

THE INFLUENCE OF THE CHURCH IN ENHANCING PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE AMONG AFRICAN COMMUNITIES

AGNES WANJA KIBUI

Senior Lecturer, University of Nairobi, Kenya

ABSTRACT

In today's age of globalization and rapid social change, the benefits and challenges of ethnic diversity are being experienced in many nations. Many refugees and emigrants move restlessly across different regions of the globe, either trying to escape wars in their regions or freeing poverty. Migratory movements add to ethnic and cultural diversity in many societies and help shape demographic, economic, political and social dynamics. That means that there is a great need for better understanding and communication among peoples from different races, communities and cultures. The migration can be internal or external and is a reflection of the rapidly changing economic, political, and cultural ties among countries and communities. Since these movements have created a multicultural society, ethnic cultures should be respected. Religion plays a crucial role as it adds to social cohesion and strengthens bonds among different ethnic groups. The Christian communities in Africa bond together in love and service which Jesus Christ brought about between groups (Jews and Gentiles). Jesus calls for love of enemies without expectation of reward. For the Catholic community, God created the human race as one and not a countless multitude of individuals. In order to give emotional, physical and financial support, the Catholic Church has formed different groups which reach out to people with different needs such as spiritual, psychological, financial and so on. Examples of such groups are peace and justice committees, small Christian communities, couples for Christ, singles for Christ, bible study groups and so forth. All these groups address the basic human needs of all human kind regardless of their religious affiliations. This approach encourages peaceful co-existence among different communities in Africa.

KEYWORDS: Ethnic and Cultural Diversity Demographic, Economic, Political and Social Dynamics