

RURCON



Signs of Hope

Development, Conflict and Religion in Northern Nigeria

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Nigeria – a hot spot?

October 1st, 2007 forty-seven years after Independence and eight years after the peaceful transition from military rule to democracy, almost every TV-report on Independence Day celebrations presented a picture of politicians lamenting that Nigerians had not effectively used the chances to progress that they had gained in post-colonial times and, especially, since 1999. The speakers, of course, attributed their judgement to very different reasons. Some of them pointed to the weakness of political institutions, to the incompetence of people in key positions or at lower administrative levels and also to greed and corruption. Others mentioned that control over economic resources and political power rested with small elites that have only been made partially accountable to democratic standards. In their speeches, none neglected to say that, due to this heritage, Nigerian society faces immense challenges today. Too visible to be denied and hardly compatible with proclaimed democratic values is the difference between the rich and the poor, between rural and urban areas and between the country's various regions - a difference which is, at the same time, the background to many conflicts, some of which are very often violent.

Eliminating huge, social and regional disparities requires programmes that address themselves to the short-term needs of Nigeria's majority. More than half of the population is living below poverty line – a worse figure than that of 15 years ago. They expect public policies and non-governmental efforts that are in line with the globally agreed Millennium Development Goals (MDG) to improve, such as eradicating poverty and hunger, improving primary education and health, ending discrimination against women, and ensuring environmental sustainability.

Substantial changes also require credible long-term political and economic strategies that promote respect for human dignity and enable steps towards more justice and equity to be taken. Policies to increase “checks and balances” in the political system may be an essential requisite like further efforts to stabilise and foster a democratic and competent State based on the rule of law. Promoting more participation of the population in political decision making at local, state and federal level may also contribute to bridge existing gaps. As well as the use of revenues from oil and gas to diversify the economy, increase employment and reduce the dependency on non-renewable natural resources.

Expectations that aim at a better and just future are high, not only within the poor majority. Although there is no lack of promises for change by politicians, most Nigerians know that a long way is still ahead of them for the nation to be closer to an effective implementation of the policies mentioned above. They also know that neither the short-term nor the long-term objectives indicated may be achieved without simultaneously creating a new culture of togetherness and of peaceful conflict transformation within the Nigerian society. Up to now, the lack of comprehensive policies to counter poverty and inequality has been one factor for creating tension and conflicts between different groups of society. The absence or ineffectiveness of institutions and political mechanisms, which are able to resolve disputes in time or to mediate in conflicts, have sometimes contributed to their escalation. The lack of timely, profound and law-bound answers to problems has even led to continued political thuggery, the establishment of ethno-religious militias or sudden eruptions of local violence. In many places, these have caused death, injury, destruction, grief,

revenge, mistrust and insecurity in the population. Governmental responses to these situations have often been based more on short-term crisis management and the power of force than on the will to look at the causes of conflict and define ways to solve them.

Although the state has to play a leading role in dealing with conflict and in the prevention of violence, it is not alone in its responsibility. The creation and maintenance of a culture of peace also depends on the responsibility of each citizen in his or her daily life, in the community and the society at large. Actors of Nigeria's Civil Society can make important contributions to empower citizens to assume this role. In particular, the religious communities are challenged to do this: Not only are Nigerians very religious, and churches and mosques able to reach all segments of society; "peace" and "justice" are core values in Nigeria's two main religions, namely, Christianity and Islam. Religious differences are nowadays often seen as the principal mobilising factor in the escalation of conflicts and in its resulting violence. Hasty generalisations about "religion as a source of conflict" or about a commonplace feature of "Nigerian conflicts" are certainly inappropriate.

The role of religion in situations of conflict and violence

Over the past years, increased attention has been paid by the German public to the role of religion in socio-political processes, and in civil conflict settlement. In consequence, more often than before questions have been directed to EED about its co-operation with foreign churches and with other organisations active in development. Although it has been easy to describe the objectives and the respective activities and results of the programmes realised by its partners, EED did not always feel able to give satisfying answers about the significance that religious identities and differences have in the implementation of e.g. community development projects and, in specific, when the context is characterised by social and political tension. In the past, the German public mostly perceived EED's work, its faith-based partners abroad and their development efforts as important factors for promoting social justice and peaceful relations between people of different religious beliefs. Now, questions are more often raised and doubts are expressed, whether development and peace are really walking hand in hand.

Pointing to countries where Christian and Muslim communities live in tensions with each other, EED is asked, whether its work is giving privileges to Christians and, by this, deepening segmentation in other societies and, eventually, contributing to the escalation of conflicts between groups of different faiths. Others doubt whether EED perceives and reflects consciously that religious convictions or actors can be an obstacle as well as an opportunity to address barriers to development or to the peaceful transformation of conflicts. New expectations are directed to EED and its partners, too: They should place more emphasis on promoting inter-religious cooperation and on peace-building in situations where religion is a dimension in social problems or in political conflict. Helpful insights resulted out of this process, such as:

- the need to recognise the diversity existing within each religion as well as the specific approaches that different religious communities assume with regard to development in their society,
- the relationship between "religion and society" (for instance: the risks for peace that may result from situations when one religious group claims to be "chosen by God", knows "absolute truth" or has an attitude of moral superiority),

- the need to look carefully as well at each conflict, its causes, dynamics as a potential for peace, before trying to understand the roles assumed by religious groups,
- the need to distinguish clearly between religious communities and political movements that use religious references in their agenda or religious affiliation as a tool for social mobilisation,
- the importance of religion and cultural factors in societies that are changing dramatically (for instance with regard to the key role that religious values, identities and institutions can play in times of competing world views).

While “reflecting” the relation between people of different faiths in development processes, EED perceived that it lacked of more detailed information about the analysis and experiences of its foreign partners in their specific context. Did religious differences become an issue of concern in the regions where they are working? How do they deal with these differences in their programmes and which lessons have been learned about it? To identify some answers, this assessment was commissioned by EED. It serves the desire of EED to be a “learning organisation”.

The North of Nigeria was chosen as an example for several reasons. Nigeria is the most populated country in Africa and it plays a crucial role in West Africa. EED cooperates in the North-Central and Northeastern region with a considerable number of churches and NGO that implement programmes directed to community development. In religious terms, Nigeria’s population has an almost equal proportion of Christians and Muslims, besides a minority adhering to traditional African beliefs. It is in the North-Central and Northeast of the country (“Middle Belt”), where people of different faiths live together and share their daily life. But the same zone is sometimes also mentioned for the close ties existing between ethno-religious rivalry, political problems and violent incidents. Finally, Nigeria is known for having courageous religious and civil leaders that are making dedicated efforts to avoid or to decrease the escalation of conflicts involving a religious dimension.

Peace-building and democratisation

Several Nigerian churches and organisations cooperating with the EED shared their interests in the assessment. For a couple of years now, peace-building has become a more important aspect in their programmes. Sporadic, violent eruptions of conflicts have been seen in the Middle Belt since the beginning of the Eighties and, even more, in the present decade. Simultaneously, permanent low-grade tension and mistrust between people of different faiths, denomination or tribal culture exists all over the region. As both already have had or may have a direct impact on the target population of community-oriented action, the need for integration of conflict resolution and peace-building into development strategies has been increasingly felt. Another dimension important for Nigerian organisations is related to the context of democratisation that started in 1999. How to promote successfully mutual respect and co-existence between Nigerians of different religious or ethnic background is a challenge for the churches as a main actor in Civil Society, but also on the level of many development projects and grassroots initiatives. Elaborating the assessment has therefore been seen by the partners of EED in Nigeria as a welcome opportunity to discuss the issue and to collect information not only of one organisation, but within a group of several programmes.

The assessment was carried out by the Director of RURCON Andrew Gwaivangmin, and by a staff member of EED, Wolfgang Kaiser, in September / October of 2007. Nine (out of ten) projects have been visited that are realising development activities in ten Northern states of Nigeria. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with members of Board and/or staff. Additionally, it was possible to speak to Church leaders and to visit local communities in Adamawa, Plateau and Taraba State. One organisation was interviewed that is neither a EED partner nor related to the churches in the North of Nigeria, but which has played an active role in restoring peace in Jos and Kaduna after the riots of 2001 to 2004. The interviews focussed on the following aspects:

- perception of the conflicts existing in the local context,
- perception of the relation between people of different faiths or denominations,
- influence of conflicts, tensions or violence on the programmes,
- effects of the programmes on attitudes, behaviours and on context,
- challenges and needs.

The report does not present a summary of each of the interviews - due to the fact that these have been too comprehensive to be described briefly. Instead, the authors opted to add up the variety of information, analyses and interpretations into a single text that touches on a few basic issues discussed in all or most of the interviews.

We are most grateful to the leaders and staff of all organisations visited by us and to the respective churches and their leadership. In addition, we would like to express our gratitude to the various communities we visited at different locations in Adamawa, Plateau and Taraba States for their hospitality in the midst of their deprivation, and for coming out *en masse* to welcome us on arrival, and for proudly sharing their stories of transformation with us. Finally, we are grateful to God for the opportunities He has given us to serve Him and indirectly the majority of the poor people we never met but on whose behalf we were called to serve.

Signs of hope

Before looking at the perception of conflicts and on the ways in which peace issues are dealt with on the level of Christian development programmes in Northern Nigeria, some information on the organisations interviewed, the relationship between them and on the context of their work may be helpful.

The consultants have been in contact with:

- four community development programmes directly related to Nigerian churches, and the four respective church headquarters,
- two community development programmes indirectly related to a church,
- two programmes of Christian organisations mainly active on the level of networking and capacity building,
- a vocational training programme in a Christian school,
- a peace programme regarding the fellowship of churches,
- a peace-building programme in the case of an NGO not related to the church and not in cooperation with the EED.

Mainly using their own terminology, these programmes can be described below as follows:

Church-related development programmes

The **COCIN Community Development Programme / CCDP** (Panyam / Plateau State) is part of the Department for Health and Social Services in the *Church of Christ in Nigeria / COCIN* (headquarters: Jos / Plateau). It started in 1997 with the merger of former rural development activities. Its objective is to empower less privileged communities to improve their quality of life. Focal areas of work are value transformation, community organisation, health care & sanitation, income generation and literacy. The area of intervention includes communities in Plateau, Bauchi, Gombe, Yobe, Borno, and Adamawa.

“Peaceful living” is one out of 7 core values that determine CCDP’s philosophy of people-centred community work.

The **Integrated Community Based Development Programme / ICBDP** (Garkida / Adamawa State) is one pillar of the *Ekklesiar Yan ‘uwa a Nigeria / EYN* (Church of Brethren; headquarters: Mubi / Adamawa). Incepted in 2002 (on the basis of earlier EYN services), it empowers poor communities towards holistic, people-centred and self-reliant development (community work, education, rural health, agricultural development). The operational area comprises approx. 120 communities in 11 Local Government Areas (LGA) in Adamawa and 9 LGA in southern Borno.

For ICBDP, the promotion of “peaceful co-existence” is one element of community empowerment (trainings in non-violent conflict management) and in its own advocacy activities.

The **Integrated Development Programme / IDP** (Takum / Taraba State) is part of the *Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria / CRCN* (headquarters: Takum). It empowers communities to take the initiatives in improving their living standard. Merged in 2001 of two former programmes, today it provides services to communities in 8 Local Government Areas of Taraba. The major units are in the areas of community development, health care, credit schemes and commercial activities.

“Peace & reconciliation” is an area, which the IDP has endeavoured to touch upon since 2001.

People Oriented Development / POD (Jos / Plateau State) is a department in the *Evangelical Church of West Africa / ECWA* (headquarters: Jos). It received its name in 1988 when former programmes that had rural poor as a target group, became integrated. Since then, POD promotes improved and sustainable living conditions through effective community mobilization and a capacity building up of underprivileged communities. It provides services for health, agricultural education, food security and construction in more than 150 communities in 11 Middle Belt states (mainly Bauchi, Gombe, Kaduna, Kwara, Plateau).

People-oriented programmes are seen as an instrument in “peace-building and harmonious relationship for sustainable development”.

Organisations indirectly related to a church

The **Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Movement / JPRM** (Gurum-Nongvan / Adamawa State and Jos / Plateau State) is a member organisation (movement) entitling its members to facilities like loans, grants and scholarships. At the same time, it is a NGO started by the influence of persons within the *Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria (LCCN)* who aim to ensure justice, promote peace and reconcile people. Current programmes are directed to communities in various Local Government Areas of Adamawa and in a neighbouring LGA in Plateau. A Liaison Office in Jos also carries out educational and advocacy activities for a wider public in various part of the North.

JPRM’s programmes focus on justice and peace promotion, adult education, Christian-Muslim dialogue, and women’s empowerment for economic and social transformation

The **Youth and Women Development Association for Social Transformation / YOWDAST** (Ganye / Adamawa State) is a NGO with close ties to the LCCN Bonotem Diocese. It provides skills for self-reliance (employment, literacy, health) to women and youth in communities of three Local Government Areas of Adamawa.

The aims of YOWDAST include bringing about “harmonious living between the diverse religions” existing in its geographical area of intervention.

Christian organisations active in networking

Christian Rural and Urban Development Association of Nigeria / CRUDAN (Jos / Plateau State) is a membership organisation (established in 1990) which promotes Christian Wholistic Development among Nigerian churches and para-church organisations.

Its main sectors of intervention are participatory trainings in Wholistic Development Education, capacity building for community transformation, counselling in institutional development, networking, and advocacy regarding issues of national interest, like democracy and good governance, human rights, and peace-building.

Rural Development Counsellors for Christian Churches in Africa / RURCON (Jos / Plateau State) is an independent institute of Christian development studies for the promotion of integral mission. Founded in 1971, today it provides services (in English and French) for enabling churches in Cameroon, Ghana, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria and Sierra Leone to reach poor and marginalized communities. To achieve its mission, RURCON runs the following programmes: Wholistic Development Education, organisational development, networking / partnership, advocacy towards *justice, peace and the integrity of creation*, and consultancy services.

“Peace & conflict” as well as “religion & politics” are cross-cutting issues in the programme work.

The **Christian Health Association of Nigeria / CHAN** is a coordinating body for church-sponsored health-care work made up of 400 members representing 4,000 health facilities. Due to time constraints, CHAN has not been visited.

Church-related school

Mason EYN Technical School / MTS (Garkida / Adamawa State) addresses the problem of unemployment of youth after graduating from school. It is run by EYN’s Department of Education, and offers courses in auto mechanics, computer / office management, carpentry, and tailoring.

Fellowship of churches

The **Peace Desk of Tarrayar Ekklesiyoyin Kristi a Nigeria / TEKAN** (Fellowship of Churches of Christ in Nigeria; Jos / Plateau State) was created in 2007. TEKAN has been established by 13 Christian denominations in Northern Nigeria in 1955, including COCIN, CRCN, EYN and LCCN.

The Peace Desk is one out of several units in TEKAN, and increases the capacity of the member churches for “effective peace-building and conflict intervention”.

NGO with a peace-building programme

The **International Centre for Gender and Social Research / INTER-GENDER** (Jos / Plateau State) is a Nigerian NGO that had started as an informal forum in the University of Jos, in 1991. Legally registered since 1997, it promotes gender equality, democracy, good governance and social development.

Worried by urban violence in the state capitals, Jos and Kaduna, from 2004 to 2006, it implemented a project (financially supported by the European Commission) to build up peace in both cities through inter-personal, inter-religious and inter-communal relationship.

Precarious living conditions

Although different, the organisations visited have a lot in common. First, all of them work among the poor regions in the Northern states. Their primary focus is on rural communities and on small towns with a population often living under precarious conditions. Although vast areas of the North are considered rich savannah fields or inland valleys, the majority of the rural population are poor peasant families, whose returns from farming or animal husbandry are mainly for subsistence. Food security is a permanent challenge and has become even more difficult over the last 10-20 years, due to little official support of small-time agriculture and growing tensions about the use of land caused by environmental problems, growth of population and internal migration. Access to local markets is often expensive and difficult, as surplus is limited, and many communities are located in areas without roads that easily link to paved ones, especially in the rainy season. Once on the market, farmers often face competition with imported goods – another reason for deteriorating economic conditions and the decreasing production of traditional crops, like cassava, maize, yam, cotton and rice.

Although reliable figures related to social indices are seldom available, the living standard in many Northern rural areas is considered to be below the national average. Illiteracy among adults is high; enrolment for schools low. Safe and sufficient potable water is not available in many places; it is not even an exception to find a village with humans and animals drinking out of the same (polluted) stream. Diseases caused by the lack of water supply and of sanitation are common; infant mortality and maternal mortality, malaria, tuberculosis, leprosy, HIV/Aids figures are alarming, despite health services and immunization campaigns. Although cultural norms differ from one ethnic group to the another, women generally have little political and economical power, and carry a great load of work thought to be “women’s work”: caring for the family members, fetching water and firewood, cooking, washing, cleaning, etc. Their right to education and good health or their needs for support (in heading a household or suffering from domestic violence) are often neglected.

“Female Genital Mutilation –practised mainly in the South (... more than 65% ...), with about 25% in the North-West, 18% in the Middle Belt and 4% in the North-East – perpetuates women’s poverty by acknowledging the inferior status of women in Nigeria. It has adverse implication on women’s health, compromises the health of others through the possible spread of HIV due to insanitary conditions and other procedures. Wife inheritance is still practised in some cultures, and domestic violence is culturally sanctioned in many communities. The practice of Purdah in Northern states impedes women from exercising their rights to education, social services, contribution to family income and caring for their families.”
POD (“Strategic Plan 2004-2010”, page 6)

The situation of youth is another problem in the region, especially in towns where unemployment is high and child labour, juvenile delinquency or teenage prostitution is frequently to be seen. Poverty is interrelated with long-standing ethnic and religious tensions. They enhance communal and inter-communal conflicts that sometimes lead to violent fighting, the generation of loss of life and property, revenge and the displacement of families. Although, since 1999, governmental efforts have been increased to tackle poverty and to improve rural infrastructure services, most villages are hardly attended to by public institutions and programmes. Strategic and participatory approaches to change the rural situation do not exist or are not visible to villagers. To them, the division of labour within the three-tier, governmental structure

of Federal Government, State Government and Local Government remains undefined within the processes of non-transparent decision-making. As they often do not feel treated as citizens with equal rights when in contact with civil servants, a political culture prevails that is strongly based on obedience to power, hierarchy and seniority. It finds its manifestation in a type of popular thinking that assumes that steps to the improvement of local infrastructure or services are either a “gift from outside” (from government, politicians, churches, NGO and/or from foreigners, etc.) or perhaps achieved by a nepotist relationship to the powerful, by corruption or by the threat or pressure of violent action.

Community-based development

The programmes visited work in situations of little, unequal and insufficient presence of the state towards its citizens, of poverty and of extreme difficulty for ordinary people to get resources for improving their own living conditions. The response of the organisations - a second feature that is common to them - is “community-based development” approach. This means that the rural population assumes the responsibility for its empowerment. The programmes are directed to the whole community (independently of ethnic or religious adherence) and concentrate on capacity building for community organisation and participatory action that involves identifying and addressing local needs.

At community level, initiatives and resources are technically and financially supported to facilitate equity-led projects that are designed, run and controlled by the village people. In many cases, these focus primarily or initially on issues of education (building of schools, primary education, literacy courses), health (training of health workers, sanitation, construction of health stations), water supply (wells), food security (agricultural practices, sustainability of the environment) or local economy (commercialisation, income generating, feeder roads and the construction of bridges). As the process of community trust building and organisation continues, changes are not only happening in the quality of life of families and villages. Changes can also be observed regarding the self-confidence of the people. New attitudes towards organisation and styles of leadership are appearing; the capability to negotiate collectively with actors outside the local boundaries is starting to increase.

Community-based development (also called: “people-centred” or “people-oriented” development) has been introduced into the methodology of the organisations only since the late eighties or during the last decade. Former activities in church-related programmes were primarily based on a social service approach (offering health, education, agricultural training). Their implementation had been mainly the responsibility of the churches, without central involvement of the communities in the establishment, maintenance and sustainability of the structures. In some cases, these services can be traced back to missionary days, when hospitals, schools and charity work were created “from outside” or “from above” for the people instead of by them.

Wholistic Christian Development Education

The shift to a community approach was accompanied by changed theological thinking in evangelical constituencies. Historically, since the start of Christian mission in Northern Nigeria (about 1900/1905), spiritual needs, evangelism, personal salvation and future heavenly aspects of the Kingdom of God have been much more emphasised than the Christian task of responding to social need on earth and through human efforts to combat injustice or oppression. Since the eighties, the inseparability of

evangelism and social concern (“word and deed”) have become an important feature in Nigerian churches and have also influenced the way of understanding what ‘development’ means.

Although there is some divergence within the churches, within the clergy and among lay people with regard to (w)holistic theology (and “integral mission”) which faithfully reflects biblical reality, wholistic thinking has now become central to those Christians engaged in social activity and in discussing what social responsibility involves when it is effectively exercised. For them, community-development does not only aim at strengthening communal relationship by working mutually towards the realisation of common goals. It also refers to the whole spiritual, physical, mental and social needs of the people concerned with the aim of complete transformation of a person, family, community and society. Their efforts underline the fact that religious impulses have primacy in human life and they expect the churches to contribute to wholistic development by addressing themselves to topics that affect the day-to-day-life of the people.

“In most African countries, such problems include the position of the Scriptures on issues of politics, economics, poverty, ecology, and technology, besides the moral ones of corruption, work ethics, market ethics, self-reliance, birth control, and certain cultural practices that are incompatible with the Scriptures. Other areas that equally demand teachings include tribalism, racism, human rights, environmental pollution ... economic inequality between the rich and the poor, between the cities and rural areas, and between poor and rich nations.”
Sulaiman Z. Jakonda (“Your Kingdom come - A book on Wholistic Christian Development”, 2001; page 136)

In practice, not all church members or their leaders agree that Christians have to get involved in those issues as part of their witness to the world, and that the church should have a responsibility “to teach as well as preach the gospel”.

“Although we pray daily that God’s Kingdom will come on ‘earth as it is in heaven’ we behave as though we were only to await the coming of this Kingdom in the next life.”
Sister Kathleen McGarvey (Inter-Gender: “Muslim/Christian Dialogue on Peace in Jos”; 2004, page 33)

“The church has a God-given responsibility to the extent that as many people as possible will not only make heaven, but also live victoriously in this world.”
(CCPD; Narrative Report July to December 2006; page 8)

RURCON and CRUDAN have played a major role in the formulation and diffusion of the concept of “wholistic development education”. Their courses on wholistic development have been and are attended by leaders of different Northern evangelical churches and by management and staff of the organisations visited. Therefore, a third factor common to the organisations visited for this assessment, is the concept of “Christian wholistic development” which forms a central part in all institutional visions. Additionally, key staff at all the programme projects maintains close exchange of experience, and ideas. These contribute to further conceptual and methodological elaboration, and also to networking between them, especially in areas where distance and deficient means of communication hamper close contact and co-operation.

Distinct Christian identity

Common historical roots among the evangelical churches facilitate close inter-personal and inter-institutional relationship. In the North of Nigeria, Christian mission was established during the first years of the 20th century. Most of today's about 15 Northern evangelical ("historical") churches have their origins either in the various branches of the Sudan United Mission (SUM), the Church of the Brethren Mission or the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM). Missionaries (from Central Europe, Scandinavia, South Africa, UK, USA etc., many of them coming from Reformed churches in their countries) had mainly been active with ethnic groups that, at the time, adhered to traditional African (animist) beliefs and lived in areas economically and politically controlled by a Hausa majority which, since the end of the 18th century (Usman Dan Fodio) - were dominated by Muslim Fulani. Christianity quickly spread within the non-Hausa-Fulani population and later this became a central element of their identity, distinguishing them clearly from the majority of their tribe and religion, Islam. Education and other services offered by the mission schools helped the minorities to reduce dependency on the Hausa-Fulani, even though the British colonial system (forcefully established before and by 1914) reinforced the economical, administrative and political power of the "traditional" elites in the North by using indirect rule as a governing mechanism.

Up to today, some of the churches - like CRCN or EYN - are still closely associated to former mission zones in the North, and to the ethnic group(s) who have lived in these regions for generations (independently of the fact that in the last few decades' migration by Northerners to Nigeria's South-East or West on evangelism campaigns have helped these churches to extend to other parts of the country). Other churches are present all over the North of Nigeria, like COCIN, or even in neighbouring West-African countries (ECWA), which make up a membership of some several million people today.

Because of their specific "indigenous" character, the Northern churches distinguish themselves from the Roman Catholic Church or from other Protestant churches which later established themselves in the region via trading or migrant families – like the Anglican or Methodist church. Differences also exist between churches related to Pentecostal movements and to even more recent "prosperity gospel" that are quickly growing in both bigger and smaller towns (but not so rapidly in rural areas with a poor population and strong ties to "their" respective churches). Despite an identity based on common evangelical heritage, historical background and even joint institutions (like TEKAN, a fellowship of thirteen churches, or the Theological College of Northern Nigeria), there are quite distinct features to be seen from one church to the other. They result from different numerical and financial strengths, ethnic composition (language), different doctrinal interpretations (e.g. regarding infant baptism, feet washing, female ordination, polygamy) or leadership structure. Time and time again these differences cause tensions, especially when associated with attitudes of being "holier than thou".

Although unity is difficult to establish and maintained between the churches, common challenges also exist. The growth of Christianity in the North (today not representing a minority, but about half the population!) raises questions regarding the churches' contemporary social and political stance and their power in society. This also implies that we should re-think what could and should be done regarding the situation of the majority of church members: These belong to the low-income groups described above suffering in their daily struggle to fight for their basic needs and demanding comprehensive strategies from the churches either in changing their lives

or helping at times when there is not sufficient support by a government. And, additionally, there is common concern among them as to whether the churches can effectively intervene in conflicts that involve religious considerations.

Ethno-religious conflicts

Since independence in 1960, Nigeria has had its fair share of violent conflict, ranging from local uprisings in the early sixties, to the Civil War after the secession of the eastern (Biafra) region (which, from 1967 to 1970, involved the deaths of over a million civilians and 100,000 soldiers), right up to the last two decades of political struggle and armed fighting in the oil-rich Delta region.

Ethno-religious riots became more notorious in the mid 1980's and have escalated during the last ten years, predominantly in the North. Estimates of casualties differ from estimates of several thousands to as many as tens of thousands. Generally, violent incidents are mainly of local or sub-regional range (although "external" factors may trigger the dynamics) and do not spread to the whole North. In many cases, the inter-ethnic or the Muslim-Christian divides define the combatants combat lines.

"From practical experience, it is difficult to clearly distinguish between religious and ethnic conflicts. These conflicts begin as ethnic and then turn religious – or vice versa; the reason being that in most cases the parties involved are usually divided along ethnic and religious lines. For example, the 2001 Jos crisis is rooted in the tussle for the ownership of Jos township between the "Indigenes" (Beroms, Afizere and Anaguta) on the one hand and the "Jasawa" (mostly Hausa-Fulani) on the other. Although the issue in contention has nothing to do with religion, the crisis naturally degenerated into a religious warfare, because the Indigenes are predominantly Christian and the Jasawa Muslims. The Kaduna crisis was between Muslims and Christians on the question of the Sharia implementation in the state. However, because the Christians are non-Hausa ethnic groups, the crisis became a fight between the Hausas and other ethnic groups."
Cletus Tanimu Gotan (Inter-Gender: "Muslim/Christian Dialogue on Peace in Jos"; 2004, p. 68)

The permanent low-grade tension in many parts of the North involving religion or religious differences, and the effects of sudden eruptions of violence have also been felt strongly among the visited Christian churches and their development programmes.

Conflict and peace challenges

When asked about their perception of current conflicts and violence in the North, all those interviewed emphasized that religious differences were not the only source of tension. For them, in Northern Nigeria there was neither a dispute along the lines of a “good” or a “bad” religion, nor even a “clash” between two groups clearly defined as “the Christians” and “the Muslims”. Signs of unity, but also of diversity and differences as they exist among Christian groups, are seen among Muslims, too. Most of those interviewed also emphasized that for several generations and in most places of the North, the relationship between Christians and Muslims has been determined by accepting the integrity of each other’s religious heritage and by living side by side. Changing individual adherence to another religious community is not an exception, and within a family or clan, members can belong to different denominations or religions without fear of being forced into exclusion. All those interviewed disagreed, therefore, with reports that confrontation had become the most dominant feature of relationship between Christians and Muslims.

Nevertheless, they coincided in their opinions that attitudes of mutual mistrust, separation or even hatred have increased in the past 20 years as well as fighting in the name of religion. But the dividing line is not always between Christians and Muslims; there are also tensions and, sometimes, violence among different Christian as among different Muslim groups. And, more important for the interlocutors, they do not perceive intra- or inter-religious differences as the one single factor in producing tension and, eventually, its escalation into violence: The religious dimension is one out of several elements in a conflict.

Poverty, vulnerability and competition for resources

The experiences of those development programmes visited are helpful in perceiving major divisions at the local, “grassroots” level, and the dynamics of conflicts between different social or religious groups. Some basic, but often interrelated constellations have been observed by organisations in several regions of Northern Nigeria. As mentioned in a previous chapter, most of Northern Nigeria remains basically dependent on agriculture. In economic terms, little has changed for decades, since support for peasant families or technical and social infrastructure for rural areas have been a second priority for a long time in the central government’s oil-based development policies. Dislocation of farming populations to other areas has been a consequence; food supply to markets has decreased although the ‘Middle Belt’, in particular is still considered Nigeria’s “food basket”.

The majority of the population is made up of poor peasant farmers and herdsmen, hardly able to guarantee their families’ subsistence. They are not in any condition to create a regular surplus, an expansion of economic activities and to have a bigger share in money-based consumption. On the contrary, it seems that in many places general well-being is less likely to occur, and frequently enough, further impoverishment increases. Due to the high degree of individual or collective “vulnerability”, fears about the future exist permanently or are easily raised by third party. There are few alternatives to the situation. For some family members, migration to other parts of

rural Nigeria or to towns might be one such, but in many other cases it only means changing one uncertain perspective for another. Young people especially are often unable to make a choice for their future. In this context, the contest for control of land has become a major factor in the promotion of conflict and the likelihood of violence. Most prominent among these are tensions between pastoralists and farmers, which prevail during the rainy season. Owing to the growing population and the desire to feed more mouths, there is an increase in the number of arable land under cultivation. Sometimes old cattle routes are included that had always been left uncultivated so as to provide an access route for the benefit of pastoralists. As fewer areas are left for them to graze their livestock, the herds graze consistently on farmland and so cause harvest destruction. From this situation, conflicts about the use of land or about adequate compensation for loss result between both groups.

Relations can worsen and easily escalate into violence, when additional elements enter the scene, for instance when distinct identities (in many places, the pastoralists are Fulani and Muslims, while the farmers are of other ethnic origin and Christians), the possession of weapons (mostly in the hands of pastoralists) or the influx of herdsmen even coming from neighbouring countries (e.g. Cameroon, Chad or Republic of Niger) and who are seen as strangers without responsibility and lacking relationship to the host community.

Unequal access to public programmes

More accentuated than differences in material lifestyle is the socio-cultural divide among the local population itself. In many communities of the North people of more than one or two ethnic groups live together in harmony. Sometime, kinship relations and cultural ties between the tribes are close (at least if seen “from outside”). In other cases, the groups may differ considerably in language, values, traditions, and internal structure. The history of the respective inter-ethnic relationship matters a lot for today’s pattern of living together, and may as well be determined by a tradition of mutual, friendly acceptance or by some kind of hierarchical relationship, economic dominance or by ethnic rivalry.

Intra-communal conflict is often linked to clan leadership or a desire by a section of the community to control perceived or real benefits that should accrue to all members of the community. One section of the community may feel that they have been denied rights to certain basic needs: access to education, health care or other physical infrastructure, for example, that contributes to the well-being of the people. Inter-community conflicts, on the other hand, are often linked to resource control or perceived loss of authority over an ethnic group or when one community feels unfairly treated in the distribution of amenities by the local, state or federal government.

“(The region of Takum in Taraba state) has a paramount chief who directs and rules the tribal systems, which include both property and social matters. However, the area is also divided into Local Government Areas, which handle policing, education, taxation, and health care. About 80% of the jobs are government jobs, and the local government chair has tremendous impact on how local economies run. In this situation there is frequent conflict between the tribal groups. Tribal efforts to control government posts is a regular feature of life.”
World Alliance of Reformed Churches (“The Takum Peace”; 2005, www.warc.jalb.de)

Indigenous population and settlers

This is an issue that has been the cause of conflict not only in many rural communities, but also in bigger cities like Jos or Kaduna. It is linked to issues of resources, inter-ethnic relations and citizenship rights. Trading or grazing settlements next to the villages of the native “indigenes” or migration from one region to another can lead to shifts in the ethnic composition of the local population. When the “settlers” not only acquire land, but also increase in number and from there gain economic dominance over the original inhabitants, they often start to ask for the status of “full indigenous citizenship”. Often, the settlers first contest traditional authority or titles that had once been the exclusive preserve of the native population. Indigenous protest against changes like these in the balance of power can take the form of violent resistance, especially when the competition has already generated resource-based tensions (like access to markets) and rekindled pre-colonial or colonial conflicts of domination or the struggle for self-determination, e.g. between Hausa-Fulani and ethnic minorities.

Modern Nigerian laws can worsen the situation. They determine a person’s legal citizenship to that state to which he or she has a cultural-ethnic affinity. Having left one state and then residing in another on a permanent or long-term basis, not all the rights of a native citizen can be enjoyed. As a consequence, settlers may feel discrimination; on the other hand, the natives react when they feel that the wealth of the “newcomer” can buy them a say in local political affairs.

Political culture

The vast majority of poor Nigerians are disconnected from a functioning democratic system and from equal treatment by public administration. Misinformed about basic citizens’ rights or deprived of exercising them, they often show a fatalistic attitude to politics and public services. Access to public programmes or jobs seems to them more easily gained by patronage relationships with politicians than by demanding their rights equal treatment. Politicians often live in capital cities and create the relation between the citizens and state. Many only visit the villages for campaigns, when seeking the mandate to represent communities, and at times when they distribute “favours” to their supporters. The lack of parties with a coherent programme contributes to patterns of politics, which are strongly based on personality and personal relationship. Frequently, politicians blackmail their opponents to gain favour or backing from the ethnic or religious group to which they themselves belong. This is possible in several forms; it might be, for example, that a perceived rival ethnic group (with a historical divide) is held responsible for something lost or not achieved; it could also be that a particular ethnic or religious group decides to side with a particular politician and his party and in so doing portray another party as biased towards candidates of its particular religion or tribe.

The divide created at local level, may well be deepened after elections and transformed into a long-term partisan political tussle when those that have lost in their attempt for power, permanently contest the elected representative and his supporters. Often, young men are manipulated by both sides to challenge and intimidate the other group.

Promoting democracy and state building

In many places, people have little confidence in governmental bodies and the justice system to find solutions to their problems. The absence of serious debate on deep-rooted divisions in Nigerian society, the lack of social programmes and of effective law

enforcement does not create trust in adequate public management and in the mitigation of conflict. Additionally, governmental reaction to problems is often perceived as being less determined to come to a peaceful regulation of conflicts than its desire to maintain security. Containing and suppressing violence is seen more as a common response to conflict than the prevention of escalation or long-term conflict resolution. The following example of conflict, which arose in the Wukari region in Taraba State, illustrates the connections between different divisions (including an inter-faith divide, here mainly between Christians of different denominations) and the dynamics of a conflict.

The Jukun / Tiv crisis started in 1910 when the colonial administration encouraged the Tiv migration into Jukun territory and the established Indirect System Rule brought the Tiv under the Aku Uka (paramount ruler of the Jukun) of Wukari. The Tiv were cast as subordinate group to the Jukuns. ... Due to the growing Tiv population, the pressure on land was accentuated. ... By 1948, some colonial officers claimed that Tiv expansion was not due to land scarcity, but the result of extravagant methods of farming (“slash and burn”) which required the expansion of their territories.

The decision to encourage Tiv migration into Jukun territory reflected the colonial perception of each group’s relevance. While the Jukuns, with a history of centralized leadership, were not expanding economically and demographically, the Tivs with a and this had a direct bearing on the capacity of the colonial government to raise revenue from tax. ... The “hard working” Tivs were encouraged to move into the territory of the “lazy” Jukuns.

By 1990, the Tiv formed majority of the population of Wukari Local Government Area. While the Tivs referred to as the “settlers” were wealthy, the Jukuns referred to as “hosts” were economically disadvantaged. Due to their higher population, the Tivs were able to politically dominate and determined the leadership within many communities. ... In 1991, the Jukuns, fearing political manipulation and control of the Tivs in the leadership of the State of Taraba, resorted to ethnic cleansing. They accused the Tivs of lawlessness in occupying Jukun lands and in establishing unrecognised chieftaincies, ... and of disloyalty to a place that the Jukuns had provided them (for temporary residency). They also claimed that the Tivs preferred to pay their taxes in Benue State, whilst living in Taraba. Tivs’ attachment to their natal home base (Benue) for burials and weddings were seen as justification for asserting that they were not really Tarabans.”

WANEP (“Conflict Monitoring in Nigeria”; 2004, p. 186)

“A growing stream of villagers are fleeing border areas between Benue and Taraba states after an upsurge of deadly clashes ... over protracted land disputes,” residents and officials said on 25. July. ... Dozens of people have been killed since the resurgence of fighting in early June, when local militiamen opened fire on a crowded minibus. ... More than 700 people died when violence peaked in the area in October 2001, most of them massacred when troops launched reprisal attacks on Zaki Biam town and surrounding villages after local militia killed 19 soldiers deployed to quell the violence. More than 500,000 people fled their homes at the time ... finding refuge with relations and friends.”

IRIN-NEWS, 27.07.2007

“In October 2001, members of Reformed churches found themselves on opposite sides of violent conflict, in the case the CRCN (Jukun and Chamba) and the Tiv church, known as NKST. Tensions between the two groups have been longstanding and complex. Rumours that Tiv were getting numerous enough to win political

power, and their dominance of the yam market (a staple food for many) led to tensions. Small raids led to people fleeing their homes; some Tiv farmers defended their crops ...

It is risky to list the causes, because parties on all sides see the causes differently. Nevertheless, a few facts are clear. Jukun had once a large kingdom in the area, which was gradually getting smaller, while both Tiv and Fulani people moved into the area. The Jukun considered the other groups “guests” in their lands, and local tradition affirmed this perception. The Fulani were nomadic cattle herders from the North, and - being Muslims - were sometimes used as a tool to incite unrest by northern Muslim politicians. There was also competition in the Army between generals from this area, ... played a role in the massacre at Zaki Biam, after vigilantes killed 19 soldiers.

Nigeria has tried to manage ethnic conflict by dividing territory into ever-smaller states to give different groups a political base. This strategy has led the Jukun to view Taraba State as “their” base, while Benue State was to be for the Tiv, in spite of the fact that Tiv have lived for generations outside Benue.”
Reformed Ecumenical Council (“A central Nigeria ethnic conflict and a Church-initiated process for peace”; 2004, www.rec.gospelcom.net)

Despite the things that divide and separate people, those interviewed also stressed the existence of factors that are able to bring different groups together. Restoring democracy in 1999, and the initial steps to reform governmental bodies are seen as important cornerstones to put structures in place that reduce the distance between state and the common people. The creation of more programmes that promise to alleviate the suffering of the poor, and help to tackle some of the crises related to resource-based conflicts. Where criteria of equity, justice and transparency in the distribution of public resources are seriously applied, the impression of the majority that the government “has ears to listen to the cries of the people” can be changed and ethnic or religious tensions be reduced.

More often than before, local government, security forces and representatives of civil society groups have established forums of exchange prevent the escalation of conflicts in time. After crisis episodes peace commissions were established (mainly at the level of State governments). Many have been criticised for not having investigated the roots and dynamics of conflicts thoroughly or for not having been sufficiently inclusive in their recommendations and peace initiatives. But they are a start in dealing with problems and violence beyond simple security and legal patterns of response. Nigeria’s ethnic-religious divide has also produced a kind of power-sharing between politicians of different faiths or tribes. At national level, as in local politics, public offices are divided between members of competing groups or the alternate occupation of posts is arranged.

At local level, common interests in maintaining economic activities or in the access to scarce social services (education, health) are factors in restoring social relations and in bringing people together. Shared history of positive interaction, common personal experiences (like the school that the educated once attended together) or inter-marriage are also elements that connect different groups and open ways to de-escalate conflicts. Where governmental structures are absent or not willing to settle conflicts, traditional rulers and religious leaders often play an important role in resolving disputes, limiting violence and promoting reconciliation. Traditions can be helpful if different chieftaincies and tribes are not competing with each other or enter in conflict with “modern” structures. Religion is another important factor in the North Nigerian

context, as the vast majority is very pious. If religious communities intervene together when conflicting parties (with opposing economic or political differences) mobilise the population along religious lines, escalation of conflict can be avoided or even reversed.

“A consultation for peace requires much preparation. The right people have to be contacted and persuaded to meet the other group. The Peace, Justice and Reconciliation Committee, a local organizing group, together with an outside facilitator talked to church leaders on each side, to traditional tribal chiefs, to local government authorities, and eventually to top officials at the state and national government levels. Local leaders were invited to meetings lasting three or four days for intensive discussions of causes and solutions to the conflict, to learn what reconciliation means and to assess the role for Christian leaders in making peace work. After months of preparation, the first meeting took place in July 2002. ... A cross-ethnic team helped the town calm their emotions; and the town eventually helped Tiv refugees resettle and rebuild. ...

In August 2003, hard work by church and community leaders led to a significant peace agreement by leaders of the Tiv and Jukun, supported by the paramount chief of the area, the Jukun Aku Uka. It was heart warming to see people who often had seen each other only through the barrel of a gun come together to fellowship, pray and share jokes and find solutions together.

Among them was an acknowledgement that Tiv families that had lived in Wukari for generations should be considered “indigene”. They also agreed that all should follow the traditional ways of getting land and oppose land grabbing. In other points, they agreed to respect traditional names for places, to pay legitimate taxes, and to share elected and appointed offices equitably. Land use and political power were among the primary causes of the conflict. A few political problems remain, but there is good will to find a solution without violence. Reconstruction has begun, but schools, hospitals and other government services are makeshift.

At a more personal level, participants pledged themselves to work to overcome mutual suspicion, to socialize with each other and improve personal relationships. They urged church leaders to work more closely together, so they could worship and fellowship without regard to their ethnic background.”

Reformed Ecumenical Council (“A central Nigeria ethnic conflict and a Church-initiated process for peace”; 2004, www.rec.gospelcom.net)

As in many other places in the world, religion can have a "dual role". Examples of religious groups contributing to peace-building can as well be found in situations where religious adherence is used as a tool in the struggle for influence and power. For the Nigerian Christian community-based development projects, one dimension of communal divisions presents a special challenge: Is it possible to bring people together at the grassroots level, despite deeply entrenched polarisation resulting from Christian-Muslim mistrust?

Inter-religious relations

As in other parts of Nigeria, religion has always been and is still a strong factor in any aspect of the Northern context. There is a sometimes astonishing diversity of religious communities and of places of worship, going far beyond the demarcation “Christians / Muslims”. Religious commitments are very important for most people and, in comparison with European or even with other African societies, frequent public reference to faith and scripture is common among ordinary people in their daily life as it is for politicians in their speeches. Looking for a harmonious relationship with God fulfilling His will (transcendence) and being part of a fellowship of believers is central to most people’s thinking and actions. Even beyond their spiritual relevance, religious communities are the main harbours for the people, social life in the villages and, often enough, between neighbouring places. In the case of the “world religions”, Christianity and Islam, these communities also link their members to views and events occurring “outside” their immediate geographical and social environment. In social and political terms, the relationship between the two major religious communities, Christianity and Islam, has gained special importance in the public sphere as far as development programmes are concerned over the past 20 years. More frequently than ever before, it is determined more by polarisation, hostility and mutual fears of being “overturned” by the other religion, than by respect and cooperation.

All those interviewed stressed the fact that that religious differences have become a major feature of separation in the population, and that this can easily be used at times of tension to trigger off violent conflict. Making people understand the need of peaceful coexistence, offering them positive experiences in working together for the common good and of respectful ‘togetherness’ are seen as needs to counter the risk of misusing religious identity. Among those talked to, there were different views regarding the possibilities of achieving this objective. While many of those working directly at community level emphasized positive experiences on their ‘micro-level’ as it were, others, especially church leaders said that it would require long-term effort by both religious communities, necessitate changes in the society and this even at the international level.

A lot of changes in daily life have been mentioned in the conversations indicating an increasing fragmentation in the society along the lines of religious membership. In many places, mutual participation in religious events or the offering of gifts on these occasions are less common today than in former times. Sharing food has decreased due to rumours of eventually being poisoned by the adherents of the other religion. Criticism and public incitement against other people’s belief are more often heard. Inter-marriage has become more difficult, especially a relation between Christian man and Muslim woman. Different housing areas separate people, too, as does schooling in some parts. Some of these lines of divide are attributed to the impact of political extremism and of overzealous preaching. Among Muslims, the relative weight of Saudi- or Iran-influenced Islamic teaching has increased. Their followers (“izala”) often create problems within the Muslim community as they try to gain control over mosques and religious education. Ignoring numerous ways of expressing Islam, they want to ensure one standard interpretation of their religion and, for their own political purposes, a specific form of state structure based on Islamic principles (seen as a

superior value above any democratic order). Moral issues play a big role in this intra-Muslim struggle, together with strong tendencies to “galvanise the flock” and to blackmail those that do not follow their dictates (social isolation). The relative introversion of these missionary and political efforts within the Muslim community does not help to maintain peaceful coexistence with Christians either; internal debates are accompanied by deepening the gap between “the other” and us. Tensions are especially high in regions where Christians and Muslims each represent about half the population, and any change in this balance in favour of the other religion would imply a re-shuffle in local or regional power.

The increasing number of Christian churches and broadcasting stations in the North, and the presence of national and foreign missionaries converting people to Christianity can lead to negative or even furious reactions from Islamic authorities up to physical threat of death to “apostates”. This is the case, where some of the “new” Christian churches employ preaching tactics that similarly offend both Muslims and Christians. Conversion or evangelism is central to the churches that were visited. Convinced of being a witness to the Kingdom of God (bringing a change to the individual, the community and the larger society of believers), “evangelism and church planting” is a central priority in their understanding of wholistic mission. For them, the presentation of the gospel is not only in proclamation, but is also a demonstration of faith. For instance, engagement in development programmes is for them a demonstration of Christian faith in action. Meeting the needs of the poor people – independent of their faith – is a good deed (“praising your father in heaven”) and a sign of God’s love, but this is also seen as an opportunity to explain to others why the churches are involved in development. The combination of evangelism and development, seen by Christians as a wholistic expression of our faith, is perceived by some Muslims as a re-newed attempt to make Muslims renounce their faith. Old objections to Christianity still exist a hundred years after the mission started, and these are quickly revived. Christianity and Western influence are seen as two sides of one coin, an impression strengthened by the international debate on confrontation between the “Western” and the “Muslim world”.

Politics and religion

Hausa-Fulani dominance over other ethnic groups went along with Islam, which is predominant in the North, in pre-colonial and colonial times. After independence, the inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations slowly began to change. Smaller ethnic groups gained greater self-determination (when the North was divided into several states) and Christian communities caught up with Muslim adherents, numerically.

“During the long period of military rule (1960-1979, 1983-1998) the Hausa-Fulani, who are mainly Muslims, dominated other minority groups, but with the return of democracy in 1999 many of the groups resisted attempts by the Hausa-Fulani to politically dominate them. This brought about the many violent conflicts in the entire zone. These conflicts started much earlier than 1999, as an internal problem among Muslims themselves under the name Maitatsine, but later turned to be inter-religious.”
TEKAN (“Outline of Peace Desk”; 2006)

Although nationally the North is still seen as a mainly Hausa and Muslim area, the balance of power has shifted in many regions and in the North, at large. Now, about half the population is Christian (no reliable figures exist) who continue to feel discriminated as “citizens of second rate” and being “pushed around by Government

and Islam”. Less access to public functions or to public resources for predominantly Christian communities is one complaint; restriction of religious freedom by uneven use of public rules and laws is another one. While Muslims can build tiny or giant mosques everywhere in Nigeria (including in “Christian lands”) churches are often barred to do the same in mainly Muslim areas. Christian social services, sometimes existing since missionary time like schools and health posts, can be forced to close or to integrate themselves into the public system. At State schools, Muslim leadership ensures that schools within their domain have Islamic education as part of the curriculum in exclusion of Christian religious education. In some parts of the North, public servants only get a vacant position if they are a Muslim or convert to Islam. Although similar complaints may also exist among Muslims in mainly Christian areas, there is definitely a distinct attitude towards the relationship between politics and religion, among many Christians and Muslims, respectively. Since missionary times, the Nigerian Christian community maintained distance to political engagement, separating spirituality and worldly (“secular”) affairs. In contrast, close relationship between faith and political activity has hardly been questioned by Nigerian Muslims, up to now. For many of them, historically, political and religious dominance went together in the North (“even granted by the Christian British colonial power”). Theologically, Islamic principles are thought to be the answer for any relationship with the divine and with other human beings (as God’s final revelation to Muhammad and mankind). Islamic ruling of society then includes that “non-Muslims” are treated with respect, but seen as followers of an inferior religion.

A close relationship between Muslim political leaders and religious authorities still exists in many parts of the North: “Emirate Councils” have a strong influence on public decision-making, seek religious legitimation and often find reasons and ways to channel public funds into religious life. As the federal constitution is not very explicit on the place of religion in national life, and so ambiguities and contradictions regarding the engagement of the state in religious affairs and practice are possible. The introduction of the Sharia penal law in some parts of the North at the beginning of this decade is one example of the consequences that allowing privileges to one religious tradition can have on the total population and that the existence of dual systems can also create conflicts. The legal recognition of Islamic law caused a lot of fear and uncertainty, and this also among Christians. They feel that the Sharia legal system will one day affect them, too. Protests against the inclusion of Sharia in public law were followed in some places by violent clashes between Christians and Muslims. Although the Muslim community seems to be divided in many independent mosques at first glance, unity among them, however, is strong. It is established via the ulama (respected scholars) on the one hand, and a strong feeling of community or union that allows implementation even without major internal debate or formal hierarchical leadership on the other. In Nigeria, therefore, Muslims are considered to be able to fight together for their rights and for maintaining their status or privileges and, at the same time, quickly receiving support from the international ‘umma’.

Christians show patterns of a different political culture, not only because, religiously, they are more inclined in favour of non-violence, forgiveness and reconciliation than in violent, active engagement for their rights. Often institutionally divided, many churches are also internally structured in a complicated way. They are consequently “less spontaneous”. Up to now, serious and long-term efforts to reduce the tensions between Christians and Muslims hardly exist. There are some churches (first of all, the Catholic Church) or single clergy members and lay people who engage themselves in setting up respectful relations between Christians and Muslims, but often enough they do not represent the majority or any kind of acknowledged institutional position.

Religious leaders in or after a situation of confrontation mainly seek dialogue. It is often helpful to restore local relations, but these attempts remain primarily within a short-term conflict management framework and are not part of a strategy ranging from an analysis of the reasons of Northern conflicts and the religious dimension in them to an identification of ways of transforming them peacefully and of the specific contribution that religious communities could give.

Conflict resolution and democratic peace-building

Governmental bodies are involved in many dialogues and forums. Their presence is necessary, as many conflicts have their roots beyond the religious dimension. But to many of our interlocutors it seems that the debates are less focussed on a government's lack of concern in acting responsibly towards its citizens, but reduced to the issue of inter-religious relations. In consequence, all sides position themselves by statements of "political correctness" rather than serious reflection on how to overcome existing polarisation and so resolve conflicts. Then, over-emphasis is easily given on the mutual presentation of theological interpretations of the scriptures of both faith (underlining texts and traditions of human peace-building and justice, and at the same time playing down the role of religious communities in legitimising oppression and violence). Moving beyond theological debate (in particular, as the religious dogmas are not to be "negotiated") and developing concrete approaches to effective peace-building are just starting.

High expectations exist in the National Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) created by the former Federal Government. Weakly strategic and effective in the past, the commission is now (Presidency of Yar` Adua / Goodluck) trying to define a multi-annual agenda. It would be a positive signal if the participating representatives of the state and of the religious communities are able to agree on what issues are relevant enough to be discussed, what the nature and dynamics of conflict is and how to deal with it in the near future. Discussion of structural inequalities, the lack of democratic institutions and on finding contemporary concepts for religious communities and their contributions to a democratic nation, as well as and peace-building may require from Christians and Muslims that they go beyond certain scriptural traditions. Many of those in discussion stressed that Christians and Muslims are forced to make commitments to each other, should both be willing to stop Nigeria from falling apart and stop religions from gaining disrepute.

Whether substantial and quick changes in attitude towards each other are possible (from hostility to respect, peaceful co-existence and mutual cooperation), is a matter open to question for many of the Christians interviewed. An international "climate" of competing world views (involving religious diversity), the degree of injustice and suffering in Nigeria, and the militant intolerance typical of fundamentalist Islamic groups are seen as barriers. The attitude in both communities is to maintain or to gain numerical majority in the North, so as to be able "to keep the other in check", also continues to uphold an atmosphere of mutual mistrust. Debates in Muslim groups see as stimulating and connecting factors have not spoken about non-violent strategies in conflict (by other Muslims often associated with Christian tradition and regarded as "passive and ineffective" methods to contest opponents). There is a growing preparedness in Christian churches to discuss the possibility of a stronger public role of Christians and of all faith communities in favour of a democratic and just Nigeria. A new phase of relationship based on the readiness to listen to each other and to work together is reported from the people involved in projects.

Conflict transformation

All the projects visited have been affected in one way or the other by conflict, resources, social and political participation and by the ethno-religious polarisation.. Escalation into violent incidents was probably most felt by IDP (Christian Reformed Church in Nigeria), as the region Takum / Wukari in Taraba State was seriously hit by disputes and skirmishes for several years. Two separate cases, both involving ethnic groups with tense relations going back to the 19th century and concrete conflicts about land and public resources (the Jukun / Tiv conflict and the Jukun / Kuteb / Chamba conflict), caused death, destruction, police and military intervention and also displacement of many people in IDP's area of work. In some villages IDP was barred from realising its development activities. Other activities couldn't be attended by staff for fear of their personal security being undermined or by fears that members of local development committees could be accused of "collaborating with the wrong people".

"In 1996, the Takum Paramount Chief died, after a 30-year rule. This chief by tradition has always been Kuteb, who are still the majority in this district. However, a Chamba general with the help of a Jukun ambassador, had crafted a federal law that changed the election procedure so that a Chamba would alternate with a Kuteb in that position. Local Kutebs were incensed and refused to allow the election of a new chief. In 1997, this Chamba general, who was now the federal Minister of Defense, pushed through a reorganization of the local government boundaries, in the hopes of splitting the Kuteb majority and allowing a Chamba to rise to the post of local government chair. When a Kuteb won the first election anyway, the election was nullified and the districts reorganized again. ... With these two events raising the tension, it took only the beating of one youth by a group from the other side to set off conflict. Starting in October 1997 war raged, destroying 75% of the buildings in Takum. 100,000 Kutebs fled to the hills. The army was sent in to bring order, but ... shot at random.

... In this conflict, the Reformed Church of Christ in Nigeria (the Kuteb group) and the Christian Reformed Church in Nigeria (everyone else, but probably with a Jukun majority) were on opposite sides."
World Alliance of Reformed Churches ("The Takum Peace"; 2005, www.warc.jalb.de)

After initially including more relief work in its activities, IDP then decided to become engaged in inter-faith and inter-ethnic peace-building. It supported those people in its own and other Christian churches, in community organisations and public bodies that were interested in peaceful settlement; a process that was not easy due to the internal differences in the churches and in ethnic groups with regard to conflict and the use of "violent resistance". IDP made very clear that its community development programmes were open to everybody and, simultaneously, began to integrate conflict management training into its approach. While the conflicts in Takum / Wukari lasted for years and indeed are still not resolved completely, despite peace-building processes at regional level (and trained mediators and local mechanisms of "early warning / early action", at project level), the other organisations visited had to deal with conflicts occurring mainly at the grassroots level. (In this, they were less involved as potential "parties to the conflict"). We are speaking here of tensions between groups of

pastoralists and farmers or political disputes causing intra- and inter-communal problems. Working on these local conflicts of interest (and, sometimes, the consequences of those situations that turned out to be violent), became more important for the projects during the last years than local hardship and divisions resulting from these tensions negatively affecting the processes of Community Development. All the programmes started to give more attention to grassroots' peace-building as a specific element in their approaches.

The polarised atmosphere between members of different Christian denominations or that between Christians and Muslims is a huge challenge to the organisations. "Constant low grade tension" is more difficult to work on, as issues of suspicion and accusation are strongly involved (for instance of attempting to convert or to "bewitch" people) and the analysis of its roots and dynamics is more difficult and goes far beyond local boundaries.

Influence of the projects on conflicts

At local level, experiences are generally positive. Even before becoming more conscious of dividing identities within communities, the organisations had noticed that Community Development (CD) brought together different local sectors. Once these shared interest in changing living conditions and in mobilising resources to deal with common problems (not met by government or politicians even though they used the people to come to power), people started to cooperate more closely.

"Despite the increasing religious and ethnic intolerance in general, Dakanug community is an example where Christians and Muslims coexist peacefully. A Fulani Muslim was elected as a community development leader despite the fact that the community is made of about 90% Ron people who are Christians. Through COCIN community empowerment activities the attitude to peaceful coexistence is enhanced."

"Taiyu community in Yobe state has adopted me a community member as a result of the facilitation process in which they identified, prioritized and executed a water project. Though they are Muslims, they are willing that I – a Christian – be a member of their community. With this, I have all privileges that sons and daughters of this community have."

COCIN (local reports cited in "Executive Summary July to December 2006")

"POD has opened the way to ECWA to network and partner with other faiths and Christian denominations in the difficult context of permanent religious conflicts. Christians and Muslims living in the same community participate in peace-building process to minimise conflict situations and work together for the benefits of the community. Some predominantly Muslim communities have been reached through "bush-fire effects" that brought them closer to neighbouring Christian communities with which they interact in peaceful atmosphere. But the programme has also experienced hardship in other places through Muslim opposition and violence." POD ("5th phase evaluation"; 2006, p. 7)

In community development, needs are assessed using participatory approaches and giving members of the community an opportunity to express themselves and to find new forms of organisation (not determined by the interests of "outsiders"). There is no better recipe for motivation. People are able to work towards issues they were involved in identifying (often: education, health, water and sanitation, agriculture). The initiative and resources come from the community and therefore the responsibility will

certainly stay in the community enhancing collective will, communal safety nets, and a stronger negotiation position in contact with “outside” people who control economic or political power. Positive results of community cohesion on conflicts include, for instance:

- Intra-/inter-communal conflicts: These conflicts are gradually easing out as more communities see the benefit of community development. Working on joint projects within their wards and communities has been instrumental in curbing violence, although politics continues to be a threat to peaceful community harmony.
- Pastoralists/farmers: Dialogue has been the major tool for conflict resolution between farmers and pastoralists. Furthermore, at various levels peace committees have been established to ensure that the causes of conflict found. For example, a peace committee in Ganye local government in Adamawa State identified cattle routes on which farmers are not allowed to cultivate.
- Indigenous communities/settlers: The contribution of settlers to the economies of their host communities has been on the increase, and this is used as evidence that they mean well after all, and can be trusted to represent the community they come from. In many states now in the North, settlers are gradually being recognised by indigenous communities. Settlers are therefore allowed to stand for political positions, which is an indication of the gradual acceptance of settlers. More recently, the government has called on displaced individuals who left during a crisis to return, now that the indigenous communities see the need to accommodate people from other ethnic nationalities.

We heard stories of cases all through the conflict areas where the community jointly executed projects and were protected by the community, no matter what kind of conflicts were involved:

“Working together in the projects bonded them together. In a number of communities, we testified that working together brought peace and harmony between Muslims and Christians, e.g. in Tafare community (Bauchi state) where all structures of Christians were destroyed by Muslim fanatics, but Muslim leaders prevented the fanatics from destroying the community clinic that was jointly built by Christians and Muslims.”
COCIN (“Phase II Evaluation, June 2004)

Through community development, Christian and Muslims groups are able to understand the need to live together and to work on improving their lot by embarking on projects that serve the community. Most of these projects include schools, health centres and in some cases, rural electricity projects. Most communities have identified education as key to ensuring a plausible future for their children and village. When education becomes a priority, women and children benefit first, but the expectation to have more opportunities to be of use to the community is an indirect effect. Increasingly Christian and Muslims leaders understand by these experiences that they owe it a duty for their people and nation to live together in peace. Nation building supersedes religious bigotry.

“To be able to overcome poverty, communities need to develop capacity to transform their global environment (political, economic, social, cultural and ecological), to become proactive and self-reliant. To do so, they need to acquire skills in strategic thinking and planning. ... should have their capacity built in the area of peace-building and constant awareness for the communities on same. Where practical, dialogue should be used as a strategy to resolve inter-faith and inter-denominational conflicts.”
 POD (“5th phase evaluation”; 2006, p. 8)

Community development is able to break the barrier of religious discrimination as well and counter injustice, if community members see that whatever has been done at that level is done for the good of all. Even in very religious Muslim communities where women were normally not allowed to work with men on projects like the construction of a health centre, for example, new attitudes have been observed. In some cases they were even allowed to come out to attend literacy classes.

Government has a major role to play in this regard, by appointing leaders that are nominated by the community. People are being taught to be community-focused and to work more towards community integration.

“Governments in the past in Northern Nigeria are most of the time sceptical and suspicious about such NGO and movements talking about issues of justice, peace and the emancipation of the very poor people, and usually things are made difficult for such organisations. The main reason for the backwardness of the communities is the deliberate creation of continuous dependency on the Government controlled by the powerful “big men”. ... Since the beginning of this phase of programme, the situation and atmosphere has been better than in previous periods. We have better understanding from people and fewer attacks from those who wrongly thought we were only trying to woe people to Christianity. Much more people have realized from our indiscriminate distribution of programmes that we are concerned about development, justice and peace devoid of sentiments whether tribal or religious. The written appreciation of our programmes by government was impressive and the recognition (which was openly) by the traditional rulers led by the paramount chief was self-explanatory. This is the opposite of what was obtained in the past, when the authorities more often threatened us.”
 JPRM (“Annual Report 2006”, page 13)

A lot of the conflicts could be linked to incitement from outside and also to the fact that existing laws were not enforced to deal with the situation. The case of the Danish cartoons resulting in the burning of over 400 churches in Maiduguri, Borno state is a good example. The scenario had been worsened by the fact that the state government did not prosecute the perpetrators of the violence. In places where the government allowed the rule of law to take its course, most of the violence could be curtailed.

“We discovered that the two staff employed for Justice & Peace Promotion had organized a monthly training for a team of local facilitators. ... They are “court watchers” who attend the sessions of the local Courts. We realized that that has minimized corruption; even though the idea is not so much welcome by some judges and some staff of the courts. Out of ten court cases addressed, we discovered that 7 were effectively handled; the result was measurable. This is one of the most empowering programmes for any community in Adamawa state.”
 JPRM (“Evaluation 2004”, page 5)

Community involvement, religious, traditional and political, is a key factor in the development of peace-building. The government has set up the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC), which helps to create understanding between the two religious groups. The council also works on sensitive issues that are peculiar to the two religious groups that have been responsible for causing conflicts in the past, for example in the areas of marriage, preaching using abusive language, not giving land to either religious group to build houses of worship and bans on religious teaching in state schools etc.

During the election of March/April 2007, both Christians and Muslims issued joint declarations against the massive fraud by the ruling party. These were internationally affirmed. Religious bodies could do more by teaching people to have respect for each other, regardless of their religious affiliations. Christian leaders need to preach and teach more about love and forgiveness.

Eminent Christian and Moslem scholars must emphasise the teachings of the Bible and the Koran, which condemn taking the lives of human beings for any reason whatsoever. However, these days with different religious teachings (most of them from the outside), communities then become divided along religious lines, which, formerly, was never the case. Fortunately, quite a number of the villages live in harmony based on the old tradition of respect for human life.

What has not been changed regarding local conflicts?

Some factors have been mentioned that cannot be influenced at local level, and require advocacy and lobbying efforts by the programme projector themselves, their churches or even by general debate in Nigerian society at large: The political environment in Nigeria is as yet immature, and the issue of power struggle and the use of religion or ethnicity to gain political authority will continue to be an area of concern for some time to come. This may only change with more political and civic education among the population in general. The sentiments that religion and ethnicity cause will still be an issue influencing politics and power.

Poverty increases this risk. Lack of assets, small houses, little land, few or no livestock means that all family members will have to work, unless they are too young, too old or sick. Furthermore, adults may be physically weak and unable to work due to illness or disability, or because of the migration of active adults. This puts the people at the mercy of politicians and religious fanatics who will promise to alleviate their suffering or may deceive them in endlessly delaying the needed succour. Some of the conflicts involving the access to resources (pastoralists/farmers) can only partially be managed locally. Without major changes in Nigeria's environmental and economic policies, and comprehensive efforts to reduce poverty, poor rural families easily find themselves drawn into situations of competitive conflictive.

Many identity-based conflicts have international connections and relationships. Once something happens elsewhere, especially on the question of faith, adherents to that faith take it upon themselves to seek vengeance. The handling of information by the press is one area that is not influenced locally. Operators of International radio stations often whip up latent sentiments and thus cause divisions. This is particularly the case with the Hausa BBC broadcasts, *Voice of America* and *Radio Deutsche Welle*. These stations played a key role in fuelling the Jos crisis in 2001 when the Plateau State House of Assembly had to make a representation to these stations and requested that the reporters be changed and that qualified Hausa-speaking, Christian reporters be hired as well. This is still a major area of concern. The media need to monitor the Hausa

programmes, to handle issues with caution, be unbiased, and ensure that they are not pro-Islam in their news coverage and programming.

“While (conflict mitigation programmes, trainings for dialogue and negotiation by local CSO) are steps in the right direction, the Nigerian government needs to make a quantum leap in its search for peaceful resolution of conflicts. As a young democracy of a divided society that is steeped in poverty, Nigeria needs a sophisticated conflict management system that is directed at building a culture of peace, mitigating conflict and creating a conflict early warning mechanism.”
Chom Bagu (“Mitigating Conflict and Eradicating Poverty in Nigeria’s North Central Region: A Critical Assessment of Current Efforts”, 2002, p. 101)

In many communities there have been cases where conflicts were buried either due to forceful government intervention. Proponents of the conflict were either killed or voluntarily left the region. Since such conflicts were never solved, it is only a matter of time until they surface again. Such cases include inter-ethnic conflicts over positions of leadership in most parts of Northern Nigeria to mention only one problem.

As (unemployed) youth are often in the forefront of situations of open conflict, and their percentage of the total population high, youth empowerment through the acquisition of skills is an important and serious business. Governmental policies have to be extended and new models of working with this age group tested. (This, for instance, also implies support from foreign development partners). Often these projects are seen as either too expensive to support or as having doubtful long-term benefits or both. The experience of YAWDUST that channelled the energy of youth in a positive way towards community development, and that of MST’s vocational skill training programmes offer hope regarding the better integration of young people into society and conflict transformation.

Insights and challenges

In a multi-religious and, eventually, tense context, Church-related development programmes have to clearly state their institutional relations and wholistic development approaches. The fear by Muslims that “development” could be misused by trying to coerce people to convert to Christianity has to be taken seriously. Those programmes have been successful that gave clear signals of separating religious life from the secular in of their local faith community, and have made efforts directed towards community self-reliance. The points of emphasis should be: service delivery and meeting community needs.. Where this is done properly, the benefit coming from an NGO with a specific religious or denominational background is positively recognized by most or all parts of a community. On a few occasions, projects were rejected completely by communities because of their Christian identity, mainly when incited by Muslim fundamentalists. Yet, in similar Muslim communities, the programmes were invited to provide service with the full knowledge of the identity of the organisation.

Promoting co-existence, the protection of strangers and the less privileged are values in traditional African cultures. The same applies to Christianity and Islam where the Holy Books preach in favour of peaceful co-existence. This positive aspect should be more emphasised in any kind of inter-action and dialogue between Christians and Muslims. The programmes have shown that common initiatives towards community development restore trust, starting with simple things liking working and eating together, women’s groups meeting each other or in cases were informal settlement of

land disputes takes place. The relationship between religion and politics has not been resolved and will therefore continue to be a outlet for conflict. Government must take decisive measures with regard to the place of religion in national life and law. Overtly favouring Islam at the expense of Christianity (as it is fact in some northern states in Nigeria) creates room for future conflict. When the state promotes co-existence and secularity (no participation of state in religiously motivated power struggle and, simultaneously, non-acceptance of political manipulation relating to religion), it can contribute to the “inner peace” of society. This includes the fact that governments must strengthen their commitment to guarantee the rights of all citizens, regardless of their religious backgrounds.

At the same time, the religious communities have to continue reflecting how they, their traditions and values are able to contribute to the processes of democratisation, a just society and peaceful conflict transformation. But this must be handled creatively and without claiming that religion is the criteria in determining public affairs. Human dignity, freedom, equal rights, the integration of intervention; participation and democracy; sustainability, are no doubt points where Christians and Muslims can work in partnership towards an egalitarian society where everyone is happy and fulfilled.

Church-based community development programmes need more than moral support from their parent churches to deliver quality service and to change the lives of their church members and of the communities at large. Most of the programmes receive little in terms of personnel and financial support. This is partly understandable, because the churches themselves are struggling to meet their own current expenses and, at the community level, church income is also low because those attending are mostly farmers and the aged, while the young and have all gone to look for gainful employment in the cities. On the other hand, in comparing the different strategic priorities of churches, it seems that in some of them the balance between evangelic campaigns and Christian social responsibility could be a matter worthy of discussion.

Religious leaders have a strong responsibility in social and political conflicts where religion or religious differences become a major, motivating force. Political support for development programmes that are mainly effective at grassroots level is necessary to get at the root of many conflicts, to intervene in crisis and to advocate on behalf of effective peace-building, conflict transformation and promote justice.

Increasing separation and competition between different Christian congregations or between Christians and Muslims, where each creates its own programmes of social services, development or peace-building, undermines attempts to create systems of interconnected, social institutions or to find comprehensive answers to situations of conflict and suffering. Institutions will need to better utilize the often complementary nature of their activities, and not function in a competitive fashion. There is also a need to maintain on-going dialogues between NGO's and governments with a view of ensuring greater mutual learning and cooperation.

Executive Summary

The assessment has been commissioned to provide information on the perception that partners of EED in Northern Nigeria have of the relation between people of different faiths. Most of the organisations are closely related to Christian churches, and work in regions where conflicts and sometimes even sudden eruptions of violence are common. In many tense situations, domestic and foreign observers regard the affiliation to communities confessing different faiths as a central element of dividing people and in the promotion of conflict escalation.

Gradually, issues of conflict transformation and peace-building have become important in the current approaches of the organisations visited. Most of them have a tradition stemming primarily out from approaches employed by other social services and, more recently, community development. Some others are more strongly influenced by Christian traditions of peace work. Common to all of them is the conviction that the current tensions in Northern Nigeria are not related to a “religious conflict”, i.e. opposition between Christians and Muslims.

Their experiences of working at community level have shown them that the roots and dynamics of conflicts are mainly related to different interests regarding the access to natural resources, public facilities and political power. Nevertheless, in their work they have perceived that the management and transformation of these conflicts of interest also require a closer look at ethnic and religious identities. Tensions resulting from tribal or religious differences (between Christians and Muslims or between Christian denominations) often aggravate a conflict, in particular when these are used to mobilise sectors of a community for political purposes.

According to the lessons learned by the organisations, community development with a strong focus on the participation of all local actors is able to bind people together, beyond such identities as faith and tribal affiliation or attempts at political manipulation. When community initiatives succeed in mobilising people and resources to effect changes in local living standards (e.g. education, health, food security, and income generation), conflicts can be settled more easily.

Although modifications in people’s attitudes and behaviour can be effected locally, more complex conflicts require major changes in regional or national policies, and in Nigeria’s political culture. Despite improvements since re-democratization in 1999, Nigeria is still faced with a lack of political will or capacity to eliminate the huge social and regional disparities and so promote more well-being, justice, democratic participation, the rule of law, and good governance.

The peaceful transformation of conflict requires new public policies, but also an active civil society engaging itself for the establishment of responsible citizenship (civic education) and speaking out about the challenges facing Nigeria. Within their traditions, the Christian churches are still struggling to define their own contribution to this process, but also they are also attempting to find a contemporary understanding of the term, “wholistic development”. Part of this re-definition includes a review of the relationship between Christians and Muslims. Scars of the past and old tensions have related more to social and political questions of dominance and discrimination rather than theological differences or missionary efforts, but these features are still

predominant. These prejudices are easily rekindled in local conflicts, nowadays additionally falling back on global generalisations such as the controversy between “Western, Christian” and “non-Western, Islamic”.

How to respect diversity, practise tolerance in inter-personal relations as in society at large and to promote a culture of effective and non-violent communication is a challenge for Christians in general, for the Christian-Muslim dialogue and the trilateral relation between both faith communities and state. Finding more comprehensive answers, and exploring alternatives (as the organisations visited are doing in their development activities) may also be a pre-condition to prevent further violence and to overcome a situation where faith communities as well as governmental authorities mostly start to react only after violence already having occurred. Recommendations are made to the effect that churches should promote debate on how to respond to conflict and to permanent “low-level-tensions” between Christians and Muslims. Involving Nigerian partners more intensively in international dialogues may also stimulate debates among Nigerian Christians about social concerns. On the other hand, Nigerians would then be able to share their own experiences of Christian social responsibility in order to change with their European counterparts.

Signs of Hope.

Development, Conflict and Religion in Northern Nigeria

The position of Christian development programmes regarding relations between people of different faiths

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