

RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

THE USE OF CONCEPTUAL
PHOTOGRAPHY



Fig.1: Religious Tolerance. Source: Field Work, 2023

This piece of Art is a kind of photography known as Conceptual Photography; a concept driven photography that depicts an impression of the Artist.

Items found in this piece of art work are just two; An Islamic ablution kettle (*representing a symbol for Moslems*) and the rosary (*representing a symbol for Christians*).

The title: Religious Tolerance.
Author: Joseph Essuman

Religious tolerance is a key factor in achieving many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Goal 16, according to religious freedom and business.org (2023) focuses on promoting **peaceful and inclusive societies, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and **inclusive institutions** at all levels.**

This goal calls for measures to be taken to eliminate intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief, and to promote mutual respect and understanding among different faiths and beliefs.

❖ Additionally, religious freedom provides a platform for faith-based organizations to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs through their charitable endeavours.

Indeed, a central aspect of religious freedom is that it gives faith groups license to innovate and contribute to the wellbeing of individuals, communities and nations.

But where religious freedom is curtailed, so are such innovations.

For instance, reform-minded Saudi princess Basmah bint Saud argues that religion “should not be a shield behind which we hide from the world but a driving force that inspires us to innovate and contribute to our surroundings” (ohchr.org, 2023).

This art work promotes the connection and tolerance between the two main religious bodies and how this acceptance can sustain development.



The art work describes, initiates and concludes with a case study of how one faith group could be tolerant to the other opposing group.

The art work depicts such faith-based activities that are facilitated by religious tolerance and freedom and how it directly contributes to Sustainable Development.

HOW RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE CONTRIBUTES TO **SUSTAINABILITY**



Religious tolerance has the potential to contribute to sustainability and sustainable development in a variety of ways. For instance, having the freedom to practice religions or belief systems that focus on environmental stewardship can influence individuals to take steps to protect the environment.



Indeed, with the kind of message that this art work represent, spiritual practices such as meditation and mindfulness can help to foster respect for the community we live in, its resources, and the people who occupy it.

Additionally, by enabling individuals to connect to their faith, religious freedom can encourage them to act with greater love and compassion towards the environment and its dwellers.

Finally, having the right to practice one's religion can lead to increased awareness and understanding of the importance of acting in a sustainable manner.

Therefore, religious freedom can be a powerful tool for promoting sustainable development.



In Ghana, religious freedom can have a positive impact on sustainable development. It can enable people to express their beliefs without fear of persecution and discrimination, which would create a more tolerant, open-minded and inclusive society.

Speciously, one might take it for granted that it is just a composition of two items. But a deeper reflection on it means more to it; tolerance. This would lead to greater acceptance of different views and beliefs of the two major religious bodies in Ghana, leading to more constructive dialogue and less conflict.



Furthermore, a spectacle from the art work suggests that, religious freedom allows individuals to make decisions based on their beliefs and values, which can lead to more holistic decision-making and a better understanding of the long-term consequences of brutal actions that have ensued fighting between Muslims and Christians.



This assertion has been buttressed by Agyeman-Duah (2008). He is of the view that, religious freedom has the potential to bring positive change to Ghana, leading to sustainable development in the country.



Accessing and appreciating the art work holistically could lead to more responsible and sustainable development practices.

Additionally, it may create a deeper sense of belonging to a community, which would lead to enhanced social cohesion and a more peaceful environment.

◆ Furthermore, understanding the art work can create a more tolerant, open-minded and inclusive society, where different views and beliefs are respected and constructive dialogue is encouraged. All in all, religious freedom can enable positive change and contribute to sustainable development in Ghana.

Religious freedom also gives individuals the opportunity to make decisions based on their beliefs and values, leading to a better understanding of the long-term consequences of their actions and more responsible and sustainable development practices (Homan, 2013).

◇ This suggests that, religious tolerance can create a deeper sense of belonging to a community, enhancing social cohesion and contributing to a more peaceful environment which the art work aesthetically and meaningfully projects.

In conclusion, religious tolerance can have a positive impact on sustainable development in Ghana and enable positive change in the country. It is an essential part of fostering a more tolerant, open-minded and inclusive society, and provides individuals with the freedom to make decisions based on their beliefs and values, leading to more responsible and sustainable development practices.

The Art Work, has said it all.



HOW DOES THIS **AFFECT LEARNING?**

- ❖ **Understand the concept of religious tolerance and why it is important**
- ❖ **Learners would understand the role of images in promoting religious tolerance and the role they play in shaping attitudes and beliefs**
- ❖ **Analyse the representation of religion in images**



HOW DOES THIS **AFFECT LEARNING? CONT'**

- ❖ **Appreciate religious diversity in images**
- ❖ **Understand the impact of images on sustainability and**
- ❖ **Develop critical thinking to sustain religious tolerance in Ghana and the world at large.**



THANK YOU