

History

LESSON 1: The Influence of the 19th Century Islamic Movements

Topic: Islamic Movements of the 19th Century

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this lesson you will be able to:

1. Define Jihad.
2. Explain causes of Jihads in the 19th century in West Africa.
3. Outline the importance of Uthman dan Fodio and Mohammed Bello in the Islamic movements of West Africa.

Materials you will need:

- textbooks
- Pens
- Notebooks
- the internet
- the Atlas of West Africa

Instructions

1. Use a handbook for Senior 4 history.
2. You can make reference to other related books.
3. If possible, consult an adult and Google/ internet while doing an activity.

Step 1: Introduction

A Jihad is a holy war ordained by God with the intention of purifying Islam. In simple terms, it is an effort made by believers to live out the Muslim faith as well as possible, to build a good Muslim society and to defend Islam with force if necessary. The holy Quran teaches that soldiers who die in Jihad go to heaven immediately. The Muslim leaders in West Africa tirelessly worked for a spirit of oneness as they fought to purify Islam.

See Figure 4.1 below.



Figure 4.1: Jihadists in Central Mali

Step 2: Causes of the 19th century Jihads in West Africa

Although Jihads were religious movements, they had a mixture of political, economic and intellectual causes. The Muslim leaders of the Jihads also had an important mission of spreading Islam. They looked at war essentially as a religious duty. The war was an extension of intensive teaching and preaching.

The number of pagans was increasing steadily and it created a need to convert them to Islam with force where it was necessary. There was an increase in evil practices such as adultery, alcoholism and corruption. Some leaders of the Hausa were greedy and their mission was self-enrichment. Leaders such as Uthman dan Fodio launched Jihads because they were sure of defeating the corrupt ones.

Jihads were also caused by political factors such as interstate conflicts. The Fulani were tired of being dominated by the Hausa and, therefore, wanted to get rid of Hausa domination. The Jihad leaders wanted to protect people from all forms of oppression and exploitation. War became one of the means of bringing about meaningful changes in society. The 19th century recorded unfair judgements in courts of law. The Muslim leaders were, therefore, focused on ending these unfair judgements since they were against the practices of Islam.

The 19th century Jihads also had some economic causes. Governments such as that of Western Sudan overtaxed their subjects. Fulani town merchants always complained of heavy taxes in their trade while Fulani pastoralists were opposed to high taxes on their cattle. Worse still, the methods of collecting taxes were ruthless.

There were also intellectual causes. The Jihad movements aimed at spreading Islamic education in West Africa. They hoped to make an ideal Islamic society through education.

A look at the above factors shows that the situation was ripe for a revolution. All that was needed was a spark to set things ablaze.

Task

1. Why were Jihads called Holy Wars?
2. Mention any developments that West Africa experienced during the Jihad movements.

Step 3

The Islamic movements of West Africa were largely spearheaded by Muslim leaders such as Uthman dan Fodio and Mohammed Bello. They committed themselves to ensuring that Islam is spread all over West Africa.

Usman (Uthman dan Fodio)

Shaihu Uthman dan Fodio, born Usman in Foduye, was a religious teacher, revolutionary, military leader, writer and Islamic promoter, and the founder of the Sokoto caliphate. Dan Fodio was one of a class of urbanised ethnic Fulani who

had been living in the Hausa states since the early 1400s in what is now northern Nigeria.



Figure 4.2: Uthman dan Fodio

He was the leader of the first Jihad in Western Sudan Hausa land in the 19th century. He was a Fulani preacher and scholar. He played an important role in the wide spread of the West African Jihad movements. He was a great teacher, scholar and Islamic reformer. He was very eloquent and highly learned; he, therefore, built up a large number of followers who looked to him as a saviour. He preached against unfairness in Hausa land, such as over-taxation of the poor; he also revived Islam throughout Hausa land and brought together the different states that were under Fulani leadership.

He brought about national unity in the Sokoto caliphate. As a leader, he treated others fairly, and eventually everyone started treating others as citizens. He preached against all forms of unfairness and became extremely popular.

Uthman was a great scholar who encouraged education. He advocated the building of many Koran schools in the Sokoto caliphate which concentrated on the teaching of Islam and Arabic. He was also a good leader who managed to delegate power and responsibility to other leaders.

Importance of Mohammed Bello

Muhammad Bello was the second Sultan of Sokoto and reigned from 1817 until 1837. He was also an active writer of history, poetry and Islamic studies. He was the son and primary aide to Uthman dan Fodio, the founder of the Sokoto caliphate and the first sultan.

He was a great believer in Islam and Islamic reforms. He worked hand in hand with Uthman dan Fodio to establish and administer the Sokoto caliphate. He was a scholar of dan Fodio and when dan Fodio died, Mohammed took on the leadership of the Sokoto caliphate.

He concentrated on the establishment of a modern and competent army (see **Figure 4.4 below**). The army was trained with a promotion strategy based on merit. For every soldier to be promoted, he would first undergo the right training and prove that he was competent enough to serve as required. He also ensured that the army was well supplied with military equipment. Owing to its being competent and well-equipped, the Sokoto caliphate army was able to survive on the battlefield.



Figure 4.4: Modern soldiers undergoing training

Mohammed Bello held peaceful negotiations with hostile tribes in order to get them to accept his peaceful administration. This strategy was very favourable, since he did not have to do much to convince the people to practise the good values of Islam.

He improved education by encouraging the establishment of Quranic schools (see **photos below**). He made sure that the teachers in those schools were well facilitated so that they would deliver efficiently and effectively. Many mosques were also built during his time.



Figure 4.5: Class time in an Islamic school

Figure 4.6: An Islamic school

Mohammed Bello fought corruption and ensured that all forms of injustice were wiped out from the face of West Africa.

Task

Using the library and research, describe the contribution of the following personalities in West Africa:

- i) Seku Ahmadu
- ii) Al Hajj Umar

Lesson Summary

The Islamic Jihad movements in West Africa resulted largely from the need to spread Islam as far as possible and also to purify the Muslim religion. In the process of spreading and purifying Islam, the Jihad leaders made an effort to wipe out all forms of injustice in the communities. This, however, was not a smooth operation for some people required force to get them to convert to Islam and follow some of its principles. Much as the movement brought about remarkable changes, some of the results were negative, such as the big death toll that the population suffered.

Follow-up Activity

1. Discuss the impact of the Jihad movements on the people of West Africa.
2. Describe the changes that occurred in West Africa during the Jihad movements.

LESSON 2: The Influence of Christian Missionaries in the History of West Africa

Topic: Christian Missionary Activities in West Africa

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the lesson you should be able to:

1. identify the Christian missionary groups that operated in West Africa.
2. explain the motives for their coming.
3. find out the activities of Christian missionaries in West Africa.
4. explain the problems which they faced.

Materials you will need:

- a pen
- a pencil
- a notebook

Instructions

1. Make sure you have nothing distracting you. Switch off the TV and create a quiet environment for yourself that is suitable for study.
2. Take time to study and understand the information given for each step.
3. In case you find difficulty, it is all right to seek help from any adult that is near you.

Step 1: Introduction

- What do you understand by Christianity?
- Think of the different Christian religions around you and the differing beliefs they have.
- These religions started a long time ago and they continue to grow.

Christianity is an Abrahamic monotheistic religion based on the life and teachings of Jesus of

Nazareth. Its believers, known as Christians, believe that Jesus is the Christ, the messiah, whose coming was prophesied in the Hebrew Bible, called the Old Testament in Christianity, and narrated in the New Testament.

A Christian mission is an organised effort to spread Christianity to attract new converts. Missions involve sending individuals and groups, called missionaries, across boundaries, most commonly geographical boundaries, to carry on evangelism or other activities, such as educational or health work.

The activities of Christian missionaries in West Africa first became evident as early as 1456 when the Portuguese launched their mission there. However, they were not successful in their work owing to a number of factors, including the wide spread of Islam. It was only in the 19th century that the activities of the Christian missionaries proved successful. The initiative to embark on missionary work was first taken by the Protestant churches of Europe, with the Catholic Church following later.

Task

1. Outline the different European Christian missionary groups that operated in West Africa.
2. Identify the challenges that the Christian missionaries faced in West Africa.

Step 2: Motives and activities of Christian missionaries in West Africa

The main purposes of missionaries were: First, to make converts to Christ; to build up the Church in the entire world; and to extend Christ's influence by pervading non-Christian societies with his standard of right and wrong. The primary motives of Christian missionaries in West Africa were religious. Many people viewed Africa as a dark continent (see **Figure 5.1 below**). The European missionaries, therefore, wished to save the souls of Africans by converting them to Christianity with the hope to bring them light.



Figure 5.1: The African dark continent

Christian missionary interest in West Africa was further stimulated by the desire to stop the spread of Islam. In the 19th century, Islam was spreading like a bushfire in West Africa following the Jihad movements. Christian missionaries, therefore, wanted to halt the spread of Islam in West Africa.

European missionaries wanted to wipe the images of slave trade (see **Figures 5.2 and 5.3 below**) from the face of West Africa and clear their name before the Africans. They looked at their effort to spread Christianity in Africa as a way to compensate for the horrible crimes that Europe had committed against Africa.



Figure 5.2: A slave caravan



Figure 5.3: A slave ship

The missionaries also had humanitarian motives. In the process of spreading Christianity, they hoped to stop all inhuman acts that were rampant in Africa through preaching against them and preaching the love of Christ to Africans who had been dehumanised.

Missionaries had economic motives, too. Through their teaching and preaching, they wanted to create an atmosphere that was conducive to carrying out legitimate trade in Africa. They also encouraged Africans to grow cash crops, which would be a great boost to the economy.

The missionaries also wanted to spread western education so as to spread western cultures and values. That is why they established many schools in West Africa.

Christians also came to West Africa to facilitate the establishment of colonial rule. They worked hand in hand with the colonial governments and even helped them to identify areas in West Africa that were rich in raw materials.

Christian missionaries made an intentional effort to lead others to the saving faith in Jesus Christ. This was their primary task but, in order to accomplish it, they had to do quite a number of things. They cared for freed slaves, and other vulnerable people that needed help.

They spread Christianity and preached the good news of Jesus Christ and made an effort to convert as many people as possible. They shaped the attitude of people towards many things. The Africans changed their attitude towards certain practices such as polygamy, witchcraft and traditional African practices.

The missionaries encouraged the development of education, establishing many schools, such as Fourah Bay College, which was set up by the Church Missionary Society and where prominent historical figures such as Samuel Ajayi Crowther received their education. The missionaries also built many churches in West Africa.



Figure 5.4: A missionary school



Figure 5.5: A Christian church



Figure 5.6: A mission church

The missionaries taught local people many languages, such as English and French. Many people learnt the languages through missionary education. These languages became very important in the development of West Africa. The missionaries also played a significant role in the development of agriculture by teaching Africans better methods of farming. The missionaries taught Africans by example because they knew farming. The missionaries also taught many skills, such as bricklaying and carpentry, which Africans later used as sources of livelihood, hence improving their livelihoods.

Task

Carry out internet research and find out the careers of the following missionaries in West Africa:

- i) Bishop Samuel Ajai Crowther
- ii) Bishop Joseph Shanahan



Figure 5.7: A brick-making project

Step 3: Problems faced by missionaries in West Africa

Missionaries faced a number of challenges as they performed their activities. They included the following:

The greatest problem faced by the early European Christian missionaries were the tropical climate and health hazards. Many missionaries died because of the climate. This single problem made missionary work very difficult. The missionaries were also affected by tropical diseases such as malaria. Most of them contracted the tropical diseases and because they had no access to medicines, some of them succumbed to the diseases during their missionary work.

Missionaries did not have enough funds to carry out their missionary activities. They depended on alms that came from their mother countries. These alms would always take very long to reach them, thus causing them to lead very difficult lives. When the missionaries came to West Africa, most of the roads and railways were not yet developed so they faced difficulties in moving from place to place to carry out their activities.

The missionaries faced the problem of language barrier. It was very difficult for them to communicate with Africans yet they had to work closely with them. They used interpreters who were not reliable sometimes. In addition, the Africans who worked for them as porters were not honest; they would run away with some of the missionaries' items.

The missionaries also met resistance from Africans who looked at all whites as connected to slave trade. It took some time for the missionaries to convince these Africans that they had come for a good cause.

The missionaries also faced the problem of natural vegetation such as thick forests which were difficult for them to penetrate. They would sometimes encounter wild animals which were a threat to their lives. This put their lives at risk and interfered with their activities.

Task 3

1. Discuss the social, economic and political impact of Christianity on West Africa.
2. Carry out research and find out the different measures that Christian missionaries used to preach their message.

Lesson Summary

Christian missionaries in West Africa came with a major intention of spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ. However, they paved the way for the colonisation of West Africa and influenced Africans to adopt foreign cultures and practices. This left African culture partly eroded and western culture and successfully established western education. Regardless of the challenges faced by European missionaries, they successfully accomplished their mission.