

Rebranding Inter-Religious Dialogues Between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria

Joshua Akintunde Owolabi

*Department of Religious Studies,
University of Ibadan, Oyo State Nigeria*

Abstract

Nigeria needs rebranding dialogues in all areas of life, especially in the religious atmosphere. The religious crises that many States experienced in the country have spoiled good things, notable among them are loss of lives and property. The inter-religious dialogue between Muslims and Christians needs rebranding. This will bring back peace, unity, love, cordial social relation, truthful interaction, mutual trust, harmony and tranquility. The study adopts descriptive survey research design. Both questionnaire and unstructured interviews were used as instruments for data collection. Recommendations were made at the end of the analysis.

Keywords: Rebranding, Inter-Religious, Dialogues, Muslims and Christians, Nigeria

Introduction

Dialogue differs from problems and controversy. It is not a way of defending one's own views and rejecting others. Rather, it is a way of calling for mutual understanding and real reconciliation, especially in the midst of misunderstanding and prejudices. It is a way of exchanging personal or group ideas pleasantly. Dialogue comes up in a situation where there is need to establish better human relationship. It is not a way of expressing any person's or group's interest. Dialogue, in the real sense, is believed to be a give-and-take activity. Dialogue is a powerful tool and soul settlement. Its functional power is immeasurable and unquantifiable. Religion is an essential phenomenon and the most viable form of human institution in Nigeria. The three major religions practised in Nigeria are: African Traditional Religion, Islam and Christianity. In Nigeria, as a pluralistic nation, religious dialogue becomes inevitable. The potency of dialogue is advertently needed. As the title suggests, this paper is mostly concerned with rebranding inter-religious dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria.

Dialogue

According to Martey (2002), the term dialogue is derived from the Greek word "*dia-logos*", which literally means through words. Dialogue, therefore, means

'talking together' or conversation. It is primarily a conversation between believers of different faiths, religions or traditions. Brown (1976) also claims that, the word dialogue is derived from two Greek words - "*dia*" meaning between and "*legein*" meaning "to talk". Dialogue is a conversation on a common subject between two or more persons with different views. It is a form of meeting, arrangement and communication between individuals, groups and communities to bring about better human relations in the spirit of sincere respect for person's mutual trust and a better grasp of the truth. Abioye (2004) avers that, dialogue means a conversation between people of two or more religious beliefs or systems. It is concerned with personal meeting, encounter and co-operation in work and worship. It generally involves the need to talk together, for exchange of ideas, for a free and frank mutual discussion of ideas in order to enhance better understanding and harmony among diverse and different religious groups who live in the same country or neighbourhood. Dialogue is an encounter on the platform of searching for the truth regarding questions of the greatest importance to persons involved in the dialogue. In addition, Abioye (1990) notes that, dialogue is a search for a reciprocal exchange of information and insight with others, thereby deepening and strengthening each other's religion or faith. It involves the sharing of understanding and experience and, as such, it is a significant method of building a harmonious community. It is a means of expanding self-knowledge about people's religion. Kateregga and Shenk (1980) observe that, dialogue means to initiate better relationship between people of two religions on the basis of informed understanding, critical appreciation and balanced judgment of each other's basic beliefs. These indicate that dialogue is needed when opposing views or pluralistic religions are attempting to overcome their mutual prejudices and plan for mutual agreement among one another.

According to Chukwulozie (1979), there are three essential types of dialogue, namely:

- i. **The Plane of Simple Human Relations:** An encounter on the plane of simple human relations with a view to drawing the interlocutors out of their isolation and creating an atmosphere of deeper understanding, mutual esteem and respect.
- ii. **The Plane of Search for the Truth:** An encounter on the plane of search for the truth regarding questions of the greatest importance to the persons involved, by striving in common things to attain a deeper grasp of the truth and a fuller knowledge of reality.
- iii. **The Plane of Action:** An encounter on the plane of action which aims at establishing the conditions for collaboration towards fixed practical objectives despite doctrinal differences.

From the three types of dialogue propounded by Chukwulozie above, we can glean that inter-religious dialogue operates in three specific areas: one, in practical way, where we collaborate to help humanity, two, the cognitive, where we seek understanding of the truth, and third, the spiritual, where we attempt to experience the partners' religion from within. However, from the above views, dialogue can be said to be an arrangement or meeting together of different people or different faiths to discuss matters that they share in common or on which they disagree. Also, it involves the sharing of understanding and experience. The primary aim is for each participant to learn from the others, so that there will be cordial inter-personal relationship and social interaction among the different groups of people. Its main significance is to rebuild and rebrand the situations that has been destroyed and mismanaged. A way of learning from each other and have mutual understanding in all matters relating to the parties that meet together.

The Necessity of Rebranding Inter-religious Dialogue in Nigeria

There are several reasons to support why Muslims and Christians need to rebrand inter-religious dialogues between one another. Some of them are stated below;

- It is a proper way made for discussing with one another. In other words, rebranding inter-religious dialogues between Muslims and Christians will bring them together to a common forum for exchange of religious ideas, views, values, opinions, doctrines and other necessary information for common understanding, consensus, peace, love, tranquility and unity.
- It is an easier way of preventing clashes and settling crises or conflicts among them. The Yoruba elders will say, "*Ti ara ile ko ba gbo ohun ara oko, ija lo n da sile*" (If the people leaving in village farm do not hear any information from those in the town, conflict will ensue). In a simple way, rebranding inter-religious dialogues among people of different faiths, especially Muslims and Christians, will assist in fostering inter-religious relationship among them and it will put away lack of confidence, isolation, conflict of interests, avoidable conflict, divisions, prejudices, suspicions, fighting, exclusiveness, misinterpretation of facts and figures, miss-interpretation of religious scriptures, and the like.
- It serves as means of mutual understanding between Muslims and Christians in their time-to-time discussions.
- It will even give room for co-operation in the areas of religion, politics, economy, education, inter-communication and so on for the goal of

improving and retaining the social conditions of different religious adherents.

- It is to promote open-mindedness and self-evaluation in order to ensure inter-religious tolerance in a religiously pluralistic nation like Nigeria.
- Rebranding inter-religious dialogue will help to maintain and sustain religious peace, love, unity, security and stability.
- It is a sober and rational way that gives room for both critical and appreciative approaches.
- It will promote personal and group reflective logical reasoning in order to attain truth in our inter-religious forums.
- It will encourage the general well-being of inter-religious relationship and dialogue in whatever manners.
- It will encourage a positive growth of inter-religious thoughts and attitudes.
- It will equally promote and develop religious institutions of each of them.
- It will promote mutual respect for each other's religious scriptures, literatures, doctrines, observations, ordinances, commandments, institutions and their entire practices and beliefs.
- It will assist them to agree on their areas of convergence and divergence.
- It preserves moral ethics, social values and discourages religious crises.
- It will not encourage instability of government, evil policies and political saga.
- It will bring an end to destruction of educational systems or operations at any point in time.
- It will assist religionists, individuals, different stakeholders and even government to fight common foes that are troubling them. Examples of such are poverty, severe health problems (e.g. Ebola Epidemic), famine, climatic hazards, (e.g. global warming) and the likes.
- It will give room for inter-religious marriages and inter-ethnic relationship in a sensible way.
- It will enhance regular inter-personal relationship in many forms among different religious leaders.
- It is a tool for putting an end to the state of wanton destruction of lives and property.

Rules Needed in Rebranding Inter-religious Dialogues between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria.

For rebranding inter-religious dialogues to be effective, the following rules must be observed:

1. **Open-Mindedness:** Open-mindedness is one of the major important rules that must be followed in rebranding inter-religious dialogues. The adherents of Islamic and Christianity religions in Nigeria should engage in dialogue with an open mind and speak out their minds. There should be a show of free behaviours and clear conscience with any matter arising. By doing this, rebranding of any dialogue will be a huge success. Each participant must display complete honesty and sincerity in other partners. This is because absence of sincerity prevents dialogues from being real. And where there is no truth, there cannot be genuine dialogue. Dialogue requires open-mindedness.
2. **Objectivity:** In rebranding inter-religious dialogues between people of different faiths, the partakers must avoid emotional outbursts that can cause crises in the dialogue process. Each of them must be patient and put others into consideration in any matters they raise and must be objective in the discussion(s).
3. **Tolerance:** The people that take part in rebranding dialogues between Muslims and Christians must avoid being ruled by emotion. They must tolerate each other by creating chances for opinion of others.
4. **Reverence:** Reverence is another important rule useful for rebranding inter-religious dialogues between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria. This is because there is need to have deep respect for other religions. No religious adherent would want his or her religion to be treated with disdain and disrespect in any ramification whatsoever. This is because religion is much more personal to individuals regardless of languages, races, genders, clans and tribes.
5. **Sharing together:** Sharing individuals and groups views together is one of the essential rules in rebranding inter-religious dialogues. In any situation, where real dialogue is taking place, participants must bear each other's faults and accept individual differences with love. They must also uphold the truth found in the doctrines of people of other faiths. Malek (1987) notes that our faith is sensed by others on dialogue as valid by virtue of their trust in us. This means that, we should accept people of other faiths with love and joy. This will really assist both Islamic and Christian religious leaders and their adherents to rebrand inter-religious dialogues that have been unfruitful in the past.

6. **Stressing of the common elements that bind rational foundations of all religions:** In order to rebrand inter-religious dialogues between Muslims and Christians, there is need to stress the common elements that bind rational foundations of all religions. This can be done in two major ways. The first has to do with the factors which unite the two religions together. There is the need for Muslims and Christians in Nigeria to stress their common citizenship within the boundaries of the nation. Being citizens of the same country, they should be able to work together. The second is the fact that Muslims and Christians must bear in mind that, they are operating on a common religious heritage. They should remember that there are many beliefs common to both religions. So they should be ready at any time to rebrand dialogues with each other. Brown (1976) notes that, those who share a wide range of similar attitudes towards God, the world and human responsibility within it should find it possible to stay together in many common enterprises. The common elements that bind the two religions together and their rational foundation must be followed if genuine rebranding inter-religious dialogues will take place.
7. **Competency and Knowledge Ability:** Competency and knowledge of the representatives of any religions that are to be involved in rebranding dialogue are one of the most important rules to be followed. The representatives or groups of any religions that are to be involved in dialogues must be well versed in other people's faiths. This will put an end to religious crises.
8. **Personal Contact:** Personal contact is another rule to guide in rebranding dialogues. Dialogue involves personal contact among those engaged in it. If we really wish to rebrand real dialogue, personal contact have to be made at all levels, so that misunderstanding and element of prejudice will not be shown at all. We should not at any rate compare our religious systems or beliefs with others, because this does not lead to a person-to-person encounter.
9. **Avoid Assumptions:** Each participant must come to the dialogue with no rigid assumptions as to where the points of disagreement are. Rather, each partner should listen to the other partners with free minds while still maintaining integrity with his or her own religious traditions.

Rebranding Inter-religious Dialogue among Muslims and Christians in Nigeria
Rebranding means to re-structure, re-establish, re-organise, re-schedule or re-arrange. It indicates that something has been in operation before, but now stopped for a while or it has been in operation but it needs re-structuring in

another form. In Nigeria, the adherents of the two major religions have been at loggerheads since the nation gained independence in October 1, 1960. The religious crises have made the nation to experience crimes like heartless killing, maiming, kidnapping, political instability and wanton destruction of lives and property. There have been several religious dialogues among people of different faiths in the past years and even at present that have not been fruitful. Instead, they had resulted into conflicts, violence, prejudices, tribal sentiments and disunity. The Nigeria Catholic Church leaders have been trying to bring people of different faiths together but this has not yielded good results. Akintunde (2007) avers that some bodies responsible for dialogue have been established. Among them are the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), the Association of Episcopal Conferences of West Africa (AECOWA) and Inter-Religious Dialogue Commission (IRDC), among others. In some of these organizations mentioned above, Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), which hold twice a year in particular, Muslim clerics are usually invited to be observers during inter-religious sessions. This is to facilitate a situation where those in attendance will see the position of the church on tolerance and dialogue. And the Bishops are to educate the local churches within their Dioceses on the church's stand on the issues and the new programmes deliberated upon. Akintunde (2007) also notes that the association of Episcopal Conferences of West Africa (AECOWA) and Inter-Religious Dialogue Commission (IRDC), with its headquarters in Abuja, also holds dialogues which feature articles on inter-faith dialogue. There are other established and non-established religious bodies focusing on the dialogue between people of different faiths, like the Project for Christians-Muslims Relations in Africa (PROCMURA), and Oyo-North Catholic-Muslims Religious Dialogue Relations (ONCMRDR) which established many years ago. The peaceful struggle of all of them yields nothing reasonable. It needs rebranding. That is why religious crises are rampant today in almost every corridor in our loving Nation, Nigeria. The recent activities of an insurgency group which universally known as Boko Haram (a group that is against Western Education) and in particular the abducted Chibok Girls are still fresh in our memories. If inter-religious dialogues have been successful in the past, all these would not have been featuring out any more. (See Table 1 for different religious crises that had occurred because of unfruitful inter-religious dialogues)

Table 1: A Litany of Clashes with Religious Undertones in Nigeria

S/	Date	Location	Nature of Occurrence
1.	Oct. 1977	Zaria (Kaduna State)	ABU Muslim Vs Christian Students
2.	May 1978	Tundun Wada, Kano	Argument over Islam and Christianity in a primary school students.
3.	May 1978	Kaduna/Zaria	I found it (Jesus salvation) religious crises
4.	Dec. 18, 1980	Kano, Bauchi, Yola and Borno	Muslim Maitastine sect Vs. other intra Islamic Puritanical Insurrection.
5.	Oct. 29, 1982	Pigassa (Kaduna)	Muslim Maitastine sect Vs. others
6.	1983	Kaduna/Tundun	Muslim Vs Christian Crisis
7.	Feb. 27, 1984	Gongola (Jimela-Yola)	Muslim Maitastine sect Vs. others
8.	Feb. 27, 1984	Kwara (Ilorin)	Muslims Vs. Christians
9.	April 26, 1985	Bauchi (Gombe)	Muslim Maitastine sect. Vs. Others
10.	March 11, 1987	Kano (B.U.K)	Muslims (Izala sects) Vs. Christians
11.	March 12, 1987	Kalanchau, Zaria	Muslims Vs. Christians
12.	June 12, 1987	Kaduna, Bauchi and Kano	Muslim Students Vs. Christians. Crusade at College of Education Kafancha, where one RevBako was accused of blasphemy of Prophet
13.	April 12, 1988	Zuru	Muslim sects Vs. Others. Riot against the Killing and Sales of pig at the public abattoir.
14.	April, 1988	Ilorin (Kwara State)	Palm Sunday Conflicts: Religious Crises
15.	June 13, 1989	Kano (B.U.K)	Muslims Vs. Christians. Riot against the Crusade of ReinhardBonke.
16.	May 17, 1990	Sokoto	Muslims Vs. Christians
17.	May 31, 1990	Kaduna (Markali)	Muslims Vs. Christians
18.	June 1, 1990	Bauchi	Muslims Vs. Christians
19.	Oct., 1991	Kano (Kano State)	Religious Crises on Reinhard Bonke Crusade
20.	April 22-26,	Toto-Ninji Bauchi	Muslims Vs Christians riot
21.	Oct. 14, 1991	Kano/Kano	Muslim Youth protested against Reinhard Bonke's Revival in Kano
22.	May 23, 1992	Kaduna	Inter-religious war between Katafs and Zangos
23.	May, 1995	Sabo-Geri (Kano)	Christian/Muslim/Ibo/Hausa Ethno-Religious
24.	Nov. 27, 1999	Lagos	Hausa/Fulani Muslims Vs. Yoruba tribe
25.	April 24, 2000	Oyo (Saki)	Hausa/Fulani Muslims Vs. Christians
26.	May 24, 2000	Abia (Aba)	Hausa/Fulani Muslims Vs. Iabo
27.	July 18, 2000	Ogun (Shagamu)	Hausa/Fulani Muslims Vs. Yoruba Christians
28.	Oct. 15, 2000	Lagos	Hausa/Fulani Muslims Vs. Yoruba Christians
29.	Oct. 2000	Ovo (Ibadan)	Hausa/Fulani Muslims Vs. Yoruba Christians
30.	Oct. 16, 2000	Lagos (AlabaRago)	Hausa/Fulani Muslims Vs. Iabo Christians

31.	Oct. 17, 2000	Kwara	Hausa/Fulani Muslims Vs. Yoruba
32.	Oct. 24, 2000	Niger (Minna)	Nupe, Hausa/Fulani Muslims Vs. Yoruba
33.	Nov. 25, 2000	Lagos	Hausa/Fulani Muslims Vs. Yoruba
34.	April 7, 2001	Katsina	Hausa/Fulani Muslims Vs. Kafafs Christians
35.	April 13, 2001	Kano State	Muslims Vs. Christians
36.	June 18, 2001	Bauchi	Hausa/Fulani Muslims Vs. Christians
37.	June 18, 2001	Gombe	Hausa/Fulani Muslims Vs. Christians
38.	June 25, 2001	Nassarawa	Hausa/Fulani Muslims Vs. Other faiths.
39.	July, 2001	Jigawa	Hausa/Fulani Muslims Vs. Christians
40.	Aug. 2001	Birnin (Birai) Gwari	Hausa/Fulani Muslims Vs. Christians
41.	Sept. 7, 2001	Jos	Hausa/Fulani Muslims Vs. Birom and Christians
42.	Sept. 8, 2001	Zamfara (Gusau)	Hausa/Fulani Muslims Vs. Christians
43.	Sept. 16, 2001	Kano State	Muslims Vs. Christians
44.	Sept. 18, 2001	Benue State	Muslims Vs. Christians
45.	Oct. 12, 2001	Kano	Hausa/Fulani Muslims Vs. Christians
46.	Nov. 29, 2001	Osun (Osoqbo)	Yoruba Fundamentalists Vs. Christians
47.	Dec. 29, 2001	Plateau	Hausa/Fulani Muslims Vs.
48.	Feb. 2, 2002	Lagos	Hausa/Fulani Muslims Vs. Yoruba Christians
49.	Nov. 23, 2002	Abuja / F.C.T.	Muslims Vs Christians.
50.	Nov. 26, 2002	Kaduna	Muslims Vs. Christians. Alleged blasphemous publication against Prophet Muhammed.
51.	April 3, 2004	Kaduna	Alleged destruction of the Qur'an by
52.	2004 & 2005	YelwaShadan Plateau, Jos State	Hausa Fulanis were accused by Christian natives of migrant invasion of their area.
53.	Nov. 28-29, 2008	Jos	Jos-North Muslims Umma Vs. Christians on Post-Election Genocide
55.	Dec. 2008	Jos / Jos	Hausa/Fulani Muslims Vs Christians.
56.	July, 2009	Bauchi / Bauchi	Boko Haram Fundamentalist sects attack
54.	2010	Bauchi, Yobe Maiduguri, and Jos	Boko Haram sect protests against Western education, among other reasons.
57.	March 7, 2010	Jos / Plateau	Hausa/Fulani Muslims Vs. Birom ended in Muslim/Christians Crisis.

Source(s):

- i. Dr. (Mrs.) Dorcas Olubanke Akintunde. Religious particularism: hindrance to religious dialogue in Nigeria. *"Voices"*. PP. 23-26.
- ii. *TELL* No. 21, May 31, 2010 P.23.
- iii. 2000 Annual Report on Human Rights Situation in Nigeria: *TELL*, September 24, 2001.
- iv. *Nigerian Tribune* - September 19, 2001.
- v. *The Punch* Newspaper, November 22, 2002.

- vi. *TELL Magazine*, February 18, 2002.
- vii. *Ife Psychologia* Volume 9 No. 3, 2001.
- viii. Mikali, M. (2002) "Living in Crisis". *TELL* Feb. 18.
- ix. *The Vanguard*, May 21st, 2004.
- x. *The Vanguard*, March 30th, 2009.
- xi. *The Nation*, March 22, 2010.

This table shows that Nigeria has been engulfed in many crises with religious undertones. This shows that Nigeria needs rebranding of inter-religious dialogue urgently before things seriously go sour. Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, a former Nigeria President, notes that Nigeria has "to discover dialogue at all spheres of life".

Table 2: Table Shows the Responses of the People about Rebranding of Inter-Religious Dialogue

S/N	QUESTION	YES	PERCENTAGE	NO	PERCENTAGE
1.	Religious crises always increase from the meeting places.	15	75%	5	25%
2.	Religious dialogue meeting points are now turned into battlegrounds, places where they exchange grievances and where evil political saga has been the order of the day.	18	90%	2	10%
3.	In dialogue, there should be recognition and respect for the true claims of each religion.	17	85%	3	15%
4.	Open-mindedness is not needed in dialogue	2	1%	18	99%
5.	Dialogue means argument and controversy on doctrinal issues of one religion.	0	0%	20	100%

Analysis

As seen in this table, only 5 respondents (25%) did not agree with statement 1, while 15 respondents (75%) agreed with it. This proves that, different religious crises that engulfed the nation of recent increasingly increase right from the

dialogue meeting places. Also, in statement 2, most of the respondents supported the view that religious dialogue meeting points are now turning to battle grounds, places of exchange of grievances and where evil political saga has been the order of the day. This is so because, 18 respondents (90%) agreed with this, while just only 2 respondents (10%) disagreed. As for the third statement, 17 respondents (85%) supported the opinion while only 3 (15%) of them rejected it. This indicates that, in dialogue, there should be recognition and respect for the true claims of each religion. Only 2 respondents (2%) agreed with statement four, while 18 respondents (99%) disagreed with it. This indicates that, open-mindedness is really needed in dialogue. None of the respondents agreed with statement 5 that dialogue means argument and controversy on doctrinal issues of one religion. This implies that dialogue does not mean argument and controversy on doctrinal issues of one religion. In a nutshell, the nation needs rebranding at religious dialogue arena. This will put an end to various religious crises and thus, control the maiming and colossal destruction of lives and property that we are presently experiencing in Nigeria. It will even foster genuine relationship between the religious adherents and hold them together as one nation. This will result into the promotion of cordial socio-political and socio-economic relations, good interaction, peace, love, unity, harmony, mutual understanding, trust and tranquility. It will also enable them to share a common service to the nation as a whole.

Conclusion

This paper looks at how to rebrand inter-religious dialogues between the adherents of Islamic and Christianity religions in Nigeria. It emphasized that the meeting point of religious dialogue should not be a fighting place. Inter-religious dialogues that have failed in the past, need to be rebranded at all spheres of life for the betterment of Nigeria. From the paper, we have seen that, we need to struggle to re-organise truthful religious dialogues as quickly as possible.

Recommendations

For inter-religious crises to be nipped in the bud and to ensure a society free of religious crisis, where peace, love, harmony and tranquility will prevail, the following recommendations are suggested:

Proper and adequate religious ethics as embedded in both the Holy Bible and the Qur'an should be given to all and sundry, especially the Christians and Muslims. While doing that, caution should be exercised on who gives and receives what, with regard to the said ethics, when they are given and how they are relayed,

most essentially, to the younger ones. Efforts should also be made by every well-meaning individual to give ethical instructions in the right way to the younger ones, lest they have them in a wrong way. On this note, the word of Babalola is more appropriate. He postulates that,

"the curriculum and the syllabus of the University should be revised. Students of religious studies must be made to pass through the three major religions before graduating. This will also create religious harmony in our community".

Also, religious organisation should teach moral codes so that nobody (aliens and citizens) would be able to hide under religious issues to perpetrate evil. As education is termed the bedrock of any meaningful development and civilization, every Christian and Muslim must aspire to be educated and be versed enough in Christian and Islamic teachings. Their knowledge in what their religions teach, especially peaceful co-existence among the members of the society, making them work together for the development of their areas. In facilitating this, the government at every level should, as a matter of urgency, intensify efforts at enhancing religious education in Nigeria. This would give every Nigerian student an opportunity to know the fundamentals of his or her religion as well as those of others. This can be done through making the teaching and learning of religious and moral education compulsory in primary and secondary schools and tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Besides, this policy, if used, would promote mutual understanding, respect, love, harmony and tolerance among the adherents of the different faiths. At the same time, Muslims and Christians should re-affirm their determination to resist any attempt from anywhere to engage in any act that may lead to disintegration of Nigeria. All avenues for rebranding truthful religious dialogues should be pursued. Religious scholars, and the Nigerian press should stop writing views that are provocative or against other religious groups. Inflammatory and sensational captions should be avoided. Likewise, the religious preachers and lecturers should do away with negative preaching, teachings and utterances that are against the beliefs of other religions or sects. Rather, their focus should be on how to enhance meaningful and peaceful co-existence among people. Every religious leader needs to imbibe the spirit of togetherness and understanding among themselves and extend same to their followers.

Inter-religious seminars, conferences and symposia on featuring matters that are threatening the peaceful co-existence of society should be organized regularly by every concerned individuals, groups and organizations. Besides that,

world bodies like Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), The Organisation of Islamic Council (OIC), The World Council of Churches (WCC) and United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) should organize religious and ethical forums where the causes and effects of religious crises will be discussed and the scars of the past occurrences will be treated and healed totally. This, if done, will ultimately bring unity, peace, love, harmonious relationship and tranquility between the Christians and Muslims. On this note, Babalola opines that,

Seminars and symposia should be held from time to time inviting the adherents of the three major religions to participate. In this type of seminars, symposia and conferences, we are to emphasise what brings us together rather than what separates us. This will definitely create a great deal of religious harmony in a multi-religious community.

Dialogue at various levels must be observed. The dialogue here is not an ordinary roundtable discussion, but a dialogue that will involve saying the truth and nothing but the truth. This should be done to understand what exactly are the causes and the solutions to be proffered in the overall best interest of ensuring peace, love, harmony and stability in the affected areas. In the same vein, federal, state and local authorities should support inter-religious dialogue and co-operate through generous funding. Adekoya sheds more light on this, when he pinpoints that,

... the primary purpose of dialogue is for each participant to learn from the other, so that he or she can change and grow. This is 'the way of dialogue' which is a powerful tool when used to contribute to humanity, build trust and mend relationships. But for it to be meaningful and fruitful, participants must leave behind stereotypes, mindsets, beliefs constructed and reformed based on preconception and prejudices regarding and beliefs and practices of the other religious community in the dialogue.

The devil makes work for idle hands. Jobs should be provided for those who are seeking for them. This will engage the jobless youths and other young school leavers who by meagre monetary gratification partake in crises. So also, appointment into national key posts must be done in love and unity. Since Nigeria belongs to everyone, appointment into national key posts should not be lopsided.

This means that, all sections, regions and zones of the entire nation should be considered when sharing key posts, especially political and career posts. There should also be a programme to recognise and re-integrate warring ethnic groups. People should instantly forget their ethnic differences. Sir Ahmadu Bello long ago remarked that;

No, let us understand our differences. I am a Muslim and a northerner. You are a Christian and an easterner. By understanding our differences, we can build unity in our country.

This statement underscores the powerful influence of ethnicity and religion on Nigeria's peaceful co-existence.

Additionally, inter-personal relationship and socio-cultural development must be promoted among all Nigerians. Babalola opines on this that,

... socio-cultural practices also bring harmony and interaction. It has to be regularly done among Muslims, Christians and Traditionalists.

Above all, government, religious groups and individuals should uphold section 35 of the Nigerian Constitution of 1999 which entitles a Nigerian to freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief in worship, teaching or observance. Government in particular, should develop and maintain a neutral position on religion, for section 10 of the same (Nigerian) constitution prohibits the government from adopting any religion as a state religion. This indicates that, no religion should be accorded primacy over the others. Therefore, everyone needs to approach religious issues with unbiased attitudes. They should adopt the attitude of live and let live.

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Biographical Note: Owolabi, Joshua Akintunde holds the B.A (Ed.) in Christian Religious Studies of University of Ado-Ekiti (now Ekiti State University, Ekiti State), and the M.A., and Ph.D. degrees of the University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria. Dr. Owolabi's area of specialisation is Comparative Religion. He is currently a part-time lecturer in the Department of Christian Religious Studies, Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo (Lanlate Campus). He is a well-known Baptist Pastor for years more than a score. Dr Owolabi has many publications to his credit. He authored Senior Secondary School and Junior Secondary School text books on Christian Religious Knowledge and Civic Education in line with Federal Ministry of Education Basic Education Curriculum. His research interests cover Religious violence and promotion of peace, love, unity, tranquility and meaningful dialogue in the world in general and Nigeria in particular.
