Plateau, Wearing a New Face

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Much have been talked about concerning the sectarian crises that rocked plateau state of recent which led to the wanton destruction of lives and property. The more worrisome part of the narrative was the heart-rending pictures posted on the Internet about that humanitarian tragedy. In them, we are faced with gruesome massacre and killings of fellow Nigerians perpetrated by ungodly Nigerians. These disturbing pictures are a tormented memory in my life that will be hard to erase by time.

However, time has a way of healing the wounds of life. Somehow, we could say that some form of palpable peace is settling on the plateau like the morning fogs in winter. The game is over, suddenly we have realised that we do not need the blood flowing through the streets any longer but rain to cultivate the Irish potatoes, cabbage, “acha” etc.

I hope someone would not dare to take us back to the dark days. In the recent past, even the thought of passing through Jos was always a nightmare with much turbulence to go with even before the start of the journey. More often than not, we would ask drivers which routes they would take and gladly pay when they said Saminaka, even though it would cost us much more. Nonetheless, if by any reason they chose to pass through Jos, we would want to know where and how they will maneuver the crises-ridden state.

Why we were always bothered is because some areas might be considered flash points depending on your religion. This was a curious experience for most travellers. Lately, I found myself as usual travelling to Bauchi and back to Abuja by public transport. Unfortunately, our vehicle took a particular route within Jos which for me was one of the most dangerous spots. Alas, we ran into unusual hold-up. Then, I remember the popular quotation “that which I fear most has befallen me”. Apparently, it was time for me to die again because cowards, they say, die many times before their death. I was in deep unease and the presence of military men could not dispel my fears as I read every movement with great suspicion. Indeed, what could be more traumatizing than passing through Jos?

As the hold-up lingered, my fears doused away, sense of normalcy downed on me. People were busy with their daily activities. I saw calmness on people faces which presupposed a return to some semblance of peace and tranquility.

There is need to consolidate on the existing peace now that we have new government on ground. The politicians should know that the rankling is over. Let’s fall back and close ranks to build one indivisible plateau devoid of sentiments. One of the major contestants for the seat of the governor has it on her campaign signboard “with God change is possible”. Since change was not possible it means therefore, that continuity was an act of God. Hence, let all accept defeat and eschew primordial interests. We can recall interestingly, Hilary Clinton was a major opponent of President Barrack Obama, but now an arrow head of the American diplomatic missions.

For the electorates, our preoccupation should be on how to build a common framework irrespective of our religious and ethnic differences to demand for deliverables that will bring to us a good standard of leaving. Those who have the experience of the weather conditions in Bauchi and Abuja will bear me witness that the only place I had respite from the harsh weather was when I arrived Jos. This accentuates the fact that plateau state was ordained to be land of “Peace and Tourism” and we all owe it a duty to make it so.