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Inter-Faith Relation in Nigerian Educational Institutions: A Case Study of Selected Tertiary Institutions in the Ilorin Emirate

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ABSTRACT

The relevance of higher education in contemporary times has brought students of different religious backgrounds together in the same academic environment in Nigeria's institutions of learning. This practice can be enriched to become a positive experience that students as well as the immediate and larger society can benefit from. Currently, ethno-religious conflicts have left untold hardships on families and grudges in the minds of many Nigerians. Therefore, if the practices of faith integration and interfaith relation are managed well, it will result in social, economic and academic benefits. It is in line with this that the author examined the concept of faith integration and the practice of inter-faith relations in some federal and state owned tertiary institutions in the Ilorin Emirate of Kwara State. Methods employed were historical and descriptive. Data were collected through interviews, information from textbooks, journals, and electronic sources. Findings revealed that cases of religious crises in some institutions of higher learning have led to the killings of innocent students and lecturers; destruction of properties; disruption of families and academic calendars of institutions; and harm to the economy of the nation. However, such ugly scenes are seldom heard of in tertiary institutions in the Ilorin Emirate. It is, therefore, the intention of this paper to highlight the various approaches to inter-faith relations adopted by these institutions, which can make them serve as models to other educational institutions in Nigeria. The paper concludes and recommends, among others, that, to sustain good inter-faith relation on institutional campuses, the management of the institutions, student leaders, different religious groups and leaders must come together regularly to discuss their areas of convergences for holistic human development.

Introduction

Nigeria, the acclaimed giant of Africa, is a multi-ethnic as well as multi-religious nation. Unfortunately, the country has become a centre of vibrant ethno-religious intolerance. Worse still, with all the developmental programmes and amenities put in place by the government to sustain and promote the standard of education in the country, issues of ethno-religious crises in some parts have hindered academic stability. Schools have been closed down; as well, innocent students and lecturers have been maimed or killed. In an ugly situation as this, meaningful learning and development-oriented researches that take place in universities are hampered.

Mustapha (2011) has identified education as an important instrument that any nation can employ

to shape Muslim and Christian understanding and tolerance of each other's faith. This same purpose can also be achieved through inter-faith relation in tertiary institutions. Therefore, this paper is germane for any establishment or institution that wants to achieve success and attain desired goals, especially with the present insurgence being experienced in certain parts of the nation. The study is relevant for the promotion of inter-faith relations in Nigeria's citadels of learning. Proper attention should be geared towards inter-faith relation so as to curb, as early as possible, any problem that could arise, which may eventually lead to loss of lives and property, as well as disruption of academic calendars. Matters of inter-faith relations should become part and parcel of Nigeria's educational effort towards establishing and promoting peaceful co-existence among people of diverse faiths. Students should be taught how to integrate their faith in resolving issues. By so doing, they would be able to learn under a very conducive and crises-free environment. Thus, complete their course of study at the prescribed period, and so would be able to contribute to the desired peace and harmony required for sustainable development within and outside the institutions.

Delimitations

In this paper, discussions on inter-faith relation on campuses will be limited to Muslim and Christian faith as practiced in Nigeria, though, this author is also aware that people of the same religion may be from different denominations and may disagree on certain doctrinal issues. However, that is not the focus of this work. Events in the past have shown that lack of genuine inter-faith relation is more prominent between adherents of Islam and Christianity. This is usually not the case with those practicing African Religion. (AFREL). This is further confirmed in the following words, that "Afrrel is the minefield of both Christianity and Islam. Not only are the two religions making converts from Afrrel, which is often attacked verbally and physically because Islam and Christianity are dominant socio-politically, and they create most of the religious violence and breach of peace in Nigeria."(Abioje, 2007, p. 347)

Based on the aforementioned and the current onslaught of Boko Haram sects on the nation, the study examines what inter-faith relation is, its benefits, the choice of University of Ilorin and Kwara State University as models of inter-faith relation in the Ilorin Emirate of Kwara State. The paper also identifies evidences of faith integration in the attempts to maintain positive relationship among adherents of diverse faiths in the two universities, and further provides proposals for sustaining and promoting good inter-faith relation in all Nigerian institutions of higher learning.

Methodology

The methods of research used in this work were imperative because of their nature. The methods were essentially historical, comparative and interpretative. The historical approach became necessary because the work itself required a good capture of historical events. For objective analysis and interpretation, historical data were, in turn, compared with the views of other scholars. These results enabled the author to arrive at a favourable choice of Kwara State University and the University of Ilorin as models of tertiary institutions where good inter-faith relations are encouraged.

The interpretative method employed involved joining in the activities of the groups that were studied being a member of staff, and an active insider in the religious activities of the two institutions, at one time or the other provided adequate knowledge and

experience, about the nature of inter-faith relations obtainable in the two institutions.

This method agreed with the views of Fawole (2006) that “Interpretative method is often used when people see a problem in a situation and, by becoming involved in the activities of the group, are able to experience the problem and work out solution (p. 12).

The method was relevant to the study because it helped with identifying the problem, observing thoroughly how the people involved were able to cope with it, and suggesting solutions.

Tertiary Institutions in the Ilorin Emirate and Selection of Cases

The Ilorin Emirate consists of five local government areas. They are Ilorin East Local Government Area (LGA), Ilorin West LGA, Ilorin South LGA, Asa LGA and Moro LGA. (see *Kwara State of Nigeria Today* (n.d). Ilorin East was created in 1991 from Ilorin LGA with its headquarters at Oke-Oyi. It has 11 wards. Ilorin West, also created in 1991, has its own headquarters at Oja Oba. It has four districts and four wards. (see *Kwara State of Nigeria Today* (n.d), Ilorin South LGA, according to Akande (2010), was created in 1996 with headquarters at Fufu. It is made up of three districts and has 10 wards. Asa LGA headquarters is at Afon, about 27 kilometers (km) from Ilorin, and is one of the oldest in the State since its creation in 1976. It has 12 wards and shares boundary with Osun State at several locations. (see *Kwara State of Nigeria Today* (n.d). Moro LGA forms part of the originally vast Ilorin Emirate. It was created in 1976 out of the Ilorin Native Authority. Among the towns and villages in this local government are Bode Saadu (the headquarters), Shao, Ejidongari, Ipaiye, Oloru, Lanwa, Jebba, Elemere and Malete. (see *Kwara State of Nigeria Today* (n.d). It shares boundaries with Oyo and Niger States, and has 17 wards.

The tertiary institutions in the Emirate are the University of Ilorin, Kwara State University, Malete; Alhikman University (a private university); Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin; two Colleges of Education, and a private School of Health Technology, known as St. Bartholomew School of Health Technology, located at Shao, in Moro LGA. For the purpose of this study, the tertiary institutions selected are the University of Ilorin (owned by the Federal Government of Nigeria), and Kwara State University, Malete, owned by the Kwara State Government). The choice of these two institutions was informed by the fact that both are owned by government. In addition, and, more importantly, the author was a pioneer academic staff of the Department of Religions, History and Comparative Religious Studies, Kwara State University, and is presently a lecturer in the Department of Religions, University of Ilorin. Her involvement and understanding of the operations of the two institutions in inter-faith relation made the selection of the two institutions appropriate for the study. The University of Ilorin, is situated in Ilorin South LGA of the Emirate, while Kwara State University, Malete, is in Moro LGA.

Inter-faith Relation in Nigeria’s Tertiary Institutions

The word *inter-faith* has nothing to do with religious syncretism; neither is it about asking others to leave their religions to embrace other religions. Inter-faith relation is about developing good relationships with individuals whose religious beliefs, doctrines or faith differ. It does not compel participants to put aside, abandon, or lessen the significance of their own religious

traditions. According to Adewale (1989), “when religions interact positively there is bound to be peaceful coexistence and healthy rivalry. But, the reverse is the case when religions interact with a view to absorbing or annihilating one another.”(p.5). Inter-faith relation is not the latter. On the contrary, it aims at developing in individual good relationship skills that will manifest in their professional, religious and secular lives in the present and in the future. Therefore, religion and inter-faith relations cannot be diffused from each other. They are both two sides of the same coin, which permeate every aspect of life, politically, economically and socially.

The current religious scenario in certain part of the country, especially in the north, calls for genuine inter-faith relation on campuses. No individual practicing one religion or the other can do so in isolation. Nigeria is such a country of diverse ethnic groups and different religions. There is neither separate Christian nor Muslim community.

Admission to a higher institution of learning in Nigeria is open to all students irrespective of their faith or religious practices. Departmental associations in these schools comprise of Muslim and Christian students interacting freely and amicably. Also, in some universities, Departments of Religion(s) offer courses in some of the different religions practiced in Nigeria. Students who enroll in those courses interact freely in and outside of class with course mates despite their individual religious affiliations. Good examples of such institutions include the University of Ilorin that has a Department of Religions; Obafemi Awolowo University, Ife, with a Department of Religious Studies; and Kwara State University, Malete, with a Department of Islamic, Christian and Comparative Religious Studies.

In addition, people of various religious orientations in this country interact amicably in offices, political parties, market places or as business associates without resorting to aggression or violence. On the other hand, incessant cases of religious violence instigated by both Muslims and Christians in various communities and institutions of learning are recorded. Writing on this, Bidmos (2006), supports with the following statement:

In 1987, a misunderstanding (believed to be provoked) that started between the Muslim and Christian students of an institution of higher learning in Kafanchan spread like wildfire to almost all the Northern States of Nigeria. The loss of lives and properties resulting from the incident is incalculable. (p. 2-3)

The author is not aware of any recent cases of religious crises in higher institutions.

The above incident described by Bidmos is just one of the many cases of religious disturbances in Nigeria, especially at institutions of higher learning. Through these ugly occurrences, lives of many promising youths who would have brought succor to their families or society have been truncated, lecturers killed, property and places of worships destroyed. Bidmos emphasized the need for would-be Imams or Church Ministers to be well trained and exposed to the inter-religious dialogue. This is equally applicable to all students in Nigerian institutions of learning, regardless of area of discipline. Because they live and study in a religiously pluralistic society, they will definitely meet with other devotees outside their faith. It, therefore, becomes necessary that they are exposed to and provided with necessary skills that will enable them to effectively cope, accommodate and tolerate devotees of other faiths. That will go a long way in promoting peaceful coexistence in our society.

Aderibigbe (1989) had commended the positive impact of education on the Nigerian religious

system thus:

In the education field the relation that has grown between Muslims and Christians has been largely positive. The schooling system in the country brought members of the two religions into close contact, developing in them attitude of cooperation and tolerance (p.14).

Since education is a positive weapon to promote religious tolerance, inter-faith relation need to be encouraged in tertiary institutions where there are mature students with mature minds. This will encourage the needed religious harmony. Ayinla and Adeoye (2006), aver that “Nigeria is a religiously pluralistic society, as such ethnic discriminations and religious intolerance constitute some of the problems of inter-faith relation in the country. They maintain that activities of some of the adherents of these religions need to be properly investigated with regard to intolerance.”(p.605-607). This is based on the fact that the rise in the level of religious fanaticism and an extreme sense of religious intolerance had resulted in numerous cases of intra and inter religious violence.

Furthermore, the report on a consultation held on 30th November, 2006, by the Inter-Faith Network for the United Kingdom (UK), in association with the Equality Challenge Unit, opined that today’s university campuses are much more religiously diverse than they were a decade ago, with students of many faiths living and studying together. That could be a positive and enriching experience and a strong foundation for professional life in a diverse world. But to ensure that the experience is positive, there is a need to see that good relations between people of different faiths on campus are developed and strengthened.

In his bid to promote inter-faith relation on campus Opeloye (1993) was of the opinion that institutions of learning should:

Evolve a kind of religious education curriculum which will not limit student exposure to their own traditions alone. They should be made to know that religious traditions have many teachings in common. This is the kind of programme in operation at the Lagos State University and the University of Ilorin. Other Institutions of Higher Learning should emulate this practice. (p. 59)

The above view of Opeloye is obtainable in institutions selected for this study. Therefore, issues of religion and belief on campus are critically important, especially now more than ever before. Hence, it becomes very necessary to engage students constructively and effectively in building good campus inter-faith relation. As part of measures to promote inter-faith relation on campus, Uka (2012), was of the view that “all hands must be on deck to inculcate in students high ethical standards of faith integration as contained in the Bible and Quran, such as respect for human life and dignity” (www.academicexcellencesociety.com/ethnic). This, it is believed, can be achieved by educating them on the benefits of being more loving and tolerant of other people’s religious faiths and doctrines. In his explanation of the security implications of ethnic and religious conflicts, he opined that conflicts in a university or any tertiary institution can threaten the economic base of the institution as well as its intellectual productivity because lecturers would run for dear life to seek refuge elsewhere.

The following are few examples in the past of cases of religious crises, as reported by Abashiyah and Ayuba (2009) that call for or make inter-faith relation among students in Nigerian tertiary institutions a necessity:

In Bauchi State in 1990, some Muslim students were reported to have attacked Christian students and staff of a particular school, killing two students and injuring others. In 1978, in Kaduna, some Muslim students at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, attacked Christian students. By the end of the fracas, six students had lost their lives. In 1987, some Muslim students at the Advanced Teachers' College of Education, Kafanchan, (now College of Education, Gidan Waya), disrupted a Christian religious meeting at the College, on the allegation that some verses of the Glorious Quran had been misinterpreted. This resulted in the religious riots that engulfed the towns of Kafanchan, Kaduna, Zaria, Funtua, Kankia and Katsina, all in the former Kaduna State. In 1986, some Muslim students at the University of Ibadan destroyed the sculpture of Jesus Christ at the Chapel of the Resurrection, on the University Campus. (p. 44).

With these ugly scenarios in the institutions of learning in a nation that is multi-religious with students of diverse faiths, beliefs and doctrines from different religious background, the need for inter-faith relations among these students should be a struggle that must be realized, if the nation is to put a halt to incessant religious conflicts which had posed challenges to national development, destruction of lives and properties, and disruption of academic programmes of affected institutions.

University of Ilorin and Kwara State University as Models of Inter-faith Relations

The University of Ilorin and Kwara State University are two tertiary institutions sited in the Ilorin Emirate of Kwara State, owned by the Federal Government of Nigeria, and Kwara State Government, respectively, selected for the purpose of this study. Kwara State is in the North Central zone. These institutions have for long continued to be models of religious tolerance, mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence even in the presence of multi-religious adherents. This view was reiterated in the Extra Case Presentation of Adua, Akande and Jamiu (2011) titled "Religion and Cultural Balances as Instrument for Harmony." According to the authors, since 1967:

approximately forty-four years ago, (now fifty two years), when Kwara was created along with other eleven states across the nation which included, by then, the present Kogi and some parts of Niger State, there were no records of religious disturbances, except one, around 1986 and it was quickly nipped in the bud (p. 306).

It is worthy to note that if for the past fifty two years, people of diverse ethnicity could maintain a good record of peaceful coexistence in a country where cases of religious and ethnic violence had erupted in many parts, then, such a state is worth emulating. Selecting Kwara State University, a child of the state, and the University of Ilorin, justifies the choice of these institutions for the study.

University of Ilorin

There are certain policies and administrative structures put in place by the management of the University of Ilorin to promote inter-faith relation on the campus. For example, in the Department of Religions, there exist good relationship among staff and students as the department houses the different religions practiced in Nigeria. Students from other departments come to the Department of Religions to take two or three religious-based courses. There are no separate departmental associations for Muslim and Christian Students. They all belong to the same Association of Students of Religions. This decision is in agreement with Bidmos' (2006) advice:

In all tertiary institutions where Religious Studies is offered as an academic discipline, cross-fertilization should be instituted. This is a situation where a student offering Christian Studies as his major should be made to take courses in Islamic Studies and those who major in Islamic Studies compulsorily offer some courses in Christian Studies. With such an exposure, parochialism and narrow mindedness, which breed misperception and misinterpretation among youths could be nipped in the bud. Cross-fertilization in terms of course offerings in religious studies is a potent instrument of engendering tolerance. (pp. 2-3).

Similarly, since the establishment of the institution in 1975, there has been no case or cases of religious disharmony which in some other institutions had led to wanton destruction of lives or property and disruptions of its academic calendar. The University of Ilorin is noted for academic stability. The university has been and remains a model in this regard, because right from inception the management gave full support to the Department of Religions in promoting inter-faith relation, when "between 7th and 11th August, 1978, it organized a seminar on religious Understanding and Cooperation in Nigeria. It was reported by Balogun (1978), that "eminent Scholars and Religious leaders did not only participate actively but also presented quality academic papers on the general theme and sub-themes of the seminar."(p. 7). Speaking further on the importance which the University of Ilorin attached to inter-faith relations, he added that:

Right from its inception, the University of Ilorin has always maintained the principle of correlating gown with town. Gone are the days when universities remained ivory towers amidst the populations of their environments. It is only by consciously creating an effective interaction between university and the people among whom it situates that both the academia and the populace can benefit from each other. It was precisely in order to generate this much needed beneficial interaction between gown and town in respect of religious tolerance that the Department of Religions in the University of Ilorin decided to organize a seminar on religious understanding and cooperation in Nigeria. (pp.7-8)

The proceedings of the seminar was later published by the department and distributed to scholars and students.

Still on the relevance of the seminar to inter-faith relation, Wambutda (1978) commended the organizers by stating that:

The seminar was the first of its kind in Nigeria, and therefore unique and historic; while at the same time it is most timely because it is happening at a time when religion is glaringly becoming a major factor, especially in the political as well as the economic, and to some extent, the social life of this nation. (p.10).

With this understanding, it becomes germane to appreciate the foresight of the founding fathers of the University of Ilorin and the Department of Religions intentionally inculcated into stakeholders of the university the spirit of inter-faith relation and peaceful coexistence. Of particular note, and in this respect was the effort of Professor Ismail Balogun, a former Head of the Department of Religions. Bidmos (2006), commended him for his resolve, dynamism and action, stating that “He designed many programmes that brought Muslims and Christians to face-to-face discussions on several occasion. His inaugural lecture is an eloquent expression of his attitude to inter-faith relationship.” (p.4).

It is for that spirit and principle that earned the University the reputation of a model in building good inter-faith relation on campus. In support of peaceful co-existence on campus using religion as a vehicle to promote same, the University of Ilorin authority has established a centre known as the University of Ilorin Inter-religious Council, with Professor B. L. Adeleke, as the chairman. Part of the mandate of the centre is to call for papers with and organize conferences that will promote peaceful co-existence among adherents of different religions for national integration and development.

Kwara State University, Malete

The practice of inter-faith relation in Kwara State University is equally commendable. In spite of it being situated in a densely Muslim populated environment, the relationship that exists among the students and members of the immediate community has been very cordial. As a pioneer member of staff of the institution, and of the Department of Religions, History and Heritage Studies, as well as the sub-dean, Students Affairs' Unit of the University, up till joining the service of the University of Ilorin in October 2016, there were no cases of any act of religious intolerance which could have led to disruption of the academic calendar of the institution. Part of the measures put in place to forestall occurrences of religious disturbance, include the intentional and conscious sensitivity of the management to religious matters. For instance, during the yearly Eid-Mubarak festive period when most or all Muslim students must have travelled to their respective homes, it is the tradition of the university, in the spirit of festivity, to involve Christian students left on campus in the felicity by preparing and distributing beef and drinks to commemorate the occasion. It promoted good inter-faith relation among the students. There is no separate Department of Islam or Christianity or Comparative Religious Studies. A single department houses all the three units with the name “Department of Religions, History and Heritage Studies” Students in Islamic studies offer selected courses from Christian studies and vice-versa. The lecturers in the different units also relate amicably with one another. The welfare committee is jointly managed by all lecturers in the department. Students and staff in the department are like one big family.

Every 300 level student of the institution compulsorily takes a General Studies course titled Religion, Ethics and Leadership (GNS 302). It is a three-in-one course. The religious aspect of the course was designed by the author. Some of its content emphasizes the need for inter-faith relation on campuses and in the Nigerian society. Regardless of students' course offering in the university, it is important that they take one or two courses related to inter-faith relation.

When the Christian group needed a place for fellowship, a request was made in writing to the Vice-Chancellor, who promptly directed the Christian group to liaise with the University Project Manager to allocate a portion of land for the purpose. The Vice-Chancellor, a Muslim faithful, emphatically enjoined the Christian community to erect a befitting and worthy edifice. Although, there was no financial backing, the fact that land was allocated for the purpose of worshipping was commendable. The intention and step taken by the Vice-Chancellor would be better appreciated in light of the fact that they were located in a densely populated Muslim environment. Moreover, Christians are allowed to freely practice their faith. The advent of the University heralded the erection and establishment of Orthodox and Pentecostal Churches in the town.

Evidences of Faith Integration in the thrust for Peaceful Co-existence in Tertiary Institutions

The work of Luke Fetters (2019), on faith integration is fundamental to this enterprise and provides a framework for this study. He has rightly observed that Faith Integration is “the process whereby Christian Scholars seek to situate their embedded faith in an informed understanding of Church history and evangelical theology” (<https://www.huntington.edu/uploads/page/fetters.pdf>). He went further to state that faith integration is “to express faith in personal piety and responsible service to society and the body of Christ” (<https://www.huntington.edu/uploads/page/fetters.pdf>). In the light of this, faith integration can be extended to cover issues of doctrine of the religions in a multi-religious landscape like the tertiary institutions under study. Based on this, it becomes imperative, especially for both Christians and Muslims faithful in higher institutions of learning to integrate their faith into their day to day activities and in their relationship with one another on campus and in the society at large.

Faith integration was evidenced in the inter-faith relation among the various religious groups at the University of Ilorin and Kwara State University, the two institutions under study. And, this was made possible by the deliberate actions of the administrators of both institutions. These areas of faith integration worthy of mention include, but not limited to, the few mentioned hereunder. They are peaceful coexistence and love. Each of these would be examined as follows:

Peaceful Co-existence

Christians and Muslims faithful related peacefully with one another on both campuses. Christianity and Islam preach peaceful co-existence. It is only the radicals that engage in religious disturbances. For instance, the Holy Bible in Romans 12:18 enjoined all Christians to live at peace with all men, because Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace. Similarly, the Glorious Quran in Sura 8:61, says, “And if they incline to peace, incline thou also to it, and trust in Allah. Lo! He is the Hearer, the Knower”. Fagbiye (2013) is also of the opinion that “the Christian message of peaceful co-existence is glaringly the most significant as it is both in words and

actions as demonstrated by Christ the Lord and Giver of peace” (p. 337). All of these views suggest that, living peacefully with one another is essential to faith integration. There were courses in both departments that reflected the advantages of people of different faiths living together. The students were exposed to seminars and group assignments jointly written by students of different faiths. This allowed them to work together irrespective of their religious affiliations. Still on peaceful co-existence, the students became friends in the course of their study in the schools. As a result of this, the challenge of religious violence is minimized both on campus and outside the campus. Since this component of peaceful co-existence was well integrated in their life styles, good inter-faith relation was enhanced, which in turn worked to reduce to the barest minimum cases of religious violence on both campuses.

Love

Love is another virtue that is easily misunderstood by the young ones of today. Both religions have spoken extensively on this subject matter. The main message of Christianity and Islam centres on love. In the two universities, both the Christians and the Muslims exhibited love to one another and to people of other faiths. This, in my opinion, informed the sharing of beef to non-Muslims on campus during the Muslims’ festive season. If this and other acts of sincere love are well executed on our campuses, cases of violence or other types of intolerance that lead to disruption of peace and school academic calendars would be minimized. The Bible in Matthew 5:44 enjoins Christians to love their enemies, bless those who curse them, and do good to those who hate them. 1 John 3:14-15 even qualified Christians who would not show love as murderers, heading to hell. In the same way, Quran 2:208 says “O You who believe! Enter absolutely into peace (Islam). Do not follow in the footsteps of Satan. He is an outright enemy to you.” It was observed that to some extent this component of faith integration was made manifest on these campuses. Oral interviews conducted with some students, Awoyale Adedayo, Sumaya Adefaka, and Dr Ogunbiyi Olawale, a lecturer showed that some of the students and even staff helped one another in the areas of school fees, medical bills, accommodation, and in other areas of need, regardless of their religious consciousness. By extension, there were some students with different religious backgrounds who were into courtship, with the intention of marriage. Whether this relationship blossomed into marriage or not is outside the scope of this work.

These two attributes of peaceful co-existence and love discussed above were keys to positive inter-faith relation at the University of Ilorin and Kwara State University. We can, therefore, deduce that when Christians integrate their faith in their daily living and relate to people positively, regardless of their religious backgrounds, they will impact lives positively, and in turn build a more habitable society.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the discussion, attempts have been made to explain the actual meaning of inter-faith relation, as well as identify some evidences of faith integration. Also, the relationship between inter-faith relation and faith integration have been adequately presented. Findings have shown that faith integration positively affects inter-faith relation. These two concepts cannot be separated from religion considering the constitutional nature of Nigeria as a secular state. It has been observed that, the Muslims, Christians or believers in African Traditional Religion are the same set of students cohabiting indiscriminately in the different tertiary institutions across the nation’s six geo-political zones. Thus, the need and effects of inter-faith relation in these academic environments have been analyzed, using the University of Ilorin and Kwara State

University as case studies. We have also discussed how faith integration can key into faith relation in order to promote peaceful coexistence on our campuses and the larger society. It is therefore, recommended that:

- i. More intensive and extensive research on faith integration and inter-faith relation in Nigeria's academic institutions and the society at large should be promoted;
- ii. Relevant policies and administrative structures should be put in place by all tertiary institutions in Nigeria to promote inter-faith relation on campuses;
- iii. Seminars, workshops and conferences should be organized periodically for students and staff where invited speakers or resource persons are scholars in the field of interaction of religions , with the sole aim of educating and properly informing students and staff about the values and benefits of faith integration and inter-faith relation on campus.
- iv. The School or Department of Visual and Performing Arts should be engaged at specified periods to stage dramas depicting the advantages of inter-faith relation as well as dangers connected with religious disturbances and the like;
- v. The General Studies Curriculum for Nigeria's tertiary institutions should be redesigned to incorporate components of inter-faith relation. Hopefully, the new curriculum could address topics like religious tolerance, cultism and other social vices in Nigeria's institutions of higher learning; and
- vi. Seminaries, Islamic schools (private and public) and other institutions of higher learning should be encouraged to include inter-religious dialogue in their curriculum of studies.
- vii. Doctrinal teachings that allow for faith integration should be further pursued on campuses to allow for both inter and intra Departmental, Faculty and University based engagements.
- viii. More courses on faith integration should be mounted on the curriculum of the students. It might be part of the GNS courses or made to stand alone like the newly introduced Entrepreneurial course that is compulsory for every student in higher institution of learning.
- ix. An award should each be given to the best student of faith integration, both in theory and practice for Christian and Muslim students.

Doing all the aforementioned would bring remarkable improvement in the level of inter-faith relation among students and staff across tertiary institutions in Nigeria and the country as a whole. Also, more than before, students would better appreciate, acknowledge and respect the beliefs, doctrines and faith system of religions other than theirs. Above all, these would make positive impact on religious understanding and peaceful co-existence in Nigeria as a multi-faith nation.

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