

The Downside Relationship between Christians and Muslims in Jos and Kaduna

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Recommendations

Individual Adherents:

There can be no gainsaying the fact that individual adherents are the most important to every religion, for without them no religion can survive. As such adherents should:

1. Know the tenets of their religion. It is advisable for them to strive to be conversant with the teachings of their religious books, rather than rely solely on what their religious leaders say. From experience some religious leaders have capitalized on ignorance and misled followers.
2. Accept the fact that there are religions other than theirs. Consequently, they should develop the spirit of accommodation in spite of the differences that might exist. Their watchword should be “Live and Let Live.”
3. Show interest in other religions. They should seek to learn about religions other than theirs and, if possible, create an opportunity of sharing their belief with people of other religions in a healthy manner.
4. Adherents should understand that religion is not a personal property of an individual or a group as seen in the definition at the beginning of this work. Religion belongs to God, who on His own has revealed Himself to mankind. As such, adherents should refrain from adopting a posture that gives the impression that they can defend God and his cause through physical means. They should bear in mind that “faith” should be the main ingredient in religion rather than “compulsion” or “fate.”

Leaders of Religious Organisations:

The importance of leaders to any organisation cannot be over-emphasized. For leaders do, in most cases, have great influence over those that they lead. To this end leaders should:

1. Weigh seriously and critically their utterances and actions. In a situation like Nigeria, where perhaps more than half of the people are not literate, the masses virtually depend very much on what the leaders say or do.

¹J. Akume, 4 Sep/2004, pp. 5, 9.

2. Leaders should teach their followers the basic tenets of their own religion and those of others. One of the ways of achieving this is through encouraging adherents to read and understand religious book(s).
3. Make sure that preaching engagements are not inciting and/or insulting. It should be understood that one of the best ways of making converts is through “persuasion” rather than “compulsion” or “alienation.”
4. Leaders should create and sustain forums for communication, dialogue and interaction between various religions.
5. Leaders should refrain from manipulating adherents for their own selfish ends.
6. Leaders should avoid degenerating into “remote control appliances” and “manipulating gadgets” to the government of the day.
7. Leaders should not allow themselves to become “tools or agents” of government.
8. Leaders should ensure that adherents live in peace and harmony and respect other people.
9. Leaders should accept and accommodate the existence of secular institutions.
10. Leaders should, together with adherents, respect and uphold the constitution of the land.

The Role of Government & Non-Governmental Organisations:

In a country like Nigeria which has religious pluralism, and where each religious group might try to win the favour of the government of the day, a neutral and an impartial role by the government is an absolute necessity. Due to this fact, it would not be out of place to recommend that, government should as a matter of urgency make sure that the constitution of the land not only guarantees religious freedom, but seen to do so.

Furthermore, government should not openly or clandestinely, give undue favour and/or attention to one religious group.

Thirdly, government should not involve itself in the activities of any religious group either directly or indirectly.

In order to sustain an atmosphere of peace and harmonious relations among the Christians and Moslems, government should not finance any religious activity apart from the provision of religious education, where religious knowledge forms part of the school curriculum. In doing this, government should ensure equitable treatment for all pupils and students.

Making or ensuring equity availability of facilities available to religious groups. It can also be safely said that government should not join any religious organization whether within or outside the country.