

The Impact of the League of Imams and Alfas on the Lives of Muslims in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The idea of the formation of the League of Imams and Alfas in Ekiti land started in 1949. This ended with the joining of the Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria, Ekiti State chapter in the same year. The current League of Imams and Alfas in Ekiti came to existence with the creation of Ekiti State in 1996. The body adopted the aims and objectives of the national body. The purpose of forming the body in Ekiti State is to feel the influence of the national body in Ekiti State. This is one of the reasons why the establishment of the body at the local government level was encouraged in the State. The major reason for this article is to enable the readers to get acquainted with the activities of the organization in the State. Aside from the historical analysis of the formation of the body in Ekiti State, the paper states some of the achievements of the body in the state to include conferment of chieftaincy titles and construction of Islamic Centre. Its challenges consist of inability to settle all rifts leading to division and the dichotomy between the body and the Ansar-Ud-Deen Society. Among the recommendations are that the position of authority should not be given to the person that seeks for it, education of Muslims and non Muslims on Islamic tenets and that the Muslim leaders should always listen to the followers as long as their advice dose not contract the Shari'ah.

Keywords: Ekiti State, Imams, Alfas, conferment of titles, dichotomy .

Introduction

Ekiti State is one of the states in the Southwest of Nigeria. It coexists with the states like Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun and Ondo. Its Headquarters is located at Ado Ekiti (Balogun 2024: 59). The idea of the formation of the League of Imams and Alfas in Ekiti predated the creation of the state in 1996 (Balogun & Balogun 2021: 330, Balogun 2022: 271). It started in Ado-Ekiti in 1949. In the year, representatives of the Muslims of the town attended the meetings of the Muslim Congress of Nigeria formed in 1948. The meetings were held in Ibadan and Ijebu-Ode respectively. On returning from the meetings, Pa Ayinde A. Bello who was the leader of the delegations to the meetings, called the meeting of the Muslims of the then Ado-Ekiti District to the house of Pa Alabi Bello where he briefed them about the importance of the Muslim Congress of Nigeria.

The Chief Imam of Ido-Ekiti, Lawal Agbetola was on a business trip to Ado-Ekiti. He called at the house of his friend, Lawal Bello, only to meet them in the meeting. He was given permission to contribute to their discussion. He suggested the summoning of the meeting of the Imams of the seventeen communities whose kings formed *Pelupelu* (Council of first class Obas) in Ekiti. These communities include Ado, Ikere, Ogotun, Otun, Ijero, Emure, Ayede and Ikole-Ekiti. He opined that such a meeting would provide a wider forum for a unified Muslim body in Ekiti. His suggestion was applauded and upheld. The meeting was held at Ado-Ekiti Court Hall on the 5th August 1949 (Ajibade 1988:17-18, Sulaiman 2011: 66). The following decisions were taken in the meeting:

- 1 The meeting of Ekiti Imams and Alfas should be encouraged.
- 2 The Imams should settle the misunderstandings among the Muslims in Ekiti to pave the way for peace and harmonious relations among them.
- 3 Establishment of Muslim schools so as to prevent further conversion of Muslim children and wards to Christianity in their pursuit of western education.
- 4 Provision of scholarships for the Muslim students as motivation for their pursuit of western education (Kareem 2008: 214).

Kareem stated further that the meeting ended with the decision to re-convey at Ijero-Ekiti on the 4th November, 1949. The Ijero meeting was concluded with the decision to join the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society of Nigeria so as to be able to realize their aims and objectives in respect of the education of the Muslim children in Ekiti. Thus what should have been the League of Imams and Alfas for the entire Muslims and Muslim organizations in Ekiti, turned to the Council of Imams and Alfas of the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society of Nigeria, Ekiti Division and the Imam of Ikole Ekiti, Alhaji Yusuf Olatunji Ogunlayi was made its chairman (1949-1988). This prevented the Imams and Alfas of other Muslim organizations like the *Zumratu'l-Mu'minin* Movement of Nigeria, *Ahmadiyyah Muslim Jama'at* and *Nawair-Ud-Deen* Society of Nigeria from joining the organization. The societies were operating the Council of Imams and Alfas of their own; independent of each other with the overwhelming majority in the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society of Nigeria. This situation characterized the Ekiti Division of the Yoruba-land till the creation of the former Ondo State in 1976. The body was finally formed in Ekiti State in 1997.

Research Methodology

This study made use of qualitative approach and employed different data collection methods to examine the impact of the League of Imams and Alfas on the lives of the Muslims in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Interviews were conducted with important Muslim figures in Ekiti State such as the Grand Imam of the State who is also the President General, League of Imam and Alfa, Southwest, Edo and Delta States, Alhaji Muhammad Jamiu Kewulere Bello, the Deputy Grand Imam of Ekiti State, Alhaji Uthman Ayolo Bakare, the Chief Imam of Ansar-Ud-Deen Central Mosque, Ikere- Ekiti who is also the Missioner of the Society in Ekiti State, Alhaji A.B. Abdus-Salam, the Secretary of the League of Imams and Alfas in Ekiti State, Alfa Abdul-Rasak Adenipekun, and the Chief Imam of Ire Ekiti, Alhaji Muhammad Jamiu Zubair Ojutiri. Aside this, other documents used include the constitution of the body, programme, journals and textbooks, and verses of the Qur'ān. The information gotten from the interviews was corroborated with written sources to avoid contradictions of facts.

Results and Discussion

Interview conducted with Alhaji Muhammad Jamiu Kewulere Bello revealed that the creation of the former Ondo that comprised the present Ekiti and Ondo States made Alhaji Yusuf Yaquab Akorede, the Imam of Ado-Ekiti, to become its 1st Grand Imam. He died on the 11th October 1976 and was succeeded by Alhaji Yayi Akorede, the Imam of Akure, as the Grand Imam of the State whiles the Chief of Imam of Owo, Alhaji Ahmad Aladesawe became the Secretary General. Other prominent members of the organization from Ekiti Division were Imam of Ikole Ekiti, Alhaji Yusuf Olatunji Ogunlayi; Imam of Iyin Ekiti, Alhaji Sanusi Hussein; Imam of Ikere Ekiti, Alhaji Adamo Kolawole Ibraheem; Imam of Ijero Ekiti, Alhaji Shittu Owonifari; the Missioner of *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society of Ekiti State, Alhaji Liadi Adebayo Ameen; Chief M.T.S. Balogun and Alhaji Muhammad Jamiu Kewulere Bello who succeeded Imam Yusuf Yaquab Akorede as Imām of Ado-Ekit.

He stated further that the process of the formation of the League of Imams and Alfas that comprised all the Imams and Alfas of all the Muslim organizations in Ekiti as mooted in

1949 started again on the creation of Ekiti State in 1996. The organization was finally formed in Ekiti State in 1997. As soon as the organization was formed, leadership tussle erupted. At the initial stage, the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society members in Ekiti State wanted a rotational Presidency of a four year time. The rotational Presidency was faulted by members of Central Mosque, Ado Ekiti with the Constitution of the organization which makes the occupation of the position of the Grand Imam a lifetime. Balogun (2007: 49) states that the Society then claimed that they were the majority in Ekiti State. Hence, the Grand Imam of the organization in the State should go to their leader, late Alhaji Liadi Adebayo Ameen who was the Missioner of the Society in Ekiti State.

The Central Mosque members, especially Ado-Ekiti, opined that the position belongs to them in the sense that the Central Mosque is for the generality of the Muslims. All the Imams of the Muslim societies in a given town are under the Imam of the Central Mosque of the town and the Imam of the State Headquarters is the leader of all Imams in the State. Hence, the position belongs to the Central Mosque, Ado-Ekiti (Kareem 2008: 49, Sulaiman, 2015: 140). They buttressed their claim with the practice in the neighboring States of Ondo and Osun where their Grand Imams were appointed in the States' Headquarters and in the Central Mosques.

Alhaji Muhammad Jamiu Kewulere Bello asserted that the division of the Muslims of the State to the Central Mosque and *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society dichotomy on the matter was a big challenge to the Muslim leaders of the State and the apex body of the League of Imams and Alfas. The apex body resolved the issue with the appointment of Alhaji Muhammad Jamiu Kewulere Bello as the Grand Imam of Ekiti State. His appointment to the position was not acceptable to the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society of Nigeria, Ekiti State Council. The society dissociated itself from the appointment and boycotted the meetings of the organization. He claimed further that Alhaji Sulaiman Afolabi Ogunlayi who was the Commissioner of Finance under the Military Administrator of the State, Major Muhammad Inua Bawa (1996-1998) and a staunch member of the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society, and the Governor, who is also a Muslim, took up the settlement of the matter. As at that time, the uncle of the Commissioner, Alhaji J.F. Ogunlayi, was the National Vice Chairman of the Society while Alhaji Remi Badmus was the State Chairman. The Commissioner with the approval of the Governor conveyed several meetings of the two parties where they resolved to make the following people the members of the Executive Committee of the League of Imams and Alfas in Ekiti State.

- 1 Imam of Ado Ekiti, Alhaji Muhammad Jamiu Bello Kewulere-Grand Imam.
- 2 Imam of Ikole Ekiti, late Alhaji Hassan Taiwo Ogunlayi who was a strong member of the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society-Vice-President.
- 3 Alhaji Sulaiman Omotade, a native of Aramoko-Ekiti-General Secretary.
- 4 Alhaji Qadiri Oguntuase from Agbado-Ekiti-Assistant Secretary-General.
- 5 Imam of Ise Ekiti, Alhaji Uthman Ayolo Bakare-Treasurer.
- 6 Alhaji Abdul-Rasaq Adenipekun from Ado-Ekiti-Public Relations' Officer
- 7 *Mufassir* of the Central Mosque, Ado-Ekiti, Alhaji Aruna Sakariyau Oluwagbadurami- Grand *Mufti*.
- 8 The State Missioner of the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society, late Alhaji Liadi Adebayo Ameen from Ado-Ekiti-State Missioner.
- 9 Late Alhaji Abdul-Raheem Olowoyo from Ado-Ekiti, the *Awiye Adini* of Ekiti State-member.
- 10 Imam Iyin, Alhaji Sanusi Hussein-Patron
- 11 Imam Ijero-Ekiti, Alhaji Shittu Owonifari-Patron.

It is of note that the appointment of Alhaji Sulaiman Omotade as the Secretary General of the League of Imams and Alfas, Ekiti State, was not acceptable to the members of

the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society because of his relationship with the Central Mosque, Ado-Ekiti. The Secretary General used to attend the *Jumu'at* services at the Central Mosque, Ado-Ekiti. Their belief is that the two principal positions in the League of Imams and Alfas-the Grand and the Secretary General, had been technically given to the Central Mosque, Ado-Ekiti. In the course of time, Alhaji Sulaiman Omotade stepped aside. The Public Relations Officer, Alhaji Abdul-Rasaq Adenipekun was asked to take over the post in the acting capacity. He has been occupying the position to date. The taking over of the post of the Secretary General by the Public Relations' Officer of the organization is not a solution to the agitation of the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society because the Public Relations' Officer is a strong member of the Central Mosque, Ado-Ekiti.

It is observed from the distribution of the positions that *Zumratu'l-Mu'minin* Movement of Nigeria, *Ahmadiyyah* Muslim *Jama'at*, *Nawair-Ud-Deen* Society of Nigeria and other Muslim organizations, were left out. The death of of the Imam of Ekole Ekit, Alhaji Hassan Taiwo Ogunlayi, pave the way for the Imam of Ise Ekiti, Alhaiji Uthman Ayolo Bakare to become the Deputy Grand Imam of Ekiti State.

Aims and objectives of the organization

The League of Imams and Alfas in Ekiti State adopts the apex body's aims and objectives without addition or subtraction. These include:

- 1 The unification of all Imams, Alfas, Arabic and Islamic Teachers, and all learned Muslims in terms of Islam who preach Islam;
- 2 Demand their rights from the Government as the spiritual leaders of the Muslims;
- 3 Set up a committee to look after the welfare of the mosques, teaching of Arabic and Islamic Studies and preaching of Islam (League of Imams and Alfas, Western State, Nigeria1974: 3).

Membership

The Organization states further that the membership of the League of Imams and Alfas is open to all Imams, Alfas, Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers, and the preachers of Islam.

Organizational Structure

The League of Imams and Alfas is organized in Ekiti State at the level of State and Local Government areas. The Chief Imam of the State Headquarters, Alhaji Muhammad Jamiu Bello Kewulere, is appointed as the Grand Imam of Ekiti State while the Chief Imams of the Local Government Headquarters are recognized as the Chairmen of the League of Imams and Alfas in their respective Local Governments. The duties of the Grand Imam and the chairmen of Local Government Imams are to:

- (i) Preside over the General and Executive Committee meetings of the League;
- (ii) Guide the body to the right path in all its activities;
- (iii) Seek the advice of members before taking decisions on any issue.

Since the beginning of the League of Imams and Alfas in Ekiti State, their meetings have being holding on every third Thursday of the month. The reasons adduced by the Grand Imam of Ekiti State, Alhaji Muhammad Jamiu Kewulere Bello for this includes:

- 1 The decisions taken in the meeting would be part and parcel of the Friday sermon of the following day. If there is any information to the congregation, it would be easily passed to them in unison. This would save time and cost for the Imams
- 2 Traditionally, Thursdays and Fridays are weekly public holidays in the Qur'anic schools instead of Saturdays and Sundays that are recognized for Western education in Nigeria. The Imams and Alfas teaching in the schools usually use the opportunity

to attend to other issues. On Thursday, they will attend meetings and on Friday morning, the Imams revise or write the sermons to be delivered at the *Jumu'at* Service.

- 3 As at the time that Thursday was chosen, few of the active members of the organization in Ekiti State were Government workers.

Findings revealed that the fixing of the meetings of the League of Imams and Alfas to Thursdays in Ekiti State, gives no room for the new set of Imams and Alfas who are Government workers to attend the organization's meetings regularly. The attempt to shift the meeting to either Saturday or Sunday may create another problem, because most of the social functions sometimes involving Muslims are slated for Saturdays and Sundays. Also, most of the meetings of the other Muslim organizations are held on Sundays. For example, the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs holds its meetings on the 1st Sunday of every month; Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria takes 2nd Sunday; *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society of Nigeria, 3rd Sunday; United Muslim Council, last Sunday of every month; *Ahmadiyyah* Muslim *Jama'at*, last Sunday of every two months. *Nasrullahi-l-fatihi* Society holds its pray meetings on every Sunday.

At the early stage of the League of Imams and Alfas in Ekiti State, its meetings were held on rotational basis. The rotation was shelved in 2009 because of the complaint of lack of fund to host the meeting by some Local Governments. Between 2009 and 2011, its monthly meetings were held at the Central Mosque, Ado-Ekiti. This has negative effects on the attendance of the Imams and Alfas who were from far distances like Omuo, Osan, Erinmope, Efon and Ikoro-Ekiti. The cost of transportation of people from these towns and villages was higher than those from Ado and its immediate environs. The Imams and Alfas from these far distances were put to disadvantage while those from Ado and nearby towns and villages were favoured. The Executive Committee of the organization reverted to the rotational system in 2011. This is in operation till date.

In many of the Local Governments, meetings are not held because of lack of effective chairmen. The making of the Imams of the Local Government Headquarters the automatic chairmen of the organization at every Local Government in the State is affecting their meetings. Many of the Local Government Headquarters' Imams lack qualities for the position. If the position is not permanent to the Local Government Headquarters, one of the Imams in the Local Government that is competent for the position would have been selected.

Achievements of the League of Imams and Alfas in the State

Settlement of crises resulting from Imamship tussles

Making of peace is an indispensable part and parcel of Islam (Qur'an 49: 10). The various attempts made by the League of Imams and Alfas, Ekiti State, to resolve the crises that erupted on the appointment of Imams in many towns in the State, is in line with the commandments of Allah and the practice of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). For example, the Organization was able to settle different Imamship cases at Awo and Ire Ekiti without any division.

Conferment of Titles on prominent Muslims

The practice among the Muslims in Ekiti State before the emergence of the League of Imams and Alfas, was for each town to have its own chiefs. They used chieftaincy titles as a tool to consolidate Islam in their different towns and villages (Sulaiman 2013: 141). There was none that cuts across the State. The League of Imams and Alfas, deemed it fit to have State Muslim chiefs. The organization therefore created State chieftaincy titles and filled them with the following Muslims:

1. *Are Musulumi* of Ekiti State- Alhaji Abdul-Ganiyu Adebisi from Ado-Ekiti. He is a member of the Central Mosque.
2. *Baba Adini*-Dr. Sikiru Tae Lawal from Ado-Ekiti. He is a member of the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society.
3. *Amiru-l-Ulamau*-Alhaji Abdul-Rahman Salmon from Ado-Ekiti. He is a member of the *Zumratu'l-Mu'minin* Movement of Nigeria.
4. *Amiru-l-Muminu*-late Alhaji Bakare Abiola Maliki from Igbemo-Ekiti. He was a member of the Central Mosque.
5. Balogun-Alhaji Yahaya Aremu Ibraheem from Ijero-Ekiti. He is a member of the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society.

The question of why the positions are concentrated in Ado-Ekiti was answered by the President- General of the League of Imams and Alfas, Alhaji Muhammad Jamiu Kewulere Bello and the Chief Imam of Ire-Ekiti, Alhaji Muhammad Jamiu Zubair Ojutiri. They said that there are many positions with the League of Imams and Alfas. They had directed every Local Government to submit names of their nominees. Only the Local Governments that submitted names were given positions. The chieftaincy positions of the other Local Governments would be allotted to them when they are ready. A major reason why the other Local Governments are not ready is finance. The money that is collected on a would be chief is hardly affordable to some people. Information has it that the *Amiru-l-Ulamau* spent over one million naira before the position was conferred on him. If this continues, people may lose interest in accepting chieftaincy titles from the League of Imams and Alfas of Ekiti State.

Radio programmes During Saḥūr in Ramaḍān

The period of Ramaḍān fasting is a time that every Muslim wants to engage in one good deed or the other. The League of Imams and Alfas, Ekiti State chapter, is not left out in the struggle to be part and parcel of the organizations that would benefit from the reward of the month (Qur'ān 2:261).

In an attempt to get more rewards during the period of Ramaḍān, the League of Imams and Alfas, Ekiti State chapter, decided to be sponsoring Radio programmes early in the morning of the month of Ramaḍān, covering 29 or 30 days, depending on the appearance of the crescent of moon. The Organization is the brain behind the *Emusarije* between 3:00 and 5:00 a.m. on the Broadcasting Service of Ekiti State Radio, 91.5, during the twenty nine or thirty days of every Ramaḍān. A Committee presently under the Chairmanship of Alhaji Muhammad Jamiu Zubair Ojutiri, the Chief Imam of Ire Ekiti, is saddled with the responsibility of organizing the programme. Other members of the Committee are: Alhaji Rasheed Yakubu, from Awo; Alhaji Tajudeen Olorunsola, from Emure; the Chief Imam of Ode, Alhaji Idris Yunusa; Alfa Muhibullah Sulaiman Orelope, from Ise-Ekiti; Alhaji Salman Adebayo Adedipe, from Ado Ekiti and the researcher, Dr. Yisa Olorunda Balogun, from Igbemo Ekiti. The programme is being financed through four major sources.

1. The League of Imams and Alfas itself;
2. Financial assistance from Ekiti State Government;
3. Donations from philanthropists;
4. Contributions by different towns in all the Local Governments in Ekiti State.
5. Sponsoring of programme by people during the allotted period.

Ramaḍān Lecture

Aside the Radio programme, the League does organize Ramaḍān lectures for the Muslims in Ekiti State on the last Saturday of every Ramaḍān at Ado-Ekiti. This is a programme that every Imam, individual and Muslim organization is invited to participate. The programme usually serves as another avenue to give enlightenment to people about the

tenets of Islam. It gives room for questions and answers on issues bothering the minds of the participants. It is another forum for the Muslims of Ekiti State to make personal contact with each other and exchange ideas.

Acquisition of land for the League's secretariat

The organization has acquired 85 plots of land behind Olaoluwa Muslim Grammar School, Ilawe Road, Odo-Ado. The land had been cleared and the fencing of the land is ongoing. 6 different plans that consist of the mosque, market stalls, conference hall and meeting house and residential houses had been drawn. Internet building and borehole are already on the land. The researcher is the chairman of the Building Committee of the Islamic Centre.

Mosque projects in towns

Alhaji Muhammad Jamiu Kewulere Bello opined that the League of Imams and Alfas assisted some towns in the construction and completion of their mosques. For example, in 2009, the body donated a cash gift of fifty thousand naira out of the money realized on the installation of Alhaji Bakare Abiola Maliki, as *Amiru-l-Muminu* of Ekiti State, towards the construction of a befitting Central Mosque at Igbemo-Ekiti. It equally donated a cash gift of forty six thousand naira towards the roofing of Esure-Ekiti Central Mosque in 2014. Their major aim of assisting the towns is to share from the reward accruing to a person or group of persons that build a mosque. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) is reported to have said that: "He who built a mosque for Allah, Allah would build a house for him like it in Paradise (Sunnah.com)."

Financial assistance to members in need

The League of Imams and Alfas, has assisted many Muslims who needed their help, most especially from recovering from their sickness. The researcher secured the financial assistance of the organization when he was admitted to Ekiti State Teaching Hospital, Ado-Ekiti in June, 2015, when he was receiving treatment for internal bleeding. The organization gave ten thousand naira to him and kept on paying regular visits to him till he left the hospital. The leadership of the organization also paid a visit to the former Chief Imam of Igede-Ekiti, Alhaji Yusuf Abdul-Kareem Adewumi Olorunkemi and assisted him financially during the period of his sickness in 2015 (Adenipekun 2025). The actions of the organization were based on the Qur'an 9:1 which recommends charity. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) enjoins the Muslims to alleviate the suffering of other Muslims (Sunnah.com).

Challenges

Islam in Ekiti State has numerous challenges ranging from educational issues, government employment, political appointments and Islamic culture (Balogun 2022: 91). Some non Muslims do not even want a Muslim to become the King of their towns. This is reflected in the case of Awo Ekiti (Bello and Bello 2020: 168). This made Buhari, Agus and Syarifuddin (2024: 93) to say that the Muslim and Christian leaders should encourage equitable relations among Christians and Muslims in Ekiti State.

Inability to amicably settle some of the rifts resulting from Imamship tussles

Despite all efforts of the League of Imams and Alfas to settle all the crises that surfaced on the appointment of Imams in the State, there are still some towns where the rifts led to schism of the Muslim community to Central Mosques and Ansar-Ud-Deen Society. Examples are Igbemo Ekiti, Ikole Ekiti, Agado Ekiti and Ilawe Ekiti.

Inability to combat the conversion of Muslims to Christianity

Investigations revealed that the League of Imams and Alfas is not doing enough in combating the rate of conversion of Muslims to Christianity in Ekiti State. The Grand Imam of Ekiti State and President-General, League of Imams and Alfa, Southwest, Edo and Delta States, Alhaji Muhammad Jamiu Kewulere Bello, attributed the conversion to lack of the adequate knowledge of Islam, greediness, influence of western education and culture, and fault of the parents of the converts. He asserts that many Muslim parents have no control over their children. Muslim primary and secondary schools were established in every community in the State for the Muslim children to attend. Some Muslim parents and children prefer Christian schools to these schools. Qur'anic schools were established by the Imams and Alfas, only few Muslim children attend the schools. Arabic and Islamic Studies were introduced in Ekiti State University, National Open University, Ado Ekiti Study Centre, and the Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere-Ekiti, only few Muslims care to study these twin subjects. On Fridays, the Imams do deliver sermons, and in the Muslims forums, the Imams and Alfas do educate the Muslims on the principles and practice of Islam. He promised that the League of Imams and Alfas will brainstorm to find other means by which the conversion, especially through education and marriage could be reduced.

Ojeniyi (2013) lists ten major reasons for conversion from Islam to Christianity and vice versa in Nigeria. These are:

1. **Poverty:** A poor person who cannot meet his financial needs may be influenced to religion of his financier.
2. **Inter-religious marriage:** In most cases, wife ends up in changing to the religion of her husband. However, if the husband is weak, the wife may influence him to her religion.
3. **Peer group:** Sometimes, a person may influence his friend to his religion by preaching to him or her.
4. **Spiritual problem:** People who have one problem or the other may decide to change their religion with the hope of getting solution to the problem in the other religion. However, many of them remain in the religion with the false belief that their problem is under control.
5. **Prosperity and miracle:** Today, Christianity preaches prosperity and miracle more than any other religion. This super bait is being widely used by most leaders as a result of man's affinity for cheap prosperity.
6. **Laziness/shortcut:** many Muslims have the belief that Christianity is less stressful than Islam as they have to observe the five daily prayers timely and regularly and perform other *'Ibadah* (worship) such as spiritual baths (*Janabah*), which are always performed by the Muslims after menstruation, stoppage of blood birth and sexual intercourse. Such purifications are not compulsory in the Christianity.
7. **Parents with different faiths:** Some people are born to the family where the parents belong to different faiths. The father may be a Muslim and the mother a Christian and vice versa. In this case, the children's faith is determined by the parent who has more influence on the children.
8. **Spiritual revelation:** Some converted Muslims or Christians used dream as their reason for conversion to the other religion.
9. **Religious curiosity:** Most people with a high level of curiosity often end up accepting the religion they are curious about.
10. **Personal conviction:** Some decide to convert to other religion because they are convinced that the religion is the best. The conviction may come as a result of one thing or the other that they cherish in the religion.

Added to the above points is abuse of polygamy. It is observed that some Muslims do neglect one wife for the other. This is against the principle of equality and justice mentioned in the Qur'ān 4: 3 and 129.

Some husbands go to the extent of neglecting the children of such a wife. They keep on spending money on the upbringing and education of the children of their favourite wife. The other wife is left with all the responsibilities of her children. The abuse of polygamy has made many Muslims and non-Muslims to condemn polygamy regardless of its advantages to humanity. Its condemnation is further influenced by the Christian and Western policy of one man and one wife. This had eaten deep into the minds of many female Muslims to the extent that they do not want to hear anything about polygamy. Many of them who have no deep understanding of Islam. They prefer to marry non-Muslims rather than falling into the polygamous family. Some who have sympathy for polygamy prefer to be the first wife (Balogun 2006: 141). Their common saying is that "I do not disallow my husband to marry another wife but he must not marry a wife before me."

The death of the husband is another reason for conversion. A woman of the Christian background who marries a Muslim may revert back to her previous religion after the death of her husband with her children. This is more common if the woman is not deep in Islam before the death of the husband.

A major way to combat the conversion of the Muslims to Christianity is for them to have sound knowledge of Islam. This can only be achieved through the understanding of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. The two would guide a Muslim to understand other tenets of Islam.

Lack of good care of widows, orphans and the less privileged

On the care of widows, orphans and the less-privileged in Ekiti State, the result of our finding revealed that the League of Imams and Alfas in the State is lagging behind. The taking care of orphans, the needy and the less privileged is encouraged in the Qur'ān 107:1-3. The substantial point here is that when people are dealing with the orphans, affection and humane treatment is more important than bodily food which is in the secondary stage. Feeding the needy and the widows are two of the most important good actions that the Muslims are encouraged to engage in. If they cannot feed a needy person or widow, they must encourage others to do so (Sahii Muslim).

The dichotomy between the League of Imams and Alfas and other Muslim organizations

The type of relationship that is supposed to exist among the Muslim organizations is expressly stated in the Qur'ān. Allah says that:

And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves; and remember with gratitude Allah's favour on you; for ye were enemies and He join your hearts in love, so that by His Grace, ye became brethren; and ye were on the brink of the pit of fire, and He saved you from it. Thus doth Allah make His Signs clear to you: That ye may be guided (Qur'ān 3:103).

In Qur'ān 3:105 Allah says: "Be not like those who are divided amongst themselves and fall into disputations after receiving Clear Signs: For them is a dreadful penalty."

Alhaji A.B. Abdus-Salam stated that the biggest issue dividing the Muslims of Ekiti today is the issue of an acceptable leader for Muslim 'Ummah. There is a dichotomy between the leaderships of the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society of Nigeria, Ekiti State Council, and the League of Imams and Alfas. Many of the Imams of the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* Society are not interested in

attending the League of Imams and Alfas meetings. Their major bone of contention is that the Grand Imam, Alhaji Muhammad Jamiu Kewulere Bello, does not listen to their advice. The case of the installation and turbaning of Alhaji Abdul-Rahman Salmon as the *Amiru-l-Ulamau* was cited as an example. They advised him that the position of the *Amiru-l-Ulamau* belongs to him and he should not abdicate it to another person.

Riches as the basis for conferring chieftaincy titles

Basing of conferment of chieftaincy titles on monetary issue as against merit and positive contributions to Islam are challenges to the organization. Many Local Governments could not submit nominees for conferment of chieftaincy titles because of lack of enough money to finance the installation and turbaning. The implication of this is that the deserving Muslims would be robbed of chieftaincy positions.

Failure to replace those occupying Executive positions

Since the inception of the League of Imams and Alfas in Ekiti State, many of the people appointed to the positions of one to three-year term are still in their offices. No serious attempt has been made to replace them. The positions are the Secretary, Treasurer and Financial Secretary. This is not in consonance with the laid-down rules and regulation of the organization (League of Imams and Alfas, Western State, Nigeria 1974: 6).

Funding

As regards the financial position of the organization, Alhaji Uthman Ayolo Bakare opined that the major areas through which the organization generates its funds are installation and turbaning of Imams, conferment of chieftaincy titles, meeting dues and donations from philanthropists and Governments. One major problem with the organization is the sharing of large percent of funds realized in any function to the Imams and Alfas that attend the functions. The organization cannot be blame totally because many of the Imams and Alfas depend on the money realize in the function. This is an indication that our Imams and Alfas should find ways and means of sustaining themselves rather than the money realize from Muslim functions. We thank Allah that many of them are now gainfully employed.

Recommendations

- getting to the position of Imam or Muslim leader is not a do or die affairs. Anybody that seeks the position of Imam or Muslim leader should not be considered for the position. If it is not given to the person, it will act as deterrent to others. This will reduce the division of the Muslims of a given town to different groups.
- there should be education of the Muslims brothers and sisters on the negative effects of conversion. The problem is mostly from the parents. They spend a lot to money to send their children to the schools where they will be eventually converted to other religion with the belief that the Muslim schools are not good. A Muslim that is not educated on the tenets of Islam will not value the religion. This accounts for a reason why many of the Muslim children are being converted, mostly on marriage.
- Polygamy should be encouraged to pay the wave for the widows and Muslim women who are yet to marry. This will equally reduce prostitution and extramarital affairs. It will reduce different diseases associated with sexual relations.
- once a person has been pronounced as the Grand Imam or an Imam or Muslim leader, others should accept it as the Will of Allah. The attempt not to recognize such a person will tantamount to disrespect to the Will of Allah.
- the Muslim leaders should always listening to the advice of the followers as long as it is not against the Sharī^cah.

- the League of Imams and Alfas has its Rules and Regulations. The Muslims of Ekiti State should abide by it. If they want to draft their own, they should let it be written and allow the Muslims of the state to have access to it.

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