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DIALOGUE AS TOOL FOR CONFLICTS RESOLUTION IN RELIGIONS: A  
CASE STUDY OF CHRIST APOSTOLIC CHURCH NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

The study "Dialogue as a tool for conflict Resolution in Religions A Case Study of Christ Apostolic Church Nigeria." The conflict that started from 1990 and still on to the time of this project, the conflict is about 22 years now unresolved. Many reconciliatory attempts made within the church and out of it have proved abortive with the two main factions holding to be the pious and right in their stands.

The main focus of the study was to find out the remote and immediate causes of the conflict in Christ Apostolic Church Nigeria. How dialogue has been used to resolved the conflict. Why the attempts made by the use of dialogue failed and then make recommendations for lasting resolution. The method used was to draw from primary, secondary and tertiary sources, one-on-one interviews were held with stakeholders on both sides of the conflict while a questionnaire was designed and used to collect more information from a wider spectrum of the congregation.

The recommendations were made for a peaceful resolution of the conflicts based on the findings of this research. The fractions were encouraged to adopt scriptural approaches in resolving the conflict. The CACSEC should willingly and in the spirit of Christian brotherhood dissolve into the main stream CACGEC while the latter in the spirit of the kingdom should whole heartedly and unconditionally reintegrate their brothers without loss of face. The factions were also encouraged to be more serious on the growth and unity of the church and leave personal ego so that permanent peace and unity can return to the Christ Apostolic Church in Nigeria.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### (1) Scriptural Solution

The Bible teaches servant leadership a programmatic solution to the conflict. In the spirit of repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation, if the splinters group the SEC which is said to control only 5% of the congregation and assets to dissolve and be unconditionally absorbed into the main group the GEC faction said to now control 90% of the assets and congregation of the church. All the factional leaders should fortify themselves with spiritual teachings so that the reconciliation would be in the true Christian love of win/win and victor/no vanquished scriptural teaching (Lev. 19:18; Prov. 20:3, 22:28-13, Jer. 3:22, Joel, 2:12-13, Acts 3:19; 17:30-31, Rom. 12:17, I cor. 3:3-4, 6:5-7, I Peter 3:8-17).

In line with this, all court cases should be withdrawn and terminated (I Cor. 6:1-7). While unconditional general amnesty should be granted to members who have found themselves on the "wrong" side of the divide (Isa 1:18, Matt. 6:14-15, James 4:11-12, I John 4:7, 8, 12 and 16).

## (2) Need to Improved Secular and Theological Education

The Church established a Bible Training College at Ede on 27<sup>th</sup> March 1952 while the main campus of the Church's Theological Seminary at Ile-Ife was established in 1979. This writer noted that progress has been very slow with poor infrastructure facilities and faculties that need a lot of restoring. The Theological Institution urgently requires the services of team of sound theological education consultants to prepare a strategic plan for theological education in the Church. It is not the number of campuses that we have that matters but their standards and effectiveness. Scholarship should be awarded to deserving lecturers in these seminaries to pursue higher education both within and outside the country while their welfare packages must be competitive.

The leadership of the Church has taken educational challenges at the top seriously with the establishment of Joseph Ayodele Babalola University (JABU) which graduated its first batch of students in November 2010. However we strongly recommend that it is high time the Church established model primary and secondary institutions where the Church can "catch" them "young" our investigation revealed that most other Churches who have established Universities first started with primary and secondary educations. This should be a challenge to the CAC Men Association, The Good Women Society and particularly some assemblies who possess the human and material resources to establish such. While the universities are good and an image booster, the primary and secondary projects will have long lasting beneficial effects on the growth of the church.

## (3) Need for Prayer and Fasting

Spiritually, there is no problem that prayer and fasting cannot solve (Matt. 17:21) and since the Church is noted for her prayer powers, this writer will want to

challenge the leadership of the Church to proclaim dedicated periods of prayers particularly at stipulated periods on Sundays to seek the face of God for lasting peace in the denomination. This arrangement should continue-until the desired peace and tranquility are restored. Treasury, ultimatum and judicial victory cannot bring genuine reconciliation. The Church leader should also listen to what God have for them not using their own view to direct the Church.

It is believed that if these recommendations are followed with open mind prayers and submissions to the fact that God own His Church, peace will prevails and the Church will return to “one fold, one shepherd” (John 10:16b).

#### (4) Constitutional and Administrative Review

A mutual agreed independent constitution Review: Committee should be set up prepare a draft constitution. This will be subjected to a referendum among the coordinating council/zones, districts and selected elders and deaconesses such as a draft constitution, among other things will address issue of the administrative structure: modes of operation for the creation of Districts coordinating councils, Zones, District and relationship with independent church planters. It will also address such matters as ordinations appointments, transfers, leadership accountability and reporting relationship. Exclusive and concurrent matters among the Headquarters DCC, Districts and Assemblies should be explicitly stated to avoid confusion.

#### (5) Youth Development and Evangelism

The current effort of youth development as seen in the CACGEC should be sustained and improved upon. The campus Ministry should be re-organized and re-engineered with human and material resources deployed to enhance sense of belonging and project the future growth of the church. The establishment of the royal shepherd is a welcome development but our youths should not be debarred from

interacting with their peers in other Christian denominations. Efforts must also be made to strengthen evangelism both within and outside the country.