CONGRESS OF NORTHERN NIGERIAN CHRISTIANS (CNNC)

Historical Background

Christianity has a long challenging history in Northern Nigeria. Over the years, numerous efforts were made to unite Christians under a common platform that could effectively address their shared challenges. While the establishment of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) represented a significant step toward unity, many of the expectations of Northern Christians remained unmet.

As time passed, additional Christian organizations emerged to complement the work of CAN. However, the challenges confronting Christians in Northern Nigeria continued to grow in both scale and complexity. These challenges include socio-political marginalization, religious persecution, violent conflicts, and the widespread destruction of lives and property. Such developments have also had profound social, economic, and spiritual consequences for the Christian community.

One of the major concerns has been the absence of a strong, independent, and coordinated body dedicated to representing and defending the interests of Northern Christians. Existing organizations have often operated independently, lacked sufficient capacity, or faced limitations that reduced their effectiveness.

These persistent challenges strengthened the desire among Christian leaders and stakeholders to establish a united platform capable of providing credible leadership, advocating for justice, promoting unity, and protecting the rights and welfare of Christians throughout Northern Nigeria. This aspiration ultimately gave birth to the vision of the Congress of Northern Nigerian Christians (CNNC).

Emergence of the Congress of Northern Nigerian Christians (CNNC)

Although Christians in Northern Nigeria had endured various forms of persecution for many years, the post-election violence of 2011 became a defining moment that accelerated the vision for a united Christian organization. The widespread destruction of churches, loss of lives, and displacement of communities attracted both national and international attention, highlighting the urgent need for a coordinated response.

Motivated by these tragic events, a group of concerned Christians led by Mr. Joshua Garba approached Prof. Adamu Baikie, only to discover that he had carried the same burden and vision for several years. Following their initial meeting at his residence in Zaria, they undertook visits to communities affected by the 2011 crisis across parts of Kaduna State.

Their observations, together with reports from other Northern states—including Katsina, Zamfara, Bauchi, Gombe, Sokoto, Jigawa, Kano, and Kebbi—confirmed that the suffering experienced by Christians was widespread and not confined to a single location.

These findings reinforced the conviction that a united organization was urgently needed to advocate for Northern Christians, coordinate interventions, and provide a collective voice on issues affecting their faith, security, and wellbeing.

Subsequently, extensive consultations were held with respected Christian elders, church leaders, and other stakeholders across Northern Nigeria. These consultations resulted in a unanimous agreement to establish a strong and representative organization that would champion the interests of Christians throughout the region. This marked the formal crystallization of the vision that became the Congress of Northern Nigerian Christians (CNNC).

Under the leadership of Prof. Adamu Baikie, together with other founding members, a series of strategic meetings laid the foundation for the establishment, organizational structure, and future growth of the Congress.

The deliberations produced a clear blueprint for establishing the Congress.

This included the appointment of a Board of Trustees, Patrons, and a National Executive Council; the establishment of State and Local Government branches; the registration of the organization with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) and drafting the following Objectives;

- To unite Christians across Northern Nigeria irrespective of denominational, ethnic, or cultural differences.

- To receive and document complaints and grievances affecting Christians.

- To pursue justice and appropriate redress for victims of discrimination, persecution, or injustice.

- To serve as the collective voice of Northern Nigerian Christians while encouraging peaceful, lawful, and constructive engagement in addressing societal challenges.

- To implement other constitutional responsibilities as contained in the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Congress.

Expansion of the Vision

As membership steadily increased, the meetings moved from Zaria to Kaduna, initially meeting at Bible Fellowship Worship Centre, Kamazou, in October 2015.

In August 2016, through the support of Rev. (Dr.) Emmanuel N. Dziggau, the meetings were relocated to the HEKAN National Headquarters on Katsina Road, Kaduna. This relocation marked a significant turning point in the growth of the Congress, attracting delegates from all nineteen Northern States and the Federal Capital Territory.

During this period, leadership responsibilities evolved. Elder Saidu Dogo served as Deputy Interim Chairman alongside Prof. Adamu Baikie. Following his passing, Elder Steven B. Bangoji assumed the position. Barr. Danladi Ali initially served as Acting Secretary before Mr. Joshua Garba took over. As coordination responsibilities increased, Pastor Aminu Yusufu was appointed Interim National Secretary.

To coordinate the growing activities of the organization, a Steering Committee was established under the chairmanship of Prof. Adamu Baikie, with Pastor Aminu Yusufu serving as Secretary. The committee played a central role in implementing resolutions and directing the affairs of the Congress.

Among its notable achievements were mobilisation for meetings, drafting of the CNNC Constitution by experienced legal practitioners, proposal for approval of the Board of Trustees, and the successful processing of the organization's registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission.

Registration and Inauguration

CNNC was officially registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission on 13 November 2017.

Prior to the registration, the growing membership necessitated another relocation of meetings to New Life Christian Assembly, Kakuri Industrial Estate, Kaduna, where preparations intensified for the formal inauguration of the Congress.

A dedicated Inauguration Committee under the leadership of Prince (Dr.) James Angbazo coordinated extensive planning through several specialized sub-committees responsible for logistics, finance, security, publicity, protocol, youth mobilization, transportation, medical services, accommodation, and church mobilization.

Coordinators were also appointed across the nineteen Northern States and the Federal Capital Territory, for sanitization, mobilisation and transportation of states delegates to the inauguration.

The Congress was formally inaugurated on 11 November 2017 at Murtala Mohammed Square, Kaduna.

The historic event attracted an overwhelming gathering of Christians from across Northern Nigeria and beyond. Distinguished guests included General Yakubu Gowon, Rt. Hon. Yakubu Dogara, (the speaker of the national house of representative), senior government officials, members of the National and State Assemblies, traditional rulers, respected church leaders, representatives of Christian organizations, international observers, non-governmental organizations, security agencies, students and thousands of faithful Christians.

The inauguration marked the birth of a united platform committed to promoting justice, unity, religious freedom, and the collective advancement of Christians throughout Northern Nigeria.

Post-Inauguration Activities

Immediately after the inauguration, the Interim Management Committee commenced the implementation of an ambitious programme designed to establish the operational framework of the Congress.

Several strategic committees were constituted, including the Elders Committee, Interim Working Committee, Constitution Objectives Analysis Committee and Board of Patrons.

Thirteen Standing Committees were also instituted, covering (1) Legal Matters, (2) Security, (3) Education, (4) Religious Affairs, (5) Political Affairs, (6) Finance and Economic Development, (7) Agriculture and Rural Development, (8) Land Matters, (9) Women and Humanitarian Intervention, (10) Youth Affairs, (11) Communication and Information Technology (12) Research and Planning (13) Health and Medical Intervention.

Regular meetings were held across Kaduna, Abuja, Bauchi, and other locations to strengthen the organizational structure, coordinate state chapters, elect representatives, distribute membership materials, and prepare for democratic leadership elections.

The Interim Management Committee also undertook stakeholder engagement, media advocacy, public enlightenment, state visits, strategic planning, and continuous coordination with state and zonal leadership structures.

These foundational efforts established a strong institutional framework upon which the Congress continues to pursue its mission of unity, advocacy, justice, and service to Christians throughout Northern Nigeria.

Congresses

States Executives were elected across the thirteen Northern States and FCT by December, 2018.

National Congress was held in Dec 2019 during which the following were elected as the National Executives

- Prof David Adamu Baikie (President)

- Elder Steven B Bangoji (Vice President)

- Pastor Aminu Yusufu (General Secretary)

- Mr Usman Adamu Tomas (Asst General Secretary)

- Mr Shafi'u Danjaji (Financial Secretary)

- Mr Jack Kurah (Auditor)

- Evan Daset Bulus Joshua (Treasurer)

- Engineer Daniel D Kadzai (Youth Leader)

- Mrs Dudu M Manuga (Women Leader)

- Mr Larry Yamai (late) (PRO)

When Pro Adamu Baikie became incapacitated due to ill health, he relinquished the leadership in Feb, 2021.

During the National Executives Council and the Board of Trustees' meeting on the 18th October, 2021, Elder Steven B Bangoji was elected as the President, to replace Prof Adamu Baikie; Abdallah J M Baikie was elected as the Vice President while Barr Luke Akanbi was elected as the PRO to replace late Larry Yamai.

Conclusion

The establishment of the Congress of Northern Nigerian Christians represents a landmark achievement in the history of Christianity in Northern Nigeria. Born out of decades of shared challenges and inspired by a vision of unity, the Congress has provided a credible platform through which Christians can collectively defend their rights, promote peaceful coexistence, and contribute meaningfully to national development.

CNNC remains committed to justice, unity, responsible leadership, religious freedom, and the advancement of Christian values while working in partnership with all people of goodwill to build a peaceful, equitable, and prosperous Nigeria.