

## **CRE S.4 NOTES**

### **ECUMENISM**

Ecumenism comes from a Greek word Oikoumene which refers to all people of the world. All these people have life, love, blood, bodies and bones, whose source is the same ie God the creator.

Therefore the word Ecumenism refers to all people of different religious sects coming together since they all have the same origin and their destiny is the same. Ecumenism therefore calls for unity of all people of different religions, African traditionalist inclusive.

Ecumenism also refers to the spirit of charity, understanding and togetherness which exist between people of different religions.

All these people of different religions have joined together and formed a body known as the “Joint Christian Council” which works out all ways of bringing Christians and people of different religions together. The joint Christian Council is under what is known as Ecumenical movements. These movements aim at integrating the gospel and manner of worship into the cultures of the people.

### **ROLES/ PURPOSE OF ECUMENICAL MOVEMENTS**

- To unite different Christian sects so as to fight against things which make people to evade God.
- To translate Bible into local languages of the people.
- To organize joint Christian conferences.
- To help people who are suffering in areas like those of Northern and North Eastern Uganda by giving them food, clothing etc.
- They aim at increasing the number of Christian converts in Africa,
- They aim at simplifying the manner of worship in Churches e.g. by encouraging people to use their mother tongues in prayers, use of local drums, translated hymns etc.
- To organize joint Christian feasts in Church e.g. Easter, Christmas, Mothers’ Union Days, Students’ Days etc.
- To combine efforts in fighting against external forces of opposition like African independent Churches.

- They aim at training highly qualified bible and the logical experts e.g. through establishment of institutes like Christian Universities.
- They aim at helping Christians understand the Bible and how to apply its knowledge in their daily lives.
- They also aim at helping at condemning all sorts of mistreatment which disrupt peace.
- To strengthen the existence of strong Christian faith in Schools and institutions by encouraging students to form Christian associations like YCS, Youth Alive etc.
- To unite different Christian families.
- To encourage Christians to be baptized, confirmed, take Eucharist e.t.c
- They carry out joint Christian campaigns against disasters like AIDS, Civil wars e.t.c
- To bring out gender balance in churches and eliminate of all forms of injustices.
- To modernize Christian prayers.
- To convince all governments in Africa to all free movement of missionaries in their countries to preach the word of God under peaceful conditions.
- To print and publish books which emphasize issues on Christianity.

#### **FAILURES/CAUSES OF THE FAILURES OF ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT/ECUMENISM**

- Not all grounds have been accommodated into the joint Christian council.
- Islam, Christianity and other foreign religions have continued to condemn traditional leaders as ungodly and sinful.
- Lack of money to find bigger conferences.
- Historically, certain denominations are natural enemies.
- Women are still in the background.
- There is a lot of misunderstanding of Christian doctrines.
- Politics and government interference fail ecumenical movements e.g. people fear to go and spread the word of God in certain countries/areas because of insecurity.
- Discrimination among believers e.g. members of one religion or sect abuse members of another sect.
- People are confused on which particular/religion to follow. Hence they face conflicting loyalties.
- Some religious leaders are irresponsible and not committed. This makes ecumenism to fail.

- There is a lot of back biting of each other.
- There are many conflicts and fights among people in the world today. This makes ecumenism to fail.
- Different sects are interpreting the scriptures differently. This does not assist in making people of different religions come together.
- People do not use the same methods of preaching e.g. some shout, others do it calmly, others do it through singing e.t.c. This makes the people perceive the word of God differently.

### **SITUATIONS/AREAS WHERE WE SEE ECUMENISM TAKING PLACE**

**OR**

### **WAYS IN WHICH CHRISTIANS ARE WORKING TOGETHER IRRESPECTIVE OF DENOMINATIONAL DIFFERENCES TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE**

- People of different religions praying together
- Educating children of different denominations in some schools
- Treating people of different denominations in some hospitals.
- Forming interdenominational organizations like Scripture Union, YMCA, YWCA, Youth Alive, YCS etc.
- Translating the bible into different languages involves Priests, Reverend, and Laymen etc.
- Fighting corruption. This is done jointly without saying this one is from this religion.
- Welcoming the Pope, Bishop Canterbury is carried out by all people of Uganda.
- Allowing marriage between members of different churches e.g. A Muslim marrying a protestant or a catholic.
- Teaching religious education in schools (students of different denominations are taught)
- Involving women in church leadership. (This is taking place in all churches)
- Joint setting up of Radio and TV stations together.
- Having joint peace talks e.g. different religious leaders have advocated for peace e.g. Bishop Odama a protestant and Cardinal Wamala a catholic volunteered to go and talk to the rebels.
- Joint church projects have been set up e.g. House of Bishops.

- The practice of ecumenism started a long time ago e.g. the Uganda Martyrs included traditionalists, Muslims, protestants, Catholics e.t.c
- All Ugandan clans have people of different denominations i.e. one clan may consist of Muslims, Catholics, Protestants, Bahais, Charismatic, Adventist church members, traditionalists e.t.c.
- In the preaching, nobody preaches that mixing with members of other religions will lead one to go to hell.
- All religions in Uganda emphasize that all human beings are God's children regardless of sex, race, nationality, educational level, tribe e.t.c
- During national celebrations/functions, different religious leaders attend and lead prayers
- In Uganda, denominational schools, hospitals and other institutions are on the increase.
- At times on the eve of important days like Easter, all leaders of different Christian sects such as Anglican, Orthodox, Catholic e.t.c do address the nation.