this process may culminate in the total disappearance of the performer by means of *chigbe* (magic) only to reappear again.¹⁰⁹

An example of such songs during festivals include *Achinga yizhe ejin o; za nan zhi go wo a na, a bichi* meaning “such is the world, those who cannot cope should run away”.¹¹⁰ The import of this song is to reveal the strength, courage and importance of the masked ones or cult members as against the weak, coward and insignificant non-members. Therefore, the song seeks to spur non-members to become initiates and to also encourage the spectators to appreciate the heroic performance of the actors and thereby give them gifts. Generally, the song has the invocational power in the whole process of the activities.

Closely connected with the song is a type of incantation used by the initiates of the *Ndakogboya* cult as recorded by Baba Josiah. The incantation reveals a lot of things believed by the Nupe and their concepts about them.

Mi jiba ya soko
Soko gan min lan ya kin
Mi jiba ya sogba
Mi jiba ya alijenuzhi kpata
Mi jiba ya Waka
Mi jiba ya Ndafo Legbo
Mi jiba ya Patizhi Kpata
Mi jiba ya Mawo Woye
Mi jiba ya Kunniania Pati
Mi jiba ya Tswasha Malu
Mi jiba ya Sidiku Ebasanchi
*Alijenu babozhi kpata ye tagwa guba e go mi.*¹¹²

This means,

I revere God
 God said I should give it to the ground (earth)
 I revere all jinns
 I revere *Waka* tree
 I revere Ndafo Legbo
 I revere *Wanzaya* (mountain)
 I revere all mountains
 I revere *Twasha Malu* (the god of Chigbe or medicine)
 I revere Sidiku *Ebasanchi* (name of the first herbalist)
 All the spirits of these places please stretch your two hands and accept my offer.

The materials used include *Pito* (a substance made from guinea-corn), an animal e.g fowl and other food items.

All these facts show that *Ndakogboya* is surrounded with a lot of intricacies, especially as regards initiation and celebrations. It is socio-religious in nature. While there are family adherents who practise it as an inherited cult, novice could also learn it and teach others who can also rise to the top of the ladder as the masters of the *Ndakogboya* cult.

Gunnu

Gunnu occurs everywhere in Nupeland and is the most important *kuti* (divinity).¹¹³ It has a mythical origin which is connected with a stranger who became leprous and later died. He was said to have been miraculously buried by God himself. The site where the villagers have dropped his body was said to produce white sand which is believed to have therapeutic elements. The cult is said to have originated from the Beni. According to Nadel,

The ritual which is said to have spread in the course of years through Beni country and the whole of Nupe is the Gunnu, the hill is known as Gunnu Hill, and the white sand is said to possess special healing properties (a claim which chemical analysis did not confirm).¹¹⁴

The Nupe name for leprosy is *sokogun*. This comes from the conglomeration of two words: *soko* (God) and *chigun* or *egun* (disease). Therefore, literally it means a disease of God. This is why in Nupeland, the burial of a leper is the responsibility of the Gunnu priest. Two things can be inferred from the whole concept. The first has to do with the Nupe concept of the Supreme Being. The idea that God miraculously buried the leper suggests the lofty idea about the Supreme Being among the Nupe. Secondly, the myth seems to attempt to explain the origin of the practice of the Gunnu priest's responsibility to bury the lepers.

Another source says the name *Gunnu* derives from the expression, *egun na dan nimi nu o na*, meaning the red earth that is inside the furrows or hoeing. A source also says the name is from the statement "one reaches the end of the wanderings; it is accomplished". Yet another source says it was taken from the word *nugun* meaning boundary or limit. When the syllables of the word *nugun* are reversed, it gives *gunnu*.¹¹⁵

The priest of the Beni village which housed the hill on which the stranger died is regarded by other *Gunnu* priests as the head of the entire *Gunnu* fraternity. A *Gunnu* priest is called *Ndazo*.¹¹⁶ Any child who is born with a tuft of hair on his head automatically becomes *Ndazo* and he is consecrated to *Gunnu*.

Gunnu ceremony lasts between three to four days depending on the quantity of food and drinks the adherents are able to gather for the celebration. Like other *Kuti*, there is an aspect of *Gunnu* which is performed in secrecy at *gunnuba* (*gunnu* shrine) and only witnessed by the initiates.¹¹⁷ Also, like *Ndakogboya*, *Gunnu* is characterised by a lot of singing and dancing from people of various age groups.

Essentially, *Gunnu* serves as an intermediary between man and God and whoever asks anything from his neighbour in the name of *Gunnu* must be given. *Gunnu* featured prominently during the burial of any chief in Nupeland. More importantly *Gunnu* was used to detect witches and sorcerers.¹¹⁸

Incredibly however, *Gunnu* has disappeared almost in all parts of Nupeland today. This may be so because of the overwhelming influence of *Ndakogboya* cult in the land. *Ndakogboya* may have absorbed *Gunnu* because of their similarities. Therefore, in order to avoid duplication, *Gunnu* may have gone into extinction.

Ganni

As pointed out earlier in chapter one of this work, *Ganni* took root in Kutigi and environs. It was a function of foreigners who imported it into Nupeland. The festival of *Ganni* is associated with the Muslim celebration of the birth of Prophet Mohammed. The celebration has some Islamic colouration as well.¹¹⁹ However, a lot of ambiguity is associated with this cult especially as regards the rituals and ceremonies involved. For anybody considering it from a distance, there may be a temptation to quickly conclude that it is an Islamic festival. However, a thought-provoking question which any serious-minded researcher will ask is “How will Islam which is a highly monotheistic religion, come to terms with a celebration of this nature?” This will amount to syncretism. In the view of Nadel,

the Nupe have no suitable name for this performance which has many aspects of a ritual act without conforming to a ‘ritual’ as the pagans understand it. They all emphasize that it is not a *Kuti* but neither do they call it *dzodzo*, mere ‘play’ in spite of the great scope given to mummerly, display, crude pranks, and merry-making generally. They either use the non-committal term *nya’nya*, dancing, or simply argue that ‘the *gani* is the *gani* that is unlike any other tribal festivity. Linguistic usage, it seems, has not quite caught up with this novel and ambiguous species of ceremonial.¹²⁰

The only possibility, *Ganni* could be associated with some Islamic elements was perhaps Islam was in vogue and indeed a religion of the elites. Consequently, for *Ganni* to gain a

wide acceptance, it was linked to the more “superior” religion of the time. Basically, *Ganni* was celebrated at the time when boys and youths were ready to move to the next age grade. A lot of imitations take place in the activities to reflect the reality of this movement or promotion. Each age-grade has a specific role performed under their leader called *Ndakotsu*.

The celebration lasts for six days. On the eve of the first day, the ceremony opens with a group of youths and drummers beating their drums. The celebrants dance to *Totonbato* beat and head straight to the king’s palace.¹²¹ The purpose of this is to signal the commencement of the festival. On the first day, the celebrants gather at a spot where they will take off. The activity of the day is to carry the flag round the town. This is what is called *Nnakogi*. The flag is made from the scarves donated by the girls in the town. This day which will normally fall on a market day is always exciting and the purpose of it is to announce the actual commencement of the programme.¹²² The programme of the day starts by 2 O’ clock in the afternoon and ends by sunset.

Ganni song which forms an important aspect of the celebration varies according to the sex of the group singing it. In a situation where a person’s name is mentioned while the song is being sung, it is a sign of bad omen to the person whose name is mentioned. One of the songs sung in such occasion is:

Mamma Ganni Sallah!
Mamma Ganni Sallah!
Nana Nana o! Nana Nana o – Nana ye!
Wo ga e wa Anabi ye o le, wo che ba Soko
*Wo ga lele ma! Asha ba ningbanna, wo boje wo be.*¹²³

The song is interpreted thus;

Mamma Ganni Celebration!
Mamma Ganni Celebration!
Nanna Nana o! Nana o – Nana ye (play on words)
 If you want to see the prophet
 Request from God that you do not sleep!
 If they prepare *ningbanna* (soup), can you prepare *eje* (food)?

On the second day of the celebration, the girls would go and fetch the sand from the outskirts of the town. The sand is taken to the ruling houses in the midst of *Ganni* song characterized by great excitement. After the fetching of the sand, it is spread on a plain ground where the wrestling will take place. The third day of the celebration is dedicated to the celebration of Prophet Mohammed's birthday. Nothing very significant happens on the fourth day except prayers in the mosque. The artists or musicians perform on the fifth day and youths are seen dancing in groups. The sixth day is the last day and it is the most exciting day. The programme of the day starts in the morning where the chief or king and the subjects are seated. The *Nnako Ganni*¹²⁴ will be busy with other young girls preparing food which will be served at the occasion. The main programme of the day is wrestling among the different age groups. It is good to conclude this section with the words of S.F. Nadel who states glaringly the purpose of this celebration and incidentally the purpose of *Ganni*.

The *Ganni* ceremonial has for its main theme the periodical reconstitution of the village age-grade associations, that is, the acceptance of novices into the first grade and the promotion of older boys and youths to higher grades.¹²⁵ In his other book, *the Black Byzantium*, he states the importance of the age grade life as an "education for citizenship."¹²⁶

Ndabazunma

Another important cult among the Nupe is *Ndabazunma*, otherwise known as *Ndaliasu*. According to the research carried out by the Calvary Ministry, *Ndabazunma* is described as

an object that is manipulated to make a fearful noise called *vuguvugu* so that people run into hiding. Zaba interprets its message to people and nobody must see the object. It is practiced especially among the Nupe of Kwara State.¹²⁷

Ndabazunma is a cult which the Nupe use against the witches. It is used to excommunicate a witch out of a town. When a stranger enters a town or village, and such a stranger is believed to be a witch, perhaps she was excommunicated from another village, *Ndabazunma* is used to force such a stranger out of the village. It is a taboo for a female to set her eyes on *Ndabuzunma*.

Other *kuti* in Nupeland include *Tsoede*, *Ndaduma*, *Eloon*, *Egun Nyakpa*, *Bansa*, *Kederuku*, *Ewo*, *Ayalaba*, *Koto*, *Bakonbaji*, *Nakuti*, *Sogba*, *Duwa*, *Patiko*, etc.

2.11 Belief in Medicine, Magic and Witchcraft

Medicine, Magic and Witchcraft are cardinal beliefs among the Nupe. To really appreciate the meaning and the importance of these concepts among the Nupe, their meanings have to be ascertained. However, this is not without certain difficulties in the sense that these words “Medicine”, “Magic” and “Witchcraft” are English words meant to translate the Nupe concepts of the words. Viewing these words from a purely Anglophonic perspective may be misleading and that is why a careful study of it from the Nupe socio-cultural axis is necessary.

Medicine

Out of these three concepts, the most important word is the one translated as medicine. It cuts across other concepts such as magic, witchcraft and sorcery. The word which is translated medicine is *Chigbe*.¹²⁸ This word was wrongly spelt by Nadel by writing it as

Cigbe.¹²⁹ This mistake was equally made by other non-Nupe scholars like Dopamu¹³⁰ and Oguntola-Laguda who spelt it “*Cigbeni*”.¹³¹

Dopamu in his work cited a lot of authors and abundantly prove that many of these authors do not comprehend the meaning of medicine especially as it relates to magic.¹³² He quoted comprehensively, the work of Nadel on the Nupe where he writes:

the English equivalent does not quite render the implications of the vernacular concept; for though the latter includes typical remedies, that is, materials applied for strictly therapeutic purposes... it also include materials whose alleged efficacy goes far beyond the treatment of ailments. In this latter sense *cigbe* is a substance or object which exercises remote and miraculous effects upon the efficacy of other objects, for example, tools or weapons, upon the outcome of human efforts of all kind, and upon human fate in general.¹³³

Dopamu wraps up his argument in the following words:

it is clear from the writings of some anthropologists and sociologists, therefore, that the scholars see the facts as they are, but they are unwilling to adopt what they consider to be an ordinary, run-of-the milk sort of theory. Hence, they miss the essential in the exercise of circumlocution and stick to a term which they further classify as covering two categories of ideas. However, it should have been clearer had they found different terms for the different “associations of ideas” discussed under that single term.¹³⁴

While the researcher agrees with Dopamu that many scholars find it difficult to draw a clear line of demarcation between medicine and magic, he disagrees with his criticism of Nadel that he is confused in his concept of medicine and magic among the Nupe. What Nadel is proving is what Dopamu has earlier said concerning the practice of medicine and magic among the Yoruba. According to him,

the Yoruba practitioner has no difficulty in knowing the difference between what we had classified as magic, medicine or sorcery. He knows, for example, that when he heals a headache, he uses medicine; when he protects someone against bullets he uses magic; and when he invokes to harm or kill a person he uses sorcery.¹³⁵

This idea perfectly describes Nupe experience. The only area where Nadel could be faulted in his idea is in the fact that he could not find different terms for different association of ideas, as explained by Dopamu.

Among the Nupe, *chigbe* refers to any substance or material like parts of plants e.g. root, bark, leaves, flowers, etc, parts of animal body, other inanimate objects like water, sand, stone, etc which can be used separately or with other elements combined to make concoction as therapeutic measure in order for an ailment to be cured. The materials used are purely natural and do not have any element of metaphysics added to it. However, in some cases, the assistance of the spirit world has to be sought in the form of incantations before some medicines can be efficacious.¹³⁶ This is where religion interacts with medicine.

It is pertinent to note at this point that the word *chigbe* technically refers to “knowledge”.¹³⁷ It is this knowledge which enables an individual to manufacture specific medicines to be used for specific ailments. This knowledge could be gained from interaction with nature, through apprenticeship or even from spiritual entities. The concept of medicine in Nupe is similar in any aspects to the concept of medicine in many other parts of Africa. For instance, as found among the Yoruba, many diseases have names which are derived from the parts of the body they affect, e.g. *efori* in Yoruba which is *etisan* in Nupe (headache), *inu rirun* in Yoruba and *gbakotan* in Nupe (stomachache) or the cause or their descriptions, e.g. *igbe orin* in Yoruba and *tsarantsoro in Nupe* (purging) while other names have no etymology. To sum the idea up, it can be said that there is that part of medicine in Nupe which is purely therapeutic and prophylactic.

Magic

A fact was established while discussing medicine and it is the fact that there is an aspect of Nupe medicine which is expressly therapeutic. However, there is another aspect

which is non-therapeutic in nature and this is called magic. This takes care of things which are not associated with disease or illness. In the words of Dopamu,

human beings want victory, success, luck, protection from danger, good harvest, successful business, success in examination, rain for crops, protection against accident, protection against forces of evil, followers, others to love them, employment and a host of other needs. These concerns are quite distinct from pathological or therapeutic conditions of human beings, and they are mainly dealt with by the use of magic.¹³⁸

This is not to say that medicine is completely equal to magic but the whole process is magical. What informs the “magicality” of it is *Chigbe* (medicine). In other words, it is the knowledge of *Chigbe* that brings about the efficacy of magic. Without the esoteric knowledge of *Chigbe*, magic becomes absolutely impossible and inefficacious. Therefore, this is how magic and medicine interact.

An important aspect of magic in Nupe is called *eyanman*. This is part of different terms for different associations of ideas Dopamu is suggesting.¹³⁹ An ability to withstand matchet cut, penetration of bullet, or certain occurrences which are brought about by a person and which cannot be explained scientifically are called magic by the Nupe. Usually, this involves conjuring the forces of nature for it to happen. When such happens the Nupe will say, *u manyan* meaning he performs magic.

Magic can be used positively or negatively. In other words, there is a good use of magic and bad use of it. An example of the good use of magic could be in any of the above cited instances. On the other hand, the bad use of magic manifests itself in sorcery. This still boils down to the idea that it is because that individual possesses a secret knowledge of *Chigbe*, that is why he can use *Chigbe* to harm another person. This is the more reason the opinion of M. J. Field should not be pushed aside just with a wave of the hand the way Dopamu did. M.J. Field asserts concerning the Ga of Ghana that “witchcraft is a bad medicine

directed destructively against other people.”¹⁴⁰In the light of Nupe concept of medicine, her idea has a lot of senses in it. When one person uses medicine to inflict bodily pain on another person, i.e. sorcery, the Nupe will say *wun a u ka chigbe* which literally means he is “cut” with *chigbe*. There are different names by which they are known, e.g. *chekperi*. One common magic in Nupeland is *was* which is used to fight or scare away thieves through snake.

Witchcraft

Witchcraft is regarded as an evil thing among the Nupe. It is an intangible, mysterious thing, shrouded in secrecy for all but the initiates. The word for witchcraft in Nupe is *ega*, hence *gachi* refers to the possessor of *ega* craft. It is possible to have witchcraft or do and practise a faculty or skill.

The Nupe's belief is that the withches eat *nakan* (body) of human beings. Not only that, they are said to have a *chigbe* (medicine) which eats *rayi* (life) gradually until the victim dies. In a situation where the victim is not sick, the *gachi* (witch) seizes *finfingi* (shadow) and the person begins to take ill because they will have witches carry out their activities spiritually but manifest physically. They will be eating his *rayi* (life) until he dies.¹⁴¹ Their activities are mainly in the night. Usually the art of witchcraft is commonly and largely found among women. Their head or leader is called *lelu* or *sagi*. She has the responsibility of checking the nefarious activities of the witches. However, that is not to say there are no male witches.

The male witches are called *eshe* but are relatively fewer in number than the female witches. Their function in the guild of witches is to help their female counterpart to kill their victims. In the words of Nadel, he says:

...thus it is thought that all witches in a village, or seven or three, share one male helper. They would visit him at night to solicit his help, but while some think that it is only the *finfingi* of man and woman who meet in this fashion, others are certain that it is the real person who does so.¹⁴²

From the quotation above, it is crystal-clear that the female witches cannot operate successfully without the assistance of their male counterparts. It is a common thing in Nupeland to find the women in a particular home (*yawomizhi*) joking with their "husbands" that they are their *ebitsozhi* (knife-men). This means that if they accuse them (women) of witchcraft, they (men) are those who help them to slaughter their victims. One can become a

witch through inheritance from one's mother, one can be born a witch, one can buy it and can also be initiated through food.¹⁴³

The Nupe strongly believe in witchcraft. It is a reality in Nupe society. The Nupe recognise witchcraft as a societal problem and they have adopted different methods to get the problem solved. The Nupe adopt spiritual means to solve the problem of witchcraft. Even though there may be no empirical statistics to prove it, experience has shown that witchcraft is an age-long problem in Nupeland. It is one of the cardinal causes of underdevelopment. The presence of Islam and Christianity has not been able to check this menace as expected.

2.12 Rites of Passage: Birth, Marriage and Burial

The passages of life that will be treated in this work are birth, marriage and death. These stages of life are very important in the lives of the Nupe. Consequently, many ceremonies and rituals are associated with them.

Birth

Birth is treated not as a climax but just a stage in a series of events. It all starts with conception and ends sometimes after birth but more importantly, there is a connection between the Nupe's concept of birth and life on the one hand and body and soul on the other hand. In the belief of the Nupe, the most appropriate time for conception starts from five days after the mother's menstruation. Moreover, the mating of the couple must take place when the night is still young, the reason is that any child conceived in the dark of the night when spirits and witches are active may be born with malformations or physical defects.

Once the pregnancy is noticed between the third and the fifth month, the couple must discontinue sex, the mother should be mindful of the time to go out and where to go to avoid the influence of the spirits. She must also be mindful of the type of food to eat which may cause harm to the unborn baby. Such food include honey because it can give the baby adenoids, and certain species of fish because the baby may end up having six fingers on one hand.¹⁴⁴ The diviner may also add his own taboos to this list when consulted by the father of the unborn child.

It is also the responsibility of the father to procure medicine or collect the herbs which will facilitate a hitch-free delivery. At the point of delivery, the father is not expected to be present, rather, his elder sister, mother or aunt of the father who will carry out the delivery. When the child is born, its umbilical cord will be cut by the father's uncle or grand-father and carefully buried outside the house.

After a safe delivery of the baby, the grandfather makes an announcement to his relatives and friends that he has been blessed with a grandchild. After this announcement, the father of the child would begin to send kolanuts to his friends and the well-wishers who may come to congratulate the family with the announcement that the naming ceremony will come up on a particular day. The naming ceremony is called *sunna* meaning "name", it takes place

eight days after the birth of a child. However, on the day preceeding the naming ceremony day, the father takes a gourd of beer and pour libation to the ancestor who is thought to have reincarnated into the family. This is done in secrecy in the hut where the reincarnated ancestor is buried. The attendants in this ceremony are the child's father and his nearest male relatives. As the father performs this ceremony, he kneels down, holding a gourd of beer and prays to *Soko* (God). He identifies the ancestor that has reincarnated in his prayer and asks the *Kuchi* (ancestor) to hold the child, keep him or her healthy to live and grow old. This is one of the ambiguities involved in Nupe religion – a prayer to the reincarnated ancestor to watch over the reincarnated ancestor! After the libation, the remaining beer is drunk by the other people.

On the eighth day, the main activity is concerned with announcing the name of the child formally. This is done by the grandfather in the presence of the guests. After the announcement of the baby's name, it is brought out of the mother's hut at least for the first time in eight days. If the child is a boy, his hair is completely shaved. The hair is collected in a bowl and buried in the house. In the case of a female child the hair on the top of the head is left standing. After the shaving, the tribal mark is made on the face of the child. Immediately the name of the child is announced, the food is served to the guests and that marks the end of the ceremony.

We must note, at this juncture, that the name that will be given to a child will be dependent on a number of factors ranging from the way the child is born, to the time he or she is born and situations surrounding the birth. Examples of this are sufficiently given.

When a set of twins are born, they are given special names e.g. *Nda'ba* and *Nna'ba* for a twin brother and sister respectively. Other names in this category include *Gimba* and *Hussaini* or *Hassan* and *Gimba*. A child born after the twins had been born by the same parents is called *Gambo*. This name may carry the prefix *Nda* or *Nna* to differentiate the sex

of the child as male or female respectively. In a case where a child is born with the amnion sac, he or she is called *Ndashirun* or *Nnashirun* for male and female respectively. A child whose legs come out before the head at birth is called *Ndabinni* or *Nnabinni* for male and female child respectively. A child born with a split upper mouth lip is named after the heroic Nupe legend, *Tsoede* or *Nda'degi*. *Goye* is a child born with grass or a leaf between its lips. This could also be *Nda* or *Nna* for male and female respectively.¹⁴⁵

In a situation where a couple waits for a long time before giving birth to a child, or after giving birth to a child the subsequent ones die before they give birth to the one who is alive, such child is called *Kuru*. The prefix *Nda* or *Nna* is added depending on the sex. In a case like this, the parent would look for two big calabashes of the same size, put them on her head for hawking it around the town in a symbolic manner of hawking *kuru*.¹⁴⁶ People give gifts and pray for the child. It is believed that the prayer offered will protect and sustain the life of the child.

Another name include *Zanna* for a child born after the death of his or her father. *Zanna* is a Nupe word meaning farewell. Such child may be *Nda* or *Nna Zanna* depending on the sex. *Cheyagi* is a name given to an infant whose mother dies. *Cheyagi* means “the thrown away (child)”. Other names in this category are *Baiwa* and *Danganna* for female and male respectively. Such names are given to any child who loses any of the parents while still an infant.¹⁴⁷

A child could also be named after the divinity thought to have given him or her as gift e.g. *Sogba* as stated earlier in this chapter. A second child from *Sogba* is called *Tsubeyan*. It is a compression of the statement, *Etsu Soko Sogba be mi yan*. Meaning “the Sogba god adds another child to me,” a third child born in this manner is called *Yebo* meaning “Thanks (to Sogba)”. A child may also be given praise names like *Legbo*, *Gana*, *Wusa*, *Dufia*, *Giwa*,

Jiwo, Kolo, Tswayan, Saba, Jiya, Woye, Tsado, Lolo, Nnadzwa, Nnamakan, Dzwabishi, Wodu, Manchinma, Kashi, Kiatswa, etc.

Because of the Nupe belief in reincarnation, the name of the profession of the deceased ancestor who is believed to be reincarnated in that child is given as his or her name e.g. *Baba Mashin* for a male tailor, *Baba Nangi* for a male goat rearer, *Baba Kafinta* for a male carpenter, *Nna Kara* for a female bean cake seller, *Nna Mi* for a female oil seller. An infant can be named after a title holder e.g. *Nakodi, Gabi, Shaaba, Kpotun, Mayaki, Chekpa, Ndatwaki, Nnatsu, etc.* A child can also be given the praise names or greetings of some titles, e.g. *Agaba, Aluwo, Takun, Kpakoyankpa, etc.* A child who is born at the arrival or visit of an eminent person takes the name of such person or title e.g. *Etsu* for king, *Shaaba* for Vice-president or Deputy Governor, *Gomina* for a Governor, *Shugaba* for President. Other such names include *Kpotun, Nakodi, etc.*

Months or days in which children are born determine the names which will be given to them. For instance, any child born during an important festival is either called *Baba Salla* or *Nna Salla* for male and female respectively. For a child born on Sunday it is called *Danladi* and *Ladidi*; Monday, *Tanimu* and *Teni*; Tuesday, *Ndata* and *Talatu*; Wednesday, *Bala* and *Lare*; Thursday, *Danlami* and *Lami*; Friday, *Danjuma* and *Jumai*; Saturday, *Nda Asebe* and *Asebe* for male and female respectively. However, in the alternative, a child born on Wednesday could be named *Raba* or *Laba* for female; Thursday, *Lami* or *Lamude* for female; Friday, *Dzunma* or *Nda Dzunma* for female and male respectively; Saturday, *Nda Ashibi* and *Nna Ashibi* for male and female respectively.

Names could also be by circumstance or location in which a child is born. A child born in the market is called *Nda Dzuko* or *Nna Dzuko* for male and female respectively; in the farm, *Nda Lati* and *Nna Lati* for male and female respectively. A child born in the night is called *Nda Yeshi* and *Ega* (guest) *Yeshi* (night) for male and female respectively.

Marriage

In the old traditional Nupe society, marriage can be categorised into two types; relationship marriage and non-relationship marriage. The third type of marriage came with Islam, and this can be described as charity marriage.

Relationship marriage is a system of marriage where the parents of the couple are related by blood. The motive behind this marriage is to keep the chain of the relationship. The non-relationship type of marriage is the one where the parents of the couple are not related by blood. The charity marriage is a type of marriage where a girl is given in marriage by her parents to a man in the name of Prophet Mohammed, as a gift. Another reason could be because the man in question may not be buoyant enough either financially or materially to consummate marriage.

Marital journey started with *nyimi ba* (begging for wife) and culminated in *yawojin*. Nadel gives a very vivid summary of marriage among the Nupe. According to him, including all the various preliminaries, the wedding ceremonial is a long drawn out affair, occupying twelve days, divided into three phases or four days, it begins when the bride puts on (or 'enters') the veil, which she will put aside only on the twelfth day, after the consummation.¹⁴⁸

The whole process starts when the father of the proposed groom, without the knowledge of the groom himself, approaches the father of the proposed bride and asks for her hand in marriage for his son. The proposed bride does not need to attain a marriagable age before the proposal is made. When a proposal is made, usually, the father of the bride directs the one who makes the proposal to the bride's uncle.

The next stage is the appointment of *Rina*.¹⁴⁹ He carries any message, information and request from the groom's family to the bride's family. He also serves as the intermediary. If there is any message from the bride's family it is communicated through him. After the groom's family has approached the bride's family for the proposal, it is now left for both the intending groom and his family to begin to do *yele*.¹⁵⁰ Dauda explains this vividly. According to him,

the boy having known the parents in-laws, there used to be exhibitional show of modesty to the parents of the girl. He helps them whenever they are in need, in the farm and otherwise. He gives full respect to them and feel shy to sit in their midst in any gathering.¹⁵¹

This act is not limited to the proposed groom alone but also his family members. The family of the groom respects the parents of the bride and show the same respect to her family members. The act of *yelejin* is so important that the Nupe have a proverb that *kagan u yi bo Etsu bo a, yele a won o*; meaning "if not for the king, in-law is to be worshipped or served." This implies that an in-law earns much respect to the extent that after God, he or she is the next to be revered. It should be noted that *yelejin* is not an act which stops at a time but a life-long activity.

After the proposal has been made, the bride's family is expected to declare formally that they have assented to the proposal. This official declaration by the bride's family is called *emikpe*. Literally, it means "open mouth". This can be likened to the modern day introduction and engagement. After this declaration, the *Rina* takes some kola nut and a specified amount of money from the groom's family and delivers them to the family of the bride. The family of the bride shares the kola-nut and the money among themselves. This act signifies the official engagement of the intending couples. It is a notice to the public that other intending suitors should keep off from the duo.

After the engagement, the *Rina* begins to work towards the date for the marriage, this is called *efo yawogo*. The *Rina* may pay frequent visits to the family of the bride before a date is given by the bride's family. The bride's family may give several excuses to *Rina* such as "she is not yet matured", "we have not yet met on the day", etc. They may even try to provoke the *Rina* by telling him never to come back and ask for the date again. However, he keeps on begging until his request is granted. Immediately after the date has been fixed, the groom's family arranges for the dowry and other material things requested by the bride's family through the *Rina*.

Another stage in marriage solemnization is called *rufadan*.¹⁵² The day of *rufadan* is kept secret to the bride so that in case she does not like her suitor, she will not run away. Whoever informs her prior to the time and she runs away will be responsible for her whereabouts after much insults have been passed on such a person.

Rufadan could take place early in the morning or late in the evening. Two elderly women are usually involved in the act. One of the women will go to the house where the girl is sleeping and wake her up to go to the river and fetch water. The other woman will hide somewhere around the entrance to the door. As the bride steps out, the old woman would pour or splash water on her. The other women who may be hanging around the vicinity then begin to *kpawulele*.¹⁵³ It is at this juncture that it dawns on her that she is in for a family life. Once *Wulele* is whistled, a pot or calabash is broken to signal the expiration of her spinsterhood.¹⁵⁴ This act is the beginning of the real marriage ceremony.

Next is the *edunfe yawo*, meaning the sitting of the bride. This is a situation where friends and relations of the bride stays with the bride's parents to identify, rejoice and help them do some work. This time, the bride is in veil and her feet and palms are dyed in hyena leaves called *lali*. It is after this that the bride is taken to her husband's house. But before this, the bride's father would make sacrifices to the ancestors at the family shrine. He asks *Soko*

(God) to bless the marriage with children and other material things. Therefore the bride goes in the company of her friends, her father's younger sister, her mother's brother, drummers and musicians¹⁵⁵. This takes place in the night. The morning following the day the bride arrives in her husband's house, the father in-law performs the types of sacrifices performed by her father. At the arrival of the bride, *rufadan* is observed for the groom also but different from the way it is done for the bride.

All festivities end on the tenth day and all this while the bride has been separated from her husband. On the tenth day, for the first time, she sweeps the hut and in the evening she sits outside her hut to receive gifts from friends and relatives. The marriage ceremony is concluded on the twelfth day. In the morning, the bridegroom will send a cock and a hen to his mother in-law to cook. After the preparation the mother in-law sends it back to the bridegroom. The bride will be given the hen delicacy which she eats with her companions and give a small portion to her mother-in-law. On the other hand, the cock will be cut into two and the bridegroom together with his friends will eat one portion and the father will eat the other portion alone. At the close of this feast, the bride's companions finally depart. With this, the Nupe will say the "path is open at last" mainly the marriage will be consummated that same night.¹⁵⁶

When the couple meet that night, a white cloth will be placed on the mat to collect the stained blood of chastity. If the virginity is authenticated all the members of the bride's family, friends and the groom become excited. The friends of the bride burst into song. One of such songs is given as follows:

Ka yi gae fu kara fu, zunye yi de a li
Ka yi ga e te zana te, zunye yi de a li
Ka yi gada ye shi, zunye yi de a li
Ka yi ga e le emi eya o le, zunye yi de a li
Eyan na eyanmanchizhi wa be egi nyi na
Wun a ye de
Za na ga gi yan be'bi na e
Zaga wun e sa mi o

E be jin yi barika, ebo na zunye yi de ali.¹⁵⁷

This means:

Even if we were jumping over fence (to meet with men)
Our shame is saved
Even if we were prickling through grass fence
Our shame is saved
Even if we were visiting (men) in the nights
Our shame is saved
Even if we were sleeping in the same room with our boy friends
Our shame is saved
What parents want from their children
Is achieved
It is the person who eats with knife
That gets his/her mouth cut
Come and congratulate us
Because our shame is saved.

Lastly, the bride is accepted into her husband's family fully by an elderly woman who is closely related to the family of the groom. This is called *Yawogi kata go*. The senior woman is responsible for hosting the bride and educating her about the dos and don'ts of the family. Once the bride has been delivered into the hands of *Nnakata* (the hostess), all other guests who may remain till that time will depart. Marriage among the Nupe shows their rich cultural heritage and the importance they attach to the family life. However, with the arrival of Islam and Christianity in Nupeland, there are a few modifications.

Death and Burial

Nupe, like all other people of West Africa, believe that life here on earth is transient and will be terminated by death one day. Despite this belief, they still believe that death is a transition to another life and world which is about to begin. The Nupe believe that life is cyclical, hence their belief in re-incarnation. The physical body which is a material substance will decay at death but the personality soul called *rayi* which is the spiritual substance returns to its source of Being.¹⁵⁸ This belief therefore, explains the importance attached to funeral ceremony in various parts of Africa.

The Nupe, like their other African counterparts, believe that there are good and bad deaths. When a child dies or a youth who is not yet married dies or death is caused by the anti-wickedness divinities like thunder, it is regarded as a bad death. Death occasioned by diseases like smallpox or leprosy is also referred to as bad death. When a person dies “a bad death”, he or she does not receive a full funeral rite. Those who die of certain diseases such as the ones mentioned above must be buried by priests who would perform purification and expiatory rites to appease the concerned divinities. In the words of Oyewole, he says:

unnatural death such as suicide by hanging is one of such dreadful occurrences. In many African communities, corpses of victims of suicide by hanging are buried in special burial grounds unknown to the relatives of the victim and the generality of the community. The relatives are expected not to mourn such death.¹⁵⁹

Other people in the category of those who died “bad deaths” are lunatics, women who died in pregnancy, those who have been murdered, drowned or burnt. Those who died “bad” deaths must be buried as quickly as possible and in such burials, commoners are not expected to be in attendance but the priests who are the specialists.

The death of a person that lives to a ripe old age is regarded as a good one. Although, ordinarily, death among the Nupe and indeed all Africans is regarded as uncanny and disturbing, when an old person dies, it is an occasion for celebration. Hence, the level of the funeral rite vary with age, sex and status of the deceased.¹⁶⁰

The Nupe believe that the death of a person must have a cause. It may occur as a result of evil forces e.g. witches or sorcerers. They also believe that death could be a natural occurrence. The person could be old and pass away, a person may also die as a result of a brief illness. In a situation where they suspect the death of a person to be mysterious, they consult an oracle for verification. The oracle could give any of the above reasons for the person’s death. The oracle may also indicate that the deceased had broken some taboos or neglected certain divinity or had committed a serious sin or an abomination.¹⁶¹ It is those who

die a good death that are accorded elaborate and full funeral rites. The type of funeral rite described in this work is the one offered to a person who dies a good death. We must also note at this juncture that there are occasions when the death of a young man or woman, is not regarded as totally bad in such a situation, the deceased must have lived a life worthy of emulation and must have left behind some children.

The funeral ceremony starts at the point when a person is declared dead. Usually, the Nupe do not feel comfortable at the sight of the corpse. Therefore, they make an arrangement as quickly as possible to bury the body. The first funeral rite is the *mba* and it is performed during the burial.¹⁶² Before the burial, the appearance of the close relatives of the deceased look mournful and they express their sorrow by wailing and sobbing. The guests are offered food and drink.

The family members send for the grave-diggers called *goro*. At their arrival, they prepare the body of the deceased by washing it with soap and water, wrap it in a new indigo-dyed cloth and cover the face with a cap.¹⁶³ After this preparation, the *goro* lay the corpse inside the grave and cover it with loose earth. Before the *goro* leave the grave which may be dug inside the sleeping hut, they pour a libation of wine. Thereafter, they pray to the ancestors that the deceased is coming to join them in their world and so should accept him or her into their fold. Immediately after the prayer, the *goro* bar access to the grave with a curtain until the second day.

The mourners mourn the departed until the eighth day when the second rite will be performed. During these days, the relatives of the deceased are expected to observe all the taboos associated with funeral ceremonies, e.g. they must not have their bath, dress their hair or change their clothes. They must not leave their huts except when they want to ease themselves.¹⁶⁴

On this day, the head of the family performs a sacrifice of wine outside the sleeping hut of the deceased and prays for good health and protection. After this, the elders drink the remaining wine or beer. After this rite, guests are entertained with sumptuous meal and are treated to good music from the invited drummers and musicians. The occasion ends at nightfall and the guests depart for their homes. However, the widows of the deceased and some relatives must still observe the taboo until the fortieth day when another rite will be performed. During these days they can do some minor house chores.

On the fortieth day, the head of the family will repeat the type of sacrifice performed on the eighth day. Following this is the two day elaborate feast similar to that of the eighth day.¹⁶⁵ After this feast, the widows of the deceased are permitted to go anywhere in the town at night but they can still not change their clothes until after the expiration of a hundred and twenty days.

At the expiration of a hundred and twenty days, the head of the family performs the same sacrificial rite as that of the eighth and fortieth days respectively. At this point, all taboos are removed and the widows are free to remarry another husband. The sense in having to wait for a period of four months before remarrying is to ascertain whether the widow is in state at the point of death of her husband. If the widow refuses to remarry, any child born by her after this time will be disclaimed by the late husband's family.¹⁶⁶

Incursion and Influence of Islam in Nupeland

As noted earlier, the Nupe had a very organised religious milieu prior to the advent of Islam. However, Islam had a very powerful influence on the socio-cultural, political, economic, and religious lives of the people. Therefore, this section seeks to trace the history of Islam in Nupeland, identifying the roles of people through whom Islam spread and to highlight specific impact on the Nupe society. This is very essential in order to understand the major hurdle which Christianity had to grapple with at the arrival of the Anglican Church in

Nupeland. Contrary to the general belief that Islam got to Nupeland in the 19th Century during Uthman Dan Fodio's Jihad, Sidi argued strongly against that and asserts that Islam pre-dates Uthman Dan Fodio's Jihad in Nupeland. He maintains that Islam got to Nupeland through the efforts of Arab scholars, migrants, traders, and Muslim clerics. He further states that other sources through which Islam arrived Nupeland were from Songhai, Hausa and Kanem-Borno areas.¹⁶⁷

Although the impact of Islamic influence was not felt in the early period in Nupeland, there was the emergence of certain Islamic reformers. These include *Etsu* Jubrilu who reigned between 1746 and 1759,¹⁶⁸ and Abdulrahman bn Muhammad Sharif who reigned between 1778 and 1830.¹⁶⁹ Despite oppositions and resistance against these reformers, certain important religious centres and towns acknowledged for high standard Islamic scholarship emerged.¹⁷⁰

The Western and Central Sudanese areas and Arabs and North Africa are said to have had contact as early as the 8th century AD.¹⁷¹ The contact may have been facilitated by trade and commerce. Other possibilities could have been the curiosity of the Arab geographers, historians, travelers and Islamic clerics to have a good knowledge of the Sudanese milieu. It is therefore, suggested that through the writings of these Islamic scholars and travelers, the Nupe might have come in contact with Islam.

Another possibility is found in the Al-Bakri's *Book of Roads and Kingdoms* written between 1067 and 1068 where he describes the ancient Ghana and its neighbours. It is conjectured that Nupe might have been one such existed neighbours, if not geographically, at least on trade and commercial relations. According to Al-Bakri, by 1068 AD, there already existed a mighty and expansive kingdom called Al-Denden in Nupe which was headed by a powerful ruler.¹⁷² It is assumed that it is probable that such kingdom must have had a wide range of relations with other places. As such, the possibility of Islam informally penetrating

Nupeland cannot be easily dismissed. It is also contested that vital information about the early Nupe and their polity may have been obtained from the writings of Ibn Munnabel in AD738, Al-Mas'udi in AD947. More importantly is the writing of Frobenius and Nadel who produced ethnographic and anthropological evidence to prove their points.¹⁷³

As stated earlier, trade and commerce played an important role in the introduction of Islam in Nupeland. Through trade and commerce between West Africa and the Arab world, a lot of goods were exchanged. However, in the process of commercial interactions, the Arab traders must have introduced Islam to their host communities. They must have taken the advantage of the accommodating and receptive nature of the Nupe to introduce Islam. The liberality of Nupe society must have accounted for the involvement of Muslim scholars and clerics in the administration of the local kings where some of them served as advisers, interpreters, diviners, chaplains on spiritual and secular matters among the court officials of the Nupe kings long before the arrival of Mallam Dendo.¹⁷⁴

Ndaduma River (River Niger) was a source of transportation and communication for the traders and Muslim clerics. Hence, by the 15th century. *Wangarawa* communities had already existed at Nikki and Bussa in the Borgu area of the present Niger State.¹⁷⁵ Such settlement must have extended to Nupeland which formed their neighbours. Alhaji M.A. opines that the pioneers of Islamic propagation in the Western Sudan were the *Wangarawa*.¹⁷⁶

The dispersal of traders, Muslim traders, Muslim clerics, and preachers in search of security, peace, new homes and markets, after dynastic disputes in Mali in the 15th century made them to settle in Nupeland.¹⁷⁷ Some of them also visited Nupeland on adventure. The religious influence of these migrants were felt early enough in places like Nku, Nupeko, Gbara, Zhima, Mokwa, Labozhi, Raba, Eggan, Kulfo, among others.¹⁷⁸

Furthermore, the political and economic inter-group relations between Nupeland and Borno facilitated speedy Islamization of Nupeland long before the 19th century Jihad. Islam was said to have been well established in Kano between the 14th and 15th centuries and the process of extending it to other places had begun.¹⁷⁹ According to Mahadi, there was a long standing trade, commercial and inter-group relations among Nupe, Kano and Borno where exchange of goods took place as well as settlement of Nupe traders and skilled workers in many parts of Kano and its environs.¹⁸⁰ In the opinion of Sidi, by the 1450s, Kano had begun to import slaves and kolanut from Nupeland in return for horses and potash.¹⁸¹ These interactions and culture contacts must have resulted one way or the other in the Islamization of Nupeland. History also has it that the first Muslim ruler of Kano, Aliyu Yaji (c.1349-1385) led a religious war into the neighbouring states of Attagara and Jukun.¹⁸² Considering the historical and geographical affinity of the Nupe with the Igala Kingdom, it is highly probable that the Nupe must have had the influence of these wars.

Katsina was another area in Hausaland which may have facilitated the Islamization of Nupeland. The first Muslim King of Katsina, Muhammad Korau (1492-1541) fought the Nupe in view of the border disputes between the two areas. A peace pact was later signed between the duo to resolve the conflict and also to keep the trade route passing through Nupe to Katsina safe for the *Wangarawa traders*.¹⁸³ Hence, the Muslim clerics and traders from Katsina and *Wangarawa* must have introduced Islam into Nupeland.

The Islamization processes described above are informal ways through which Islam entered into Nupeland. The formal Islamization of Nupeland is said to have taken place in the 1650s when the Islamic scholars of Yemeni origin who first settled in Borno before their immigration southwards settled in Nupeland.¹⁸⁴ In the course of their stay, they must have engaged in the formal propagation of Islam. Mason puts it thus:

It is generally accepted that the influence of these people (Yemeni immigrants) later on extended beyond the homeland of the Kanuri and

affected the lives of a great variety of peoples of differing cultural traditions both Islamic and non-Islamic.¹⁸⁵

Smith's submission is further confirmed by the presence and settlement of people who migrated from Borno to settle in Nupeland in the 18th Century. Such immigrants settled in places like Kutigi and Enagi. As noted earlier in this work, these immigrants from Bornu are called the *Benu* (a Nupe sub-group) which is a Nupe corruption of the word Bornu. After they had assumed a political and economic importance, they must have played a major role in the conversion of the indigenous people.

It is very difficult to set a specific date when Islam entered into Nupeland. Nadel supports this view in his writings: "Even before Mallam Dendo's arrival apparently it had become customary to include Mallams among the court officials of the Nupe kings, as diviners, chaplains and advisers on matters spiritual and secular".¹⁸⁶ The tradition of Nupe states that the 15th king after Tsoede, Jibiril who reigned in about 1770 was the first to adopt Islam. Despite this fact, names of earlier rulers seem to indicate Islamic influence e.g. Abdu Waliyi (1679 – 1700), Ibrahim 1713-1717) and Abubakari Kolo (1742-1746). History shows that under *Etsu* Muazu, the impact of Islam had gained both in strength and purpose.¹⁸⁷

The Impact and the Religious Activities of Mallam Dendo

Uthman Danfodio's *Jihad* had an indirect bearing on Nupeland through the religious and political activities of Mallam Dendo. Prior to the arrival of Mallam Dendo in Nupeland, the Fulani people were seen in most Nupe towns and villages. While some of them lived a nomadic life, others lived a sedentary life. Hence, Nupeland became a second home for many Fulani people taking advantage of the hospitable nature of the Nupe people.¹⁸⁸

Mallam Dendo arrived in Nupeland shortly after the death of *Etsu Muazu*.¹⁸⁹ At his arrival, he secured a permission from the *Etsu* to move round the length and breadth of Nupeland for the purpose of preaching in order to introduce a pure form of Islamic practices. However, Mallam Dendo's way of dressing differentiated him from other Fulanis. He was seen carrying on his shoulder a stick like the others but became peculiar when people saw him hanging varieties of items on his stick. Such items include a mat, a bow, arrows, a spear, a gourd of water, assorted hides.¹⁹⁰ Hence, the stick hanging on his shoulders became a moveable house accommodating his luggage. This was what summarily earned him the name "Dendo" from the Nupe expression *man na dan nya ndondo na* meaning 'a teacher who hangs on himself all kinds of things'.¹⁹¹ One very important factor which paved way for Mallam Dendo was his spiritual capabilities to perform certain unusual feats. Through his spiritual ability, he was able to heal the sick, he was also able to make accurate prophetic utterances which were fulfilled and he also taught Qur'an with ease.

One of the remarkable things which brought Dendo to limelight was the healing of the King's favourite daughter, Fatimako at Dabban. Fatimako was mentally ill and the king invited Mallam Dendo to help cure her. When Dendo arrived, he offered some prayers and spit on Fatimako's face. Within a space of about one hour, the patient realized she was naked and screamed for wrapper to cover her nakedness. After Fatimako had received treatments for a period of one week, she got over her ailment. Consequently, the King decided to give her in marriage to Mallam Dendo for there was no way he could show a greater appreciation than this. The criticism from the kingdom did not bother the King as Mallam Dendo became closer to him the more. The product of the marriage between Mallam Dendo and Fatimako produced a son who was later to carve a part of the dynasty of Etsuship.¹⁹²

Another incidence that brought Mallam Dendo to the limelight was the discovery of a particular crocodile which killed and ate *Etsu Jimada's* son. One day, *Etsu Jimada's* son

was trying to cross river Kaduna to visit his grandmother at Zhima but in the process, he was caught and killed by a certain crocodile. This angered the King and he decided to send for Mallam Dendo following the advice of the elders. The king was determined to punish the crocodile which had killed his son. When Dendo heard how the story went, he asked the people to converge at the river bank the next day. When they converged the next day, many people were seen at that site such as the king himself, his chiefs, other Mallams; all eager to see the miracle which would be performed by Mallam Dendo.

When it was time to carry out the assignment, he stood at the river bank and said some prayers and within twenty minutes all the crocodiles in that river assembled in front of the crowd.¹⁹³ However, there was a particular crocodile which went straight to where Dendo was standing and bowed before him. Mallam Dendo told the king that the crocodile which bowed to him was the very one which killed his son; but warned the king not to kill it. Mallam Dendo advised the king to only have the animal beaten and released into the river and it would die by itself. The king did according to Mallam Dendo's instruction. It was said that on the next day the remains of the crocodile floated on the water. This particular incidence earned him much respect and a new name. The other Mallams who were present were amazed at this miracle and they confessed that Dendo was not just a Mallam but a great Mallam. This was where he got the name "Manko" meaning a great Mallam.¹⁹⁴

Another miracle was the one where a certain woman had been pregnant for seven years in Eggan and all efforts to get her delivered were to no avail. A day came when this woman was seriously ill, when people saw her in this condition, and they thought she could not survive it, Mallam Dendo was invited to help cure her. Mallam Dendo wrote some Arabic words with a black ink from the Qur'an on the slate and washed it in a calabash for her to drink. He repeated the same procedure for the woman; the woman became healed and

delivered a baby boy on the seventh day. Even though the baby died, the mother's life was saved.

One other remarkable miracle which occurred through Mallam Dendo was at Zhima. There was a practice of giving food items during harvest to the Mallams as offering. However, it got to a time when these Mallams took advantage of this practice in order to maximize their gain. On one of such occasions, the Mallams deceived the King that calamity was about to befall the town and the only remedy to avert this disaster was for the people to donate the food items to the Mallams. Usually such food items were gathered in the Mosque and shared among them after everybody had departed from the Mosque. Luck ran out of these Mallams on this particular occasion, Mallam Dendo was in town and he watched how a large quantity of food was gathered in the Mosque. After the people had left the mosque, Dendo performed some prayers and put a charm on those food items and left in the middle of the night. The Mallams came to share their booty but unfortunately the food items had disappeared. They wondered how food items of such magnitude could have disappeared within such a brief period. After very serious deliberation, they came to realize that this act was not unconnected with Mallam Dendo. They finally resolved to meet Mallam Dendo in the palace to plead with him. When they met Dendo, they pleaded with him to release the food items because that was their means of livelihood. Mallam Dendo accepted their confession but warned them that such practice should not repeat itself as it was against the ethics and teachings of Islam. The Mallams promised not to engage in such practices again.

Mallam Dendo's Conquest, Change and Interregnum

Mallam Dendo did not at any time lose the focus of his vision and existence in Nupeland. His religious and socio-political activities were soon to earn him more prominence in the land. The events which culminated in seizing the stool of *Etsu Nupe* by the Fulani started with the succession crisis at the death of the 19th *Etsu Nupe*, *Etsu Mohammed*

(Mamman). At the demise of this King, the office of *Shaaba* was vacant.¹⁹⁵ Jimada, the son of late King was supposed to succeed his father as the next King but was thought to be too young for the office by some people. The next most qualified Prince was Majiya, who held the royal title of *Nakorji*. One historical source says he was not considered for the title of *Shaaba* because he was only related to the royal family matrilineally, hence, he could not be considered as the successor to the throne.¹⁹⁶ The stool of the King was extremely meant for the patrilineal descendants in Nupeland.

At the death of his father, Jimada was 31 years old.¹⁹⁷ However, he did not see age as a barrier to his succession because he had been a little bit exposed to governance. Moreso, he had been educated in an Islamic school in Birnin Kebbi through the magnanimity of his grandfather, *Etsu Muazu*.¹⁹⁸ With these credentials, Jimada decided to take over the throne but was fiercely objected by Majiya who wanted the throne by all means. Historians seem not to agree about the true relationship between Jimada and Majiya both of whom were struggling for the throne. Nadel believes the reason Majiya wanted the throne was the fact that his father, *Etsu Muazu* was Jimada's father's elder brother.¹⁹⁹ while Nariya believes that Majiya was only a son to *Etsu Muazu*'s sister, hence, had no authority to rule since he was only related matrilineally.²⁰⁰

Whatever reason Jimada may have given to explain why his rival was not a rightful heir to the throne was trivial and unfounded to Majiya. Majiya might have considered himself more eligible on the platform of age (since he was older than Jimada), he had been a title holder of *Nakorji* ever before the death of Jimada's father and consequently had tasted power and royalty. Also, he must have won the support of many noble elder statesmen. All these factors must have put him on a more advantageous position than Jimada. There were indications to also show that Majiya's mother contributed in no small measure to the succession feud which was about to rent the whole kingdom apart. She encouraged her son to

contest for the throne since she had the support of the elders who mattered in the kingdom.²⁰¹ The problem lingered on for a very long time without solution until the kingdom got divided into two lines of the duo. Consequently, Majiya built a new capital for himself at Raba while Jimada retained the older capital at Zhima at first but later moved to Ragada before he finally retired to Gbara.²⁰²

Majiya was certainly not satisfied with this development because both of them were accorded the respect of a King. He did not want a rival kingdom. Rather; he wanted the whole of Nupe kingdom to himself. Majiya secured the friendship of Mallam Dendo and the Fulani group in Nupeland; hence, he became more powerful than Jimada group in military strength. Having secured the confidence of Mallam Dendo, Majiya combined his forces with Dendo's forces and attacked Jimada at Ragada; near Jegi. By this attack, Ragada was completely destroyed. *Etsu* Jimada was killed alongside his children and relatives except Idrisu, Gana and Iliasa, his kid sons who were fortunate to escape to Adamalelu near Eggan,²⁰³ through the help of Nnamadaki, Jimada's senior wife, under the protection of Makolo who was also a survivor of the massacres. One of the factors responsible for the outright defeat of Ragada was that at that time of fighting, major fighting forces of Jimada were out on an expedition to Yagba land for raiding. Hence, Ragada became weakly defended by poorly armed soldiers and other domestic servants in the palace.²⁰⁴ Also, Jimada had made a very costly mistake of sending away some Fulanis from his domain. This Fulani group who were the loyalists of Mallam Dendo went back to Raba where they joined forces with Majiya to attack Jimada.

The victory at the Ragada war was a plus to Mallam Dendo as this elevated his status in the kingdom and also increased Majiya's love for him. *Etsu* Majiya lavished rewards on Dendo at his arrival from this battle. He was given two beautiful female slaves. He made one his wife and sent the other one to Atiku, the Emir of Gwandu in order to pave way for his

flag as a *Jihadist*.²⁰⁵ Nadel gives an excellent summary of how Majiya rewarded Dendo in these words:

He invited him to his court and installed him there in the influential position of his private counsellor and diviner. He trusted his prophecies and his advice and was convinced that his victories in the field were due to Mallam Dendo's *asiri* (lit 'secret', that is supernatural powers); he rewarded him magnificently, gave him money, slaves and horses. He took Mallam Dendo's youngest son Masaba into his house as his foster-son, as the Nupe do with sons of friends.²⁰⁶

After the Ragada massacre, Mallam Dendo continued to grow in influence as people from various parts of the Nupe country came to him for advice and service under him. He was said to have nothing less than between 1000 – 1500 of such men under his service.²⁰⁷

The dangerously growing influence of Mallam Dendo in the court of Majiya seemed not to bother Majiya nor threaten him despite several warnings from the subjects in the kingdom as long as his kingdom was secured from Jimada's lineage. He was able to gain access to the official secret of the state and he used this to play one faction against the other. The kingdom had been factionalized into two where a group supported Majiya and the other disagreed with him especially for his role in eliminating Jimada. Not quite long after this, Majiya's eyes were open to see the impending danger and threat to his kingdom via his trusted friend, Dendo. This became more visible when the King realized that people began to listen to and respect his words and held him in high esteem than him. Majiya became afraid and convinced when his cabinet cited to him as an example how Alimi of Ilorin, a Fulani Jihadist eventually seized power as a result of his conquest.²⁰⁸ The state council became resolute that Mallam Dendo be expelled but Majiya was reluctant to do so. This was perhaps in order to continue to enjoy both military and spiritual guidance from him. When Majiya came under a serious pressure from the council of chiefs to expel Dendo, he simply expelled the Fulani living around the state capital, Raba. He went further to attack and drive away a number of Fulani residents across the River Niger. He also gave an order that all Fulanis

should vacate Nupeland with immediate effect. This made Mallam Maliki and Mallam Manzuma, Fulani *Jihadists* who were engaged in conquering Nupe villages around Lafiagi to flee to Ilorin. Thereafter, other Fulani clerics followed, these include: Mallam Musa, Mallam Bawa, Mallam Baba and others. Finally, Majiya saw the need to expel Dendo. The council together with the King decided to capture Dendo at night and drown him in River Niger. However, before the decision was carried out, Dendo got a wind of the plot and he sneaked out of the town and escaped to Ilorin. Mallam Dendo was received by Alimi and assured him of protection against the Nupe. As from this moment, Dendo started to plot against Majiya and the entire Nupe Kingdom.

The first strategy adopted by Dendo was to create dissension in Nupeland. He did this by inviting Jimada's son, Idrisu and Jimada's war commander, Maiyaki Makolo to Ilorin from Adamalelu.²⁰⁹ Mallam Dendo went into alliance with the duo against Majiya knowing fully well that a fractional part of the populace was not happy with Majiya for ousting Jimada. When Majiya learnt about the alliance between Dendo and Idrisu, he became restless and attempted to make peace with him. He sent messages to Idrisu on several occasions to return so that they could launch a common front against the Fulani but all was to no avail. Therefore, Majiya thought that the only option left for him was to attack Ilorin. The alliance of Idrisu with the Fulani was a dangerous development and threat to his kingdom.

With this plan in mind, a source says the Alaafin of Oyo encouraged Majiya to attack Ilorin. The reason was that Ilorin had been under Oyo Empire until Afonja, through the help of the Fulani declared Ilorin to be independent. However, Afonja later was killed in a rebellion against the Fulani. As a result of this, Oyo lost control over Ilorin to the Fulani.²¹⁰ Another reason was the fear that the Fulani who were at this time concentrated in Ilorin would make Ilorin a base from where they would exert control westward. Majiya finally set out to launch an attack against Ilorin having informed them of his mission. He was supported

with a large army by Alaafin Oyo.²¹¹ On the whole, Majiya's army was estimated to be 4,000 horsemen and 10,000 foot soldiers.²¹² It took the forces two days to march a distance of 80 miles (205 kilometres) from Raba to Ilorin.²¹³

When they got to the gate of the town, he halted his army. Prior to the arrival of Majiya, Dendo had made a very powerful *asiri* (i.e. secret, magic or charm) he also fasted and prayed. At the arrival of Majiya and his army, Dendo sent two brave men to fetch some sand from Majiya's camp at night. Thereafter, he instructed three powerful slaves to dig a deep pit and cover it up with grasses. On Friday morning, Dendo entered the pit taking with him fourteen dates. Mallam Dendo stayed in the pit till the hour of evening prayer but nobody knew what he did or the secret magic he performed. When he came up, he called again the two men who had gone to fetch the sand the previous night to scatter it by night around the town walls.

The next morning, Majiya's troop attacked the town. However, a thick mist had covered the entire country such that Majiya's army was unable to move. Suddenly a sand storm sprang up and blindfolded both the soldiers and the horses. The horses bolted and Majiya's Cavalry reportedly trampled down their own men. By the time the small army of Ilorin came out to engage their enemies, Majiya's army was already half defeated. When Majiya realized that his army had been defeated, he fled across River Niger back to Raba, leaving with him only 1000 horses and 1070 soldiers.²¹⁴

Idrisu and Mallam Dendo did not give up on Majiya; they pursued his army until they got to Gbajibo, a village 50 miles to Raba. It was there they crossed River Niger with ease. Mallam Dendo was said to have demonstrated his cleverness by collecting horse dung which he threw into the river. As the dung flowed along the river course, it got to Raba and when the Nupe saw it, it suggested to them that a large army from Ilorin had crossed the river to attack Raba. Consequently, Majiya fled to Zugurma in dread of the assumed approaching

army thereby leaving his town unprotected. When the Fulani army got to Raba, they took over with ease.

Mallam Dendo compensated Idrisu by making him the *Etsu* Nupe over the entire Nupe Kingdom in place of Majiya. However, it was not long after this before Idrisu realized that Mallam Dendo had just made him a puppet King at Eggan while Dendo installed himself as the real ruler in Raba. Dendo and his people took over the responsibilities and rights of the King by collecting taxes and tributes, they controlled the larger part of the army, took the legal affairs by dispensing justice and generally directed the affairs of the Nupe Kingdom.²¹⁵ This development made Idrisu to revolt against the Mallam Dendo led administration, the action which culminated in the killing of Idrisu by Mallam Dendo's forces. After the death of Idrisu, Dendo once again turned to Majiya, offering him friendship. Mallam Dendo made Majiya the next *Etsu* Nupe of Zugurma but his status was not different from that of late *Etsu* Idrisu, a mere puppet King.

The next step in Fulani domination and expansionism came as a result of Mallam Dendo's advice to his partners to go and search for territories and conquer for themselves. Following this advice, Mallam Baba, one of the companions of Dendo on his flight to Ilorin, took twelve men and crossed three rivers to establish his own kingdom. Mallam Baba and his team travelled by night and hid themselves away from the Nupe rebels raiding it as they went along until they got to a town called Agaie, 26km east of Bida.²¹⁶ Mallam Baba conquered Agaie and made it his capital, thereby establishing another Fulani Emirate in the Nupe country.

Prior to the coming of Mallam Baba to this area, Majiya had established his sovereignty there. The Nupe of this area, together with Majiya, were not to take things for granted and they revolted. Mallam Baba had no problem defeating the Nupe and the troop of Majiya. Majiya himself was killed in his next revolt and his son, Tsado succeeded him

Mallam Maiyaki who was also a close ally of Dendo went 131 miles east of Raba and established a kingdom for himself. This kingdom was Lapai. The further partitioning of Nupe kingdom by the victorious allied army leaders continued when Maliki and his brother Manzuma went to the west bank of River Niger to establish their emirates in Lafiagi and Tsonga. These events actually brought the Fulani group to limelight in Nupeland.

As from this moment, the Fulani took full control of the administration of Nupe country. While Mallam Dendo's colleagues went to establish their own Emirates, he remained in Raba together with Mallam Musa. David Madugu differs in his opinion with some renown historians in asserting that after the death of Majiya, Mallam Dendo became the *Etsu* Nupe and he remained so until 1833 when he died.²¹⁷ Nadel did not share this opinion. According to him, Mallam Dendo was said to have advised his sons not to seek official secular power but to remain what he had been, an uncrowned king, an emissary of Islam and spiritual head of the Nupe country.²¹⁸ After the death of Majiya in Zugurma, his son, Tsado succeeded him.²¹⁹

Two years after the death of Majiya, his son Tsado, whose status was also a puppet King of Nupe in Zugurma revolted against the Fulani domination. Prior to the death of Majiya and Idrisu, while they were in Zugurma and Eggan respectively, Usman Zaki, Dendo's son had taken effective control of Raba but did not confirm himself as the Nupe political leader immediately. Tsado desired to continue with his father's struggle but this did not bother the descendants of Dendo as they were determined to take over the political mantle of leadership. Consequently, Usman Zaki, Dendo's eldest son was appointed as the first Fulani *Etsu* Nupe at Raba while Mohammed Gborigi, Dendo's grandson was chosen as the Shaaba.²²⁰ Abdul Gboy, Usman Zaki's elder brother became *Alkali* (Judge), and the Fulani did not create new titles but simply adopted the existing Nupe titles. As the Fulani were attempting to take the full political control, they were beset with major challenges which made

it difficult for them to have a smooth transition. The first was the internal crisis among the Dendos and the second was the threat of a war against the Dendos by Tsado, Majiya's son.

The internal crisis which ensued among the Dendos came in consequence of Masaba, Dendo's youngest son's dissatisfaction with the principle of sharing the political offices which excluded him. His dissatisfaction came on the ground that apart from being a direct son of Dendo, his mother was a Nupe.²²¹ Hence, he had the right to the throne. Masaba showed displeasure through an open rebellion. Masaba decided to live in exile where he established himself as another Fulani *Etsu* Nupe in Lade, a place ten miles from Patigi for a period of over twenty years.²²²

As from that moment, Nupe kingdom became characterised by intrigues, fights, wars and rebellions. Nadel vividly captures the situation when he writes:

Fights between the sons of Mallam Dendo, wars against other tribes and against factions in Nupe and rebellions of the descendants of the old Nupe dynasty, who did not give up hope of recovering the throne from the Fulani, or rebellions of powerful generals of mercenary troops who claimed the rulership for themselves, and often rebellions of both, one using the other as a pawn in the game for the throne of Nupe.²²³

Masaba secured the support of Tsado in Zugurma and Idrisu in Eggan and also the backing of the Emir in Gwandu. Usman Zaki had demanded that the ancient regalia be handed him by Tsado but the latter refused. Therefore, Masaba with the support of Tsado led two revolts against his step brother, Usman Zaki, the first from Raba and the second from Lade in 1841.²²⁴ These revolts forced Usman Zaki together with Umaru Majigi out of Raba. Usman Zaki decided to take cover in Gwandu and this made Masaba an indisputable King of Nupe. He decided to move his capital to Raba where he concentrated his efforts on the expansion of his territory. He did this by conquering the Kamuku in the north, the Gbari in the east and the Kakanda in the south; he also conquered the Yoruba around the Niger.²²⁵

After the demise of *Etsu* Tsado and *Etsu* Idrisu, their children *Etsu* Issa and *Etsu* Jiya, the sons of *Etsu* Tsado and *Etsu* Idrisu respectively resolved to join forces together

against the Fulani. However, Masaba came up with a plot which destabilized their intention. Masaba succeeded in convincing Jiya that Isa was in a possession of an old flag which signified the overall rulership of Nupe kingdom.²²⁶ Therefore, Jiya was determined to eliminate Isa, his lineage as well as the Fulani. Unfortunately for Jiya, Isa was also nursing the same ambition.

With the support of Masaba, Isa first struck and attacked Jiya at Lemfa near Gbara. Jiya only managed to escape to Yeni only to die shortly afterward and was succeeded by his uncle Maza.²²⁷ Masaba ensured that the Nupe groups did not agree; he was said to have provided each group with ammunition and soldiers with which they fought each other. Maza and Isa did not give up on taking back their throne from the Fulani but all their plots against Masaba ended in futility. However, there was a ray of hope for the Nupe when they deemed it necessary to collaborate with Umar Bahaushe, the war general of Masaba. He revolted against his master and co-operated with the Nupe in order to defeat Masaba. Umar Bahaushe was a Bornu soldier who was serving the Fulani in Nupeland. Having known the secret and weakness of the Fulani, he joined forces with the Nupe army and they launched an attack on Masaba's army and the latter was decisively defeated.²²⁸ This made Masaba to flee to Ilorin to take cover. With this victory, Bahaushe made an attempt to make himself *Etsu* Nupe.²²⁹

This development was seriously resisted by both the Nupe and Fulani groups. In spite of the resistance from the Nupe groups, Umar Bahaushe proved too powerful to be resisted and defeated. To retain the throne, Bahaushe fought and killed *Etsu* Maza at Yeni,²³⁰ and continued to reign tyrannically for a period of nine years. The Fulani also allied against Umar Bahaushe. When Usman Zaki and Umar Majigi returned from Gwandu, they joined forces with Masaba to attack Bahaushe. However, the allied forces were not able to defeat this war general. There were other battles that were fought against him after this but on each occasion he defeated them. Umar Majigi was said to have led rebellion twice against

Bahaushe but the latter defeated him on both occasions. However, in the third attempt, the allied forces were able to hold Bahaushe a prisoner for three months inside the walls of Bida.²³¹ At last, the Umar Majigi led forces attacked Bahaushe unexpectedly at night. It was such a large army comprising of Masaba's troops, Majigi's troop and the troops of the confederacy of the twelve Beni towns. This made Bahaushe to run out of Bida. He was pursued by his enemies and according to one source, when he heard the war drum beat getting closer to him, he entered river Gbako with his horse and got drowned. His body was later recovered and his head decapitated.²³² With the death of Umar Bahaushe, Umar Majigi's soldiers were seen jubilating round Bida town as they hanged the head of Umar Bahaushe on a long stick. Nadel confirms this when he writes: "The rebel general was killed and when the dayspring reached Raba in 1857, Dr. Baikie saw the head of the unfortunate Umar Bahaushe at the landing place".²³³

With the death of this powerful General, Bida, which used to be a huge war camp, was transformed and wore a new look. Bida eventually became the centre of the new kingdom with relative peace. With this development, Usman Zaki was reinstated as the first *Etsu* Nupe to reside in Bida. Usman Zaki reigned until his death in 1859 or 1860 and Masaba succeeded him. Masaba's reign lasted till 1873.²³⁴ This stability in polity was brought to bear through the selfless efforts of Umar Majigi who had sent for the return of Masaba from Ilorin. While Usman Zaki was the King, Masaba became the *Sarkin* Fulani and Umaru Majigi the Yariman *Etsu* while *Etsu* Isah of the Tsoede dynasty was only allowed to live in Bida.²³⁵ After the death of Masaba, Umaru Majigi became the *Etsu* and he reigned from 1873 till 1884. He was described by Nadel as a "fanatic Mohammedian".²³⁶

Impact of Islam on Nupeland

Prior to the coming of the Church Missionary Society, Nupeland was already under the influence of Islam. In assessing the impact of Islam on the lives of Nupe, what

Trimingham says on the impact of Islam on Africa cannot be truer than it had been in Nupeland. He says “Islam had become natural aspects of African life”.²³⁷ Islam brought a formal system of education to Nupeland. The advent of Islam into Nupeland brought at least for the first time an organized form of education, in a formal setting. Islamic education gave the Nupe a system of learning which was current and relevant to its own time.

What Islam did in the other parts of northern Nigeria, it also did in Nupeland. Through Islamic education, seasonal administrators and translators were provided for Nupeland. These stocks of people were responsible for the management of various affairs within the Nupe kingdom. They also helped in keeping relevant records and diplomatic correspondence.²³⁸

The impact of Islam was also felt in the improvement of Nupe language by a number of vocabularies which are believed to be loan words into the Nupe language from Arabic language. Such words include *Kadara* meaning destiny (*Qadar* in Arabic), *Alamari* meaning the affair (*Al'amr* in Arabic), *Tuuba* meaning repentance (*Tawbah* in Arabic), *Aniyan* meaning intention (*Anniyah* in Arabic), *Haramu* meaning illegal (*Haram* in Arabic), *Lafiya* meaning good health (*Al-Afiya* in Arabic), *Aduwa* meaning prayer (*Ad-du'a*)²³⁹ and so on.

Islam produced Islamic scholars who wrote some historical accounts in Arabic language. Today, such historical materials become important historical points of reference. People like Ibn Khaldun (1332 – 1406), Sheikh Usman Danfodio (1754 – 1817)²⁴⁰ and Mallam Dendo cannot be forgotten. Others are Yaqubi, Al-Sa'di, Ibn Batuta and Al-Idrisi.²⁴¹

Islamic law otherwise known as Sharia became very much operational in Nupeland. Islamic courts were established and Islamic jurists were posted to such courts to dispense justice according to the Islamic legal system. The Fulani did a lot to strengthen the Sharia system in Nupeland. They did not only implement the Sharia legal system but they also ensured that it was correctly applied as those who deviated from the correct application were

sanctioned. For instance, during the reign of Beji, the second Emir of Lapai (1835 – 1838), a charge was brought against him by his elder brother. Beji was arrested, tried, convicted and killed in Gwandu through the order of Mallam Halilu, son of Abdullahi, Emir of Gwandu.²⁴² The effective implementation of the Sharia legal system led to a drastic reduction in highway robbery, witchcraft, adultery and stealing.

Another area where Islam had impact on Nupeland was in the social life of the people. This was visible in their mode of dressing and different ceremonies which marked the passage of life. For example, Islamic names replaced traditional names at naming ceremonies, marriages became consummated in mosques, and funeral rites were observed in Islamic ways as presided over by Islamic clerics.

The Religious Impact of Mallam Dendo on the Leadership Structure of the Nupe

It will be an erroneous assertion to claim that Mallam Dendo brought Islam into Nupeland. Nevertheless, one cannot deny the fact that he laid a very solid foundation for the spread of Islam in Nupeland. He used the instrumentality of politics to achieve this and consequently, the leadership structure of the Nupe had Islamic face. This was the situation in Nupeland before the coming of the CMS. Before the Fulani conquest, Dendo had had much impact on the Nupe kings by means of his magic. The activities of Mallam Dendo resulted into a revival of Islam among the leadership of the Nupe. Having laid a solid foundation in Islamic scholarship for Nupeland, the court of the *Etsu* Nupe was already influenced by Islam at the time of rising.²⁴³

Also, before the conquest, Mallam Dendo played the major role of a special and chief adviser to *Etsu* Majiya. This made him to rise to an important position which gave him the privilege to rule the kingdom indirectly in an Islamic way.

Crampton expresses this idea vividly thus:

Mallam Dendo, a Fulani who was Muslim religious adviser to one of the contenders for the throne at a time when it was vacant, was a skilful diplomat who made himself the power behind the throne. His family gradually became dominant, not only in Bida but in the smaller emirates they founded at Lafiagi, Patigi and Agaie. These acted as centers of Islam on the Nupe, Yoruba borderland.²⁴⁴

The above quotation shows that through the efforts of Mallam Dendo, palaces became Islamic centers. The king and their families became verse in Islamic knowledge. The decisions were based on the Sharia legal system. Through these centers, palaces became points where people received education in a formal setting.

Mallam Dendo was able to eliminate completely the royal family of Tsoede and he replaced it with his own family. The reason for this may be partly because they were not genuine Muslims. The domination of the Nupe continued by the descendants of Dendo along

the Islamic laws even though some people believe that his children deviated from the instructions he had earlier given them. According to Hadiza:

Courts were built to take care of Sharia laws and taxes collected to maintain the administration. Therefore, they started directing the affairs of the whole Nupe kingdom. This action gradually exposed Dendo's vision to produce future *Etsu* Nupe(s) that would build a pure Islamic society.²⁴⁵

After the demise of Mallam Dendo, his children pursued this vision and realized it by completely seizing the political power in Nupeland. The continuity of Mallam Dendo's vision is clearly seen in his children who ascended the throne. For instance, after the re-instatement of Usman Zaki, Sir John Glover, the Governor of Lagos visited him. After some time, Bishop Ajayi Crowther also visited him at Bida to discuss with him on how to have a close socio-economic and political tie. While Usman Zaki gave them support on these issues he was adamant about the penetration of Christianity into his kingdom.

Umaru Majigi was another example. He was a devoted Muslim who ordered the establishment of Sharia courts as one of his first projects. He replaced old and tired *Alkalis* (Judges) with the dedicated and honest ones.²⁴⁶ He also established more Islamic schools.

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194. S. Ibrahim. *Nupe and their Neighbors from the 14th Century* . 7.
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CHAPTER THREE

THE ORIGIN OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN NUPELAND

The origin of the Anglican Church in Nupeland is traceable to the activities of the Church Missionary Society (CMS). The CMS was one of the mission societies which resulted as a product of the evangelical revival which took place in Europe in the 18th Century. Other evangelical societies which were established alongside CMS include the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792 and Methodist Missionary Society in 1813¹.

The CMS was founded in London in 1799 with the name Society for Missions in Africa and the East². The CMS was an evangelical arm within the Anglican Communion saddled with the responsibilities of taking the Gospel to foreign lands. During the first ten years, the Mission sent five missionaries to work among non-Christians. After some time, the Mission gained support and the work expanded to various parts of the world like Australia, New Zealand, South-Africa, among others³.

3.1 The History of Church Missionary Society in Nigeria

The parent body of the CMS in Nigeria is the CMS in Sierra-Leone colony. Right from the beginning of the Sierra-Leonean Colony, the Anglican Church has shown interest and zeal for the salvation of the freed slaves. The Anglican Church determined to make Sierra Leone an outreach for civilization and Christianity to the whole of West Africa⁴.

The first Anglican Priest to work in Sierra Leone was Melville Home. In 1792, he strove hard to combine his chaplaincy work with evangelism but he could not make much progress. However, he was able to appeal to missionary bodies in Europe for missionary service in Sierra Leone. Consequently, volunteers from the Berlin Missionary Seminary, Melchoir Renner and Peter Hartwig, came in 1804 to continue with the work. They were later joined with Leopold Bucher, Gustavus Nylander and Johann Prasse.⁵ In 1815, Edward Bickersteth was sent by the CMS to evaluate the work of the Mission there. The

recommendations which Bickersteth made received a wide response from missionaries. Among the missionaries who were challenged to come was William Auguste John.⁶

The work of the Mission witnessed a tremendous progress especially between 1824 and 1829. This era witnessed the building of many CMS structures by the colonial government. Such Church buildings were staffed by the CMS. With the progress of the Mission, Henry Venn, the secretary of CMS introduced the idea of Native Church Pastorate or the Euthanasia of Missions. This principle advanced the course that missionaries should aim at establishing independent congregation in which missionary Superintendent would cease utterly.⁷ This could be achieved through the “3s”: Self Government, Self Support, and Self Propagation. In order to implement this lofty concept, the CMS realized it was pertinent that Sierra Leone was created in 1852, with Bishop E.O. Vidal as the first Bishop⁸.

Sierra Leone became an important settlement for the propagation of the Gospel in other parts of Africa, especially Nigeria. The reason was that it provided many black Christians and black missionaries with the training in Christian faith and evangelism. The Nigerian ex-slaves in Sierra Leone had a burning desire to go back home to be re-united with their families. The zeal became more intense especially with the Yoruba recaptives who in 1838 served on a trading ship. When they got to Lagos they recognized it as the slave-port from where they were sold and shipped into slavery. Some of these slaves later made their way inland and to Abeokuta and it was estimated that by 1841, more than 500 recaptives had returned to and settled in Abeokuta.⁹

These returnees felt they were missing spiritual ministrations that they had enjoyed in Sierra Leone. Therefore, they sent urgent request for Christian leaders to join them. This request was a subject of concern for the leading missionary societies in Sierra Leone. This made mission bodies like the Methodist, the Anglican and Baptist to respond by sending missionaries to Nigeria. The Wesleyan or Methodist was the first to respond by sending

Thomas Birch Freeman in 1842.¹⁰ Next to respond was the Church Missionary Society (CMS) who sent Rev. Henry Townsend accompanied by Andrew Wilhem.¹¹ Rev. Henry Townsend was said to have arrived in a ship named “The Wilberforce” at Badagry on 24th December, 1842.¹² At his arrival, he was met by Rev, Birch Freeman of the Wesleyan Mission and they both worshipped together on Christmas Day of 1842 at the Wesleyan Church, Badagry.¹³

After the arrival of Townsend, he later moved to Abeokuta. Oshitelu maintains that he arrived on 4th January, 1843. He was received warmly by Oba Sodeke, the Alake of Abeokuta who had earlier requested for Christian missionaries so they could propagate the Christian message to his people. Sarah Tucker describes the enthusiasm with which Rev. Townsend was received in the following words:

The narrow streets were lined with crowds of natives, shouting out, “Aku Aku” as he (Townsend) passed along, recognizing in him the representative of a nation and of a religion to which they owed so much of their long relatives. Sodeke’s reception of him was as cordial as that of his people, he seemed overjoyed at his arrival.¹⁴

Rev. Henry Townsend received similar warm reception at Abeokuta the way Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman received wherein all the commercial and business activities including markets in the town were suspended. Rev. Henry Townsend and his team could not start their evangelistic campaign due to the political disturbance and inter-tribal war which characterized the time in Egbaland.

In January, 1845, the CMS party arrived in Nigeria and they consisted of the Rev. C. A. Gollmer (a German), Rev. Henry Townsend and Rev Samuel Ajayi Crowther.¹⁵ When they arrived in Badagry, they learnt that Oba Sodeke had just died eight days earlier. Consequent upon this, they had to stay back until a new king was elected. On 27th July 1846, the team proceeded to Abeokuta and the Mission was able to establish a Mission in the Yorubaland with Abeokuta as the centre.¹⁶

Owing to the poor reception of the CMS missionaries in Badagry, coupled with the discouraging and slow progress of the work, the Mission decided to concentrate on more receptive area of Egba land. Hence, by 1847, there were already Church buildings with thatched roofs and there was a need to add another worker to assist Rev. Henry Townsend. Therefore, Rev. David Hinderer was sent in 1849 to assist Rev Henry Townsend and through his effort, he was able to establish new Churches in that area. CMS made a significant progress in Egbaland among which included conversion. For instance, in February 1847 the first baptism took place when three women including Rev. Samuel Ajayi Crowther's aged mother got converted and baptized.¹⁷ Sunday Schools were organized, primary schools were established for children, missionaries' wives catered for the girls, among others.

It was from Abeokuta that the Gospel message was spread to other Yoruba towns. It was the success which the missionaries recorded in Abeokuta and its environs that made other Yoruba towns to request for missionaries to come to their communities. Such towns included Ibadan, and Oyo. Ibadan station was opened by David Hinderer in 1851.¹⁸ The CMS in Igboland became established under the leadership of Samuel Ajayi Crowther on July 27 1857.¹⁹ The assertion made by Omoyajowo is important here. He says; "The period from 1841 to 1890 marked the emergence of Christianity in Nigeria although records show that there were various attempts by other missionaries to bring Christianity into the country".²⁰ Omoyajowo's assertion captures the time when the Anglican Church arrived in Nupeland. This further indicates that Nupeland was part of the first lands to receive the Gospel in the 19th century in Nigeria.

3.2 The History of Church Missionary Society and Emergence of Christian Mission in Nupeland

The first appearance of the Gospel in Nupeland was during the Niger Expedition of 1841. The whole idea was conceived by Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton who had the desire to

establish legitimate trade in the hinterland as a way of checking slave trade from its source of supply in Africa.²¹ In his view, commerce, Christianity and civilization are interrelated and go *pari pasu*; hence, the most potent panacea for ending slave trade in Africa was for Africa to utilize her resources. He therefore, argued that the “Bible and the Plough” must go together to bring about this change.

In order to execute this plan, Buxton persuaded Lord Melbourne’s government to undertake the Niger Expedition of 1841 at the cost of \$100,000.00.²² Consequently, the British Government commissioned Captain H.D. Trotter for this voyage. Among the crew members were two missionaries: Rev. Schon, a German Linguist who had served in Sierra Leone and Samuel Ajayi Crowther, an ex-slave from the Yoruba region of Nigeria.²³ Other members of the crew included diplomats, scientists, and others. The major task was to sign treaties with the chiefs to guarantee legal trade, to establish an experimental farm, to bring to the people technological innovations and to expose the Gospel to them.

Unfortunately, this team could not go very far into the interior because of the Malaria scourge. The expedition ended quickly when 48 out of 145 Europeans on the boats died in their first two months on the River Niger.²⁴ However, Schon and Crowther got as far as to Eggan, only about 17 miles from Kpada and began to preach the Gospel to the Nupe.²⁵ These CMS missionaries were able to make contact with the *Etsu* Nupe, Usman Zaki at Rabba where they presented him with an Arabic Bible. Dr. Schon was said to have preached at the slave market at Eggan on September 28, 1841.²⁶

In assessing the success of the 1841 Niger Expedition, it was more of failure than success as many of their goals were not achieved. However, from a missionary perspective, it was a success in the long run. Through the knowledge gained from the expedition, the CMS was able to formulate a policy in West Africa. The CMS got to know through this expedition that the Niger region was not suitable for Europeans. This later led to the advocacy of

training native agency for missionary work in Africa, more so that no African died in the expedition.²⁷ Not that alone, the expedition aroused the interest of the Yoruba and Igbo ex-slaves in Sierra Leone to return to their homelands, a decision which later culminated in the extension of the work of the CMS, the Methodist and the Baptist missions in Nigeria. The activities of these mission bodies led to the introduction of Christianity to the hinterlands of Nigeria.²⁸ Owing to the set-back suffered by both CMS and the British Government in the 1841 Niger Expedition, they were forced to go back and nothing significant happened in the upper Niger until another expedition in 1857.

The 1857 Niger Expedition

The 1857 Niger Expedition brought about success and better improvement over the 1841 Expedition. It was a joint exercise between the CMS and the British Government. The team was led by Dr. William Baikie and Lt. Glover while the CMS representatives were Samuel Ajayi Crowther and J.C. Taylor.²⁹ The Expedition went to the Niger on the Dayspring otherwise known as the Steamship.

When they got to Idah, they had much difficulty with Atta on the issues of etiquette. However, Crowther was able to secure permission to open a station at Igbebe, a place opposite the site of Lokoja called Lairdstown.³⁰ Some members of the expedition went on to the Nupeland as far as Gbara near Jebba. Unfortunately, their vessel, Dayspring accidentally hit a rock at Jebba and capsized but no life was lost as the crew were rescued by the inhabitants.

This incident forced the missionaries to remain at Rabba for a whole year. While they were at Rabba waiting for another ship to convey them back, Crowther and Baikie took advantage of the shipwreck and were busy preaching at Rabba. They met the Reverend M. Clark, a Baptist missionary who had travelled overland from Abeokuta.³¹ Samuel Ajayi Crowther also utilized this avenue to study the Nupe Language. Crowther and Clark worked

together to see the possibility of opening a mission station among the Nupe and Hausa people.

Samuel Ajayi Crowther visited the *Etsu* Nupe, Usman Zaki at Bida from Rabba. The visit to the *Etsu* Nupe had a positive influence and impression on the *Etsu*. The missionaries were allowed to preach at Bida market.³² Crowther was able to acquire some land at Rabba to build not a mission station but a missionary Rest House where he hoped the missionaries could lodge to help remove Muslim's prejudices and misconceptions about Christians through kindness and discussion with them.³³ Samuel Ajayi Crowther and Dr. Baikie left Rabba but stationed a young Kanuri man, Abegga there as a teacher. One year after their departure from Rabba, Rev. Crowther returned to Bida in 1859 only to discover that *Etsu* Usman Zaki had died and his brother, Masaba had succeeded him. Rev. Crowther held discussion with the *Etsu* Nupe, Masaba, regarding the work of the Mission but he was not interested because he was building the Bida city walls at that time³⁴. Rev. Crowther also discovered that the mission station at Rabba had been closed by Masaba.

After Rev. Crowther's meeting with *Etsu* Masaba, he had to turn back to Igbebe. That same year (1858) during the Nupe war, the mission station located at Igbebe was destroyed and Rev. Crowther was captured. In order to receive his freedom, a ransom of \$100 was demanded. Therefore, Mr. William Teller went to rescue Ajayi Crowther but in the process while Ajayi Crowther was being rescued, Mr. William Teller was shot with a poisoned arrow and he died.³⁵ Many reasons have been suggested for closing the mission station at Rabba. According to Pedranza, the Brazilian and Portuguese slavers had influenced the Emir because they wished to keep the river crossing at Rabba open for the movement of slaves.³⁶ According to Ayandele, this was brought about in consequence of some Yoruba, including Madam Tinubu who had warned *Etsu* Masaba that the missionaries were agents of the British government who had come as pathfinders of British imperialism.³⁷

As time went on, Crowther often visited Masaba at Bida and was officially welcome but the *Etsu* never allowed any more Christian workers in his domains.³⁸ However, with patience, friendship and persistency, Rev. Crowther was able to secure the kindness of Masaba. He was able to open mission stations at Lokoja, Eggan and Kippo Hills. Also to the credit of Rev. Crowther was the fact that he was able to persuade the Emirs of Bida, Ilorin, Gwandu and the Sultan of Sokoto to receive Arabic Bibles from the Church Missionary Society.³⁹

Clare Fuller has a slightly different opinion about in whose reign CMS was able to establish the mission station at Kippo Hills. According to him, Masaba died in 1873 and Umaru Majigi succeeded him and he allowed the CMS to set up a mission at Kippo Hills. He further states that the mission station in this place was operational from 1874 to 1890 when *Etsu* Maliki who succeeded Umaru Majigi asked all missionaries to withdraw from his country.⁴⁰ One of such missionaries stationed there was Charles Paul, a Sierra Leonian. Charles Paul was friendly to the *Etsu* and was able to write on Studies of the Nupe Language.

There is a historical record that Umaru Majigi allowed the CMS missionary to work in Bida in 1881 and *Etsu* Maliki, his successor also requested that the CMS send missionaries to work in Bida.⁴¹ Unfortunately, the CMS was not able to send more workers and thereby taking the available opportunity to consolidate on the expansion.

The CMS never gave up on the proselytization of Nupeland. In 1886, a committee was formed in Manchester to finance any attempt to enter the Sudan for the purpose of evangelization.⁴² Mr. Graham W. Brook showed interest in the project and in 1889, he decided to get to the Sudan via the Niger Delta for the purpose of evangelism. Mr. Graham Wilmot Brooke was able to convince a number of people for this notable task. Therefore, in 1889, Brook and ten other graduates from Cambridge and Oxford set out for the journey from

England.⁴³ This group of young evangelists were agents of the CMS and were called Sudan Party perhaps because of their mission to the Sudan (the land of the Black).

This group of missionaries were highly zealous, committed and fanatical. They expected a speedy result, in the calculation of their leader Brooke, within the space of six months, much of Northern Nigeria would have been converted into Christianity.⁴⁴ At their arrival, they were so determined to win the Nupeland that they renounced their British citizenship to become Northern Nigerians. Not that alone, they dressed and lived like the people.⁴⁵

Things did not turn out the way the Sudan Party expected, as a matter of fact the methods they thought would bring success turned out against them. For instance, by wearing Muslim clothing, turban and shoes an average Muslim was thrilled that the missionaries were at last taking the first step towards conversion into Islam. Also, they were regarded by Emirs as British political spies, an action which culminated in Emirs sending their own spies to survey the military strength of the Niger Company with the view to attacking them.⁴⁶

The Sudan Party failed woefully in their mission. After about two years of their activities, almost all the missionaries had died of sickness and physical attacks.⁴⁷ They had earlier in 1889 restricted Rev. Crowther to the Lower Niger at Onitsha while they took control of the Northern part with headquarters at Lokoja. They debased Rev. Crowther's method of conversion through schools and his other approaches. The Sudan Party taught in the local language for the Northerners to embrace Christianity. At the end of it all, the Sudan Party was not able to make any conversion.

Regardless of this fact, some positive effects were noticeable in the activities of the Sudan Party in Nupeland. These include positive contributions to the evangelization of Northern Nigeria by the Sudan Party. The impact of their work can be seen among the Nupe, Bassa-Nge, Kabba, Igala and Igbira.⁴⁸ Another area of the Sudan Party's positive contribution

was its ability to detach Christianization from Buxtonian concept of civilization mission.⁴⁹ They exhibited this by accepting to live with the natives in an effort to plant indigenous Christianity.

3.3 Interrelationship between CMS and other Christian Missions in Nupeland

One feature of the earlier missions among the Nupe is that they worked together as a team to promote the Gospel. This attitude among the missionaries really helped the growth of Christianity in Nupeland. One of the several instances of relationships between the CMS and other missions was the meeting of the CMS agents, Rev. Crowther and Rev. Baikie with the Baptist missionary, Rev. M. Clark at Rabba. As stated earlier, these agents represented by different missions together surveyed for openings among the Nupe and Hausa people.⁵⁰ This sweet relationship started as far back as the time when CMS entered Nigeria, especially the Yorubaland wherein Thomas Birch Freeman of the Methodist Church welcomed Henry Townsend.

Another area of co-operation among the mission bodies in Nupeland was in the area of Bible translations into Nupe Language. In 1905, Herbert Tugwell, the Anglican Bishop in Lagos advised those missions involved in Nupeland to meet together in order to consider issues which have to do with translation into Nupe language.⁵¹ The mission bodies in Nupeland at that time included CMS, SIM, SUM and the Mennonites. The first meeting took place in Patigi in 1906 with Tugwell as the chairman, and Rev. Banfield as the secretary. In this meeting, the committee settled on a workable alphabet, planned the production of the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer in Nupe language.⁵² It should be noted here that there had been an earlier attempt by the CMS to translate some portions of the Bible into Nupe Language.

For instance, as early as 1877, Rev. Samuel Ajayi Crowther had had a translation of the Gospel of John printed into Nupe Language. Also in 1886-1887, the BFBS published

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John which were translated by Archdeacon Henry Johnson and later revised by J.L. McIntyre and T.W. Bako in 1899.⁵³ To crown it all, there was the completion of a draft of the whole New Testament in Nupe in the year 1914; the work which consisted of the following people from different denominations: Iran Sherk, Banfield (UMS), F. Merry-Weather (SIM), A.E. Ball and C.H. Daintree (C.M.S.).

One other area of co-operation among the missions in Nupeland and indeed the entire Northern Nigeria was in praying for one another, not only that, they also followed developments in each other's stations.⁵⁴ In modern times, there are non-denominational or what can be described as interdenominational organizations whose primary objective is to advance the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Nupeland. The members of such organizations include Anglican and many other denominations in Nupeland. Such Christian groups include: Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF), Nupe Christian Fellowship (NCF), Fellowship of Christian Students (FCS), Nupe Intercessors, Nupe Inland Missions, etc.

There was also frequent meeting together and co-operation between CMS and other denominational bodies in Nupeland. Such meetings were premised on issues of common interest affecting all the Christian bodies in Nupeland. Related matters such as government policies on mission work, education, security etc were discussed together. One of such meetings or conferences took place on September 1, 1919 at Lokoja by 8:45am.⁵⁵ Those present in that conference included Mr. Alvarez of CMS, Rev. M. Brink of D.R.C.M. and Mr. Sherk of M.B.C. who could not join them the first day of the conference because he was coming all the way from Shonga. Some of the issues discussed in this meeting were the election of officers, a letter of welcome to be prepared and presented to the new Governor, Sir Hugh C. Clifford. They also agreed to mention some hardships being faced by missions in Nigeria. It was decided that request be made from the state that aid be given to mission

schools. These and many other issues were discussed among the various mission bodies in Nupeland.

3.4 The Response of the Nupe to Christianity

The response of the Nupe to the Christian Gospel is premised on a number of factors. Such factors include the existing Nupe religion, Islam, social and cultural factors, among others. In this section, the response of the Nupe to Christianity will be discussed along two main principles, the **indigenizing and pilgrimage principles**. Before we delve into the description of these principles, there is a need to explain the nature of the Christian faith.

The Nature of the Christian Faith

Christianity throughout church history has certain salient features as will be seen in this section. Suffice here to say that Jesus Christ is the focal point and the central figure in Christianity. He is not only humanly divine and utterly Jewish but also has a boundless universality of a divine person. The person of Jesus is seen in an endless series of cultural specificities; but the different specificities belong together. The cultural specificities have certain coherence and interdependence in the coherence.

The nature of Christian faith becomes more glaring as it continually enters into dialogue with any culture in the moment of transition and in the process change the cultural specificities. An illustration will make this point more apt. The events recorded in the Synoptic Gospels happened in Palestine and the central theme is the Good News brought through the person and work of the Jesus of Nazareth as professed by Jesus Christ himself in his teachings about the Kingdom of God and the working of the Son of Man. However, in trying to transplant Christianity into the Hellenistic world, Paul did not use such words and terminologies in his letter to them. The reason for this is that such titles did not exist in the cultural milieu of the new Christian community. Hence, to communicate the person of Jesus Christ and his ministry, a new vocabulary, apart from the Jewish vocabulary, had to be

employed. Consequently, the Gospel was understood in the context of the Gentile world.

According to Walls,

Hellenistic people began to see Christ in their own terms which further raised questions which even those who had had a Hellenistic education and were at home in the language felt no need to raise. Hence, Christian message moved beyond the category of Messiah, which for many of the earliest believers seemed to be the heart of the Gospel, to embrace such categories as Logos and Pleroma to explain the significance of Jesus.⁵⁶

It is clear from the above quotation that when Christianity interacts with any culture, it makes Jesus Christ relevant to such culture by answering questions relevant to that culture. As a result of this, Christianity has a cultural diversity which spreads across not only the contemporary scene but across history, since Christianity is a generational process. Therefore, just as the diversity of Christian expression and its coherence combine in the present scene, so they are across the generations.

One component and in fact, the most cardinal parts of Christian message is that it is salvific. The saving activity of Christ can be understood in terms of translation and that is why the Christian message becomes relevant to every culture. The first translation was done by God himself wherein, according to Christian theology, God translated himself into specific humanity in specific segments of social reality at a specific point in time. Hence, the response to such activity is conversion and since conversion implies to “turn to or towards something or somebody,” Christian conversion means turning towards Christ. By implication, the process of conversion involves turning what is already in existence. Christianity transcends every cultural boundary and barrier. Studies have shown that the centre of gravity of Christianity has shifted from the global north to the global south, especially Africa, Pacific, Latin America and parts of Asia. This is a clear indication that the Christian faith is penetrating new cultures. At the time the westerners brought Christianity to Africa, western

Christians seemed to be representative in the sense that they brought both Christianity and western culture.

Idowu comments on this when he writes thus:

It was in this way that Christianity arrived in Nigeria dressed up in European garb. It was immediately associated with civilization in the sense of being well dressed in European fashion, dexterity in European etiquette and manners, and proficiency(or dabbling) in the use of English Language with a corresponding disdain for their own culture, a disdain which crystallized into inability to use their language properly...Even today, the wrong notion is still with us. Some of the older Nigerian clergymen cannot imagine themselves in Nigerian clothes.⁵⁷

However, Christians are no longer representative Christians today. Therefore, the period of double identity like that of western missionaries to Africa is over. Since Christ Jesus belongs to all humanity, the Gospel message could be received by all humanity. Walls shares this view,

The process of transmission no longer takes place necessarily from the western intellectual discourse. It is multicultural in its personal, it will be increasingly multicultural in expression and application. At a time when Christianity is itself marginal to western intellectual discourse, that discourse needs to come to terms with Christianity as a non-western religion.⁵⁸

Wall's submission is revealing. It treats Africans as a peculiar people with peculiar culture. Therefore, the process of the Christian Gospel transmission must take African intellectual discourse and in fact part of the cultural specificities discussed earlier.

The Indigenizing Principle

The brain behind the indigenizing and pilgrimage principles is Andrew F. Walls. According to him, there are two opposing tendencies in church history both of which have their base in the Gospel itself. This principle states that God accepts us as we are on the basis of Christ's work alone, not on the ground of what we have become or are trying to become. However, as he accepts us the way we are, he does not take us as isolated, self governing

units, because we are not but rather we are conditioned by a particular time and place, family, group, society and culture. As God accepts us in Christ, he also accepts us together with our group relations and with the cultural conditioning which makes us feel at home in one part of human society and less at home in any other. As he takes us with our group dis-relations, those predispositions, prejudices, suspicions and hostilities, whether justified or not which is characteristic of the group to which we belong, he does not wait to tidy up our ideas any more than he waits to tidy up our behaviour before he accepts us sinners into his family.

The relevance of this principle lies in the fact that as observed from church history, living as a Christian and at the same time, a member of one's society, consequently make the church a place to feel at home. The event at Jerusalem council vividly illustrates this principle, where despite the cultural variations of the Gentiles, the Apostles did not force them to take on the Jewish culture of circumcision. In the same vein, Paul also taught that since God accepts the heathen the way they are, circumcision, food avoidance and ritual washings are not meant for them. Walls, wraps up this concept beautifully thus:

The fact that a new believer is a new creation in Christ does not mean that he starts or continues his life in a vacuum, or that his mind is a blank table. His mind has been formed by his own culture and history, and since God has accepted him as he is, his Christian mind will continue to be influenced by what was in it before. And this is as true for groups as for person. All churches are culture churches-including our own.⁵⁹

The above quotation shows that Christianity cannot be practised outside our cultural inclinations. Since religion, in some ways, is part of culture, it continues to romance with culture.

The Pilgrim Principle

As stated earlier, the pilgrim principle is another force in contention with the indigenizing principle even though it has its foundation in the Gospel. This principle asserts

that God does not only take people as they are in Christ but takes them with the purpose of transforming them into what he wants them to be.

A Christian inherits the pilgrim's principle with the inner conviction that such Christian has no abiding city here on earth (Heb.13:14) and encourages him or her to be faithful to Christ, the decision which may put him out of step with his society. The pilgrim's principle portends that in the process of transforming the mind towards Christ there will be rubs and frictions. One interesting but very important thing to note in this principle is the fact that while the indigenizing principle associated Christians with particulars of their culture and group, the pilgrim's principle which is in constant contention with the indigenizing principle associates people with things and people outside the culture and group. In a nut-shell, the pilgrim's principle is a universalizing factor wherein a Christian has all the relationship amidst which he was brought up but have them sanctified by Christ who is living in them.

This means that a Christian has a completely new set of relationship with other members of the faith family with which he has found himself. Such a Christian must accept all the group relations the way God accepted him or her. Apparently, every Christian has a dual nationality where he or she is loyal to the faith family which links him to those in interest group as against the group which he or she belongs by nature. This process makes a Christian have an adoptive past. His salvific position links him up with the people of God in all generations and by miracle, to the entire history of Israel, the race of the faithful who have Abraham as their progenitor. The integration of a behaviour into Israel is a universalizing factor which brings Christians of all cultures and ages together through a common inheritance.

The Interplay between the Indigenizing and Pilgrimage Principles and their Implications on African Theology

As stated earlier, the centre of gravity of the Christian world has shifted massively to the global south. Christianity has successfully penetrated the African culture. This is evident in many theological works published by many African theologians like Mbiti, Awolalu, Dopamu, just to mention a few of them in their ranks. Their Latin American counterparts include Gutierrez, Segundo and Miguez Bonino, who have written quite a number of works, which bordered on theological issues from African perspective. Some of these works have found their ways into the Western market, though not because they are necessarily of much relevance to the Western thought but it signals the engagements with which the African theologians have with critical issues which concern them.

This reveals a deep meaning. It is an indication that theology does not arise or develop in a vacuum; rather, it is addressed to the setting in which it is produced. Hence, since theology emerges out of practical situations, its features are that it is both occasional and local in character. In the view of Gustavo Gutierrez,

Theology arises spontaneously and inevitably in the believer, in all who have accepted the gift of the Word of God. There is therefore, in every believer, and every community of believers, at least a rough outline of a theology. This conviction leads to another, whatever else theology is, it is a critical reflection on Christian praxis in the light of the word.⁶⁰

Gustavo's view implies that theology arises to answer certain questions or address certain problems by proffering solutions to them. In this way, Jesus Christ is introduced into the cultural elements of any people. This then means that African theology will act on an African agenda. In other words, African Christian theology will address the pressing issues affecting African Christians.

The workings of the indigenizing and pilgrimage principles are observed in African Churches but more predominant in the activities of the African Independent churches. Many issues which African theology discusses may not be of much relevance to the western world because the cultural terrains are poles apart. Therefore, one will not be surprised to see some of the issues which African theologians discuss with utmost seriousness to be of less concern and may even be odd to a western theologian. At every point however, every question which relates to an African needs an answer and the answer is related to Christ, the central message. Nevertheless, in every occasion, there is a sort of coherence in the way various churches deal with diverse questions of concern by linking scripture with old tradition where the Church forms a new Levitical community.⁶¹

The coherence of various specificities is made possible through the inspired canonical scriptures, which is common to all. The scriptures make the continuity of the Christian faith possible. That notwithstanding, people at different times and places read the scriptures with different eyes. Moreso, every dispensation and community makes its own selection of the scriptures by giving emphasis to the ones which speak to community's time and place and neglecting the ones which are not so much their concern.

The indigenizing principle shows that God is speaking to the situation of every community through the scripture. At the same time, we must also note that each community approaches the scripture wearing cultural blinkers where our assumptions are determined by time and space.⁶² It therefore means that people of different dispensations and nationalities see different things in the Scripture.

There is a continuous struggle between the two principles as indicated above. The introduction of Christianity to Africa, and especially Nupeland resulted in a religious identity crisis in some places. The African Christians were not the first to experience this. However, this often results from disconnection with the past. For instance, the second and third generations of Greek Christians attempted to resolve the problem by pretending that their Greek past did not exist. They did this by pretending they were Jews; they adopted Jewish custom including circumcision. Paul condemned this attitude by telling the Greek that they were not Jews but Israel of God grafted into it (Rom. 9-11). Throughout the Christian history, the tension between the indigenizing and the pilgrim's principles are noticeable. At some stance, some people sought to impose the modes of thought and life, concerns and preconceived ideas and the ways of life of other people on some individuals. In a similar development, some Greek educated indigenizers made an attempt to eliminate what they termed as barbarian elements: Resurrection and the Last Judgment. Having said all these, we need to assert that the litmus test for authentic theology is the ability to blend the history of Israel and God's people and treat it as one.⁶³

We need to reiterate at this point that there are certain convictions and responses which are expressed whenever Christians of any culture express their faith. There may be some sharp diversities at some points but the undermentioned points are basic to them. They include;

- i. The worship of the God of Israel which is the historical particularity of the Christian faith;
- ii. Jesus of Nazareth is the ultimate significance and forms the ultimate in each culture;
- iii. God is active where believers are; and
- iv. Believers constitute a people of God transcending time and space.⁶⁴

Added to the above point is the significance of the Holy Communion which is the holy Christian sacrament. It can also be asserted that these old traditions have formed the basis for coherence in the Christian faith over centuries now.

Suffice here to say that some earliest Anglican European missionaries who came to Nupeland did not treat the African cultural and worldview with utmost carefulness and this accounted for the slow growth of Christianity in Nupeland. Some of them attempted to impose European culture on the Nupe communities, this partially explains the reason for the failure of Christianity in some places in Nupeland. Those missionaries failed to understand that Christ is the ultimate in every culture and speaks to people of every culture in a unique way through the understanding of the scriptures as translated into the local languages.

The Christianity that will be more acceptable in Nupeland will be the one which will put into consideration the social and cultural values of the Nupe people. We must quickly note that wherever Christianity has succeeded in Nupeland, it was because, to some extent, the cultural heritage of the people had been properly managed or a better alternative had been provided. An example of this is in the area of music. Today, in the Anglican Church and in fact, many Christian denominations in Nupeland sing liturgical songs in the local dialects. Not that alone, the traditional musical instrument, *angeli* or *geli* is used in many Churches across Nupeland today. They are used during worship, marriage, funeral, and other Christian religious functions. This has attracted some people into the Christian fold in Nupeland. The earliest Euro-American missionaries would have discouraged this since it did

not have its root in the Western culture. They would have termed it paganism or fetishism.

The introduction of Boys and Girls Brigade and their ceremonial activities which are introduced into Christian programmes have retained funfares and honours attached to such ceremonies. For instance, during Christian weddings in Nupeland, the Boys and Girls Brigade members are neatly dressed in their uniforms. At the entrance and departure of the new couple during the solemnization, the Brigade arrange themselves in two rows with their sword-like staff and the couple pass in the middle to the altar or from the altar as they depart. Such services are characterized with beautiful tunes with their trumpets and set of drums under the command of their captains. These activities have further led to the conversion of some people in Nupeland. Furthermore, the liturgy in Anglican Churches in Nupeland is conducted in the Nupe language. Songs and hymnals are sung in the local dialects, scriptures are read in the people's language, sermons and prayers are also said in Nupe language. This makes people to have a deeper understanding of what the Christian Gospel is all about. Open air crusades are also conducted in Nupe language. Indeed, language is an essential aspect of culture which must not be neglected. The early missionaries understood the importance of this and that was why they tried to learn the language of the people. Not that alone, they also developed the language of the people by reducing it into writing in their literature.

One of the challenges associated with the indigenous and pilgrim's principles is when and where to draw a dividing line between the two principles. In other words, how do we know when to be pilgrims or separate ourselves from social and cultural entanglements and how do we know when to be indigenous, meaning when do we complement and participate in cultural activities as Christians? In answering these questions, Jeffrey Volkmer gives some useful hints in handling both principles by asking the following questions:

1. Is there a sin issue involved? According to him, Christians are not expected to do something wrong at any point in time, since Christianity must work into every area of their lives.
2. Does the act of separation create opportunities to share the Gospel?
3. Is the Holy Spirit convicting our spirit?
4. Does a Christian feel God's leading about a certain situation or feel uncomfortable about something?

He also suggests things Christians can do or know to be indigenous. They include:

1. Things which further the Gospel, (1Cor.9:22)
2. Winning the right to another conversation; and (1Cor.8:9; 2Cor.6:3).
3. Knowing one's cultural script (1Cor.10:23-30). "Cultural scripts" is a phrase adopted by the linguists and anthropologists to explain the social and cultural forms. They form unspoken assumptions which are attached to many things within the confines of social and cultural terrains.⁶⁵

In a nut-shell, the crux of the matter is that there is a time to be culturally participatory and a time to be separated from it. Where it is necessary for a Christian to be a pilgrim in the society, his or her action must be that of humility, love, and compassion as enjoined in Matt.5:44 as against pride, anger, and arrogance. Jeffrey Volkmer's submission is vital in discussing the attitude of a Christian when trying to be indigenous in his or her religious practices. According to him,

To be an indigenous Christian requires us to rightly apportion those things which we are willing to fight for and those which are secondary issues to be put aside and "lived with." We must understand that it is impossible to legislate righteousness and if we truly desire change in our culture and society, we will be wholly given over to those activities which can bring this about-leading people to Christ and building them up in their faith toward maturity.⁶⁶

This presupposes that a Christian must be able to differentiate between things which are primary and the ones which are secondary both socially and culturally as they relate to Christian religious practice. Things which are primary and have specific and clear instructions from the scriptures cannot be compromised by Christians. However, the ones which are secondary and are not in conflict with the biblical injunctions should be accommodated.

Therefore, for Anglican Church to make more significant impact in Nupeland, there is a need to re-strategize. The Church must be able to review the methods used by the early missionaries and come up with a more workable strategy in order to be able to cover more grounds with the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Nupeland. The researcher observes and suggests that if Anglican Church in Nupeland puts into consideration, the socio-cultural world-views of the Nupe, the tendency that the Christian Gospel will spread like a wild fire within a very short period of time is very high. A few examples will make this idea clearer.

In keeping with the indigenization and pilgrim's principles of Andrew F. Walls, the nature of African life should be put into consideration in the efforts of the Anglican Church to expand the Christian Gospel beyond its present confines in Nupeland. One characteristic of any African society is the communal life. No one exists on his or her own, rather, an individual exists because the society exists and the society for individual. Hence, there is always a collective responsibility. This is in line with the view of Emiola who states thus,

The community is important. This is especially true in Africa where man is existentially a being-in-relation. An important perspective of man as a social being is that an individual human is fundamentally a member of society. Membership in an interaction with a group of persons is what really distinguishes humanity.⁶⁷

Emiola indicates here an important African cultural heritage of communal living as against Euro-American individualistic life-style. The communal life-style of the Africans is evident even in their traditional religion. The priests lead the congregation in the worship of

divinities, especially in the annual worship of such divinities and deities. This is the traditional African life. The African communal life has some associated social and cultural values which include relationships, respect for elders, sacrifice, unity, co-operation, self denial, hospitality, inclusiveness, celebration, accompaniment, greetings, etc.⁶⁸

The above mentioned values are seen and demonstrated in various activities in the African society, especially in Nupeland. This is also evident in their proverbs. For instance, a proverb in Nupe states thus: *Egwa nini e ye la kara lo ti a*, meaning “one hand cannot take a load to the head successfully.” This implies that the co-operation of other people is needed in the society before anybody can make a success in life. Also, there are practices among the farmers and rural dwellers up till today which indicate communal participation to help one another. One is called *enu* while the other one is called *egbe*. *Enu* is a situation where a group of farmers agree to work in one another’s farms in turns until it is the turn of the last person. *Egbe* is a situation where a farmer invites people to work in his or her farm or build a mud house free of charge. In such a situation, the beneficiary is not expected to reciprocate the gesture by working for them in return. His or her only responsibility is to provide good meal for the workers.

Respect for the elders is germane in the Nupe society. Elders are regarded as the experienced people in the society and they are expected to know better than any other person in the society, at least by virtue of their age and experience. In view of this, the words of the elders are always words of authority. This is the more reason traditional rulers are given important position in the Nupe society because they are regarded as the vicegerents of God himself. Hence, any Christian mission which will thrive in Nupeland must seek the favour of the elders and traditional rulers. This is an aspect of the wholistic African communal life which any Christian mission must put into consideration. Gladwin has this to say concerning one area which the Church in Africa is discouraged: the view of community that a person

holds is important to experience community. Even Christian theology has not gone beyond developing a theology of the Church not to talk of producing “a blueprint for a Christian society.”⁶⁹

The argument of Gladwin is that the Christian theology which has been developed so far by the Church, is the one which is opposed to societies which “exclude people on the ground of race, sex, or religious belief.”⁷⁰

The argument of this section therefore, is that if Anglican Church will move forward from her present point of evangelistic crusade in Nupeland, the entire Nupe traditional worldview must be taken into consideration from where the permissible practices in Christianity with the imbibed and the non-compliant ones discountenanced.

The negative reactions against Christianity have also been noticed in certain areas. Some Christians who had wives before conversion lost their wives to non-Christian counterparts and in the case of others, their wives divorced them because they could not cope with their newly found faith. A good example is the case of one Elder Peter Gana who had two wives before his conversion but one left him as soon as he became a Christian. The one who left him had no child before her divorce. The second wife had a child but the only child fell sick and died. However, his wife blamed the death of the child on her husband’s new faith and she also divorced him and got married to another man within the same community.⁷¹

There was a report about Mr. and Mrs. Merryweather, the missionaries who were stationed in Kpada Tifin in 1914. Owing to their success in the establishment of the Gospel in that area, there were some silent opposition against them. These enemies of the Gospel poisoned the missionaries’ water but God revealed it.⁷²

Hostility and attack against the Gospel in Nupeland were beyond physical. At times demonic forces were employed against Christians. For instance, in 1923, the mission house in

Patigi was struck by thunderbolt and the whole house was set on fire. Incidentally, Mr. Banfield came to visit Mr. Henshaw and both of them were in the house when it happened. Fortunately, Mr. Banfield was conscious and he quickly moved Mr. Henshaw out of the burning house. The entire house was razed down by the inferno thereby rendering the missionaries homeless. This event forced Mr. Henshaw back home.⁷³

Non-Christian Nupes show their displeasure to Christianity by denying them of their rightful political positions. There was a particular case of one Elder Elijah in Kpada Tako. For his determination to follow Christ and refusal to participate in the traditional religious rites, he was denied of his chieftaincy title. Consequent upon this, he was poisoned and he died on May 1st, 1938.⁷⁴

The event narrated above is strange to the extreme because the principle of African Religion all over the world is “Live and let’s live.” That notwithstanding, that is a clear picture of many people’s disposition to Christianity in Nupeland. Up till today in many places in Nupeland, it is difficult for a Christian to assume both traditional and political positions not only because they are in the minority but because the non-Christians are intolerant of them.

In the early days of the Gospel in Nupeland, the works of the mission proved very difficult to the CMS and other major denominations like SIM and UMS. In the view of Mr. Goertz, he expressed his opinion thus:

At this time many thought that the work among the Nupes should be closed. It had taken the health of too many missionaries. Of the twenty three missionaries stationed among the Nupes, only the Merryweathers were now left, and they had suffered so much. (Five years later Mrs. Merryweather was to lay down her life among the Nupe People). Up until this time only seven Nupes had been baptized and a few from other tribes. Other fruitful fields had opened at Egbe, Isanlu, Oro-Ago, Agunjin, Kwoi, Karu and other places. Why not leave the Nupe work and go to another more fruitful area? However, the *Merryweathers* felt that there was a “force-powerful, but not all-powerful, resisting” the progress of the Gospel and the establishing of a church among the Nupe people. Though they had already lost their two boys, and encountered so many other difficulties.⁷⁵

The above statement by Goertz shows the true picture of the situation in Nupeland. It was a difficult work for the missionaries across all the denominations because of the unresponsive attitude of many Nupe.

In spite of the irresponsible nature of many Nupe to the Gospel, there were some of them who accepted the Christian faith. Many out of those who got converted or were born into the faith are sincere and committed to the practices of the faith. Regardless of the persecution, they still stand firm as seen in the instances cited above.

As a result of the positive response to the Gospel in some places in Nupeland, Christianity has affected the general life of the Nupe society. Some aspects of culture have changed e.g. Marriage, burial and funeral ceremonies, some belief systems, education, music, and so on.

Some Nupe have left their former traditional *Kuti* religion and have imbibed the Gospel. This is reflected in their Christian song of commitment as seen in the Nupe Hymnal.

According to this hymn, it says:

*Payin le yi yakpe laya fe wa chigbe za
Banza tsa u jin ya yi to anfani dan bo a
'Za na la mi tu Jesu na yizhe a na u vo
U ma de rayi abada.*⁷⁶

Translation

Initially we trusted in *laya* (magic) looking for *Chigbe* (medicine)
It did not do us any good and there was no gain in it
Whoever follows Jesus, the world will hate
(But) will have eternal life.

This and many other songs are the testimony of the Nupe Christians. With the level of their conviction, many have laid down their lives for what they believed in. Many of these issues will be discussed more elaborately in the next chapter, especially the section dealing with the achievements of the CMS in Nupeland.

The reactions of the Nupe to Christianity was not just positive or negative but both. Their reactions were depended on a number of factors such as the existing Nupe Religion, Islam, social and cultural factors, etc.

In the words of Nwachukwu, he lamented about the slow progress of Christianity in Nupeland signalling the unresponsive attitude put up by the Nupe towards Christianity. According to him,

in spite of more than 152 years of preaching the gospel in this land, 95% of the people are unsaved. Pathetically, about 85% of professing Christians are nominal and uncommitted. The situations in Bida, the capital of Nupeland is worse. As at now, you can hardly find indigenous souls that are born again and living among the people.⁷⁷

If Nwachuku's assertion is anything to go by, it means that, as at the time of his research, just about 5% of the total population of the Nupe are Christians. Some of the likely causes of this unresponsive attitude to the Gospel in Nupeland shall be discussed under the challenges facing Anglican Church in Nupeland. The implication of the above stated point is that there was an outright rejection of the Gospel in some places in Nupeland. This is implicitly stated by the CAPRO in this statement,

We noticed in some places, notably in the Bida Emirate, that certain religions/political agencies prohibit conversion of Muslims and even non-Muslims to Christianity as agents often spy on the areas and report any such cases to the authorities. It is said that evangelism is actually prohibited in the area.⁷⁸

The attitude of the authorities (traditional rulers) and some indigenes to Christianity made the work difficult. There were oppositions from Muslim Mallams to the work of the missionaries. One clear example was opposition to Mr. Alfred Ball who was a missionary in Bida. The frustration to the work of the Gospel came to the peak in Bida, the capital of Nupeland in 1921 when the CMS Mission house at Bida was burnt down.⁷⁹ Hatred for mission work and

the missionaries was also observed at the rejection of the health care service rendered by the Christian missionaries in Bida. Only a few people responded for treatment because they did not want to receive help from the “infidels” (Christians).⁸⁰ The negative reaction to Christianity also became evident in the failure of non-Christian girls to marry Christian men who wanted to get married. Hostility to Christian faith was not limited to Bida the Nupe capital alone but also to the other parts of the kingdom. They did not just reject the Gospel but also persecuted their fellow countrymen who accepted the faith.

One good example that readily comes to mind is the story of the eighteen brutalized Doko Christians. According to a source, the District Head of Zhima/Doko paid a three day working visit to Doko. Immediately after their arrival, the subjects started their usual acts of terrorism and brigandage. They sighted a Doko man who went to fetch firewood to pay his remaining tax of two shillings. The servants of the District Head asked him to surrender his firewood but he pleaded with them because that would rob him the opportunity to pay his tax. The servants took the firewood from his head and slapped him violently. The victim, Samuel of Takogi could not take the humiliation and hit one of the servants with his fist, the blow which knocked the servant to the ground. When the other servants saw what had happened, they rushed at Samuel to beat him. However, a group of agitated fellows who sat under a nearby tree also rushed to the scene and attacked the servants of the District Head. Soon, it became a free for all fight. At the end, the servants ran for their lives.

The following morning, the palace police were sent with a list of eighteen names to be arrested for interrogation at Bida. The list contained only Christian names even though the non-Christians also participated in the fight. For instance, Mr. Peter Gara’s name was included only because he was the evangelist in charge of the Anglican Church Doko, not that he participated in the fight.⁸¹

Those arrested were taken to Bida and arraigned before the Emir, Mallam Saidu for investigation. Prior to this time, they had not eaten anything neither had they taken water. After the interrogation, the *Etsu* found them innocent but only advised that they should be warned and released. This decision did not go down well with those who arrested them and there was a sharp reaction from the people that they must be punished. When the pressure became too much on the *Etsu*, he simply retired to his chamber leaving the victims in the hands of their tormentors. At last, each of them was given six strokes of horse whip and released. This is reminiscent of Jesus unfair trial before Pilate.

When Rev. Alvarez who was in charge of the Christian communities in Nupeland learnt what happened, he wrote a letter to the District Officer requesting that the case be investigated. At the end of it all, those who were connected with the matter, from the District Head down to the scribes were relieved of their posts. The eighteen Christians who were victimized were taken home by Rev. Alvarez where they remained for four days nursing their wounds and eating. At the end of their stay, Rev. Alvarez gave each of them a Hymn Book and instructed them to go back to Doko to sing praises to God.⁸²

In the report on the work in the Nupe District in 1931, this was the event that was likely referred to. According to that report,

at one place Doko, there has been difficulty beginning with the demand of some of our scholars for receipts for taxes, and rough treatment has been the result, one at least being so brutally treated that I brought the case before the District Officer, Capt Wilkinson, who asked me to send those who had been beaten to him, and the matter has been referred to Kaduna... in this particular district the forces of reaction have long been paramount, and our stations in this area are the places that the, Supt. at BIDA has to watch over most closely, as in late years of difficulties have arisen in this area.⁸³

A similar incident which happened in Doko was the event that was described as the miracle of the collapsed *Kuchi Bridge*. There was a proposed visit of an eminent political and religious leader in the North to Doko. Christians in Doko had been informed two weeks

before that time that the purpose of the August visitor's coming was to Islamize everybody and whoever refused would be persecuted severely.⁸⁴

Regardless of the constitutional provisions about the freedom of religion, this seemed not to deter the concerned authorities about this issue. In preparation for the coming of the august visitor, the authorities forced Christians to abandon their Sunday worship to prepare a locally made tent to welcome the guest. Therefore, Christians were seen on the field with their Bibles and other Holy Books.

On that same day too, Christians in Doko were harassed by their non-Christian counterparts that they would be killed on that day unless they changed their religion.⁸⁵ Consequently, Christians went to pray. On the eve of the day the guest was to come, cloud formed around the wooden bridge which linked Bida to Doko. Not long after this there was a torrential rain which washed the entire bridge away. The amazing thing was that there was no drop of rain in both villages linked together by this bridge and the villages are just about half kilometer apart. The damage to the bridge was so severe that according to the engineer's report, it could not be successfully repaired in a period of three months.⁸⁶

Consequently, the visitor could not reach Doko and had to stop at Tsunyakpa where he was met by people who wished to be converted into Islam.⁸⁷ To have a comprehensive understanding of the reactions of the Nupe to Christianity, one needs to take into cognisance the activities of other major missions like the Sudan Interior Mission (S.I.M.) which metamorphosed to Evangelical Church of West Africa and now Evangelical Church Winning All. Resistance to the Gospel was seen in Bida in October 1894 when some people threw stones at Mr. Thomas Kent of the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) because he was an ambassador of the Gospel.⁸⁸ We need to note here that these non-Christians were non-denominationally inclined, rather whoever was a bearer of the Gospel became their enemy.

Another evidence of hostility against the Gospel was the SIM mission house in Bida which was destroyed by fire in December 1905 through arson.⁸⁹ This explains the level of hatred against Christianity in Nupeland. As can be inferred, this subjected the lives of many professing Christians and missionaries to untold danger.

3.5 Expansion of Anglican Church in Nupeland

Samuel Ajayi Crowther, a missionary per excellence established many mission stations during and after the Niger expeditions. He established mission stations at Onitsha, Igbebe, and Lokoja, among others. One important mission station he established in Nupeland was the one at Kippo Hill opposite Eggan, north of the confluence of the Rivers Niger and Benue in 1873.⁹⁰ According to the available records, there was an average church congregation of eleven non-natives in Kippo near Katsa which later disappeared until a fresh beginning after a period of twenty-three years.⁹¹

At the initial stage, the headquarters for Nupe Mission field was in Lokoja but in 1908, the CMS decided to shift her base from Lokoja to Bida. The reason for this was that it was believed that Bida, the capital city would make a better base than Lokoja. The first Anglican Church to be established in Bida was named Cathedral Church of St. John, Bida. Today, St. John's Church is the mother of Anglican Churches in Nupeland.

There were several attempts to propagate Christianity in Bida since after the second expedition. Samuel Ajayi Crowther tried at different times to get the blessings of the traditional rulers in Bida through a close relationship and friendliness. Hence, according to Jonah Kolo,

Bida remained unoccupied and, received only occasional exploratory evangelistic visit of Dr. Harford (1891-92), Bishop Tugwell (1894-5) and Rev. J.S. Williams (1903). These visits helped to sustain the interest of the mission for a permanent work in Bida, the capital city of the Nupe kingdom.⁹²

The presence of the missionaries in the above quotation shows the fruit of the labour of Samuel Ajayi Crowther to establish Christianity in Nupeland, especially Bida. Despite an amazing reception of the missionaries and a great opportunity for Church propagation in Bida and its environs, the CMS was not able to start any Church in Bida prior to 1903.⁹³

The arrival of Rev. Alfred E. Ball in October 1903 punctuated the long absence of the activities of the CMS in Bida. Rev. A.E. Ball was well received by the *Etsu* Nupe and was also given a place to reside. Not long after that, the CMS workers joined him in the Bida field, the people with whom he formed a team.

One of his strategies of conversion was annual Gospel campaigns to the mission fields. Another strategy of conversion was the stationing of indigenous evangelists in the various CMS mission fields. For instance, in Jiyako community, Mr. Josiah Alhassan was stationed there as a missionary, in Somazhiko, it was Mr. Solomon A. Yisa, in Saganuwon, Mr. Thomas Mamma, at Kowangi, Mr. David N. Sheshi was the resident missionary.

The churches planted in these areas were nurtured into maturity under the supervision of Rev. Solomon A. Mamma. History has it that by 1965, these congregations were listed among the financial contributing stations of Bida District. Not that alone, due to the commitment and arduous dedication of the missionaries in these fields, more Churches were planted between 1965 and 1970 in places like Nuwonko, Somazhigi and Tiwugi.⁹⁴

The vision and evangelistic work of Rev. Solomon A. Mamma resulted in the planting and growth of the churches mentioned above. These churches were constituted into a parish and later a district and presently an archdeaconry in the Diocese of Bida with St. Matthew's Anglican Church Somazhiko as the headquarters.

Kutigi

CMS began work in and around Kutigi towards the end of 1903.⁹⁵ Mr. Macfarlane, a West Indian who was sent by his mission to work among the Nupe was stationed at Kutigi as

the pioneer missionary. However, within a short time, Mr. Macfarlane was transferred to Kuta to work among the Gwari and was replaced with Mr. P. Gordon. The reason for Mr. Macfarlane's transfer was not unconnected with the initial poor response and discouraging result from the people among whom he worked.⁹⁶

Mr. P. Gordon had scarcely begun the work in Kutigi than he won the acceptance of people because he brought new innovations and energy into the work. Through his efforts, the CMS built a worship centre at Kutigi in 1904 where the converts could both attend church services and receive literacy education. This became necessary in view of the fact that people within and around Kutigi were coming to attend literacy class at Kutigi. For example, class attendance was recorded from villages such as Sakpe, Dabban, Dasun, Gbaci, Sopa, Nakupa and others.

Mr. P. Gordon's work and efforts were rewarded in the sense that he won many converts. In 1906, he started the Kutigi training class and he was joined by Rev. J. D. Aitken in December the same year. Through Mr. Gordon's hard work and commitment, the work grew rapidly such that by 1908 and 1909, Komi and Audu Uku were sent to Mokwa as Pupil teachers. Sunday Services were held at the Kutigi's Court with Muslims dominating the attendance.⁹⁷

As Mr. Gordon's work progressed, the training class in 1909 had fifteen boys and two boarders. This school was rated higher than the Watney Training School at Kpata in the present day Kogi State of Nigeria. Unfortunately, he took ill and died on 8th May, 1909 at Baro Hospital.⁹⁸

After the death of Mr. P. Gordon, a West Indian agent, Mr. Franklin who was highly recommended from England to work in Nupeland was sent to Kutigi to take the place of Mr. Gordon. Mr. Franklin however, had to be sent out of the country. Thereafter, Mr. D. Cole, a Sierra Leonean school master from Lokoja was put in charge of the training class. By

December 1909, the school master and senior pupil teachers were called back to Bida. When confronted with the charge of immorality, the school master and senior pupil teachers admitted that they were guilty of misbehaviours. Therefore, the school master was made to resign while the pupil teacher was dismissed. This was because they were found guilty and had been bad examples to boys and were dishonour to God.

After this strict disciplinary measure by the CMS authorities, the paramount ruler of Kutigi, Ezonuwon sent a message to the missionaries at Bida requesting that the station be re-opened stating that the erring staff were not teachers as they had learnt Christian missionaries claimed that they did not regard them as representing the Christian message.

The death of Mr. Gordon brought some temporary setbacks to the work he had started and the work was temporarily suspended. By 1910, the CMS mission put Mr. J.O. Baikie in charge of the work at Kutigi to replace Mr. P. Gordon. When Mr. Baikie assumed duty, he re-opened the work that was suspended as a result of Mr. Gordon's demise. Mr. Baikie won the hearts of the people among whom he came to work and the initial camaraderie that was between the people and late Mr. Gordon was rekindled in Mr. Baikie's relationship with them. Consequently, the Sunday Morning and evening services attendance rose to 35 and 88 respectively.⁹⁹

Rev. J.J. Williams was appointed in 1912 to head the Kutigi mission station and assisted by Abraham Akon, a Bassa-Nge convert from Kpata as a school tutor. The duo of Rev. J.J. Williams and Abraham Akon gained popularity among the school boys whose enrolment was 29 out of which fifteen were regular attendants. The number of Sunday morning worshipers also rose to 88 where eight members were enrolled and baptized in 1916. The work within the Kutigi axis progressed so tremendously to the point that many visits

were paid to over sixty villages where the Christian Gospel was preached. Moreso, people were taught how to read and write, deep biblical knowledge was imparted to the adherents of the Christian faith. Also, the missionaries attended to the sick by treating and helping them. Regular morning prayers were also held for the sick. Among the first set of converts baptized in 1916 at Kutigi included Philip Jiya Shekpatanko, James Legbo Kukpafu in Kutigi and Solomon Ndafa Fazhi; hence, between 1917 and 1918, a Kutigi native, James Legbo Kukpafu became the first evangelist.¹⁰⁰

Even though there was a steady progress in the work of the CMS in Kutigi and its environs, it was no doubt without challenges especially between 1920 and 1921. This made the Superintendent of the mission, Rev. C. Orr to remark thus:

There has been falling of interest and comparatively few have attended school and Sunday services. In the district around Kutigi, we have not found the welcome we had few years ago. There is no doubt that at Kutigi more perhaps than in other villages of the Nupe country, everything depends on the acceptability of the evangelist with the people.¹⁰¹

In order to remedy the situation described above, Orr opined that the best and keenest agents were needed; not the type on ground at that time so that the apathy to the activities of the mission being expressed would be dispelled and the opportunities to reach the people would be guaranteed. Consequent upon this, after 1921, Rev. C.H. and Mrs. Williams resumed work at Kutigi while Mr. Solomon Abu, otherwise known as Teacher Abu, a native teacher from Kataeregi was also posted to Kutigi to work there. He was the first Nupe man to work as a missionary teacher in Kutigi. In the early part of the history, the first church was built in 1920 during Teacher Abu's stay in Kutigi. From that time, church services were no longer conducted in a hut but a rectangular building which was ascribed the status of a church. The foundation of this church was laid by the paramount ruler of Kutigi, Ezonuwon Gana Gbandi in 1920.¹⁰² The period between 1920 and 1931 was a fruitful decade for the missionaries in Kutigi. At the end of that decade, a lot of progress was reported. For instance, fifteen Nupe New Testament Bibles were used by the worshippers, there were five busy outstations where the visiting agents taught the learners the rudiments of reading and writing. According to Rev. Alvarez,

The break has come after many years of Patient Seed Sowing at testament with which worshippers studied lessons and looked up chosen text. There were availing 5 out stations where learners were availing themselves eagerly of opportunities the visit of agents offered them.¹⁰³

Rev. Alvarez's report indicated the reward of patience, tolerance and hard work which the missionary had put in the course of the years of their hard labour.

After one year training at Awka Training College, Mr. John Angulu, referred to as Papa Doko resumed work at Kutigi in January 1932. There were other teachers who also served after him.

In 1956, the first Church, built in 1920 at Kutigi was demolished for a better one during Rev. Daniel T. Jiya's tenure. The second Church building was also demolished in May 2013 in order to build a new Cathedral Church. Rev. Daniel Jiya contributed to the spiritual upbringing of the new converts. He is a man of outstanding qualities and this has given him the opportunity to serve in the decision making council of the *Etsu* Nupe at Bida and Ezonuwon, the paramount ruler, Kutigi. He was an advocate of Western education in Kutigi and its environs before he left for Kano.

The Anglican Church in Kutigi witnessed an upsurge of population growth during the tenure of Rev. Canon Samuel Audu Latiko to the extent that the Church could not contain the members for services. Therefore, the foundation of a new Church building was laid on 27th February 1982.¹⁰⁴ Other villages with a fast growing Christian population around Kutigi include Fazhi, Katamba Bologi, Emindayisa, Gbangbagi, Lanle, Egbanti, Manyisa, Gogata/Kukpa, Afuagi, Mokwa and Enagi. These churches are within Kutigi Diocese of the Anglican Church Communion. It is also essential to note at this point that due to the efforts of the CMS missionaries, Christianity got to places like Kolowoni, Mawogi, Chibo and Duma but today no single Christian existed in them any longer.¹⁰⁵ This may have resulted from various factors such as rural-urban drift, lack of proper discipleship of the converts, influence of Pentecostalism, etc.

On 8th May, 2005 Rt. Rev. Jonah G. Kolo inaugurated Kutigi, Fazhi and Mokwa District Church Council into an Archdeaconry in the Diocese of Bida with Ven. P. Y. Yisa as the first Archdeacon. However, on 28th March, 2008, the Primate of the Anglican Church in

Nigeria, Most Rev. Peter Jasper Akinola inaugurated Kutigi as a Missionary Diocese with Rt. Rev. N. Kolo as the first Bishop.

Doko

Doko is a town located on latitude 8⁰N and longitude 5⁰E.¹⁰⁶ Doko is in Lavun Local Government Area of Niger State, it is about 15 kilometres away from Bida. It shares boundary with Bida in the North and Kwara State in the East. The indigenes of Doko belong to Beni stock of the Nupe.

Prior to 1908, notable evangelists had attempted bringing the Christian Gospel to Doko but no convert was recorded. Such evangelists were Mr. A.E. Ball and Mr. John Ogazuma Baikie, 1905 – 1906. Others who came regularly from 1908 included Evangelist Daniel Akerele, Evangelist Nda Jeremiah and Mr. Daniel Tijiko from Yagbaland who came in 1909 as a church teacher. Christianity started gaining ground in Doko around 1908 through a Yagba man, Daniel Akerele. He was a trader in locally woven clothes. Many of such traders from Yagbaland used to come from Lokoja on foot to Doko.

Daniel, even though a trader, had the intention of evangelizing Doko with the Christian Gospel. He established a good relationship with the host community and while in the town he would gather children together at night to teach them Christian songs and Bible stories. As a result of his effort, he had his first converts from the group of children he was teaching. One of the things which caught the attention of the early converts was Daniel's Gospel songs. The converts were taught the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments which they learnt by heart gladly. Some of the early converts in Doko included Joshua *Etsu* Kolo, a husband of two wives before his conversion, Peter Gana, Paul Kolo, Shaba Kolo Sansaniko, John Taidi, Samuel Gana, Abraham Gana, Daniel Sokomba, Stephen Soje Gana, Solomon Gimba, Elijah Jiya, Stephen Salawu Gana, Jacob Kolo, Philip Sala Tsado, Baba

Joshua and Joshua Shiawoya. Joshua *Etsu* Kolo was the leader of these new converts. He hosted the group during Christmas celebrations.

Daniel Akerele organized prayers and praises for the believers every Sunday. Due to the relentless efforts of Daniel Akerele and other itinerant evangelists who were “tent makers,” the number of converts kept increasing. However, in 1918, through the effort of Daniel Akerele, the Church in Doko was affiliated to the Anglican Mission which was established at Bida. God used the black Christian evangelists to establish and nurture the Church at Doko to maturity. After the affiliation of the church to the Anglican Mission in Bida, the white missionaries then started coordinating the activities of the black evangelists in Doko under the leadership of Rev. T.E. Alvarez, popularly known as Ndatinti by the indigenous people. Due to the coordinating activities of Rev. Alvarez, the Christians in Doko were nicknamed “egi Baba Tintizhi” Meaning children of Rev. Alvarez.

Through the steadfastness of the Christian converts in Doko, Christianity spread in Doko, though not without stiff opposition and persecutions from the African religions worshippers. The persecution of the converts was not unconnected with their disrespect for the traditional religion and its festivities or rituals. They also failed to revere the traditional cults. The converts were beaten, starved of food by their parents, the traditional religionists made attempts to curse the converts through libations, incantations and divinations in their various shrines but all to no avail.¹⁰⁷ This only made room for more converts.

In the 1920s, the population of Christians became more significant when the European missionaries in Bida began to visit the new converts in Doko. These European missionaries were Rev. Alfred Ball, Rev. Beaghen, Rev. J.C. Macintyre, Rev. C. Norr and Rev. C.N. Daintree. The non-Christians were surprised to see the white missionaries relating freely with the African converts as brothers and sisters. The fact that the whites were held in high esteem, gave the Doko Christians a very high honour before their Kinsmen and added

some prestige to them. This made the non-Christians to be curious and keen to know the secret behind this familiarity. As a result of the desire of the non-Christians to identify with the Europeans, many more people eventually became Christians. The sudden soar in the number of Christians in Doko at this time put more pressure on their place of worship as the church building could no longer contain them. Hence, a new church building with a larger capacity was built in Doko in 1938.¹⁰⁹

With time, Doko became a haven of Christian faith from where Christianity spread to the surrounding villages like Kopa in 1926, Boku in 1926, Vunchi in 1930, Kuchi in 1930, Batagi in 1940 and other such villages, also though not without the efforts of the local evangelists and believers, in addition to the aid of the European missionaries.

Persecution is a hallmark of Christianity from inception. Therefore, at the advent of Christianity in many of these villages, persecution broke out against the believers as it did in the early church. For example, it became difficult for men of marriageable age to get Christian girls to marry, mockery of their faith from the non-Christians, especially Muslims, lack of Church buildings where they could worship within a reasonable distance and lack of pastors who would live among the new converts to nurture them to maturity in Christian faith. These challenges led many Christian converts to backslide. The following villages were worse hit than other villages: Batagi, Dogo, Kupafu and Mambuuri. All the same, Christianity became firmly rooted in the seat of an Anglican Diocese.

Mokwa

Before 1910, Rev. J.D. Aitkens who had laboured so well at Mokwa station had to leave because his work seemed to be less rewarding. More importantly, there was an unhealthy relationship between him and the government officials and other Europeans in Mokwa neighbourhood. When Rev. Aitkens left Mokwa station, a native evangelist, Jonathan Panakie took over.

Prior to the death of Mr. P. Gordon in 1909, the CMS missionaries in Nupeland had been using Nupe language to educate and instruct the natives. However, few years after this pedagogic method of passing instructions, the CMS came up with the idea of introducing Western education to complement the Nupe language teaching that was used earlier. The CMS missionaries also decided to extend education to children who were to receive their education in Bida.

Christian workers were often referred to as teachers because they were mostly providing literacy education and preaching the Gospel before some of them were ordained as priests. Many children from Kutigi axis benefited from this system. For instance, one of such children who benefited was one Alhaji Ndagi who was sent to Bida between 1908 and 1910.¹⁰⁹

Mokwa was an important centre during the early years of the activities of the CMS in Nupeland because of the projected extension of the Lagos Railing passing through Mokwa. At the beginning of the CMS work in Mokwa, the attendance in the Sunday Services was much impressive. As many as sixty men were recorded on some occasions. After some other time, some women also attended on regular basis to the point that the king of the town promised to build a church on his own land.

In 1909, the night school which was started recorded the attendance between 25 to 33 where the subjects taught included 1st, 2nd and 3rd scripture reading with few English sentences.¹¹⁰ The work of the Mission at Mokwa was handed over to Rev. A.W. Banfield for one year on an agreement subject to satisfactory arrangements made about the purchase of the buildings and effective delivery of the work. This became necessary in view of the long distance between Mokwa and Bida, the headquarters of the Mission. Mokwa was four or five days trek from Bida whereas, it was only a few hours by train from Jebba, the base of the

Mennonite Brethren in Christ (MBIC). Hence, it saved the missionaries time, money and labour.

The area given to the Christian mission in Mokwa as a base was reminiscent of the type of lands given to other early missionaries in Nigeria. The land was an area used for the burial of the outcasts and cursed people. It was reported that people would not walk to that area anytime from 5pm because of the people's belief of the presence of the evil spirits. As a result of the good rapport between the MBIC Missionaries and the CMS missionaries, the two bodies were jointly able to translate the Bible, Hymn Books and Catechism into Nupe language.

The Anglican Church in Mokwa today has significantly grown. The Church has given birth to three districts such as: Gbajibo District Church Council having three churches under her, Bali District Church Council with seven churches under her watch and Teshan/Hajiya District Church Council having five churches. Mokwa is now a full Archdeaconry.

Essan

Before the advent of Christianity in Essanland, the African Religion was widely practised. However, Christianity made an in-road into the land in 1910 through the Church planting labours of the CMS.¹¹¹

Babazhigi Patigi, a native of Essan came in contact with the CMS missionaries at Gbadafu. Babazhigi became attracted to the CMS evangelists through their activities which were basically preaching of the Christian religion and teaching of the basic literacy education. The conversion of Babazhigi Patigi became an impetus to the missionaries that they needed to go beyond Gbadafu to the neighbouring villages to evangelize. Among the villages which responded to the Gospel of Jesus Christ was Essan. Not only that, they also enrolled in the Inquirers' classes. Such people included Kange Adama, Peter K. Adama, Thomas Aboni, Samuel K. Adama, Elijah Nusako Jiya, Silas Tela Yisa, Amos Tetengi Yisa, Jeremiah Kolo

and John. These early converts faced a lot of persecutions from their kiths and kin for leaving their traditional religion. Regardless of the situation, the converts did not revert on their decisions due to the encouragements given by the CMS missionaries through constant visits and the teaching of the Word of God. Christianity thrived in Essan to the point that it extended to other villages like Egbe, Emigi and Ndagbira.

The advent of Christianity in Essanland triggered the interest of people in the area in Western education. Many people both in Essan and surrounding communities began to send their children to the CMS School at Bida. According to Jonah,

Essan became touch bearers of Western education. To their credit, Essan churches produced and still produce successful professional in diverse fields making considerable contributions in church, state and nation.¹¹²

Jonah's assertion is a pointer to the fact that Christianity was the vehicle through which western education entered the entire Nupeland. This corroborated the earlier view that for many decades, Christianity championed the course of Western education in Nigeria.

Today, Essan falls under the Diocese of Bida. Anglican Church in Essan has grown from Parish to District and as it stands today, it is an Archdeaconry. Through the influence of the Anglican Church in Essan, the Diocese of Bida was able to secure a one square kilometer land for Diocesan Secondary School in the year 2000.¹¹³ It is also worthy of note that Essan Archdeaconry has been able to fulfill her financial obligations to the centre from where other large mission areas are sustained.

Kataregi

On 10th February, 1912, the Church Missionary Society of Northern Nigeria Mission (CMS-NNM) applied for the establishment of a European Missionary House, at least four hundred metres outside the precinct of Kataregi. The Assistant Resident Officer in Minna approved the construction in the letter dated 23 February, 1912 under the following conditions;

1. The first Resident Officer must be a CMS European;
2. Preaching in public places such as markets was forbidden;
3. Religious gatherings must be held in the compound and houses of the adherents of the Christian religion; and
4. The site must be acceptable to the native village head and his community.¹¹⁴

After the approval, the European Resident Missionaries operated a night school for the villagers on their return from their farms. In early 1913, the village head of Kataregi constructed a building outside his compound as a night school essentially for the members of his family rather than going to the mission compound which was four hundred metres away. Consequently, the building became a point of convergence for school and Christian worship, hence a school-Church building.

When Biscoe, the Assistant Resident came to Kataregi in the company of Mr. Longworthy in July 1913, he demolished the building on the ground that the construction of the building was not approved by the authority. Thereafter, many Residents Officers including Mr. Rac visited Kataregi and despite the appeal to the visiting Residents to rebuild the house, the authority did not give in to the request. According to Francis, the appeal did not get through because the visiting Resident Officers interpreters who were Muslims refused to convey the request to them.

However, on July 10, 1915, the Acting Secretary CMS, NNM Rev. C. H. Wedgewood, wrote a letter to the Lieutenant Governor, Northern Provinces in which he complained about how Christians were being denied a place for worship. He noted with dismay how Muslims had erected two mosques in the village, where one was located in the market area and the other in the “pagan area” of the village. After series of appeals and correspondence, the approval of the re-construction of the building was given in 1915 perhaps during the era of Mamman Shaga, the *Etsunyakpa* of Kataergi.¹¹⁵ The reconstruction of the building took place in the same area in the location. The Church was named St. James Anglican Church. Since the establishment of St. James Anglican Church, more Anglican Churches have been established in Gwari settlements in Kataergi between 1989 and 1992. Such settlements include Sabon Yeregi, Maiwayo, Dogon Ruwa, Shatakpan and Sanwagi.

Since the establishment of Christianity in Kataergi, it has taken the responsibility of spreading the Christian Gospel message to its environs. For instance, Kataergi was the gateway through which the Christian religion got to Esheti and Gbaka. According to Francis, Kataergi has produced more Church agents, evangelists and priests than any of the other mission posts established by the CMS missionaries in Bida Emirate of Nupeland between 1903 and 1958.¹¹⁶

Since the advent of Christianity in Kataergi, it has housed a number of CMS missionaries. The first set of the missionary settlers were the CMS women evangelists who came in 1930. Prior to this time, especially as from 1912, various missionaries had lived at one time or the other in Kataergi. Such missionaries included Rev. Joseph Momodu, Archdeacon Macintyre, Rev. Col. Thomas E. Alvarez and Rev. Wedgewood. There were residential houses built for the CMS missionaries, there was also the first Instructional Centre for girls managed by Miss Ritsert and the widow of Rev. John Ogazunma Baikie. Most girls who graduated from the centre later married evangelists. 1930-1960 was said to be an era of

aggressive and intensive evangelism in Kataregi. Converts were recorded among whom were Teacher Elijah Musa, Catechist Samuel Ndagi, Catechist Joshua Usman Sule of Esheti, Rev. Nathaniel Mamman Jiya, Rev. Audu Lazi, Canon Philip, N. Saba, and Canon Solomon A. Mamma. Others were Saba Paul Yisa, Alhaji Yusuf and Ya Sunma Yisa. These converts became proficient in writing and reading. Instructional and discipleship classes were organized for them where they were taught the reading, writing and teaching of Nupe language. Such a centre was also established in Bida, Kutigi, Mokwa and Katcha .

The training in these centres was in-depth to the point that graduands from these centres were gainfully employed in both private and public sectors. For instance, Paul Yisa worked as secretary to *Etsunyankpa*, Alhaji Yusuf and Ya Sunma Yisa (Yeshiga) became the Headmen (Yelima) in charge of the employed labourers at the Nigerian Railway Corporation, Rev. Nathaniel Mamman Jiya became the Secretary to the District Head of Amina Woye. Some of them became agents of the purchase of agricultural products for the UAC and John Holts companies. At Kataregi, there used to be regular morning Sunday services while most Sunday evenings were devoted to open air crusades at the market square and at neighbouring villages of Esheti, Gbaka, Kutukpa, Zunzungi, among others.

However, with the advent and expansion of Christianity in Kataregi and in the environs, there was a massive influx of Islamic clerics from Bida to Kataregi to propagate Islam. This was followed by the arrival of Hausa traders and meat sellers who settled in the town. Consequent upon this, in the course of time, many Christian converts either reverted back to Islam or African religion. Persecution of the new converts informed these decisions. Nevertheless, Kataregi has produced a number of notable Christians, among whom was the late Rt. Rev. James Aliu Yisa who was the first indigenous Nupe Christian to be appointed as a Bishop in the Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion. Late James Aliu Yisa was

consecrated the first Bishop of the Diocese of Minna, Niger State of Nigeria on the 29th April, 1990.¹¹⁷

Fazhi

The activities of the CMS in and around Fazhi began between 1912 and 1913.¹¹⁸ Fazhi became a choice for the activities of the CMS when the Gospel of Jesus Christ was resisted in Kutigi. This made the CMS to take the Gospel message to the nearby villages out of which Fazhi was one.

Solomon Ndafo Fazhi was one of the early converts who were baptized in 1916.¹¹⁹ Solomon Ndafo used to come to Kutigi for worship to join people like Philip Jiya Shekpatanko and James Kukpafu in Kutigi. There was an encouraging report from the agent in charge of Kutigi and Fazhi between 1918 and 1919 that the work was yielding results. At the said time other villages like Katamba Bologi and Emindayisa were already attending Fazhi for church worship. There were also some agents who were coming from Bida for regular follow up and discipleship training. Other converts apart from Solomon Ndafo included Paul Bake, Emmanuel Audu (Ndamanu), Jacob Nmadu Yisa, James Ndako Shema, David Legbo and Joshua Aman, among others.

We need to put on record here that despite many converts in and around Fazhi, many backslided from the Christian faith when they had difficulties in getting spouses to marry. Other things which made some of them to backslide was because of the Sunday offering collections which they were not used to, coming from African religious background. Other collection which discouraged some of them was the annual harvest thanksgiving service. Other worshippers who joined them at Fazhi from places like Katamba Bologi, Emindayisa and Majiko included Ndalazhi, later known as Rev. Solomon Yisa, Ndaejiko, later known as Mr. Philip Yisa Ndagi Teacher, just to mention a few of them. Hence, Christianity got to Katamba Bologi and Emindayisa via Fazhi.

The first church built in Fazhi was a hut but because of the increase in membership and the growth of Christianity in the area, there was a need for a larger one. The present church building is the fourth one from inception. Today, Fazhi is a seat of Archdeaconry.

Lanle

The origin of Christianity in Lanle dated back to between 1932 and 1933 .¹²⁰ Papa Samuel Jiya Yeregi, a resident pastor at Fazhi came to preach the Christian Gospel for the first time in Lanle. However, one of the statements which he made that challenged people was the fact that anybody who knew how to read and write was free from molestation by any authority and that such person would not be a slave to anybody again and would also not be in darkness of anything. This statement had much impression on Baba Legbo of Emitsunyankpazhi who happened to be the village head and he decided to give his son, Musa Karimu later known as Elijah Mamman to Papa Samuel Jiya Yeregi to be taught the art of reading and writing. Papa Samuel used the Nupe primer known as *Abidi* to teach the people. Thereafter, when Aliyu Karimu (later known as Pastor Joshua Mamman) who was an apprentice in Bida returned, he joined the clergy and was able to learn faster than Musa Karimu. Hence, he was able to finish the *Abidi* and the Nupe Primer in a day. As a result of his fast learning ability, he was advised by his teacher to buy the Good News Bible in Nupe, also known as *Labari Wangi*. His father (Baba Legbo) gave him six kobo to buy the Bible.¹²¹ Due to his excellent learning ability, Joshua Mamman became a teacher to Elijah Mamman, Mamman Legbo, later known as Solomon Legbo and Manjiya Alhassan, later known as Rev. Josiah Alhassan. These men learnt *Abidi* under the tutelage of Joshua Mamman for six months and they became versed in reading.

At the initial stage, it was only Joshua Mamman who got converted and he started attending church services at Fazhi while others were only interested in learning how to read and write. However, Elijah Mamman, Solomon Legbo and Josiah Alhasasan became truly

converted when Papa Abu who was stationed at Kutigi came to preach using John 14:6 as his text. The eyes of the trio were opened to the Gospel as the case with those whom Jesus appeared on the way to Emmaus in Luke 24:31. Papa Abu advised them to start attending Church services at Kutigi since Kutigi is closer to Lanle than Fazhi.

In keeping to the advice of Papa Abu, the new converts started attending church services at Kutigi. Eventually, persecutions broke out against them from their town's men. They collected their Bibles and any material that had to do with the Christian faith and burnt them. They also made several attempts to stop them from attending church services at Kutigi. On a particular occasion when they went to Panti for Tax census in 1933, Tsaduya, the District Head stationed at Kutigi tortured and embarrassed them in the public and also threatened that the authorities would arrest them. They were however rescued from the hands of Tsaduya by Papa Abu.

After this incidence, many people showed more interest in learning and becoming Christians. Therefore, a number of them came to Joshua Mamman both to be educated and to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour. Considering the steadfastness of the earlier converts in the face of persecutions, more people came to join them. Some of them included Nma Ndache, who later was known as Philip Abubakar. Nma Ndache was a professional drummer but after his conversion, those who came to learn the skill of drumming from him became Christians through his influence. Other converts from Lanle included Baba Yandaman who was later known as James, Abubakar Ndagidi, later known as Daniel Yanda, Usman Tantifugi, Nmadu Kolo Edzan. There were also converts from the neighbouring villages such as Kuniawo, Dassagi, Cekpa, Panti, Nnadindi, Sopa, Nkochi, Egbanti and Manyisa. It is expedient to note that because of the distance between Lanle and Fazhi, persecutions and other factors, many converts went back to their former religions.

That notwithstanding, the first church building in Lanle was constructed in 1934 while the present church building is the fourth one since 1934.¹²² There is a significant growth of the Anglican Church in Lanle since its inception in 1934. Through the efforts of the Anglican members in Lanle, St. Mark's Anglican Church Manyisa and St. Joseph's Anglican Church Egbanti have emerged. St. Peter's Church Lanle became a parish in 1993 with Egbanti, Manyisa and Gbangbagi Churches under it and in 2009, it became a province of a District.

Katamba-Bologi

The attempt to establish Christianity in Katamba-Bologi which was a farm settlement started at the time when Papa Joshua Esheti was a Pastor at Fazhi. Papa Joshua Esheti had paid several evangelistic visits to Katamba-Bologi but the people thought giving up their traditional religion for Christianity would anger the gods and this may lead to the destruction of families.

However, a breakthrough came when Ndalazhi, later known as Rev. Solomon Yisa and Ndaejiko, later known as Mr. Philip Yisa got converted into Christianity and decided to follow Pastor Joshua Esheti to Fazhi where they could have the opportunity to be properly brought up in the Christian way, not minding the persecutions from their kinsmen. This would also afford them the opportunity to worship and fellowship with their fellow Christians at Fazhi.

The new converts started attending the night Adult Sunday School at Fazhi. There were similar schools also in other neighbouring villages. As a result of their steadfastness in faith, many other converts were won from Katamba-Bologi. Such people include Joshua Nmadu Kolo, Nathanael Tsado Majinko, and Solomon Alfa Emitswanya. These early converts were severely persecuted and resisted especially from the village head at that time, Ndana Zhitsu Yisa. The converts were punished with farm work by apportioning to them

more work than they could do and on some occasions, they forfeited their meals, but these did not in any way deter them from following Jesus Christ.

The new converts from Katamba-Bologi were encouraged and supported by Christians in Fazhi. Those who encouraged them included Pastor Joshua Esheti, Jacob Nmadu Yisa Tswankwan Mmadu Fazhi who was the village head at Fazhi, and their chief host, Joshua Ama, Paul Bake, Emmanuel Audu also known as Nda Manu and Teacher Ndaba from Kuchi Woro. Usually, at Fazhi, the Christians gathered to celebrate Christmas for at least five days. It was always a time of fellowship in which everybody looked forward to.

Due to the increase in the number of converts in Katamba-Bologi, the CMS opened a fellowship centre for people in that axis by 1938. This fellowship grew into a full-fledged church in 1939 and was named St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Katamba-Bologi. When the converts decided to have a church of their own, the brethren at Fazhi were not happy with the development because they thought that would decimate the total population of the church members at Fazhi. The converts insisted and were resolved not to change their decision. With this development, the church at Katamba-Bologi started having visiting pastors who came to teach and encourage them in faith. Such pastors include: Samuel Jegede, Daniel Jiya Eregi and Paul Mamman Yisa Gbadafu. After the church has considerably grown, a resident pastor, John Taidi Piciko was posted there to nurture the church.

The church at Katamba-Bologi assumed a full responsibility of taking the Gospel to the nearby villages. Hence, through this effort, the Gospel spread to villages like Emitswana, majinko, Emizhitsu, Guduko, Mafo, Fafa, Sakpe, Gidan, Emindaceko, Eshata, and others. Consequently, through the efforts of both the European and native missionaries, more converts were won. This development prompted those who were initially afraid to join Christianity from the neighbouring villages to do so and that further increased the number of converts.

As it was the case with many other places where the CMS or Anglican Church took the Gospel, some converts were given Western education. Many of them went to the CMS School Akabe, near Lokoja in the present day Kogi State. This was to enable them to be able to read and write. The training started with English and other languages alphabets. One of the converts who championed the course of the Western education was Lydia Kaka Yisa (Nnagi Woro).¹²³ In 1960, the Church in Katamba-Bologi established a primary school named after the Church.

Kakpi

The pioneer missionary who took the Gospel of Jesus Christ to Kakpi was Rev. Paul. B. Ndagi. The Gospel was preached for the first time in 1934, the event which culminated in the conversion of Jacob Ndagunu.¹²⁴ After the conversion of Jacob Ndagunu, many more people got converted into Christianity, one of whom was Jeremiah Tsado.

The early converts in Kakpi went through a severe persecution, especially in 1949 from the village head of Kakpi and the villagers. This made most of the early believers to backslide from their Christian faith. This persecution left only six people standing as believers in the entire village. The six standing believers came to be fondly known as “Kakpi six”. The “Kakpi six” included Joshua Sheshi, Daniel Tsado, Job Taidi, Josiah Gana, James Gana and Jeremiah Tsado. The new converts were made to go through horrors. They were blackmailed, ostracized and attacked both spiritually and physically. They were also denied wives but contrary to the expectations of their persecutors, they found wives and bore children. Moreso, the families of the “Kakpi six” were poisoned by their persecutors, yet did not die. Rather their number increased when three youths decided to give their lives to Jesus Christ at the same time.¹²⁵ These three youths were not exempted from this persecution but when they were persecuted, Jeremiah Tsado’s house was always ready to host the new believers. There they received solace and encouragements. The three youths who were the

converts that joined later included Mr. Peter Amako, Mr. David Taidi and Mr. Moses Mamudu. These nine people later became known as the “Kakpi nine”.

The early converts became the strong foundation members of the Church at Kakpi. These “Kakpi nine” were described thus:

A band of committed believers, sold out to the Lord. Through this band of nine, the Lord established the strong foundation of the church in Kakpi which has withstood the storms of time. They suffered, but never surrendered, they labored without getting tired, they repaid evil with good and diligently beamed the light of Christ in the midst of darkness and ignorance. They were indeed “men that hazard their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 15:26).¹²⁶

The quotation above showed the extent to which the early converts demonstrated their faith and showed their love and commitment to Christ. This culminated in the establishment of Christian faith in Nupeland. Hence, the efforts of the early Nupe converts cannot be pushed aside in spreading the Christian Gospel in Nupeland.

One of the pillars of Christianity and Anglican Church in Nupeland was Jeremiah Tsado. Among the first six converts, he was the youngest but the most articulate and eventually became the leader of the Anglican Church in Kakpi. He devoted his life to the study and teaching of the scriptures. Although he was not highly knowledgeable in English Language, he acquired several study Bibles and other Christian literatures which enhanced his deep understanding of the scriptures and sermon preparations. Jeremiah Shaibu Tsado was an eloquent preacher and teacher of the scriptures who was also a lover of prayer. History has it that he believed so much in the efficacy of prayer and his routine was to wake up at 3:00am and would pray till 5:30am before going to ring the church bell for the corporate prayers.¹²⁷ He had passion for evangelism, hence he undertook several evangelistic trips in and around Kakpi. He organized a strong gospel band in Kakpi which was famous in the entire Bida District.

The choir in Kakpi became a strong evangelistic tool used by the New Life for All in its Gospel Campaigns in Nupeland and especially in Anglican Churches. In his various evangelistic campaigns, Christian music was a strong tool of evangelism for Jeremiah Shaibu Tsado. This made him to undertake personal trips to Kpada and Patigi in the 1960s to learn new songs and choruses from the Evangelical Church of West Africa (now Evangelical Church Winning All) – ECWA. This perhaps explains why Kakpi church had a very strong Anglican choir.

Somazhiko

Somazhiko is situated between Bida and Zungeru. For any curious church historian, one wonders why the CMS was in Nupeland working for over half a century and yet Somazhiko was not reached or discovered. What makes it more interesting is that in terms of the location of Somazhiko, it was close to Bida where the CMS had its station and also not too far away from Zungeru which was the first Colonial Capital of Nigeria.¹²⁸ One explanation which could be given for the neglect of this village by the CMS missionaries was the concentration of the missionaries' efforts on their present locations. The slow response of people in these locations made it difficult for them to break fallow in other areas.

Due to the rejection and slow response to the Christian Gospel in Muslim dominated places of Katcha, Bida, Kutigi, Mokwa and other such settlements, the CMS missionaries decided to concentrate more of their efforts in communities with higher population of African religions worshippers. Such settlements include Pici, Kuci, Doko, Gbadafu, Gaba, and Essan. When this experiment worked out, the CMS was encouraged to look for more of such communities as this category of people easily fell in love with the Christian Gospel than the communities dominated by the Muslims.

Towards the close of the 1950s, the nationalistic feelings for self determination and governance got to the peak and spilled over into the church. In view of this, the CMS

authority raised indigenous leaders to take over the running of church affairs and to continue the task of evangelizing Nupeland. Consequently, Rev. S.A. Mamman, the Vicar of St. John's Parish Bida was appointed the Rural Dean of the new Rural Deanery of Bida, Northern Nigeria on 20th July, 1985¹²⁹

When Rev. Solomon A. Mamma assumed office, he made the rural areas which were yet to be reached with the Christian Gospel his priority. One of such areas was Somazhiko. Rev. Solomon Mamma employed various methods to achieve his purpose, moreso that he received annual financial support for his work from the council for evangelism.

Esheti

Esheti is another place where Anglican Church has penetrated despite the earlier inception of Islam than Christianity. As noted earlier, Christianity filtered into Esheti through Kataeregi. Esheti, which is about 3km south of Kataeregi, was founded by two brothers, Dunguru and Nmadu who were both farmers but Nmadu was both a farmer and a hunter. Esheti derived its name from one of the two streams in the location, which are Ejiko (bigger stream) and Eshe (smaller stream).

At the advent of Islam in Esheti, many adherents of the African religion got converted to Islam. However, when Christianity came to Esheti via Kataeregi, it also had its followership through conversion from both Islam and African religion.

Papa Joshua Usman Sule was the first Christian convert in Esheti. He was a Muslim before his conversion. He was influenced by the activities of the Anglican Catechists, most of these missionaries were Bassa-Nge priests posted from the CMS mission post at Katcha. After his conversion, Papa Joshua Usman Sule destroyed all the idols in his family compound. He laboured hard through aggressive evangelization and exemplary personal life and character which made it possible for him to get converts into Christianity from the following compounds in Esheti: Emi Saba, Emitako and Emi Baba Jiya. He had earlier won

his brother into Christianity. His brother was baptized as Baba Elijah Nma. As the number of Christians increased to twelve in Esheti, Papa Joshua Usman Sule built the first church adjacent to his compound and within the village square. Prior to this time, his house was the first place of worship in Esheti. Increase in the number of Christ's followers has resulted in the building and expansion of church buildings. The present site where the St. Philips Anglican Church is built was completed and dedicated in 2002. The Church is currently hosting more than one hundred worshippers. Today, Esheti Church has become a parish with a vicarage. The church is blessed with a membership of highly educated people. According to Francis, 99% of its members are blessed with Western education.¹³⁰ Among such members is Architect Nathaniel Y. Saba.

One of those areas where Papa Joshua Usman Sule took his evangelistic crusade after his conversion was Bankorogi which was a neighbouring village near Esheti. As more converts joined the Esheti Church, Papa Joshua Usman Sule who was the Patriarch of Christian religion in Esheti declared Sunday a work-free day of worship for Christians. This decision angered the elders of the town and they reported him to *Etsunyankpa*, the village Head. The *Etsunyankpa* in turn reported the case to the *Etsu Nupe* in Bida. His arrest and detention was ordered by the Emir. The Dogaris (local Authority- Policemen) carried out the order and Papa Joshua Usman Sule was detained in prison for three months. However, after three months, his father, Baba Yisa protested the illicit detention of his son by accusing the leader of Esheti village council, Nda Makun that he masterminded the arrest and detention of his son. Nda Makun was a renown hunter and herbalist. He denied the charge and sworn to an oath that if he knew anything about the arrest and detention of Baba Yisa's son, he (Nda Makun) should die before Baba Yisa's son's return. However, before the return of Papa Joshua Usman Sule from detention, Nda Makun died.

Other illustrious children and members of this Church include Mr. Samuel Saba, a one time Chairman, Code of Conduct Bureau, Abuja, Professor (Mrs.) Victoria K. Pam, a Professor of Ophthalmology, Shika, Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital Shika, Zaria, Dr. (Mrs.) Susan Lami Ojoo, Consultant, Child Survival the Development Manager of the United Nations Children and Educational Fund (UNICEF) country programme in Bauchi, Bauchi State, Nigeria, Honourable Justice Christine Ladi Dabup-a Judge of the High court in the Ministry of Justice, Plateau State Government Service of Nigeria, among others.¹³¹

Gbaka

Gbaka is also a haven of Christianity in Nupeland. Gbaka is a settlement which is about 10kms away from Kataregi. Gbaka attracted the settlement of non-indigenes, especially people from Kataregi because of the existence of the rich Rice Fadama-land, where they come to do rice farming. Prior to the advent of Christianity and Islam in Gbaka, African religion was the dominant religion. Christianity entered Gbaka through the family of Angulu who embraced Christianity between the early 1930s and 1940s.¹³²

Among the first baptized converts in Gbaka were Nathaniel Audu Angulu and his younger brother, James Angulu. The Church could not be built in Gbaka because the congregation did not grow large enough for the Church to be built there. Therefore, the congregation formed part of the congregation of St. James Church Kataregi.

Baba Nathaniel Audu Angulu was taught the art of reading and writing from the Catechists resident in Kataregi and was also involved in the teaching of the other converts that came after him. Such converts included Teacher Musa, Canon Solomon A. Mama, Papa Samuel Ndafo, among others.

After the conversion of Baba James Angulu, he commuted frequently between Gbaka and Kataregi to attend the Church services, the class teachings and celebrations of Christmas, Easter and Harvest Thanksgiving services. As a faithful servant of God, James

Angulu was active in the conduct of open air crusades with the Catechists, within and outside Kataeregi.

Another character worthy of note in the establishment of Christianity in Gbaka is Stephen Audu Umaru, the younger brother of Mrs Margaret Aishetu Angulu, the wife of Nathaniel. N. Angulu. He became a Christian through the influence of his sister. Both Stephen Audu Umaru and his sister worshipped at CMS Church Kataeregi. He was an active member of CMS Church, Kataeregi where he conducted Bible Study Classes for the youths, preached sermons and participated in the Church choir.

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CHAPTER FIVE
IMPACT AND CHALLENGES OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH
IN NUPELAND

As stated earlier, Anglican Church has made impact in Nupeland, especially since 1903 when the first Anglican Church was built at Bida. In Niger State alone, there are three Anglican Dioceses: Bida, Doko and Kutigi. Presently there are over one hundred Anglican Churches in these three dioceses.¹The following are some of the impact made by the Anglican Church.

Religious and Spiritual Impact

Through the activities of the Anglican Church many villages, towns and other Nupe settlements have been privileged to be visited by the Christian missionaries. This was made possible through the activities of various Anglican evangelism boards, fellowships, groups, open air crusades, etc. The effort to evangelize Nupeland culminated in the opening up and establishment of the Anglican Church in such places. For instance, Bida during the second Niger Expedition in 1854,² Kipo in 1881, Kutigi in 1903, Mokwa in 1906, Fazhi in 1912, Lanle in 1932, and Katamba-Bologi in 1938.

The evangelistic activities of the Anglican Church since 1903 led to the conversion of some of the adherents of Nupe religion and Islam into Christianity. However, we need to quickly add that the number of such individuals were extremely few. Some of the few Nupe who were converted through the instrumentality of the Anglican Church are today serving in various capacities as clergy, Christian teachers, missionaries, health workers, administrators, civil servants, etc.



The Rt. Rev. Jeremiah N. Kolo
Bishop of Kutigi Diocese



The Rt. Rev. Jonah G. Kolo
Bishop of Bida Diocese



In line with the vision and mission of the Anglican Church in Nupeland, efforts are made to plant new churches where they were non-existent or more where there was a need for another one. These churches are serving the spiritual needs of the people. The commitment of the Anglican Church to establish more churches is seen in the words of Kolo, when he writes:

It is our prayer, and hope that the newly-created archdeaconries, districts and parishes will rise up to the challenge to build up and develop the areas through pragmatic evangelism, plant new churches, and bear the responsibilities which their new status demands. Let all the areas strive to become self propagating.³

This has been one of the strategies adopted by the Church to take the Gospel to every nook and cranny of Nupeland. One recent development is the collaboration of Christians in Nupeland. This is seen in the area of a Christian Film Industry. Presently, the Mount Zion Drama Ministry has given the Nupe Christian Drama Group a permission to translate their films into Nupe language for the purpose of soul winning. Many of these films and Nupe “Jesus Film” have been translated and shot in many open air crusades and revival programmes.⁴The idea was to try another method of gaining entrance into some communities in Nupeland by the Anglican Church. Villages where these films have been shot included Afuwagi, Dikko Ndabaka, Gogata Tsadu, Majinko, Mafoko, among others.⁵Consequently, a few converts have been made and it has also kindled their interest in Christian activities.

Economic Impact

The presence of Christianity in Nupeland has brought a great positive economic transformation to it. Economic fortunes which have a direct effect on the populace have been recorded. There is a Women Skill Acquisition Centre established in 2007 by the Anglican Diocese of Bida, in order to empower women economically.⁶ In order to make the processing of rice which is produced in a large quantity easy for the populace, Bida Diocese of the Anglican Church acquired a five ton capacity Rice Mill to process local rice for the large Nigerian market. According to the Bishop of Bida Diocese of the Anglican Church, Jonah Kolo, “we are working on meeting the initial challenge of making the rice stone free and of obtaining access to enough capital for production to be profitable.”⁷ This explains why there are large commodity markets in Nupeland, e.g. in Gbugbu, Tsaragi, Mokwa, Bida, etc.

In the recent times, Anglican Church in Nupeland has widened the economic scope of the region by establishing microfinance banks to boost the economic fortunes of the residents. A popular micro finance bank established in 1992 by the Anglican Church is the one called *Bayetin*, otherwise known as *Bejin* Micro-Finance Bank in Doko. The bank has been approved by the Central Bank of Nigeria and the minimum share which could be purchased was ₦120,000.00. The Diocese had deposited the sum of ₦500,000.00 only as an advance payment into the bank.⁸ Through the establishment of the bank, Christians and non-Christians alike have benefited tremendously.



There is
another
Bayetin
Micro

Bayetin Microfinance Bank, Bida

Finance Bank, Bida established by the Bida Anglican Diocese.⁹ Many people have also enjoyed credit facilities to fund their businesses and projects. In *Bejin* Micro Finance Bank, Doko, at least 300 – 350 people benefited from the credit facility each year.¹⁰ Different categories of people ranging from small scale farmers, traders and artisans benefited from the credit facility each year. The bank also provided textbooks and exercise books for the surrounding primary and secondary schools. St. Peters Primary and Secondary Schools have been beneficiaries over the years. The *Bayetin* Micro-Finance Bank, Bida is jointly owned by the Anglican Diocese of Bida, Doko and Kutigi. The aim of the bank is to enable the general public to create wealth, overcome poverty and contribute positively towards the growth of the community. According to Jonah Kolo in 2014, “The *Bayetin* Micro Finance Bank has successfully and commendably operated for a year. Its board has applied and obtained Central Bank’s approval to increase its initial share capital of twenty- million naira (#20m) to fifty-million naira (#50m)”.¹¹ This statement is an indication of growth and expansion. Another micro finance bank is located in Busu, put together by the Anglican Christians where

they co-opt the non-Christians to also participate in buying shares for the economic development of that region.

Agricultural Impact

The Anglican Church in Nupeland makes herself relevant to her community in the area of agriculture. The Church did this by forming herself into cooperatives such as *Zaworo*



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e of this, the Federal Government, Niger State Government and Non-governmental organizations are already partnering with the Church in the area of agriculture. For instance, when the Niger State Rice Consortium saw the impact which the Church was making on the society, they decided to partner with the Anglican Diocese of Bida by providing them with tractors.



Beniseed Farm, Doko



**Farm Equipment on Rice
Fadama Farm, Kudu**

Bida
Dioc
ese

Tractor on a Farm Land at Doko

Birds in Poultry Farm at Zaworo Investment, Bida

currently has thirteen tractors. The Church is expected to refund the money for the purchase of the tractors at the agreed period. The aim is that the members may realize their full potential of knowing that though they may be few, they can still control the economy and make life more meaningful.¹² Another effort was the collaboration of Bida Diocese with the River Basin Authority, to the tune of one million naira where the Authority leased out the Fadama land for rice production. The land is about 150 hectares.¹³ The Diocese also has 130 hectares of beniseed farmland at Kudu, and a poultry farm at *Zaworo Investment Centre Bida*.¹⁴ The Diocese of Bida and Kutigi have about 56 cattle under the care of fully engaged Fulani cattle rearers under the close supervision of Venerable Isah Saleh Danfulani from Kwoi.¹⁵ Other crops cultivated in large quantities by the Diocese in Nupeland include cassava, corns, etc. The Diocese through these activities, help to reduce unemployment by absorbing the teeming youths to work in those establishments. They also train and teach the people either directly or indirectly the modern farming techniques. Many crops planted in Nupeland were introduced by the early missionaries into Nupeland. Such crops include orange, grape, guava¹⁶ etc. Kutigi Diocese has a cattle ranch and oil plantation at Gbangbagi.¹⁷

Socio-Cultural Impact

Christianity made a very remarkable socio- cultural impact on Nupeland. At the arrival of the missions, Christian values began to replace some traditional values. This was evident in the areas of birth, marriage, funerals, and other ceremonies. Not that alone, there was also a transformation of some Nupe traditional values. Great improvement came on the good cultural values thereby making them better.

Another significant change among many tribes in northern Nigeria is in dressing.¹⁸ Christianity has influenced the Nupe Community and this has modified the traditional Nupe dress. Since the inception of Anglican Church in Nupeland, many Nupe, both Christians and

non-Christians now dress in skirts, blouses, shirts, shorts, trousers, as against the traditional ways of dressing in *Bente* and *Pateri*.¹⁹ The advantage in the new way of dressing is that it is more weather compliant than the period before its introduction. Apart from that, it provided opportunity to have different clothes for different occasions ranging from social, religious, economic and political activities, etc. Clothes made of materials like silk, cotton, nylon, etc are now worn instead of the traditional *Kpansa* material. At the beginning when the Western clothes were worn, they were essentially attributed to Christians.



Cathed

The coming of the Anglican Church has influenced the architectural designs in buildings. The traditional Nupe society had its architectural designs but with the coming of the Anglican Missionaries, the style of building houses changed. The Christian converts started building houses after the pattern of the Christian missionaries. Some went to live with the missionaries in order to acquire building skills. According to David Gana, the first house in Doko to be roofed with corrugated iron sheets belonged to a Christian.²⁰ This seems to be a general impact upon a large section of northern Nigeria where Christianity thrived. Crampton refers to this in his book, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*:

In almost all the ‘pagan’ societies the buildings were all round huts of various sizes. The missionary homes and other buildings were usually rectangular as soon as they had settled down, whether they were in local materials or later on in cement and corrugated iron sheets.²¹

Crampton’s writing aptly describes the traditional Nupe architectural design. With the coming of the missionaries, the Nupe started building after the pattern of the missionaries.

The Nupe started paying attention to the ventilation by inserting wider and more windows, making use of cement and corrugated iron sheets. Church buildings also started having new designs after the pattern of the Western world. Today, there are Cathedrals built in many places in Nupeland. Such buildings are equipped with many facilities like fans, air-conditioners, tiles, etc.

Political Impact

It will not be out of place to mention that Christianity has increased the political awareness of her members. Christianity is trying to overcome the earlier impression given to the members by the early missionaries that politics was not a hallowed activity for Christians to engage in. Christians are increasingly aware that politics is not a thing for godless people. The Anglican Church is informing her members today about the civil voting rights. Many church members are participating actively in the political activities of Nigeria. For example, Professor Jerry Gana, a Nupe and a committed Anglican had held many political posts in Nigeria and he is still active in politics. He was a member, Board of Directors of Peoples of Nigeria, 1989 – 1991, Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources, 1993 – 1994, Minister of Information and Culture, 1994 – 1995. He is still a member of the Board of Trustee, Peoples Democratic Party.



Professor Jerry Gana,
a renowned Nupe Christian Politician

The Anglican Church in Nupeland, sometimes through the instrumentality of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) inculcates spiritual and social teachings in its adherents for better human service to the nation. On many occasions, the Church as an institution, has had to make statements with the view to influencing or changing public policy in order to move the society forward.

Educational Impact

Western Education which was introduced to Nupeland has a very vital contribution from the Church Missionary Society (CMS). Many basic schools were established and at the initial stage, the trained evangelists who were also teachers were sent to the various branches

of these mission schools within the Nupe Kingdom to teach. Western education was used as a strategy of conversion.

The first Primary School established by the CMS in Lokoja was in 1865.²² Thereafter, more schools were established in Nupeland. A few other examples will suffice: St. Peters School, Doko was established in March 1944; St. John's Primary School, Bida, now Langbafu Primary School and Ibrahim Tako Primary School after being taken over by the government during Gowon's regime, was a brainchild of the Anglican Church. After the takeover of the Anglican School in Doko, the Church started a new Primary school called St. Peters Primary School, Doko. Bida Diocese has also established the new St. John's Anglican Primary and Secondary schools with boarding facilities. There are also the St. Jude's Primary School Gaba, St. Mathews Primary School Gbadafu and Amazing Grace Academy Teshan Hajiya established in 2011 by the Kutigi Diocese. In all, primary school programmes at Bida, Doko, Gbadafu and Katamba –Bologi made CMS mission educational service famous in Nupeland.²³

Doko is one of the areas where the CMS thrived most in Nupeland. The Mission opened a school called St. Peter's CMS School Doko on the 27th March, 1944.²⁴ This school has graduated many students since 1944 and some of them have been serving the society in different capacities both locally and internationally. The opportunity provided by the Anglican Church in Nupeland has made the early converts and their families to be in the forefront in terms of education. This is further confirmed by Alfa who affirms that this is the reason, "most of the ancient educationists were Nupe Christians from these areas of the kingdom".²⁵ Examples of such Christians are: Mr. Isaiah Z. Tsado, the pioneer Bursar, Federal University of Technology, Minna; Mr. Isaiah Gana, the Comptroller General, Nigerian Immigration Service, during General Yakubu Gowon's regime; Air Vice Marshal Zachaeus Adanma from Esan, etc.

Many of the ancient schools established by the Anglican Church are still in existence even though some of them have been taken over by various governments. Various state governments during Gen. Gowon's (former Head of State of Nigeria) regime took over many mission schools with the claim that they would grant them financial aid. More basic and secondary schools have been established and are being established by the Anglican Church across Nupeland. The establishment of schools across Nupeland by the Anglican Church is in agreement with Fafunwa's assertion that, "the colonial government in Nigeria paid little or no attention to the educational needs of the people and the field was left entirely to the mission."²⁶

Health Impact

Health Care was a paramount agenda of the Anglican Mission in Nupeland. Primary health was put in place to provide succour to the sick in the society. According to Madugu,

the early missionaries were aware of the physical needs of people around them and they did as much as possible to help meet their need. The church that was placed in a harsh climate of the Sudan had a natural foe to fight in order that both her visitors and native clients could survive. In the early days nearly all the missionaries had some medical training, as part of their programme.²⁷

It is clear from Madugu's submission that the Anglican Mission took health care seriously. As pointed out, the harsh tropical climate, malaria, snake-bite among other health hazards constituted a barrier to the survival of Christianity, the missionaries and the host community. The mission, no doubt, must have learnt from the failure of the previous expedition of 1841 where health challenge was a major problem which confronted the team.

The impact of the Anglican Mission in the area of health is seen through the health education and awareness. Writing generally on the social change brought by the Christian Missions in Northern Nigeria, Crampton states:

Women who followed the hygienic principles taught by the missionaries and who took the advantage of the mission hospitals, dispensaries and maternity clinics and who were the one wife of their husbands had more pregnancies and

more of these pregnancies succeeded in producing live children and more of these children survived than with the women in polygamous households who kept to the old way.²⁸

Many non-Christians and Christians who flooded Christian centres where health care was given, attest to the authenticity of Crampton's assertion. The Anglican Mission is a key player in health care delivery. Health care programme is integrated into the evangelism programme of the Anglican Church in Nupeland. For instance, the Kutigi Diocese has a mobile clinic where health facilities and personnel are moved in the course of evangelism from one village to another.

Impact on Public Service

Members of Anglican Church and most children trained by the Anglican Church have turned out a great manpower and have become prominent personalities in the services of Federal, State and Local Governments of Nigeria and beyond. For instance, Francis Z. Gana was Director of Education in the Federal Ministry of Education, Lagos, David N. Nmadu was Secretary in several Ministries in Niger State, Professor Paul Tom Nmadu is a Professor of Surgery and a Fellow of the West African College of Surgeons at the Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital, Shika, Zaria, Kaduna State, Professor Jonathan Othman Ndaji, a Professor of Geography with Mathematics at the Ahamdu Bello University Zaria and also became the first Vice Chancellor of the Federal University of Technology, Minna and as the Nigeria's Ambassador to the continent of Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea,²⁹ Mr. Isaiah Z. Tsado, the first Comptroller General of Immigration during Gowon's regime.³⁰ The list is endless.

Impact on Youths

Any society who fails to manage its youths well by providing an enabling environment where they will be able to thrive will not cease from managing crises which will be generated from this volatile group of the society. Anglican Church has provided a platform

where the youths can meet and interact at different levels. These interactions have resulted in friendliness which have prevented and on some occasions put an end to some crises between families and communities. This has further prevented tensions, riots and possible wars which would have broken out among different communities in Nupeland. These interactions have sometimes resulted in marriages which have further united families and communities in Nupeland.

Apart from the social interactions, the spiritual lives and Christian services of the youths have been commendable. Some Anglican dioceses in Nupeland organize youth summits regularly to challenge them spiritually to live a holy life and to open their eyes to the opportunities available for them in the society. In such fora, answers are provided to the teething life questions. These have made many youths in Nupeland to be more responsible and they are contributing their quota to the development of Nupeland.

Some Dioceses through the youth summit have provided computer literacy programmes for the youths. In the words of Bishop Uriah in 2011,

There was a one-month computer literacy class in September 2010. It was open to both clergy, and youths in the Diocese. The Web Link Computer Institute, a nongovernmental organization based in Minna with the headquarters in Jos provided instructors. A total of two hundred and twenty (220) candidates were given certificates in computer literacy. We were highly encouraged by the attendance and the enthusiasm with which it was received.³¹

Uriah's submission indicates the frantic efforts which the Anglican Communion in Nupeland is making to make the lives of the youths better. It is a complementary role to whatever the government may be doing in the youth supportive programmes.

Challenges of Anglican Church in Nupeland

There are many challenges facing the growth and development of Anglican Church in Nupeland. These issues have a tremendous effect on the existence and prospect of Anglican Church in Nupeland. The wave of Pentecostalism had more negative effects than positive

effects on the Anglican Church in Nupeland. These were influences of Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal Churches on the members of the Anglican Church, especially youths. This was evident in many ways. This has led to the mass exodus of the Anglican members to the Pentecostal congregations. According to Kabruk,

From the data collected, when asked of whether members of the Church were leaving, 87 percent of the total respondents answered on the affirmative. And this is happening across the Diocese especially in the urban Churches.³²

A similar situation which is akin to the above view concerns those who did not move out of the Anglican Church but regularly attended Pentecostal Churches for prayers and counselings. This amounted to dual membership. Pentecostalism had negative effects on the Anglican Churches in rural areas. This worry was expressed by Jonah Kolo when he opines thus:

Though the rural Churches had children in urban cities over the years, most of them had settled down in other non-Anglican Churches. While not denouncing membership of their village churches they were less personally involved and committed.³³

This situation was a major challenge to the activities of the Anglican Church and in some situations, Christianity, in some villages.

Schism was another issue. Not just individuals had pulled out of the Anglican Church but families and groups as well. Some groups for some trivial feuds and at times, for no just cause pulled out of the Anglican Church to start their own churches. The following churches either directly or indirectly had come out from the Anglican Church: the Nupe Calvary Church, Occupy Church Ministries and Resurrection Praise Chapel,³⁴ among others. These churches are mainly found in Niger State (essentially in Bida and Minna axis).

Contextualization was another issue. Some Anglican members called for the indigenization or Africanization of the Church in the area of worship. According to them, the Anglican liturgy was boring and un-African. It was dull, spiritless and hindered a free flow of

the Spirit during worship. They complained of endless recitations, formalities and rituals which made the worship boring.³⁵ As a result of this some Anglican Church members have been lost to other denominations thereby making the Anglican body weak in Nupeland.

Spiritual Problem

Prior to the coming of the Christian missionaries, the Nupe people had diverse powers which they used to protect and defend themselves. Unfortunately, some of these things were used negatively to inflict pain on their fellow human beings. Such powers include *ega* (witchcraft), *eshe* (sorcery), *duwa* (rainbow), *chekperi* (evil magic), *ewatikansanna* (dry-headed-snake), etc. These evil powers were used to attack some missionaries who came to evangelize and it led to their death on some occasions.³⁶ Likewise, these powers were also used to attack some converts in order to discourage them from following Christ. For those who could not withstand it, they backed out and went to their former religion. This was not limited to C.M.S./Anglican Stations alone but applied to missions in other parts of Nupeland. The above claim seems not to be empirical or scientific but from the African point of view and experience, the reality of it cannot be taken for granted. Closely connected to the above reason is the fear of losing magical powers which the forebears had handed down to them. The ancestors have given some protective charms against their enemies and wild animals like snake, lions, hyena, etc. They considered this means as an escape route from the enemies which may be dangerous animals, fellow human beings and *jinns*. Some of the magical charms used by the Nupe include: *namikpe*, *was*a (a charm for curing snake bite. It can also be used to protect any property, especially farm produce by setting a snake against the victim). Others include *bazhikozhi* (darkness), *badufuzhi*, out of many others. To escape from human enemy, the Nupe used charms like *Zhekpezhi* (the charm which back-fires against the sender), *bayelezhi* (mirror which helps to see the evil plot of the enemy) and *evunkozhi* (a charm which nullifies the evil medicine which may be set or sent to a person). Other

precautionary measures include: *wolima* (a ritual meal served to ward off evil), *zankajin* (sacrificial prescriptions), *efu* (sacrifice), *efindan* (wearing of magical wrist watches) and *nawukpa* (burning of incense to ward off evil spirits). Many Nupe people became apprehensive that if they abandon the use of these magical charms they may become prey in the hands of their enemies. If Christianity had approved their use, it would have attracted more people into its fold.

Socio–Cultural Challenges

Social challenges became great impediments for the Anglican Church in Nupeland. Foremost among these was the slave trade. Nupeland was one of the areas mostly hit by the slave trade in Nigeria. Places like Rabba, Gbele, Jebba, Wuyagi, Lokoja, were notorious slave markets.³⁷ These areas were centres wherein the white traders came to trade in human trafficking and shipped thousands of Nupe across the Atlantic Ocean. Some of these slaves served in sugarcane plantations while some served in tobacco plantations both in Europe and America. Since this heinous activity preceded the coming of the Anglican Missionaries, by the time the CMS mission arrived in Nupeland to propagate the Good News of liberation, the indigenous people had a very high suspicion for the white missionaries thinking it was a calculated attempt to further enslave them. This put Christianity at jeopardy. In fact, the indigenous people steered clear of the missionaries as much as possible, for the fear of being sold into slavery.

Chieftaincy title was a major inhibition to the activities of the Anglican Church in furthering the Gospel of Christ in Nupeland. Anytime the title holders took a decision to become Christians, they were faced with the danger of being impeached from their various offices. Any potential title holder who indicated his or her interest to become a Christian stood a chance of losing such positions, especially where there were few Christians. For instance, Madugu reports that in Kpada Tako, one Elder Elijah was persecuted for his faith in

Christ and denied his chieftaincy title because he refused to participate in the “pagan” rites. Consequently, he was poisoned and he died on May 1, 1938 as testified by one of his sons, Pastor Ezekiel.³⁸

Another teething social challenge was the issue of marriage. Marriage among the Nupe is a very strong social institution because of their high regard for family life. Regardless of someone’s personality, social status, wealth, background, etc, if such individual is not married, he or she is regarded as not responsible. As a result of this, some early converts who had been in courtship were denied marriages with such ladies. For those who were already married, when they learnt about their new faith they either took their wives away from them or such wives sought for divorce on their own. Madugu explains this problem in the following words:

When Elder Gana became a Christian, he had two wives but one quickly left him because of his faith in Christ. She had no child but married another man. The other wife had a child that became sick and died. She blamed it to Elder Peter Gana’s faith in Christ. Later she also divorced him and married someone else within the community. However, Elder Peter Gana was able to marry a Christian lady and the Lord blessed them with several children who later served the Lord.³⁹

This situation still persists in Nupeland today. Christianity is an aberration to some people. Some Nupe prefer to remain in their African or Islamic religions to becoming a Christian for the fear of not getting married. Some ladies are afraid of marrying Christians for the fear of being forcefully taken away from their husbands’ houses.

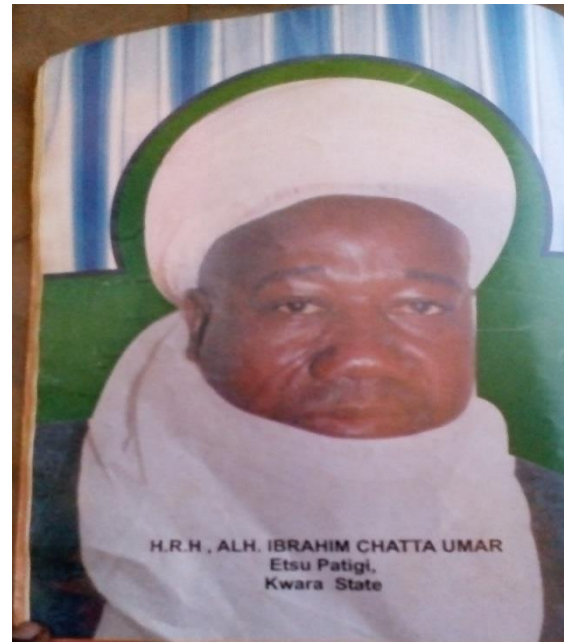
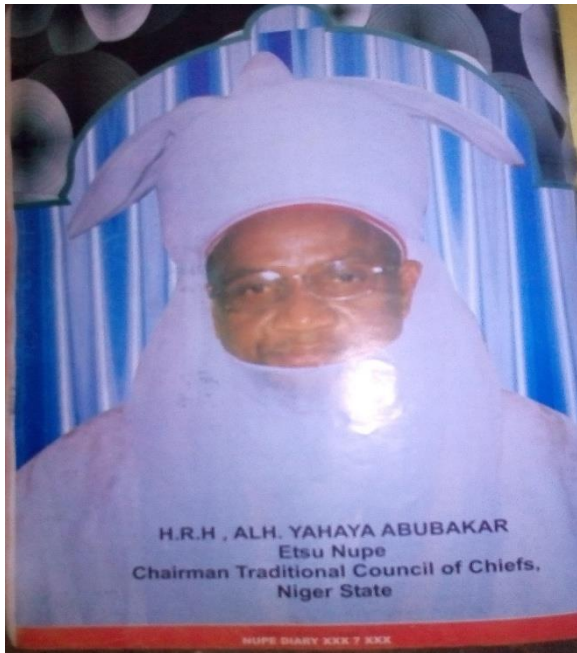
Furthermore, funfares and honours usually attached to certain ceremonies in Nupeland became a stumbling block to the Anglican Church in spreading the Gospel in Nupeland. Such ceremonies include marriages, funerals, initiations into age grades and secret societies, etc. In carrying out such activities, there are certain rite and social activities which accompany such ceremonies in order to honour the celebrant thereby enhancing his or her social status. For instance, whoever comes from the *gboya* family (*gboya* is an anti-witchcraft

cult) and is solemnizing marriage, will be honoured with a befitting ceremony for him or her. For the one who is from the hunters' family, there would be many gun-shots in honour of such an individual in that ceremony. If the celebrant is from a priestly family of any divinity, the guild of that divinity would have to render beautiful tunes to add colour to that ceremony. All these enhanced the happiness of the celebrants, the families and the well wishers. Hence, when Christianity came, many people thought stopping these things in the name of Christianity would deny them the prestige, honour and happiness that would go with these socio-cultural and religious activities. Hence, they stayed off from Christianity.

The Effect of Powerful Kings

The Nupe people have very high regard for the traditional institutions. Their sociological concept of the traditional institution is that the *Etsu* is next to Soko (God or a god). Therefore, their word and declarations were forceful and authoritative. Some of the powerful kings who ruled in Nupeland brought this great ruling power to bear on the religious lives of their subjects. Hence, their pronouncements on religious matters become orders. Some of these kings who ruled in the past and in some places in this present era ruled against Christianity, thereby, constituting a great impediment to the growth of Christianity in Nupeland. *Etsu* Masaba became *Etsu* Nupe in 1859⁴⁰ (His second term). Even though it was Masaba who granted Bishop Ajayi Crowther the permission to establish a missionary Church in Lokoja,⁴¹ he was the same King who later ordered that all mission stations be closed. The reason was the fact that the Sudan Party had sacked some of the CMS missionaries in his domain whom he had personal flair for.

Some Nupe Kings in Nupeland



Elijah Saba describes him as a fierce soldier who had no regard for human life. He made pronouncements that nobody in his domain must get converted into Christianity and it was so.⁴² Also “Masaba never allowed any more Christian workers in his Kingdom”.⁴³ His influence of power was said to be from Bida (the state capital) to as far as Mokwa, Egbian, Tsaragi, Patigi and Ilorin.⁴⁴

Etsu Maliki who reigned between 1874-1890 was said to have made a pronouncement that all Christians must vacate his domain and he must not hear the name of anyone who was a Christian.⁴⁵ Fuller attests to this when he writes, “The mission base was operational from 1897 to 1890 when *Etsu* Maliki asked all missionaries to withdraw from his country.”⁴⁶ One of those missionaries was Charles Paul, a Sierra Leonian, who, like Crowther, served with the CMS before he was forced to resign by novice English recruit and died in 1893.⁴⁷ Due to the reactions of some of these powerful rulers to Christianity, some enemies of the Christian Gospel capitalized on the authority of the traditional rulers to stop the practice and spread of Christianity. In modern times, some traditional rulers in Nupeland forcefully married Christian girls to non-Christian husbands without the consent of the ladies’ parents. An example of this was a case of an Igbo girl whose news was on the national television around 2014, who was forcefully married out to a non-Christian in Bida.⁴⁸

Persecutions

Some new converts were attacked spiritually by strange diseases. As stated earlier, this may be difficult to prove empirically but in the context of African milieu, the reality cannot be denied. When this happens to the converts, some people blame it on the victim’s contemptuous abandonment of the elders’ tradition and taboos which in most cases deal with offering or sacrifice to the gods and observance of Anti-Christian rites. For instance, one Ndalentswa Ndagitsu in Kpankorogi continued to lose his children until the fifth one died and they told him that he should renounce his new faith (Christianity) so that any other child born to him would live. After he truly renounced his Christian faith, the children who were born to

him thereafter lived.⁴⁹ This corroborates the fact that early converts were frustrated in every way possible to ensure that they did not embrace Christianity.

Persecutions against the Gospel are noticeable throughout Nupeland. As stated earlier, other Christian denominations in Nupeland had their shares of the persecution. For instance, the Sudan Interior Mission house in Bida was destroyed by fire through arson in December 1905 by the enemies of the Gospel.⁵⁰

In an interview conducted with Elijah Saba, he said sometimes, the new converts into the Christian faith were summoned and made to go through severe tortures. At times, they were severely beaten and on such occasions they may force them to put their backs on hot sand and face the sun in the heat of the day.⁵¹ This trend continued in various parts of Nupeland in different forms. For instance, such persecutions can manifest in form of parents cursing their children for deciding to follow Jesus Christ or even casting spells on them. In explaining how some Christians were persecuted in Nupeland, Philip Gana writes:

their parents began to threaten that if they refuse to forsake their new found faith, nobody will give them wives to marry. This was not an empty threat because most of these pioneer believers later found wives for themselves after a long delay contrary to Nupe tradition. In Nupe tradition, the parents of a young man usually do necessary negotiation to get a good wife for their son.⁵²

One of the greatest evils that any parent can do to his or her son or daughter is to disrupt or distort his or her marital life. When this happens, it beclouds life for an average Nupe man or lady making the future gloomy and the whole essence of life meaningless. Therefore, with this situation on ground, it was and is still difficult for the Anglican Church to get more converts into Christianity in Nupeland.

Denial of landed property where the Christians will erect their places of worship was another challenge. In some places, Christians are treated like second class citizens when it comes to the issue of securing a piece of land for public worship. In a situation like that, their

citizenship and rights do not necessarily count. Philip Gana again laments this situation in his writing as follows:

When the news that Christians wanted to build a church got to the Emir of Bida who was then known as *Etsu* Muhammadu (Ndayako), popularly called Baba Kudu, (who reigned between 1935 – 1962) he ordered the Christians to appear before him immediately at Bida, and it was a Christmas day, so they were not allowed to celebrate their Christmas at home. Bida from Nku is about a day's journey on foot, he ordered that they should go and come back in five days. When they reappeared before the Emir five days later he ordered the "Dogaris" the traditional policemen, to follow them back to Nku and to watch them put back the blocks in the hole where they have dug the mud to mould those blocks, until it appears as if no hole had been dug there. This order was strictly obeyed and blocks were broken and put back to where they were originally dug.⁵³

This was just one instance out of many of such cases. However, John Onaiyekan, the former president of the Christian Association of Nigeria, explains a possible reason for this out of other reasons. It is pertinent to quote comprehensively from his writing. He writes:

I receive several serious complaints from Christians from some parts of the North that they are hardly ever officially allocated suitable plots to build places of worship for their members. On the contrary, all round are mosques springing up with or without government authorization. The perception then is that the relevant government authorities do not consider places of worship as a right of Christians living among them. This perception is further confirmed when we have government agencies allocating lands to people with the provision that the plot shall not be used for "Church, drinking house or brothel". A land allocation paper issued by a local government authority in Kano State specifies textually: "*Ba chochi, ba gidangiya, a loggin*". This obviously indicates that churches are placed on the same level as brothels and drinking house. Naturally, this is offensive to Christians. More seriously, it seems to explain why there has been the system of reluctance to grant permission for places of worship for Christians in these parts.⁵⁴

In a just, equitable and civilized society, this is a gross violation of Fundamental Human Rights which may be partly responsible for religious crisis in many parts of Northern Nigeria today. It is an abuse of power for any government official or parastatal to allow them to be used against a religious organization such as Christianity which seeks the good of the Nigerian nation. Unfortunately, because of the low level of Western education in Nupeland, many do not know their rights and those who know them are grossly incapacitated to fight for them.

The British Colonial rule in some places in the middle belt of Nigeria persecuted Christians and this made conversions difficult for the mission agencies in such axis. Yusuf Turaki, in his book, *Tainted Legacy*, stresses this point strongly. According to him,

Some British colonial rulers incited the local people to reject Christian missionaries who came into their area. Some advised the Muslim rulers not to allow Christian missionaries into their emirates. Some British colonial officers destroyed Christian places of worship and denied permits to Christian missionaries.⁵⁵

The above quotation may be true because, not every British Colonial Officer had sympathy for the work of the CMS. The situation in Nupeland may be slightly different from such regions of the middle belt. However, Nupeland is within the region of the middle belt of Nigeria. Therefore, it is not surprising to see the effects of the waves of this persecution from the British Colonial rulers blew either directly or indirectly in Nupeland.

In modern times in Nupeland, persecutions arise against Christians in the area of marginalization in getting jobs, admissions and important political appointments in their various states of origin. Those who are seen to have had political appointments, jobs or admissions were just the few privileged ones and the number is highly insignificant when compared to the total population of the qualified Nupe Christians. This is making the work of the Anglican Church extremely difficult. This on many occasions makes the Anglican members not to be very strong Christians because of the fear of being marginalized. Philip Gana, in his work gave a very concrete example of Niger State Executive Council and permanent secretaries during the era of Eng. Kure as the Governor of Niger State. In the executive cabinet, it was only Dr. Shem Zagbayi, the Deputy Governor who doubled as the commissioner for health who was a Christian, all other commissioners were people of other faiths.⁵⁶ In the same vein, in the list of the twenty-two permanent secretaries and other political posts, except Mr. Jamiu Gamba who was also a Permanent Secretary whose religion he was not sure, all other person belonged to other faiths.

Islam

The two most competing world religions today in Nigeria are Islam and Christianity. In areas where the relationship between these religions has not been well managed, it has resulted into riots, destruction of lives and property. Islam was resuscitated in Nupeland by Mallam Dendo who was from Kebbi. Turaki affirms that the movement of some Muslims towards militancy and classical Islam and their aspirations for a return to the days of the caliphate have aggravated suspicion, conflict and violence.⁵⁷

Nevertheless, Islam is a major inhibition to the activities of the Anglican Church in Nupeland. Salami writes thus:

Long before Christianity came to the North, Islam had been the major religion of the people. The Emirs were already strong Muslims. When the Missionaries came therefore with their evangelical message, they were turned down. Still unfortunately for the missionaries, many English men who should have supported them felt that Islam was more suitable than Christianity for the North. Walter Miller was an example of the Europeans, who believed that Islam was good enough for the Northerners.⁵⁸

From Salami's submission, it shows that Islam had become a household religion before the arrival of the Anglican Church in Nupeland. Many factors gave Islam an edge over Christianity. One of it is that Islam accommodated some practices in Nupe religion and culture such as polygamy. Other things are in *Turaki's Tainted Legacy*, where he writes:

Islam also gave the impression that becoming a Muslim was a means of acquiring riches. Most Muslim pilgrims with the title of "Al Hajj" were rich, and many people in the Middle Belt areas of Nigeria became Muslims in the hope of becoming rich like them. Some testify to having been promised riches, position, power or marriage if they would embrace Islam. No doubt Islam appealed to many Africans for commercial and economic reasons: the attraction of riches, material well-being, possessions and the good life.⁵⁹

Reverse was the case when Christianity came. Majority of those Christian missions described commerce and economic activities as worldly and failed to emphasize them. Hence, Christianity became associated with poverty since some Christian missions preached contrary

to the worldly riches and advocated “apostolic poverty.”⁶⁰ Also important is the fact that Islam had hitherto acquired economic and political power in the land and was using it effectively to further Islam and many at times used them against the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Other missions apart from the Anglican Church in Nupeland also find Islam as a big road-block which they have to contend with in their activities. For instance, Philip Gana, a onetime secretary of the Patigi District Church Council of ECWA reports that First ECWA Patigi decided to give a piece of land belonging to her to some members of ECWA Garogi who relocated to Patigi in 2004. After a site plan was developed and taken to the Emir of Patigi, Alh. Ibrahim Chatta to append his signature, he blatantly refused saying that a church must not be built there because the place was already in the heart of the town. All the efforts of the District Church Council to build a church there proved abortive. Philip attributed this to brutality and discrimination against Christianity because their Muslim counterparts do not seek permission to build mosques in schools, market places, personal houses and public places.⁶¹ Till today, such treatments and similar ones are meted out against Christians. These make the activities of the Anglican Church to be crippled in Nupeland.

Ecumenical Challenges

Ecumenism is a term used for unity among Christians. Ecumenism was a brain-child of the protestants who sought to heal wounds of antagonism which came from the Reformation.⁶² There is no gainsaying the fact that there is a problem of church unity in Nupeland despite several ecumenical bodies. The growth and expansion of Christianity has so much been limited in the region due to division among the Nupe Christians. Jerry Shaaba captures this vividly when he says:

There is no true love and unity among the Nupe Christians. Let us not forget that if we must war successfully, there must be two important ingredients, true love to share ideas, strategies and resources in order to advance the kingdom of Christ. This is no time for petty bickering, partisan jealousies or divided loyalties. No house divided against itself will ever stand.⁶³

Division among Nupe Christians actually constitutes ecumenical problem in the land. The divisions manifests in various ways.

The first notable challenge is the pluralistic ecumenical bodies. Many ecumenical bodies in Nupeland are just duplication of efforts because rather than fostering unity, some of them are tearing the body of Christ apart. Where there is a multiplicity of ecumenical bodies, denominations making up such ecumenical groups seek their own distinct ecumenical identity and defined mission and goals which may not be the same with others.⁶⁴ When this occurs, it makes total loyalty and commitment to be very difficult. This is where the Anglican Church in Nupeland is having difficulties in her evangelistic bid. It is a fact that no single individual can succeed alone without the help and co-operation of others. Hence, it is sometimes difficult for the Anglican Church in Nupeland to relate effectively with churches with a very wide distinct ecumenical identity, defined missions and goals. The point therefore, is that, it is better to have a few but strong ecumenical bodies than many but weak ones. For Nupeland, activities of other ecumenical bodies could be successfully co-ordinated by primary bodies like the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) and Nupe Christian Fellowship (NCF).

Another problem of ecumenism in Nupeland is finance. No organization can be run effectively without adequate funding. Many ecumenical bodies in Nupeland lack adequate funding which has crippled the activities of these bodies. Lack of adequate funding must have been as a result of multiple membership of the concerned denominations; hence, to get the umbrella funded successfully becomes a problem. More importantly is the fact that Anglican Church belongs to many of these bodies meaning there is a great need for financial

responsibilities. Consequently, to get the money to fund the major reason for existence (evangelism) becomes a problem. This also affects the internal running of the Church.

Theological issues constitute serious ecumenical problem in Nupeland. This is a critical point because it is what makes the distinctiveness of these churches. The social problems in the land require theological solutions but in an attempt to do this, churches differ in their approaches thereby bringing divisions among Christians. This is in line with what Ninan Koshy says, “the African continent has the experience of slavery, poverty, wars, disease, hunger and political instability, economic shambles due to growing corrupt practices, religious terrorism and cultural issues.”⁶⁵ The major social problems in Nupeland are witchcraft, drunkenness, adultery/fornication. Hence, in order to find solutions to them, Christians in Nupeland are poles apart, especially from the theological perspective. Therefore, the theological differences between Anglican Church and other denominations constitute a serious challenge to the spread of the Gospel in Nupeland. In the recent time, there was the emergence of one Prophet Enock, as he is popularly known. He has been visiting many places in Nupeland claiming to have the ministry of delivering people from witchcraft. The activities of his ministry have caused a lot of rancour in many places in Nupeland. While the prophet has the support of some Christians, others disagree with him and label him a false prophet. The issue was so problematic to the extent that it caught the attention of the Nupe Christian Fellowship (NCF) who tried to resolve the issue amicably. However, up till the writing of this report, some Christians in Nupeland still have their reservations concerning him and his Ministry. This kind of issue has the capacity of diverting the attention of Christians from their main objective.

Closely connected with the above point is the problem of strife, envy and jealousy. Oyebanji makes a very important statement on one of the challenges to church unity not in Nigeria alone but all over the world. According to him, strife, envy and jealousy are a major

disease of churches world-wide but the Nigerian situation is very worrisome. Just as there is unhealthy rivalry among the three broad groups of denominations, i.e. the Catholic, the Protestant and the Pentecostals so also are rancour, envy and jealousy among the various sub-groups in each category and across categories. He opines that this is the situation in which many Nigerian Churches are today, irrespective of their locations.⁶⁶

Oyebanji's statement aptly describes the situation of the church of Christ in Nupeland. Regardless of the presence and activities of the CAN in Nupeland, the problem still lingers. This is a serious setback to church unity. This reason may account for the low level of co-operation the Anglican Church in Nupeland is receiving from some denominations.

Globalization through Information Technology is another issue. The world has become a global village. There have been social interactions across the globe, giving social factors like culture, politics and religious practices a new face. Despite the advantages that globalization has brought to these social elements, it has a far-reaching effect on the Christian faith in particular. Through globalization, many Christian youths come in contact with diverse practices and beliefs which drift them away from faith. The introduction of hi-tech and information technology, especially the internet has become a challenge to the unity of the Christian faith in that Christians get deep into all forms of beliefs which they encounter without appropriate guidance. This is a reality in Nupeland and it tears the body of Christ apart. As observed earlier, this mostly affects the youths. Some of these youths are indoctrinated by other denominations outside the Anglican Church through the internet and other means of Information Technology. Usually, when they return with these wrong teachings and theologies, they cause ripples and division in the church. This, on most occasions, distracts the attention of the Church by way of spending time and resources (which would have otherwise been spent on missions) on resolving such issues amicably. When such cases defy amicable solutions, they result into schism ; some denominations in Nupeland take

advantage of this to lure away members from their parent Church (Anglican Church). This causes disagreements on some occasions with the leadership of the churches involved. The challenge of ecumenism in Nupeland is so real that CAPRO Research Office raised a prayer point in its book, *Kingdoms at War*, thus: “Ask God to unite believers and overcome denominationalism so they can cooperate in outreach. Pray for the Nupe Christian Fellowship and the JBIF as they attempt this”.⁶⁷

Leadership Problem

Treating the ecclesiastical leadership imbroglio before we close this section is very important. The bane of growth and development of the Nigerian nation is lack of competent leadership. This statement is also true of the ecclesiastical leadership in Nupeland. This is vividly captured in this excerpt:

The church in general lacks able and dynamic leadership. Most of the church ministers/leaders are not born again and so do not have the burden for the lost souls. In fact, in many cases, the leaders oppose an evangelistic/Pentecostal movement in their churches.⁶⁸

The growth of the Anglican Church becomes a difficult task in Nupeland in view of this problem. Some Anglican Church leaders are visionless and they work contrary to the vision of establishing that Church among their people. This, quite often, makes the progress of the Church to be slow and herculean. Competition to occupy one leadership ladder or the other often results in conflicts which draw back the progress of the church.

Prospect of Anglican Church in Nupeland

This section of the work is a speculative exercise based on a number of factors which interplay. The researcher speculates based on the studies conducted that the Anglican Church has a strong chance of further survival in Nupeland.

The utterance of Jesus in Matthew 16:18 is a great assurance that the Anglican Church which has been planted by the Holy Spirit through the missionaries will continue to exist. In the conversation which ensued between Jesus and his disciples about who he was, made Peter to make a great confession which brought about Jesus' statement in Matt.16:18 : "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it"(N.I.V.) . Many interpretations have been given to these words, one of which is the fact that the bedrock on which the Church is built is Christ.⁶⁹

Since it is believed that Jesus' statement is to the Church of all ages, it is then reasonable to believe that it includes the Anglican Church in Nupeland. Hence, the security here is that since Christ is the foundation of the Church, it can neither fail nor crumble. Based on this singular fact, the Anglican Church in Nupeland has a bright future.

Religion has an organic life which comes from divine activity and man's response. According to Bolaji Idowu, this life:

is a life which comes into being and grows in the atmosphere, not only of man's response, but also of his constancy in loyalty to an accepted faith. Without this loyalty on man's part, manifestations of divine creative and saving activity will be short circuited and religion will thus become ineffectual or a thing of the past.⁷⁰

Idowu's assertion fits the establishment of the Anglican Church in Nupeland. The establishment of the Church is a divine act supported by Jesus' statement that the gates of Hades will not overcome it. Anglican Church ensures her survival by playing her role as a way of co-operating with God. Her response within her enclave and without is a good response which maintains her continuity in Nupeland. Anglican Church does this in variety of ways as will be noted in this work.

Part of the effort of the Anglican Church to keep her prospect in view is her membership of some prominent Christian organizations in Nupeland, e.g Nupe Christian Fellowship (N.C.F.), and others as stated earlier.

This state of co-operation among Christians continued until modern times. Hence, this brought about the formation of some prominent Christian organizations in Nupeland. Among such groups is the Nupe Christian Fellowship (NCF). This fellowship was formed as an interdenominational fellowship in 1975 to bring about revival in the major churches in Nupeland.⁷¹The fellowship draws membership from denominations like Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), United Missionary Church of Africa (UMCA), Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), among others. Nwachukwu describes the work of NCF as follows:

The fellowship carries out evangelistic outreaches to various areas with the co-operation and participation of the churches. They also seek to bring revival within the churches by actively teaching the basic truths of the faith and organizing prayer conferences. The fellowship has started recruiting full time evangelists to work with and through churches.⁷²

Through the activities of NCF, many souls have been won to Christ. The fellowship has served as a forum where the challenges facing missions in Nupeland are discussed. Some of the converts automatically become members of the Anglican Church. Moreso, in fora where challenges to mission in Nupeland are discussed solutions suggested in such discussions have been of great help to the Church.

Another important Christian body in Nupeland is the Nupe Inland Mission (N.I.M.). This was the evangelical organization formed through the cooperation of the Calvary Ministries (CAPRO) and Nupe Christian Fellowship. The first NIM conference was held at Doko in July, 1993.⁷³ Essentially, NIM believes that converts would be made more rapidly if indigenous missionaries are trained and encouraged to live among unreached Nupe people. Primarily, the activities of NIM are outreaches to villages where there are no churches. Consequent upon the result of these activities, Anglican Churches have sprung up in such areas.

One strong group which derives its membership from various denominations in Nupeland is the Nupe Intercessors. This group is made up of all Christians who believe that revival can only occur in Nupeland through intense intercessory prayer. Nupe intercessors mobilize and coordinate intercessory works in Nupeland.⁷⁴ The strength of this group still lies in her membership which spans through Anglican Church and other denominations. Prayers, no doubt have been a strong support for the ministry of the Anglican Church in Nupeland.

The collaboration of Calvary Ministry (CAPRO), an indigenous cross-cultural missionary movement with other evangelical bodies like Doko Christian Fellowship (DCF), has enhanced the growth of Christian work in Nupeland. This unity has led to the first

mission conference held at Doko in 1993. It also led to the birth of the indigenous mission organization called Nupe Inland Missions (NIM). This ecumenical body has stirred up increased mission consciousness and commitment among Nupe Christians, especially the Anglican Church members. This has consequently led several Nupe Christians to receive a full time call into the ministry. The marriage between CAPRO and DCF resulted in the opening of a mission station in Enagi, in Niger State. The available record shows that at Enagi station, conversions were recorded while intercessory prayers were made at Doko,⁷⁵ which is one of the major seats of the Anglican Church in Nupeland.

The role of the Fellowship of Christian Students (FCS) among the youths in Nupeland is commendable. The state coordinator of FCS in any community in Nupeland is greatly assisted by Christians who have a burden for the youths and passed through at least secondary education. This group of people have formed themselves into a fellowship group called Associate Fellowship of Christian Students (AFCS). The FCS and AFCS are non-denominational bodies. They also draw their membership from various churches and groups across Nupeland. According to Segun Akinsanya,

the Fellowship of Christian Students (FCS) has affected the lives of many youths in Nupeland. The majority of nominal Christian youths gave their lives to Christ during fellowship meetings when altar calls were made. The survey conducted recently revealed that about 50% of the Christians had contact with Christ while they were in the secondary school in the FCS fellowships. These youths, after passing out consolidated their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and have formed the greater part of the work force in other organization working in Nupeland. Thus, this fellowship supplies the man power development base for the evangelization of Nupeland.⁷⁶

Through the activities of the FCS, some who genuinely gave their lives to Jesus Christ have become members of the Anglican Church.

Closely related to the above mentioned fellowship is the Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF). It is a fellowship which has the responsibility of evangelizing the children. CEF is an international and interdenominational Bible centred organization whose aim is to

carry out the command of the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour. It reaches and evangelizes the children who are outside the influence of the Sunday school. Child Evangelism Fellowship also directs the unchurched child to a Bible believing church. Teachers in this fellowship come from different denominational backgrounds. Children who are the future of any society have also met with Christ through this organization. Such children have become members of the Anglican Church.

The Jesus Film Fellowship is an evangelistic arm of the Great Commission Movement in Nigeria (GCMN) which is sponsored by the Nupe Christian Fellowship of Nigeria (NCF).⁷⁷ Through Jesus Film, more than 80,000 people have been exposed to the Gospel and out of this number, 70% are predominantly Muslims.⁷⁸ Therefore, the fellowship through its activities have proved to be a powerful and successful instrument in reaching many rural areas. The Anglican Church members are actively involved in these evangelistic activities.

Another fellowship worthy of mentioning where the Anglican Church has been making headway is the Joint Believers Intercessory Fellowship based in Bida. The fellowship is made up of individual Christians and church groups who meet once every month to intercede for revival in Nupeland. Also, they meet thrice yearly for fellowships which involve activities like exhortation, prayer and in some occasions, evangelistic outreaches. The Christian Association of Nigeria, which is the unifying umbrella for all Christian bodies in Nupeland has also, through her programmes, been able to further the cooperation of the Christian bodies in Nupeland.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

Nupe Kingdom was one of the powerful kingdoms in Sub-Sahara Africa. Despite the fact that the Nupe are great people, they are under-researched when compared with tribes like the Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo of Nigeria. The growth and expansion of Christianity in Northern Nigeria attracts the attention of any church historian. However, there are scanty literatures where the efforts of many of these mission bodies who evangelized the region are recorded.

Nupeland forms a significant part of Northern Nigeria. This region of the Northern Nigeria attracts the attention of the researcher because of the epileptic nature of Christian growth in Nupeland regardless of the number of years the Anglican Church has existed there.

Nupeland is geographically situated between 9°30' and 8°30' N.L. It lies in the heart of Nigeria in the low basins formed by Rivers Niger and Kaduna, covering a distance of about

11, 200 sqkm³. It is a low-lying softly undulating country with the highest heights not more than 200 feet above the sea level in most places. Nupeland is located in the tropical region thereby having both wet and dry seasons.

There are various myths about the origin of the Nupe. The famous ones include the Yisa tradition, Abdul Al-Nafiu tradition, the Egyptian tradition, the Nubia tradition, the Bayajidda tradition, the Benin tradition, and the Tsoede tradition which is the most famous tradition among the Nupe. Despite the common language, Nupe is a complex whole which is made up of diverse component parts. The Nupe sub-groups include Bini or Benin, Kyadya, Batachi, Chekpan, Ebangi, Kusopachi, Gbedegi, Ebe, Dibo or Zhitako, Gwagba, Benu and Kupa. Others who were not originally Nupe but got absorbed unto Nupe include Kakanda, Konu, Bassa-Nge, Gbiztsani Sokun, Egba, Gupa and Rakapa. The Benin or Bini represents the oldest section of the Nupe sub-groups.

Three distinct political systems existed in Nupeland before the 15th century when Tsoede came to unify the Nupe Kingdom under one central government. They included Bini confederacy, the Riverine polity of the Kyadya and Batachi and the Independent Village Council System. In the pre-Edegi era, more than half of Nupeland was under a non-administrative machinery.

The economic structure of Nupeland in ancient times was divided into four major sectors: agriculture, transportation, commerce and industry. The main determinant of the economic pursuit of the Nupe was dependent on the land area occupied and the climate of the environment. The major rivers in Nupeland are Niger and Kaduna but there are also big streams which are tributaries of the River Niger. They include Gbako, Gazun, Kampe, Dukku, Egwa and Nailli. Much of the agricultural and commercial activities in the land depend on these rivers. From the ancient times, the Nupe have been involved in trade and commerce where different markets were located in river ports. Such markets were attended

by the Arabs, people from Timbuktu in Mali, Tripolis, Gonja in Ghana; the Hausa, the Yoruba, the Igala, the Ebira, the Yagba, the Idoma, the Benin and the Calabar, among several other people.

Nupe Kingdom is believed to be founded and consolidated by Edegi, otherwise known as Tsoede. He was the son of Ayegba, the son of Idoko and the third Atta Gara from Igalaland. His mother was Mama, the daughter of the Chief of Nku, an ancient Nupe town in the present day Niger State of Nigeria. When he grew up, he was taken as a slave to Idah where his father recognized him through a royal insignia which his father had earlier given to his mother before his birth. Due to the feat he performed when his father was ill, his father liked him the more. However, at the point of the death of his father, his father gave him a royal insignia which generated bitter rivalry between him and his brothers. At the death of his father, Tsoede made an escape to his motherland where he founded the Nupe Kingdom.

The Nupe religious structure follows the African traditional religious structure. God, known as *Soko* is the most important factor in the religious order. The Nupe also believe in the spirits. Magic and medicine is the last stage in the order of the structure. The Nupe believe that magic and medicine are procured through the personal efforts of man in order to control his or her environment.

There are cults in Nupeland. Sogba is a divinity which carries out God's justice. It is the equivalent of the Yoruba Sango, the god of thunder. Ndakogboya, a principal divinity was originally an anti-witchcraft cult. Gunu is the most important divinity in Nupeland. It has a mythical origin which is connected with a stranger who became leprous and died. It is believed that Gunnu has disappeared in almost all parts of Nupeland today because Ndakogboya has absorbed it because of their similarities. Ganni is another Nupe cult which took root in Kutigi and its environs. Ndabazunma, otherwise known as Ndaliasu or Vuguvugu is another important cult in Nupeland. It is also an anti-witchcraft cult. Other cults

in Nupeland are: *Tsoede, Ndaduma, Eloon, Egun nyakpa, Bansa, Kederuku, Ewo Ayalese, Koto, Bakonbagi, Nakuti, Duwa, Patiko*, etc.

Witchcraft, which is part of magic in Nupeland, is regarded as an evil thing. It is shrouded in secrecy for all but the initiates. The leader of the group is called *lelu* or *sagi* who has the responsibility of checking the activities of other witches. The male witches are called *Eshe*. Their function in the guild of witches is to help their female counterparts to kill their victims. The Nupe recognize witchcraft as a societal problem and they have adopted different methods to get the problem solved.

The Nupe observe the rites of passage of birth, marriage and burial because of their importance. Birth is treated not as a climax but just a stage in a series of events. It starts with conception and ends sometime after birth. A child is named on the eighth day and the name which will be given to a child will depend on a number of factors ranging from the way the child is born to the situations surrounding the birth. In the old traditional Nupe society, marriage can be categorized into two types: relationship marriage and non-relationship marriage. The third type of marriage came with Islam, and this is described as charity marriage. The Nupe believe that life on earth is transient and will be terminated by death one day. Death is a transition to another life and world which is about to begin. Life is cyclical, hence, their belief in re-incarnation, the physical body will decay at death but the personality soul called *rayi* which is the spiritual substance will return to its source of being. There are good and bad deaths. Those who die bad deaths do not receive full funeral rites.

Islam in Nupeland pre-dates Uthman Danfodio's Jihad. The sources through which Islam entered into Nupeland included Arab scholars, migrants, traders and Muslim clerics. Other sources included Songhai, Hausa and Kanem-Borno areas. The emergence of certain Islamic reformers also accelerated the spread of Islam in Nupeland. Such reformers included *Etsu Jibrilu* (1746 – 1759), *Etsu Abdulrahaman* and *Muhammed Sharif* (1778 – 1830).

Nevertheless, the Uthman Danfodio's Jihad resuscitated Islam in Nupeland. At the end of the Jihad, Uthman Danfodio divided his kingdom into two parts: The Eastern Kingdom, with the capital at Sokoto and the Western Kingdom with the Capital at Gwandu. The whole Hausa states became Emirates under Sokoto and Gwandu and were ruled by the Fulani who had been sent out as flag bearers by Uthman Danfodio to conquer them. Nupeland was also not spared of the influence of the Jihad. It was subtly taken over by the Jihadists who took advantage of the political rancour in Nupeland after the death of the 19th *Etsu Nupe*. Mallam Dendo, a secret emissary of Islam in Nupeland subtly and successfully launched a Jihad by taking advantage of the political impasse in Nupeland to realize his aim. His religious and political impact in Nupeland quickly established his authority and he became a force to reckon with. Consequently he succeeded in seizing the stool of *Etsu Nupe*.

Prior to the advent of Christianity in Nupeland, Islam had been well grounded in many places including the palaces. Islam had already had much influence before the coming of the Anglican Church. Formal system of education was already introduced to Nupeland, that system of education produced administrators and translators. There was improvement of Nupe language by a number of vocabularies which are loan words from Arabic language into Nupe language. Islam produced Islamic scholars who wrote some historical accounts in Arabic language. Not that alone, Islamic law became much operational in Nupeland. The social life of the people was also impacted, especially in the area of dressing and different ceremonies which marked the passage of life.

The origin of the Anglican Church in Nupeland is traceable to the activities of the Church Missionary Society (CMS). Prior to their arrival in Nupeland, the ex-slaves who had returned to Nigeria felt they were missing spiritual ministrations that they had enjoyed in Sierra Leone. As a result, they requested for missionaries. The Methodist Church was the first to respond to this call by sending Thomas Birch Freeman in 1842. Next to respond was the

Church Missionary Society (CMS) who sent Henry Townsend who was received at Badagry by Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman on 24th December, 1842. However, the first appearance of the Gospel in Nupeland was during the Niger Expedition of 1841. The team despatched by the CMS on expedition to the Niger could not go very far into the interior because of the malaria scourge.

During the third expedition of 1857, some members of the expedition went to the Nupe country as far as Gbara near Jebba. However, their vessel hit a rock at Jebba and capsized but no life was lost. This incident forced the missionaries to remain at Rabba for a whole year. The missionaries took advantage of the ship wreck and preached at Rabba. Samuel Ajayi Crowther used the medium to visit the *Etsu* Nupe, Usman Zaki at Bida. The *Etsu* gave the missionaries permission to preach at Bida Market. Also, Crowther succeeded in acquiring some land at Rabba where he built a missionary rest house. By the time Samuel Ajayi Crowther and Dr. Baikie left Rabba, they stationed a young Kanuri Man, Abegga there as a teacher.

In 1903, the first CMS Church was built in Bida and in 1908 the mission station was opened in Bida, the headquarters of the Nupe Kingdom. Since then, Anglican Church has been able to evangelize many Nupe towns and villages through the Evangelical Mission Boards, fellowships and groups. Anglican Churches have been established in many of such stations. Some stations where Anglican Church has established churches in Nupeland include, Bida, Doko, Esan Fazhi, Kutigi, Mokwa, Lanle, Katanmba-Bologi, Kakpi, Somazhiko, etc.

The response of the Nupe to the Christianity brought by the Anglican Church is discussed along two principles proposed by A. F. Walls. The Principles are Indigenizing and Pilgrimage. The relevance of the principles is in living as a Christian and at the same time, a member of one's society. This implies that Christianity cannot be practised outside our

cultural inclinations. Hence, wherever Christianity has succeeded in Nupeland, it was because, to some extent, the cultural heritage of the people had been properly managed. Therefore, the Christianity that will be more acceptable in Nupeland will be the one which will thoroughly put into consideration, the social and cultural values of the Nupe. The presence of the Anglican Church in Nupeland has since impacted that society. This is evident in many ways. There have been religious and social impact, economic impact, educational impact, socio cultural impact, health impact, agricultural impact, impact on the youths, impact on public service and political impact. In spite of these impacts there are numerous challenges limiting and hindering the spread of Anglican Church and Christian Gospel in Nupeland. Some of the challenges include spiritual problems, socio-cultural problems, effects of powerful kings, climatic and health problems, persecutions, effects of the British colonial rule, Islam, ecumenical challenges and leadership problems, among others.

Despite these challenges, the researcher speculates that the Anglican Church in Nupeland still has much prospect. This speculation is based on a number of reasons which include the promise of Jesus in Matt. 16:18 that He has built His Church and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. Also, Anglican Church in Nupeland is a member of some ecumenical bodies which further the spread of Christianity in Nupeland, e.g. the Nupe Christian Fellowship (NCF), Nupe Inland Mission (NIM) Nupe Intercessors (N.I), Doko Christian Fellowship (D.C.F), Fellowship of Christian Students (FCS), Child Evangelism Fellowship (C.E.F.), etc.

5.2 Conclusion

Anglican Church, no doubt has brought some impacts to bear on Nupeland. Such impacts are spiritual, socio-cultural, political, economic, industrial and in the area of health, just to mention a few of them. These have made the church to spread to some parts of Nupeland. However, there are issues which the Anglican Church is grappling with which

account for slow rate of growth and the spread of the Church to every nook and cranny of Nupeland. Such challenges include pentecostalism, schism, contextualization, spiritual attack, socio-cultural problems, persecution from powerful kings, health challenges and Islam. These challenges have made it impossible for the Anglican Church to justify, to a very great extent the number of years and the resources which the Mission has committed into the evangelization of Nupeland. The Anglican Church must channel a solution course for these challenges, if the church will spread beyond her present scope.

5.3 Findings

In the course of this work, some discoveries were made. Such findings are outlined as follows:

- i. The arrival of the Anglican Church in Nupeland has impacted Nupeland in some ways, such as religious, economic, agricultural, socio-cultural, political, educational and health,
- ii. The response of the Nupe to the Christian Gospel is largely dependent on the social and cultural factors,
- iii. Many Anglican Churches were established in Nupeland through the efforts of the indigenous missionaries.
- iv. Anglican Church has not been able to spread beyond its present borders due to various challenges such as sickness and death of some missionaries, socio-cultural factors, effect of powerful kings, unfavourable environmental conditions, health challenges, persecution, Islam, Pentecostalism, Schism, and contextualization.

5.4 Recommendations

For the pioneer Christian mission in Nupeland to realize its age-long vision, there is a need for her to adhere to the recommendations put forward in this work.

1. Anglican Church needs to work more hand in hand with the other denominations in Nupeland in order to further the Christian Gospel. The fact is that no single Church, denomination, group or individual can do the work of evangelism or Church planting alone. Therefore, there must be a stronger ecumenical spirit between the Anglican Church and other non-Anglican Churches in Nupeland. Anglican Church needs the help of other Churches in the area of relevant information which will assist them to have a breakthrough in some areas.
2. Anglican Church needs to establish Christian media bodies which will help in the dissemination of the Christian Gospel in Nupeland. Also, the current Christian programmes sponsored on government radio and television stations should be strengthened and adequately funded. This is because media have the capacity to reach several thousands of people at the same time and it is very effective.
3. The writing of Nupe Christian literature should be encouraged. Such literature can include newsletters or bulletin of the Christian work in Nupeland. This will help to sensitize the Christians on the state of the work in the land. Also, the Gospel message through literature can serve as a tool of conversion.
4. The Anglican Church must be involved in the wholistic ministry. It must provide not for the spiritual needs of the people alone but also the social, health, intellectual and economic needs of the people.
5. Anglican Church should formulate and teach her members a more biblically sound theology which will have impact on the lives and needs of the Nupe. Any theology which does not address the environment, need and lives of people cannot be effective.
6. More Nupe indigenous missionaries should be recruited and encouraged to live among the people to whom they minister.

7. Traditional rulers are a force to reckon with in Nupeland. Therefore, the Anglican Church, should as a matter of policy, make more friends with them. They need to use any lawful ways which are in tandem with the Scriptural principles to woo them to their side. For instance, giving of gift at intervals, getting close to them to know their challenges and praying for them could be a way of winning their hearts. Samuel Ajayi Crowther used some of these methods, and he succeeded.
8. There is a need for the Anglican Church to train and retrain her leaders at all levels and members for a more effective ministry among the Nupe.

5.5 Contribution to Knowledge

The researcher has been able to contribute to knowledge in the following areas:

1. A systematic and chronological development of the origin and spread of the Anglican Church in Nupeland has been documented.
2. The mystery of why Anglican Church, and by extension, Christianity has not been able to spread farther than its present borderline in Nupeland has been unravelled by this work.
3. One of the submissions of this work is that if Anglican mission will succeed in Nupeland, the socio-cultural life of the Nupe must be taken seriously.
4. Some of the indigenous missionaries who laboured to establish the Anglican Church in Nupeland have been identified.
5. The recommendations put forward in this work are also a means of contributing to knowledge.

List of Informants

S/N	NAME	AGE	ADDRESS	STATUS
1.	David Gana	47	Doko	Mr.
2	Elijah Saba	65	Bokungi	Evangelist
3.	David Gana	47	Bida	Mr.
4.	Jonah Gana	75	Doko	Mr.
5.	Rebekah Jiya	38	Bida	Mrs.
6.	John Mamma	49	Minna	Rev.
7	Emmanuel N. Tsado	57	Kuchi-Woro	Venerable
8.	Jeremiah N. Kolo	62	Kutigi	Bishop
9.	Uriah Kolo	64	Doko	Bishop
10.	Jonah Kolo	67	Bida	Bishop

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