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From Less to More Human Relations

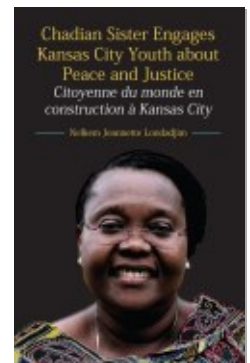
Published by

Londadjim, Nelkem.

Chadian Sister Engages Kansas City Youth about Peace and Justice.

Langaa RPCIG, 2020.

Project MUSE. <https://muse.jhu.edu/book/78585>.



➔ For additional information about this book

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[148.135.83.86] Project MUSE (2025-02-16 13:31 GMT)

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Interview with peace studies students

“What is your definition of Peace? And how does one become a peacemaker?”

Wow. Those are big questions! From my experience, I'd say that peace is not peacefulness. Peace sets in motion and combines four universal human values, namely truth, justice, love, and forgiveness.



More than the absence of war and conflicts, peace has to do with the whole of harmonious relations among people, and between people and the environment, which is respected. It also has to do with the conditions of life and existence. Peace is the fruit of love, truth, justice, and respect of human rights and the common good.

Peace demands from every person a conversion of heart, whatever their religion or convictions. This conversion cannot only be internal. It must be expressed through external acts and new social behaviors. It is a question of changing less human relations into more human relations. We know about less human relations, for example:

- Lack of a sense of one's responsibilities;
- Lack of professional conscience;
- Lack of rigor in questions of money; and
- Forgetting one's social obligations, lacking respect for others, etc.

These "less" human relations can generate a climate of mistrust, of disengagement, and of competition without scruples.

More "human" relations are based on respect for the person and their rights and beliefs. Such respect is the fruit of a conversion of heart and creates a climate of peace and mutual trust.

To promote these more human relations, which are conditions for peace, we need an awakening of consciences – not only the conscience of each person but also the collective conscience of our society.

It is not enough to have a corpus of laws well elaborated and adapted. The laws must be applied and evolved over time. Deeds contrary to the law can become so recurrent and accepted that they are not even questioned but rather regularly practiced, reinforced, and transmitted. This distorts human and social relations and makes them less human and sources of conflict and lack of peace. It is not enough to condemn the

situation. We must ensure the application of laws and the ongoing evolution of an inclusive justice system.

Creating more human relations requires respect for fundamental rights and principles, which are well documented. To have harmonious relations among people and social peace, every citizen must know these principles and help make them come alive.

