

Tolerance

It always perplexes what politics does to our country. The fear; sheer greed, lack of decorum and brotherhood for one another vexes some of us who neither speak any of the 42 languages of this country. We were born to parents who intermarried and all we speak is English or Kiswahili. To make matters worse we married into other tribes different from our parents creating a third generation of people who might not know what a tribe is except from books. The only give away is having a surname identified with my Dad's last name because it's customary to carry his name. In any case if asked I have no clue what the name means.

Fellow Kenyans and especially believers, how much would it hurt if we stopped falling prey to the antics of leaders who can chopper themselves out of the country if it burns because of tribalism? Would it hurt if we picked a leader who is respectful and capable to lead us instead of cocooning to 'my own?' would it put food on the table if the leader of the day was your tribesman? Would it pay your children's school fees because the president or Member of Parliament was from your village? I believe that question is best answered in the privacy of your homes. We all suffer because of bad governance; poor roads, high inflation, food shortages, power outages, corruption, teachers strike and nurses strike et al.

Given, none of us would mind living in a country with good governance that fosters unity and shuns all the above vices and some. We as a country would make strides unimaginable, and create an environment that not only encourages growth but people who love one another. I have been privileged to have friends from so many communities in my daily interactions. Some have helped me in one way or the other and some are still friends to date. To actually think of them as representing their tribes would actually be wrong to both God and man.

As Christians we are called show love, to both believers and non-believers. It is the actual testament of Christ abiding in us. The idle talk on which tribal chief will carry the day should not be tolerated among the faithful because it justifies the sin of prejudice that is so rife around election time. The saved should endeavor to bridge gaps created by such divisive talk and show friendship to everyone in the community instead of clustering into tribal, denominational or 'holier than thou' groupings that doesn't benefit anyone at all.

I remember the story I heard of a group of Christians who never interacted with the rest of the community for fear of being contaminated. Theirs was a group headed to heaven so they thought. Their church had a signage JESUS ALONE. On one occasion there was a blizzard and the winds blew against this signage. The JES was blown off leaving the word US ALONE. That story left me thinking what most if not all of us do. We segregate ourselves and refuse to unclench our fist, shortchanging the great commission. Now more than ever we need to reach out to the lost in the society and be the light. In so doing we as believers will show the efficacy of Christ's compassion to the lost in the society. All of the near fanatic following of political figures is because of pegging hopes on who can save this nation. If only all would know that our help comes from the lord then we wouldn't be so concerned with who leads to the point of killing one other.

It is in finding and showing the love of Christ that would steer our country toward peaceful election and beyond. There's no hole of tribalism so deep that God cannot get us out. It's accepting that we have erred and repent that only God can step into our cry for forgiveness and help us go the extra mile and show love those we perceive as our 'enemies'. It is only hard if we use our own strength but we are not

called to use our carnality. Because our own strength can only go so far. God's grace and love lays the ground for us to function easily in love remembering he loved us by sending his son Jesus Christ despite our many shortcomings.

The call

All of us as well-meaning citizens in shifting gears, should continue to pray and abide by Christ's call of reaching out to everyone regardless of faith and tribe to preach for peaceful co-existence during this electioneering period. Trawling the internet, the call to hate our fellow brothers and sisters from other regions is the name of the game. It's said that weak thrive on hatred but only the strong can love. How true remembering that even after Jesus had been severely flogged; mocked, spitted on and nailed on the cross he still prayed for those who administered these undeserved punishment to him by saying ; "father, forgive them for they know not what they are doing."

To the representatives of the body of Christ, we can show love to all and sundry. It is only love that can break the walls of hatred and tribalism. Yes, let us hate the many vices unleashed upon us by the leaders but not the leaders themselves or their affiliate tribes. We are saved by grace and even as you feel the need to hate them, remember Christ died for all of us while we were yet sinners. In our homes let us hang and adhere to the old banner that says:

Christ is the head

Of this house;

The unseen guest

At every meal,

The silent listener

To every conversation.

It will go a long way if we remembered that if Christ came right now, he will only separate us on the basis of sinners and those walking in his footsteps. Let us pray for the leadership of the nation and go out of our way to make friends with other communities. In doing so we will have epitomized the very command he gave us; love the lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and love your neighbor as you love yourself.