

We have no right to judge others

After the December 2007 general elections, our once united country was divided along tribal lines which led to the post-election violence. One day, a Sunday to be exact, some of the youths from my church went to visit some of the displaced people who were camping in a school nearby. We took them food, clothing, medicine and some money to help them buy a few things here and there.

I decided to spend more time with the teenagers as I was informed that they really were not talking to each other unless they came from the same tribe. I found this very disturbing as they are the leaders of the future and it would be really sad if they grew up with that kind of mentality.

After a while, I gathered the teenagers and encouraged them to talk about their experiences and what hurts them the most. The stories they told were quite sad and it was almost hard to believe that such things were happening in the country. They also discovered from listening to each others' stories that they had gone through more or less the same experience.

After listening to their heart breaking stories, I told them something that the priest had told us that day during service: 'no one applied to be born a Luo, Luhya, Kikuyu, Kamba, Kisii, American, Italian, etc. So it is not my crime or your crime that you belong to a certain community'. I also explained to them that now as they were, they needed each other more because our differences make us special and we can never be the same.

We then decided to play a game: you get a piece of paper and write down something about a tradition from another community that you like and wish it could be done in your community. To my surprise they know a lot about each other's traditions.

After listening to them, I asked them if they knew so much about each other then why wouldn't they become friends. I explained to them that the people they were within that camp had nothing to do with what happened to them and they should not hate a community based on what they hear because not everyone in a community is bad.

I also explained to them that our different backgrounds are enriching because of our different abilities which help us all to exist as one people and to compensate each other's community with what it doesn't have.

I learnt that not a whole community is to blame for the current situation; it is just a few individuals. I also learnt that as humans, we are so quick to judge the next person according to how they are dressed or which community they come from or where they live; this is very wrong as I learnt that we have no right to judge people.

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