



GREETINGS FROM NIGERIA

BULUS ALI

SUM-CRC
P.O. Box 261 Jos
Plateau State, Nigeria
E: bulusali@yahoo.co.uk

FEBRUARY 2007

Church and Community Mediating for Peace

The Case of the Kuteb and Tiv in Takum Local Government Area of Taraba State in Nigeria

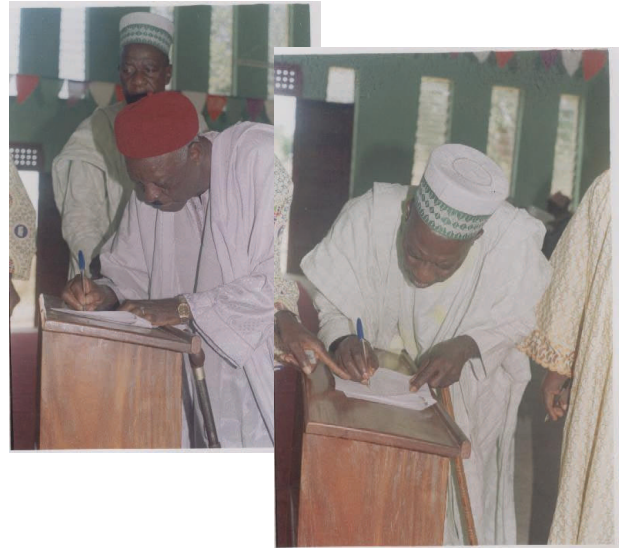
Ethnic differences can either be a great blessing or a curse. It is a blessing when it adds diversity to the rich cultures of the community. Such diversities include the language, customs, knowledge and skills from each ethnic group. It can become a curse when complete loyalty to the group is blind regardless of other realities. The following narrative is about how ethnic differences can become a curse. It is a story of ethnic conflict between the Kuteb and Tiv in Takum local government and the role the church and community played to resolve the conflict.

Professor Hizkias Assefa of the African Peace Building and Reconciliation Network told a story of how an argument between two people in the marketplace over a chicken in a West African country resulted in a conflict that drew in eight different ethnic groups. This two-person argument resulted in the death of thousands of people.

A similar thing was about to happen in the Takum area, if it were not for the quick intervention of the local church and community. It started as a land dispute between two families that became a fight. This fight caused the death of one person. The fight quickly spread and drew in other communities that had nothing to do with this dispute. Within two months, the conflict had assumed alarming proportions. It led to attacks and counterattacks with sophisticated guns. This destabilized many communities and caused many to flee from their communities, with the disastrous consequence of hunger and starvation.

Seeing the gravity of the situation, some pastors of the Nongo Kristu u hen Sudan Ken Tiv (NKST) and Reformed Church of Christ in Nigeria (RCCN) initiated a mediation effort. They were

later joined by the Peace, Justice, and Reconciliation Committee of the Reformed Ecumenical Council of Nigeria.



Key community leaders from the warring sides were brought together for dialogue. We also invited the law enforcement agents. We solicited the support of the local and state governments. After several meetings, in spite of discouraging events, a peace agreement was signed on the 28th of November, 2006.

By the time the peace agreement was signed this crisis had already claimed at least 30 lives. But since the peace agreement was signed on the 28th of November, the guns have been silent. Many displaced persons have returned to their communities. Life is returning to normal.

Thanks and Prayer Requests

Join us in thanking and praising God for what He has done. Indeed it is He that causes wars to cease to the ends of the Earth. We thank the CRCNA, through the Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action, who have been partners with us in prayers and financial support for our peace process since 2000.

Pray to the God of peace that we may continue to reconcile communities, diverse cultures, and ethnicities.

Respectfully submitted by
Bulus Ali



CRWRC

CANADA: 3475 MAINWAY, PO BOX 5070, STN LCD 1, BURLINGTON, ON L7R 3Y8
USA: 2850 KALAMAZOO AVE., SE, GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49560-0600
VISIT US AT WWW.CRWRC.ORG