



## MUSLIM CONVERTEES IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

By

**Salako, Taofiki Ajani, PhD**

Islamic Studies Unit, Department of Religious Studies, College of Humanities,  
Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, Nigeria  
[salakota@tasued.edu.ng](mailto:salakota@tasued.edu.ng)

### Abstract

*Islam is a practical religion which covers all aspects of man's life namely educational, religious, economic, political and social. For a person to embrace Islam, he only requires to utter the testimony "There is no god worthy of worship except Allah and that Prophet Muhammad is His Apostle and Messenger". The 21st century Muslim converttee has enormous challenges to cope with to enable him or her practice Islam as an ideal Muslim. The researcher adopted qualitative approach using structural interview. Twenty (20) new converttees from Tai Solarin University of Education undergraduates and within Ijebu environs were interviewed. Findings and analysis show that converttees willingly embraced Islam without duress aided by some factors which gave them conviction. They experienced some challenges which were surmountable. Alas, they became contented, experienced succour and are pleased with their new religion. Finding shows that none of them envisaged reverting to the initial religion.*

**Keywords:** *Muslim converttees, challenges and prospects.*

### Introduction

Islam as a religion of peace is a way of life that caters for the physical and the spiritual aspects of a man's life. It also caters for the educational, religious, economic, political and social aspects of life. Anyone who embraces the religion of Islam would be faced with a lot of challenges. Qurán 29: 2; says "*We did test those before them, and Allah will certainly know those who are true from those who are false*". The tests from Allah are among the challenges that new Muslim converttees will face to prove their unshakeable faith in Allah. The challenges alongside with the remedies are the focus of this paper.

### Research Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative method with the use of oral interview. Structured interview was used involving twenty (20) respondents and items centred on following:

1. What motivated you to embrace Islam?
2. How and where did you embrace Islam?
3. What challenges do you face after your conversion to Islam?
4. Are you thinking of reverting to your previous religion?
5. What differences have you observed since you embraced Islam compared to your previous religion?

6. And what is your level of understanding of Islam after conversion?

Part of their responses fall under literature review while the responses dealing with the challenges are summarized under research findings.

### **Factors responsible for conversion to Islam**

A review of literature and responses from respondents revealed a number of factors responsible for the convertees to Islam, among them are:

#### **1) Public *Daw'ah***

A number of Islamic scholars embark on public lectures that bring together Muslims and non-Muslims alike, and a number of non-Muslims embrace Islam in the process. Few of these personalities are among the Zumratul Islamiyyah group led by Alhaji Boonyamin Alalaye who resides in Aboru, Oke-Odo axis of Iyana Ipaja, Lagos State. Another personality is Mr. Yusuf Olatunde Adepoju (Episode 3, 2020, YouTube), a popularly known Islamic comparative scholar, who resides in Ibadan, Oyo State of Nigeria.

#### **2) Family Torture**

A few number of these convertees are subjected to great torture by their family members when they partake in open air lecture and are discouraged from attending such lectures. However, some embraced Islam at the highest level of provocation and tortures from their families. An undergraduate (name withheld) narrated how his sponsors refused to pay his school fees because he converted to Islam while on campus. This experience is not limited to

Nigeria; similar experiences are shared by Muslim convertees across the globe. Nathalia Costa in Hana Baba (2017) is a good example because her family initially abandoned her when embraced Islam.

#### **3) Peer Group Influence**

Some individuals have been observed to embrace Islam through their interaction with their Muslim friends whom they imitate or accompany to Islamic programmes. This is common among university students and this was attested to by living witnesses (some undergraduates of TASUED 2019).

#### **4) Marriage**

Marriage has been an instrument of conversion in certain instances. Male and female non-Muslims who have fallen in love with their partners have had cause to embrace the religion of Islam for the love they have for their partners and are not ready to lose such partners in the name of religious differences. Respondents in this study are among those who have shared this experience. It should be noted that Islam prohibits Muslim men from marrying unbelievers and those who associate partners with Allah. Rather, it is better for them to marry Muslim women. Qurán 2: 221; says,

*“And do not marry idolatress until they believe, a slave woman who believes in Allah is better than unbelieving woman even though she pleases you. And also, a believing servant is better than an idolater even though he pleases you”.*

It is an express injunction from Allah that a Muslim is to marry a Muslim man or woman and this is to safeguard

one's religious lineage. Marriage of a Muslim with an unbeliever is an invitation to hell fire and doom while marrying a Muslim believer to another Muslim believer is an invitation to garden of paradise and forgiveness of Allah and His pleasures.

### 5) Efficacy of Religion

Historical record has it that the earliest African empires and their rulers became Islamic convertees when the Islamic clerics of their time helped them in solving one problem or another as they experienced in their lifetime (Salako & Abiodun 2019). Similar occurrences still happen today in one area or the other and this has facilitated conversion into Islamic religion. Adeniran and Salako (2020) on the efficacy of prayer in *da'wah* activities illustrated the role played by *du'au* in the process of religious propagation.

### 6) Conviction from the reading of Holy Qur'an

Reading the Holy Qur'an today in different languages has exposed Muslims and non-Muslims alike to the teachings and history of Islam. Also, some scientific statements that are contained in the Qur'an which science is establishing today have been a source of conviction to non-Muslims. E. g. Qur'an 36: 40; says, "*It is not permitted to the Sun to catch up the Moon, nor can the Night outstrip the Day; each swims along in its own orbit according to law*". This verse talks about the movement of sun and moon which hitherto people thought were stationary and motionless. Scientific explanations and discoveries of Qur'anic verses have

become motivating factors to new converts in Europe presently.

## Research Results, Findings and Discussions

### Muslim Convertees' Challenges and Prospects

Altogether, 20 new convertees to Islam were interviewed in this study, ten (10) undergraduate students of Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ijebu-Ode. Their interview was conducted on campus; and ten (10) members within Ijebu-Ode environs whose interview sessions were carried out during different Muslim Organization programmes. Their responses dealing with the challenges and prospects are summarized under the following sub-titles.

#### 1) Ignorance of the contextual meaning of Islam

The first problem which the new convertees to Islam in Nigeria face is lack of understanding of Islam. 100 % of the new convertees agree that it is the religion of peace but fails to realize that Islam is a way of life and enjoins the total submission of oneself to Almighty Allah in all dealings and in various aspects of a man's life. Qur'an 2: 208; says, "*Enter into the fold of Islam wholeheartedly and do not follow the footsteps of the devil for he is an open enemy to thee*". Islam enjoins man to follow and practice all aspects of the religion in its entirety as directed and exemplified by Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

The new convertees are not familiar with the five basic principles to be followed under which the religion of Islam rests like *Iman, salat, sawm,*

*zakat and Hajj*. Hadith 3 of Annawawi's collection reported by Bukhari and Muslim says,

*"Islam has been built on five pillars; testifying that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, establishing the salat, paying the zakat, making the Hajj, pilgrimage to the House of Allah, and fasting in Ramadan".*

They need to understand the reasons for observing the basic principles. The new converts all agreed that though they recognize the existence of the Holy Quran as a revealed book from Allah but find it difficult to read the Arabic text at the initial stage.

In another response, 95% of them are not familiar with the other secondary sources of information as far as Islam is concerned like *Hadith, Ijma and Qiyas*. Hadith is the sayings, deeds, approvals and disapprovals of the holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) when he was alive but which has been documented in a book form. This was collected and compiled after the death of the Prophet. Consequently, it is not all claimed hadiths that may be taken hook and sinker as representing the holy Prophet as some dubious individuals have hidden under some so claimed hadiths to bring about some fabrications into the creed of Islam. An example of such fabrication according to Zainab Mohammed (2019) in Yasin, T, al Jibouri is attributed to Abu Hurayra claimed to have been taken from Muhammad saying, *"Allah has trusted three persons for His revelation: Myself, Gabriel and Muawiyah "*. This statement was said to have been

attributed to political ambition of Muawiyah and not a genuine statement from Muhammad (SAW).

It therefore requires that a new converttee needs proper understanding of hadiths to be able to practice his / her religion correctly. It is not possible either for a new converttee to jettison the use of hadith in its entirety as one would not be able to practice Islam without the support of the hadiths.

*Ijma'* constitutes the consensus of opinions on Islamic religious matters whose direct information may not be found in the Qur'an and Hadiths. This is a recognized practice with cautions and high level of sincerity and its application may vary from country to country Otterman (2005). In essence, there is no blanket application of this rule to all customs and traditions of the world in unison, individual countries may have differences in its application which would still be acceptable as far as the limits and standards for its application are maintained. Otterman (2005) pointed this out in the opinions of different schools of thoughts in Islam and their followers in different countries of the world. E.g. Indonesia, Malaysia following Shafihi orthodoxy, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Egypt following Ambali while Africa takes after Maliki. Some individuals have also hidden under this area to fabricate teachings and ideas which may not go well with the practice of Islam, a Muslim new converttee may not be able to distinguish this problem.

*Qiyas* meaning analogical deduction or individual interpretation of some practices in Islam by individual



Islamic scholars is another recognized provision in Islamic ruling. A few individuals have also hidden under this concept to introduce certain ideologies and practices which are alien to Islam. For a Muslim new converttee to understand this is a herculean task and the tendency to fall into wrong ideology which is against Islamic teaching is high for a converttee coming into contact with the religion for the first time. If the wrong ideology was the first thing the new converttee came in contact with, it would be difficult to correct such wrong notion and may be detrimental to his / her practice of Islam.

So, the prospect for better observance of Islam is that new converttees should seek for the knowledge of Islam. The scholars occupy a noble status in Islam, and which is higher than the position of others in this world and in the Hereafter. Qurán 5: 11 says, *“Allâh will exalt in degree those of you who believe, and those who have been granted knowledge”*. Those who have knowledge are faster in understanding to accept the truth and to believe in it. So, Qurán 22: 54; says, *“And that those who have been given knowledge may know that it (Qur’an) is the truth from your Lord, so that they may believe therein, and their hearts may submit to it with humility”*.

The holy prophet Muhammad was reported to have also said:

*“The search for knowledge is incumbent on every Muslim male or female. The scholars are the heirs of the Prophets and the Prophets did not leave behind dinars and dirhams (i.e., money),*

*rather their inheritance was knowledge, so whoever acquires it has gained a great share. And seeking knowledge is a way to Paradise. Whoever follows a path in the pursuit of knowledge, Allah will make a path to Paradise easy for him”*. (Al-Bukhaari, Kitaab al-‘Ilm, 10)

The converttees need to seek for knowledge by meeting the Islamic scholars who would feed them with adequate information about Islam. Branches of knowledge that are important to acquire in Islam include sciences of *shariah*, knowledge of medicine and other fields (Qurán 3: 164). They could also attend seminars, lectures and symposia organized on Islamic matters.

Today, there are many Islamic literature books published in English and other indigenous languages like Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo. New converttees who cannot read Arabic can purchase Islamic literature books and read to equip themselves with Islamic teachings in order to enhance their proper practice of the Islamic religion.

New converts need to be taught the rationales behind *salat, zakat, sawm and Hajj* for instance we have to worship Allah because Allah says in the (Quran 51:56), *“I have not created the Jinns and the men except that they should worship me”*. Also when Allah mentions prayer, He also mentions zakat like *“Establish prayer and pay the Zakat”*. There is need to explain to the new converts that God directs us to pay *Zakat* i.e. Alms giving because he wants equitable distribution of



wealth within the society so as to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor and also to point out to them that wealth and sons shall not lead one to paradise. Quran 89:27 and 28 say: *“The Day when money and sons shall avail no man except who returns to his Lord with sound Heart”*.

## 2) Ideological Islam

Responses from the interview show that 98% of the new converts did not have any knowledge of ideological Islam. There is need to intimate them that some Muslim members have introduced ideological practices into the religion of Islam. Some have even gone to the extent of commercializing Islam. According Salako (2018), some individual religious leaders promise their followers heaven and earth. They claim that there is nothing they would not be able to do for their followers. These followers believe in whatever their leaders tell them. Some individuals hide under different banners of religion to mislead and confuse people because they want to make money. The most recent one is a woman trending on the social media who dresses like a *Muslimat* using *hijab* but also claims she is a traditional worshipper (July 2020). When confronted with some Islamic scholars, she claimed that she practices three religions, Islam, Christianity and traditional religion. A Muslim new convert may not know the difference between the ideal teachings of Islam in an environment that is carefree and does not regulate religious activities.

Any reasonable government is to take issue of religion serious and try to regulate religious activities because of

its sensitivity but where no government is doing this, conscious Muslim individuals and religious organization should make it a point of duty to checkmate activities of deceitful people who hide under the influence of religion. They should also use different media and fora to educate and enlighten the citizenry on ideal Islamic teachings and principles whereby dubious and deceitful people would not have anywhere to hide to perpetrate their evils or spread unislamic ideologies and practices.

## 3) Spiritual / Religious challenges

Majority of the new converts agreed they face various kinds of religious challenges like observance of prayers and carrying out other religious activities. They confirmed they face the problem of how to observe their prayers correctly, pay their zakat, fast, and so on.

In their prospects to be able to carry all these out correctly and as practised by the Holy Prophet, they need to ask questions and read about the life and practices of the Prophet (SAW) for Allah has said in the Quran. *“Know Me before you worship Me, for if you do not know Me, how will you worship Me”* (Hadith Qudsi).

New converts also attested they have confusions about various Islamic religious groups like the Tijaniyah, Qadiriyyah, Ahmadiyyah who all follow the basic principles of Islam but have introduced little practices which are questionable into their practices of religion. For example, some of them claimed they observed that the Ahmadiyyah Movement were proclaiming Ghulam Ahmad as



another prophet after Muhammed (SAW), and that an Ahmadist would not perform *salat* behind a non-Ahmadist as *mamun*. They also experienced that an Ahmadist would not marry a non-Ahmadist who is also a Muslim etc, (Practical experience).

New converts claimed they face the problem of some extremists (fanatical) Muslims who uphold the teachings of Islam too dogmatically and tend to see other Muslim groups as non-Muslims or impure Muslims. New converts among the undergraduates claimed they observe that some Muslims would want to create another group or a meeting forum rather than joining the existing one. This is common in our higher institutions today where one group of the Muslim Students body would fashion out another group from the same Muslim students' body leading to disunity among the set of Muslim students' society.

Also, they responded that they observed different societies, organizations and groups springing up on daily basis in the society from among the same Islamic organizations coming up with similar programmes and agenda and one does not see any need for such. They lamented that a new convert is thrown into confusion of which group to follow and he wanders why all the bodies having similar agenda cannot come under one umbrella, whereas remaining as one group would augur well and be better than splitting into different groups.

The prospect for the new converts in this regards which is causing problems among the Muslim community is to adhere strictly to the

Quran and the Hadith for the Prophet has said, "*I leave behind two mighty things, the Quran and My Sunnah, if you hold fast to them, you will never go astray*" (Riyad as-Salihin, Hadith 346). Any group that is observed to be coming up with artificial theories, principles and ideologies alien to the ideal teachings of Islam should be discarded. In addition, new converts are to associate with Islamic enlightened associations, such as those who adhere to the Quran and the practice of the Prophet from where they will be enlightened more about other troubling issues.

In the prospect of practising Islam, new converts will come across some groups who will condemn the practices of some other Muslim groups. When this happens, they are not to jump into conclusion, they need to seek for more knowledge and use the Quran and Hadith as their basic guides before they take their stand on controversial issues.

Majority of the new converts responded that they also face the problem of false religious priests either from Islam or other religions who go about converting people or winning more followers through magic which they claim are miracles and wonders from God. These people claim these powers are from God. However, new converts need not be moved by the magic displayed, they should adhere strictly to the Quran which is the highest of the miracles and which is a guidance, blessing and healer to all kinds of problems. The Quran supports this when it says: "*We sent down in the Qurán that which is healing and a mercy to those who*

*believe; but to the unjust, it causes nothing but loss after loss*" (Qurán 17: 82).

#### 4) Economic and financial challenges

In the area of economy, new converts confessed their ignorance in Islamic economy and finances and they sought for guidance in this respect. During this period of the country's economic predicament and pandemic when everyone is struggling to survive, and people just amass wealth through dubious means, new converts need to be cautious and source for their livelihood through legal means approved by Islam. They should not put their investment in interest based business and un-islamically approved ventures which they think would give them quick returns and more yields.

Unlike some years past when there was no Islamic banking and financing practices in Nigeria and when it was allowed for Muslims to invest in commercial banks because there was no alternative banking and financing. Today in Nigeria, the prospect of Islamic financing alternative to interest banking and financing is high and impactful, therefore, new converts need to review their financial practices to go in line with the Islamic banking and finances.

New converts need to put *taqwa* "Fear of Allah" into mind and need to realize that no matter the amount of wealth a man possesses; this will not raise him above other people before Allah because the Quran 49: 13; has said. *"Surely, the most honoured among you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you"*. Also, Qurán

3: 26; says, *"Wealth is the property of Allah, He gives it to whom he pleases, and He denies it to whom He pleases. And Allah has power over all things"*.

The prospect for new converts to overcome these challenges is to desist from embarking on building houses in so many areas except for businesses and *sadaqat*, they should not establish breweries and unlawful hotels (where alcohol is served and prostitution is carried out) and they should shun the lust for material wealth. To spend their money wisely, they should establish religious schools, establish firms and industries where Islamic approved products are produced and they should sponsor religious organizations. They can also help in the propagation of Islam by establishing Arabic schools, where the knowledge of Qur'an and that of Islam in its totality could be acquired.

New converts who are wealthy need to partner with Islamic organizations that are trying to float and operate Islamic banking and finances in the country. They should also invest their money into Islamic financial institutions where they would get profits and more blessings while promoting the course of Islamic financing.

#### 5) Social and interpersonal challenges / prospects

There are many ills plaguing the Nigerian society today among which are corruption, tribalism, ethnicism, favouritism, nepotism, nudity, drug addiction and sex abuse to mention a few. In Qurán 16: 90; *"Verily, Allah enjoins justice, monotheism, good deeds, ... forbids evil deeds, illegal sex ..."*. These social problems are



worth mentioning because new converts live in a society where all these immoral dealings have reached their highest peak and if the new converts are not involved in them, they still constitute problems for them because other people really participate actively in these social ills and this set of people interact with the new converts. One clear example of this is the mode of dressing; people want to wear expensive and latest attires which do not cover their nakedness to show that they are civilized. Qurán 33: 33; says, *“And stay in your houses, and do not display yourselves like that time of ignorance, and perform salat and give zakat and obey Allah and His Messenger”*.

The new converts are to endeavour to wear the dresses which are not transparent, women to cover their heads and wear full *hijabs*. They should make friends and associate with Muslims and they should identify themselves as Muslims in their places of work so that un-islamic proposals would not be made to them. Majority of the respondents attested to the fact that they have a better understanding of Islam after their conversion because their interest in the religion and eagerness to learn about Islam deepened. All in unison also responded that they would not want to drop the religion having embraced it no matter what happens.

#### **6) Marital issues**

One other challenge that the new converts responded to is the issue of marriage. Findings reveal that some of them had contracted marriage with non-Muslim men or women before conversion. If the partner intends to embrace Islam, he or she should be

welcomed, but where the partner is reluctant, he or she should be allowed to continue with his or her religion in the interim. However, for prospective future guidance, minors among the new converts should associate with Muslim organizations where there are men and women, where they will be able to interact together and choose appropriate Muslims as wives and husbands.

Connected with this problem is the issue of women getting pregnant before contracting marriage and this social ill has eaten deep into the social fabric of our society. To tackle this, prospective new converts should keep their chastity. They should guide against sexual temptation by avoiding staying with a lady in a room alone, they may fast to suppress their sexual urges as recommended by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) and where they have the means, they may contract marriage as soon as they are mature, but where there are no means, they should exercise patience. New converts need to understand that a Muslim is not to get involved in sexual dealings before marriage. They should not allow what is happening in our environment to influence them badly. Or how does one explain a situation where a so called celebrity says she would have to test how strong her intending husband is sexually before marriage. (Celebrity 2020). Meanwhile, Qurán 17: 32; says, *“And do not go near adultery or fornication, for it is an evil that leads to other evils”*. This and similar things are what a new convert is exposed to and if care is not taken and proper enlightenment given, there is the tendency for a new convert not to see

anything wrong in the un-islamic practice. The new converts responded that after their conversion to Islam, there were certain behaviours which they did not take serious but which they have now taken cognizance of as exemplified by Islam.

These social problems could be solved by being self disciplined. That is, by having the fear of Allah in mind before doing anything and by realizing that whatever we do in secrets or in the open, if people do not see us, God sees us as expressed in Qurán 50:16 - 17; thus:

*“And indeed We have created man, and We know what his ownself whispers to him. And We are nearer to him than his jugular vein”.*

*And We have provided two guides for him one angel on the right and the other by the left and not a single word he alters without is being recorded in the books”.*

So, new converts are to shun all evil deeds, if one says he would not involve in corruption, people will like to lure one into it, but with firm faith in Allah and strict adherence to His teachings and that of the Prophet, one will surely overcome all temptations. Prospect for new converts is to participate in educating the masses about the evils inherent in all other vices and continuously fight against these vices through writing, *da'wah*, symposia, debates etc. Example is said to be better than precepts, therefore, new converts should join other Muslims in laying good examples for other people to emulate.

Another important prospect for the new converts is living in a multi religious society where there are differences in different religious beliefs. People of other religions will continue to pose problems to you because they will like to bring in more converts into their religions and they will not compromise their religion with any other religion. New converts are to live in peace and harmony with this set of people in worldly matters but they should not compromise their religion for anything. As the Quran 5: 51; puts it,

*“O ye who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians as friends, they are friends to one another. And if any amongst you take them as friend, then surely, he is one of them. And Allah guide not those people who are the unjust”.*

Therefore, new converts are to behave in good ways to people of other religions that they will be moved by the qualities possessed by good Muslims and this may motivate some of them to embrace Islam. This is because Qur'an 68: 4: has described Muslims as people of the best moral character *“And verily, you are of an exalted character”.*

New converts should enlighten the people but they should be strategic in their approach depending on the situation in which they find themselves. It is not unlikely that some of them may want to come and preach to you, entertain them, give them warm reception and cleverly show them the right teachings in the Quran and Hadiths, allow them to depart in peace without molestation. This is better for it could have been

said that, you have delivered Allah's message.

### 7) Political challenges / prospects

There can never be a community or nation without a head, the Quran recognizes the headship of Muslim community when it says:

*“O ye who believe, Obey Allah, and Obey the messenger, and those who are in authority among you. And if you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if you believe in Allah and the last day. That is better and more suitable for final determination”.* (Qur'an 4: 59).

There is prospect for new converts to Islam in Nigeria in this regard to face some political challenges. The first and foremost of the political challenge faced by new converts is living under a secular leader in a secular society using a secular constitution for a secular administration on assumed secular citizens.

The *Shariah* which is the Islamic constitution is used for administration in purely Islamic states but Nigeria being a secular state adopting a secular constitution debars the Muslims from using the *shariah* in all aspects of their lives. Islam being a religion of peace is a way of life and *shariah* is the constitution that guides the Muslims throughout all their aspects of life.

So, the new converts are limited to the use of the *shariah* in their domestic life but are not authorized to apply it in other criminal matters. Restrictions are also put on its use in their domestic life. For instance, imagine a

marriage that was conducted between Muslim couples in an Islamic way but was terminated by the English court without giving due consideration to *shariah* as being its root of contraction. The lack of recognition given to *shariah* has also contributed to many problems among the Muslim communities. For instance, where two Muslim groups dispute on a religious matter and this is taken to an English court which is ignorant of the *shariah* knowledge for settlement. So, instead of the judgement given by the court to settle the dispute, it has added more fuel to the dispute because of its ignorant judgement. Allah says:

*And if you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if you believe in Allah and the last day. That is better and more suitable for final determination”.* (Qur'an 4: 59)

Therefore, to overcome this basic political problem, the prospective act of new converts is to join hands with the other Muslim body to first educate the masses about the content of the *shariah*, and they must also point out that, its use in an unislamic state will be limited to the Muslims alone because other non – Muslim religious groups fear that its use would be imposed on them.

Another prospect dealing of the new converts is the appointment of leaders. We have witnessed situations where religious organizational leaders are being probed for corruption and misuse of association funds. Salako (2018) in his paper titled 'Effects of corruption on islamic organizations and its antidotes - focus on Al-Hayat Relief Foundation', orchestrated how

leaders of Islamic organizations perpetrated corrupt practices in mismanaging Islamic association funds put in their care. Therefore, new converts are to shun the lust for power and material wealth. Where they are appointed as officers probably in charge of money or other consumable materials, they are to make judicious use of the materials and disallow an act of misappropriations. In addition, if they are taking part in election, they should appoint very pious and God fearing people to hold important post not minding about the tribe, status or family background of the contestants. Qur'an 5: 48: says:

“And We have sent down to you the Qur'an in truth confirming the scripture that came before it and a witness over it. So judge them by what Allah has revealed and follow not their vain desires ... We have prescribed a law and a clear way”.

As the ruled ones, new converts are to obey their religious leaders as far as they are in line with the teachings of the Quran and that of the Prophet.

*“O ye who believe, Obey Allah, and Obey the messenger, and those who are in authority among you”.* (Qur'an 4: 59).

They are to give their leaders good and beneficial suggestions which would make their reign prosperous. Where they run contrary to Islamic principles, they should correct them and not give them support in perpetrating evils. Allah says, *“join hands together on what is good and fear of Allah, and do not join hands together on sin and transgression”* (Qur'an 5: 2).

This shows that Muslims are the best community because they call others to goodness and discourage people from carrying out evil deeds. New converts are to adhere firmly to the Islamic teaching which forms the basis for morality and discipline.

### **8) Dented image of Islam in the society**

Muslim image is being damaged day and night and Islam has been regarded as the religion of destruction and terrorism unlike being the religion of peace. There are many enemies of Islām tarnishing the image by spreading some false story on Islam and Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Professor Seyyed Hussein Nasr (1981) identified false propaganda on Islam as tarnishing the image of Islam.

The *Boko Haram* issue in Nigeria plays a significant role in jeopardizing the image of the Muslim. Before the advent of *Boko Haram*, the issue of Saddam Husayn and Osama Bin Ladin had made the entire world believe and think that, Islām is a religion of terrorism which is not the case. Also the image of Islam in U.S was not encouraging since the incident of Tuesday 11th September 2001 attack on the U.S World Trade Centre and Pentagon buildings.

The enemies of Islām are ready to give bad or inappropriate name to Muslim who says the Islamic position on things that are clear and unambiguous. A Muslim cannot say he wants Islamic Law or seek from the government to grant Muslim women to wear hijab without being called an extremist or accused of supporting violence. All the

aforementioned have reduced drastically peoples' revert to 'Islām in the contemporary society for the fact that, they think, Islamic Faith accommodates terrorism and extremism. This is because both the media and press within and outside Nigeria have continuously associated criminal activities to Islam (Azeez & Salako, 2015).

### 9) Discouragement of New Converts

Lack of Muslim hospitals, standard Muslim schools, non availability of Qur'ān and 'Ahādīth in Nigeria indigenous languages and lack of Muslim schools from primary educational level to tertiary levels are among the discouraging factors for convertees to Islām. In the northern part of Nigeria for example, there are over 10 million Almajiri's Children that are beggars. (El-Rufai 2020). The present promulgation by the Kaduna State government under Governor Al-Nasir el Rufai (2020) to prosecute any parent or Islamic Alfa that promotes almajirisim or encourages such is a pointer to the damaged some individuals have done to the religion of Islam bastardising it as a religion that is against learning and education which could dent the image of Islam as a non-progressive religion before the intending new converts.

### 10) Islam versus science and technology

The perception of Muslim new convertees is important in the face of new development in the world in the areas of science and technology. There is the tendency for new convertees to think that Islam is against science. It is important to let the convertees know that Islam is in

support of scientific and technological advancement. It is also important to know that if other religions went against science, the judgement passed on such religion is not applicable to Islam because of its supportive position to science and technological development.

Many scientific statements have been mentioned in the Qur'an a long time which are just being scientifically proven today. For instance, Qur'an 36: 40, says, "*the sun and the moon move in their different orbits, and they will never have head collision*". Initially, the world thought the sun and moon were stationary-motionless. It was this statement in the Qur'an that proved to the world that the sun is on motion and the moon too is on motion. Today, the scientists have proved that the speed at which the sun is moving is faster than the speed of an aeroplane.

There other scientific statements in the Qur'an that have been established by science. This according to findings in this research has been a factor contributing to why some individuals have embraced and continue to embrace Islam in America and all the parts of Europe. There are some individuals who established some of these Qur'anic statements in different areas of learning like Medicine, creation, human biology, man, animal and plant reproductions etc, "*Verily, We have created man in the best mould*", (Qur'an 95: 4), and even though, some of them did not embrace Islam, they recognized and acknowledged such scientific facts and knowledge from the source of Islam.



It is worthy of note to let the convertees know that the apex of educational level in the world is a university education, and it was to the glory of Islam that university education penetrated the world. The first and second universities to be established in the world came from the Islamic world. These were Karauwun University in Fes, Morocco established 859 and Al-Azhar University established in Egypt in 975 at a time when Europe was still in the dark ages (Guinness Book of Records, 1998).

Today, Muslims in Nigeria allow this educational glory to slip away from their hands as they make little efforts to keep and sustain the gigantic glory and fame of Islam in education which is the pace-setter to any development in any society.

There are five Islamic Universities in Nigeria presently (November 2020) namely: Al-Hikmah University Ilorin, in Kwara State; Fountain University Oshogbo, in Osun State; Crescent University Abeokuta, in Ogun State; Al-Qalam University, Katsina, Katsina State; and Summit University in Offa, Kwara State; while the Christians have well over ten Universities and there are few Muslim secondary schools (finelib.com 2020). Among the few that are available, some are low in standard and as a result, Muslim parents prefer to take their offspring to the Christian schools for standard education.

### Conclusion

Challenges facing Muslim convertees in Nigeria presently are enormous but research findings show that they are

surmountable. A level of disunity is observed among different Muslim communities, societies and organisations. However, it is clear that there is strength in unity. It could be inferred from the research that disunity may be a cog in the wheel for intending Muslim convertees. Lack of unity among the Muslims is among the discouraging factors. There is an Arabic quote which States that, "Unity is power". Different groups like, M.S.S., T.M.C., *Tablīgh*, *'Ahlus-Sunnah wa-l-Jamā'ah*, *Salafiyyah*, *Tijāniyyah*, *Qadriyyah*, *Markazī*, *'Adabī* e.t.c. seem to operate in isolation whereas all profess the religion of Islam and they all have a lot of things in common as far as the religion of Islam is concerned. There is need for all the groups to be united and disregard their differences which are trivial matters, their unity is believed would serve as a source of strength and encouragement for other intending converts and their unison would serve as catalyst to new converts yearning to embracing Islam.

### Recommendations

1. Arabic classes should be organized by able bodies and organizations whereby new convertees could be taught Arabic which is the language of the religion. New converts should listen to programmes on the television and radio to acquire more knowledge about Islam as there are a number of educative programmes aired on the Radio and Television on Islam.
2. To help solve the problem of ignorance for the Muslim new converts, series of lectures should be organized to help groom them

- Islamically. They should pursue knowledge and tap it wherever it is available. To this, the prophet has said, *“Seek for knowledge as far as China”*. In another hadith, the Prophet said, *“knowledge is the lost property of a Muslim, wherever you see it tap it”* (Sunan of At-Tirmidhi). This is pointing to the fact that a new convert could learn and gain knowledge of Islam anytime, anywhere without time or space boundaries. Each and every pillar of Islam should be explained to the new converts in details with adequate and appropriate illustrations so that they possess the right knowledge of Islam.
3. The Muslims converttees should have a good mindset and to appreciate what Allah has blessed the Muslims with i.e. His guidance as contained in the Qur’an which is clear and unambiguous. Allāh says in Qur’an 16: verse 90; thus, *“Indeed, “Allāh orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes that perhaps you will be reminded”*. Muslims should change their behaviour by being determined to be moral in the society. Being moral is to have good character, to be lenient, to do away with unnecessary quarrel, to be charitable, to stay away from wayward attitudes, e.t.c. These will encourage many people to 'Islām, because, 'Islām is a religion of leniency and peace.
  4. Muslim organizations should continue with enlightenment programmes that would educate Muslim converttees on goodness and to cooperate with others. Dialogue and consultation should be adopted to resolve issues whenever there is misunderstanding as contained in Qur’an 3: 4; *“O people of the Book, come to a word that is just between us and you, that we worship none but Allah, ... Then if they turn away, say, Bear witness that we are Muslims”*.
  5. The National Association of Teachers of Arabic and Islamic Studies (NATAIS) should not limit its educative activities within the academics, extension programmes should be mounted for religious propagators and preachers who have no in- depth knowledge, or lack teaching methodology of Islamic preachings. This can be done by organising special trainings targeted at this group of people.

#### References

- Abdul, M.O.A. (1981). The historical origin of Islam. Islamic Publication Bureau, Lagos.
- Adeniran, K. &Salako, T. A. (2020). An exposition into the role of du’a (Supplication) in da’wah programmes (Proselytization). *Ulum Islamiyyah: The Malaysian Journal of Islamic Sciences*, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, (USIM), Negeri Sembilan, Nilai, Malaysia. Vol 30.(1-10)
- Adepoju, Y. O. (2020). Episode 3, Yusuf Adepoju Versus 5 pastors. You Tube ACADIP TV, March 8, 2020.

- Al - Nasir el Rufai. (2020). El-Rufai Threatens to Proscute Parents Who Enroll Children into Almajirai Education System. ThisDay News May 26, 2020. <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2020/05/26/el-rufai-threatens-to-proscute-parents-who-enroll-children-into-almajirai-education-system/>. Assessed November 19th 2020.
- Ashraf & Jissaom (1979). Crisis in Muslim education. Hodder and Stoughton, Jeddah.
- Ashraf, S.A. (1984). Literacy education and religious values: The Islamic approach. *Muslim Education Quarterly. The Islamic Academy Cambridge U.K. Vol. 1. (1 - 118)*.
- Azeez, A. O. & Salako, T. A. (2015). An assessment of the Boko Haram's activities in Nigeria from the Islamic perspectives. *Allawh: Journal of Arabic & Islamic Studies, University of Maiduguri, Nigeria. Vol 5, (1). (233-249)*.
- Baba, H. (2017). Muslim Converts wrestle with isolation seek support. <https://www.kalw.org/post/muslim-converts-wrestle-isolation-seek-support>. Assessed November 4th, 2020.
- Bukhari & Muslim, Hadith 3. Forty Hadiths of Annawawi's Collection.
- Jameelah, M. (1977). Western civilization condemned by itself. Vol. 2. Muhammad Yusuf Khan Shant Magar Lahore, (West Pakistan).
- Islamic Schools in Nigeria. (2020). <https://www.finelib.com/education/schools-in-nigeria/arabic-schools>. Assessed November 19th 2020.
- Mohammed, Z. (2019). Are there any possibly false hadiths? If so, which ones would be false, and why? [www.quora.com](http://www.quora.com). Assessed on November 18th 2020.
- Muslim News Nigeria. (2019). Unveiling: Top 5 universities in Nigeria and their tuition fees. <https://muslimnews.com.ng/2019/07/26/unveiling-top-5-muslim-universities-in-nigeria-and-their-tuition-fees/>. Assessed on November 19th 2020.
- Nasr, S. H. 1981. "Origins and Development of Islamic Studies in the U.S: A Historical Overview of Trends and Institutions". *The State of Islamic Studies in American Universities* (ed.). The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1431AH/2009CE. The international institute of Islamic thought, P.O. Box 669, Herndon, Va 20172, USA, [www.iiit.org](http://www.iiit.org). (1-33)
- Otterman, S. (2005). Q & A: Islam and Shariah. The New York Times. [https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/cfr/international/slot2\\_031405.html?page\\_wanted=2](https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/cfr/international/slot2_031405.html?page_wanted=2). Assessed on November 18th 2020.
- Salako, T. A. & Abiodun, A. I. (2019). Challenges and prospects of Qur'anic schools in the 21st century: A case study of Qur'anic schools in Ijebu-Ode. *Al-Hikmah Journal of Humanities and Social*



- Sciences. Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Al-Hikmah University Ilorin, Kwara State. Vol 5 (1). (30-45).
- Salako, T. A. (2018). Effects of corruption on Islamic organizations and its antidotes - focus on Al-Hayat Relief Foundation. *Religions' Educator: Journal of the National Association for the Study of Religions and Education, (NASRED)*. National Association for the Study of Religions and Education, (NASRED), Ijebu-Ode. Vol 17. (1). (86-101).
- Salako, T. A. (2018). Understanding comparative religions and inter-religious education for religious tolerance in Nigeria. *Journal of Specialized and Professional Education (JOSPED)*. College of Specialized and Professional Education, Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ogun State, Nigeria. Vol 2. (1). (73-96).
- Sharati, A. (nd). The sociology of Islam. Mizan Press Islamic Publication Bureau, Lagos.
- The Guinness Book of Records, Published 1998, ISBN 0-5535-7895-2, P.24
- Yusuf, A. (1975). The Holy Quran: text, translation and commentary. Islamic Foundation, Leicester.

### List of Interviewees

Below is the list of interviewees who consented to publishing their names, others preferred to remain anonymous because of the sensitive nature of the research topic.

1. Olayinka Samuel now Olayinka Sodiq TASUED
2. Monsurat Jimoh TASUED
3. Mrs. Adenuga Oluwatoyin Ogbogbo
4. Mrs. Bakare Tinuola Imowo
5. Mr. Gbolahan Akinwande now Sodiq Gbolahan Akinwande Imepe
6. Mrs. Jeje Adebogun Imepe
7. Mr. Niyi Olusesan Imowo
8. Mr. Buraimo Alabi Igbegba
9. Mrs. Bintu Safe Igbegba
10. Mr. Kunle Aileru Atiba