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BIBLE STUDIES**

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(RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE AND INCULTURATION)**

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1.0 Introduction

With our world of today, every individual has the freedom to join any denomination and or religion. Attending a church cannot be dictated to anybody by different entity however, the person himself or herself is supposed to decide which denomination or church to join and attend. The freedom of worship that we all enjoy in our various countries do not suggest to anyone the church or denomination or religion we are to join.

There is only one God thus, the supreme being, we have all decided to go to Him. Now every religion claims the authenticity of its source from the Father almighty, then, which religion is authentically from God the Father and which is not genuinely from God. As every religion claims authenticity then let us all admit the fact that God is with all the religion leaving justifications and judgements to God that we are all serving

Even among Christian and other religions there are a lot of heresies all over the world that each one is claiming perfection and however condemning other denominations within the same religion having only one object of worship, raising many arguments unnecessarily defiling the religion we claim to be the best among all religions.

1.1 The concept of the course

The concept of this course is to study and apply the significant importance of religious tolerance, and the effects of this tolerance and inculturation on the religious bodies, and the individual members in the religion and the society.

1.2 Tolerance in general

Generally, tolerance is a very vital item in the lives of all people. Without tolerance one cannot move forward in life and for that matter in his or her visions. Whatever business that we indulge ourselves connects with many other people of different behavior, character and of cultural differences. Refusing to accept or copying with those behaviors and characters signifies the down fall of the business we are intending to operate. When we refuse to tolerate and learn the languages of the people around us then communication apparently becomes a greater barrier to interact with the neighbor countries, tribes and for that matter customers.

If I want to establish churches in different religions, countries, continents, the necessity of copying with cultures of those nations or areas should be a priority to me, because I cannot be attracted to peoples of which I look down upon their cultures, condemning and defiling their practices or way of living. Hence tolerance generally promotes evangelism, and soul wining, and the entire work of the ministry. This principles or facts is applicable in any other business.

Every business personnel ought to study the languages and sometimes the dressings, of the nations or tribes dealing with. The fact is when people see that you are a co-sharer of their cultures you are no longer considered as a stranger but a member of that community or family, that is why is very important copying with what they eat, drink, and whatever interest them, as well as their character and attitudes.

1.3 Tolerance in the churches

A church is made up of many different ethnic groups, tribes, families, and categories of specific people with special characteristics, to have all these entities on board without tolerance it is impossible. It is only tolerance being the major key factor to unite these different groups of different behaviors to cooperate towards the unity and the development of the church. Tolerance is the insight to diagnose the hearts and minds to know or identify the soul or spirit of everybody to institute means of managing them.

Not all the time that the comments receive from co-members in the church will be sweet **to you**, hence without being tolerant you can never stand to hold your breast of sustaining peace, if God does not permit granting you the spirit to endure such inconveniences, irrespective of your position you may allow yourself for chaotic situation to occur.

There are also many clashes in terms of rendering duties and responsibilities in the churches that two or three or even more people expecting to host one specific position or post in the church, if tolerance does not place its role among these people and the entire leadership, can generate a whole lot of grumbling and groaning which in a way puts the church in a truck of falling and failing.

There are many insubordinate acts or behaviors in the churches which readily causes inconveniences among leaders like pastors, deacon, deaconesses, elders, and among others, and among the entire memberships but because tolerance is one of the major topics treated in the churches of God helps to manage the people in a way that always

sustain peace and order in the church to move as one solid team of workers working for God.

1.4 Tolerance in Christian marriages

In fact, tolerance is an aspect or a factor which only facilitates love and promotes oneness, unity, and one direction thereby achieving the ultimate visions ahead of lovers in the journey of their marriages. Tolerance should be placed first or prioritized in every marriage to understand each other, tolerating weaknesses and strengths of each other, accepting corrections and adapt to changes which is the perfect measure for the future of partners, etc. tolerance also helps partners to formulate their own lifestyle or culture of living with the new environment they have indulged themselves.

The Christian religion comprises many different categories of denominations with different peoples of different features or characteristics. Looking at how God created the universe each and every one has specific means of perceiving things in the environment, different reasons of making choices of interests, especially life partners as wives or husbands, hence widening the gap of interdenominational marriages constraint the freedom of making choices of partners by the members in the churches.

In this case, interdenominational marriages should not be discouraged rather, encouraged, by preparing the minds of the people in the denominations to understand the significant importance of tolerating interdenominational marriages, citing many successful people who passed through interdenominational marriages and what the denomination received from that tolerance.

Why is it wrong to take a Christian brother or sister in the same faith worshiping in a different church as a partner. If intolerance is not taking its seat in the Christians denominations then I am afraid how Christian can massively convert many into the faith.

1.5 The Assembly of God verses Jehovah Witness

There were two Christian believers who loved themselves and started courtships from their tertiary education for almost five consecutive years. They planned and prepared toward marriage, so they visited each other's family as part of their familiarization tour towards the proposed marriage. Few days after the tour, the Girl's parents arose to resist the proposed marriage simply because they do not believe in the teachings of Jehovah Witness. They therefore started their usual condemnations with some outmoded myths, blackmailing Jehovah Witness as a Christian denomination. That truly resisted the marriage till now, the girl is still singled.

1.6 Jesus' convictions on denominational tolerance

We can understand Christ Jesus' assertion on denominational tolerance in the Matthew's Gospel, where Jesus describes the situations of denominational tolerance: that those who are not part of Him are those who always against Him. This apparently gives signals to all denominational leaders and or ministers that the acceptance of every denomination or church should be prioritized as they all promote and support the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. This gospel continues to teach us that those who do not gather together with the Lord Jesus Christ always scatter what has been gathered by the Lord. Looking at the works of the churches seem to have the same purpose of gathering with Jesus Christ the savior. I don't think there is any church under this

universe that against the Lord Jesus Christ, then tolerance should be placed first as far as denominations are concerned.

The apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ went out to minister in different areas where Jesus Christ was not with them, they found out that some people were using the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in ministrations and they attempted to resist them from worshiping by using the Lord's name. when they told Jesus Christ the savior, He asked them not to resist them because whoever uses His name is on His side. Let us take a lesson from what Jesus Christ said: that all the denominations of this era are mentioning the name of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, which means we should allow them to operate, because they mention the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Lets take into consideration the convictions of Jesus Christ and leave the justifications and judgement into His own hands to deal with every denomination in accordance with His own purpose to instill peace and order in the environment.

“do not stop him, for no one who performs miracles in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about Me” Mark 9:39

1.7 Apostle Paul's convictions on denominational tolerance

From apostle Paul we understand that we have only one body, the Lord Jesus Christ, with many parts, and each part serves particular function or functions towards the development and the welfare of the ministry of the main body. Meaning that all the parts are very important for the good of the main body. This saying must open the eyes of the Christian leaderships to value every Christian denomination and endorse them as co-Christian ministries serving special purposes for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Apostle Paul continued in his book to the Corinthians that we are all baptized with the same spirit or received the same baptism in the Lord Jesus Christ which do not allow intolerance in the Christ faith as long as denominational ministries are concerned. If we believe that we have passed through the same baptism, received same spirit and power from the Lord Jesus Christ then prioritization of tolerance should be one of the ultimate goals to achieve.

It is believed that God has assigned specific tasks to specific people or ministers to perform in bringing His people together as the fulfilments of His own plans. There are many hidden mysteries of God which we can never understand them till eternity as the book of Deuteronomy describes that; all that is “hidden leave them to God” because it is for God. Only God knows what He is doing and understands His own plans of saving His people.

1.8 Account of Matthew on religious tolerance Matthew 13:24-30

Sometimes our consciences prove us right as we perceive into many deeds of some institutions or denomination that they fall short in many circumstances yet our comments should of much respect be polite towards them. When we analyze critically what the Lord Jesus Christ said in His parable in the book of Mathew chapter 13:24, about the sower, tells us that all religions, denominations, faiths, should be allowed their operation and or existence, which is centrally to religious tolerance. This assertion of the Lord Jesus Christ has given freedom for the operations and existence of many different religions, faiths, and denominations or churches for their deeds to judge them at the end, which the bible describes as the harvest time.

It is not easy to identify cereal crops from weeds of grasses, so in order not to temper with the main crops and destroy them, should be allowed to grow together with the crops till harvest, so the harvester shall gather for himself the profitable grains and burns the weeds that pretended to be among the crops.

1.9 Significance of religious tolerance

There are many significant importance of religious tolerance and few of them are listed below:

1. It promotes cultural tolerance
2. It encourages unity within some stipulated environment
3. It prevents civil and inter-tribal wars
4. It promotes peaceful worships in communities
5. Inter-religious marriage is promoted through religious tolerance
6. Inter denominational tolerance is also promoted
7. It helps develops better principles, rules and regulations for living
8. It resists discrimination
9. It does not give room for condemnations
10. Open mindedness plays roles of prioritization over singled mindedness
11. Religious tolerance enhances teamwork of developing a community
12. It contributes in advising other social groups and institutions to maintain peace and order at all times.
13. It institutes religious mutual assistance in terms of finance, infrastructures, educational projects and among others.
14. Religious tolerance promotes business in the environment

15. It helps reduce unemployment in the countries
16. It helps fight against corruptions
17. Religious tolerance helps build very strong team to battle terrorism and terrorists
18. It puts a stop to vandalism, racisms, and other destructions
19. It eradicates fears from religious congregations to worship with free minds
20. It helps give arms to the vulnerable without discriminating them
21. Religious tolerance also protects all the people's rights to speak, live, etc
22. It protects people to act and worship according to their own beliefs without fear

2.0 How to apply

Tolerance is very important aspect in human life, to deal with many people and to lead different categories of peoples I will be prioritizing tolerance making sure that some behaviors and cultures will be tolerated and protected in order to be able to spread the gospels across the borders into foreign countries.

2.1 Conclusion

All Christians and other religious bodies should know that we can try or examine all the spirits to find the best out of them and live in it hence we should accept the existence of other religions and copying with their activities. Should also know that since the beginning were many religions and beliefs all over continents.

All the religious bodies and other authorities must mark the numerous merits of tolerating religious freedom and be tolerant to maintain peace, order, harmony, growth in economical arena, giving free minds to people in worshipping what they believe and among other benefits.

Christians and all other religious bodies should stop discriminating and condemning one another and their doctrines governing their religions, because such sarcastic nature of living does not encourage freedom, peace and unity in an environment.

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