

# Freedom of Religion: Christian Perspective

**By**

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## Introduction

- ▶ ***The importance of the Conference at a critical time of our nation***
  - ▶ This period is critical because of the various challenges facing us a people: ranging from the problem of corruption, ethnic crisis and tribalism; unemployment, insurgency, poverty and hunger; lack of infrastructural development and the recent high level of insecurity. It requires only individuals or group of people who are patriotic to have created time for a discourse of this nature.

## Impact of religion on Nigeria

- ▶ The theme of your Conference is also very prompt because of the roles religion has played in the history and development of Nigeria. It is important to note that religion has brought so many blessings to us and added value to our society. At the same time, it has its negative impact and thereby made some people to be skeptical on its relevance in our midst.

# Components of the presentation

- ▶ **Concept of Freedom of Religion (FOR)**
- ▶ **The state of FOR in Nigeria**
- ▶ **The Christian perspective**

# What is Freedom of Religion

- ▶ **Freedom of religion is widely accepted as a situation in which people generally (individual or a group of people) are allowed to affiliate, practice and express their religious convictions or beliefs without any form of restriction or coercion.**

# BENEFITS OF FOR

- ▶ Peaceful co-existence
- ▶ Development in every ramification of human endeavour.
- ▶ It protects human right and dignity.

# Constitution

***According to the Article 38 of the Nigerian Constitution under Freedom of Religion, it is clearly stated that;***

- ▶ (1) Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom (either alone or in community with others, and in public or in private) to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.
- (2) No person attending any place of education shall be required to receive religious instruction or to take part in or attend any religious ceremony or observance if such instruction ceremony or observance relates to a religion other than his own, or religion not approved by his parent or guardian

## Importance of Religion

- ▶ Religion itself should be a tool for development and peaceful coexistence when the adherents of each faith understand the doctrine or tenets therein. The major function of religion, according to Emile Durkheim, is “to provide social cohesion to help maintain social solidarity through shared rituals and beliefs, social control to enforced religious based morals and norms to help maintain conformity and control in society”.



## State of FOR in Nigeria

- ▶ Hindered
- ▶ Limited or restricted
- ▶ Abused

# Christian Perspective

- ▶ Christianity is a missionary religion:  
**Mark 16:15, Luke 10:1ff**
- ▶ Its core value is peace at all cost -  
**Matthew 6:6ff, Hebs. 12:14**
- ▶ It is about witnessing- **Acts 1:8**

## Conclusion

- ▶ The major problem with FOR in Nigeria is mainly lack of understanding and greed for power among politicians.
- ▶ There is need for continuous orientation and awareness campaign on the subject matter.



▶ ***THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
ATTENTION***