

Christian business leaders meet in Abidjan to discuss faith at work

Catholic and Muslim businesspeople from around Africa have reflected together on the place of God in their managerial experience. The Community of the Mother of Divine Love (CMDA), a new community of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, organized the gathering.

Magloire Madjessou, Abidjan, Ivory Coast, *La Croix International*, 13 December 2017



Muslim business leader Talibi Haïdara / Credit: Magloire Madjessou

Nearly 200 Christian and Muslim business leaders and managers from several African countries met in Abidjan on December 2-3 to reflect on the role of faith in the workplace.

Organized by the Community of the Mother of Divine Love, the first autonomous new community in Ivory Coast that is part of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, participants looked at their faith as a factor in their success as entrepreneurs.

Pleased to share his business experience, Muslim entrepreneur Taliba Haïdara, 50, is proud of his professional progress.

After giving up high-level responsibilities in the finance sector, he now manages a real estate business of his own. He hopes to boost cooperation between Christians and Muslims through the seminar.

“Interreligious exchange is a good thing that enables business to prosper on the basis of faith foundations,” he explains. “Christian and Muslim businessmen can assist in promoting and developing our various countries even beyond Africa.”

For Haïdara, entrepreneurship and “fear of God” make a good fit. “You cannot be head of a business without having a fear of God,” he says.

“Labor, salaries and the purchase of goods are all regulated by Biblical and Koranic verses. For example, the prophet Mohammad states that it is necessary to accumulate licit goods,” he continues.

“Business heads need to cultivate honesty. Provided that these foundations exist, then one can do business in line with God’s commands.”

Patricia Zoundi, another seminar participant, is a Catholic business leader who has followed an unusual career path, working in monetary and financial services for fifteen years.

“My ambition is to develop a network of entrepreneurs and to promote common values based on the Gospel of Christ,” she explains.

No business can succeed without God, she believes, recalling that faith was her only recourse when she had to face paying debts and taxes.

“I abandoned myself totally to God by placing my affairs in order, declaring my employees and paying my taxes,” she confides. “Once I did this, the Lord improved the situation.”

Fr François Kaboré is a Jesuit priest, who also describes himself as a business leader.

Currently the director of the Jesuit Social and University Institute in Abidjan as well as being an economist, he is convinced that God must have a central place in every business initiative.

“A business is also a work of God,” he notes. “We create value and meet the needs of our neighbors this way.

“A priest who is concerned for the affairs of people under God’s regard also needs to be concerned for business,” he adds, explaining why he took part in the seminar.

“I also wanted to share my passion for everything to do with business.”