



Last June 14, I attended a conference given by Bishop Ignatius Kaigama, Archbishop of Jos, in Nigeria. The subject was the violence in his country. As a matter of fact, we had noticed at the Afrika Center an increase of Nigerians coming to Canada, fleeing the persecutions.

According to an article written in “L’aide de l’Église en détresse, section Canada”, the city of Jos, where the seat of Bishop Kaigama is situated since the year 2000, many confrontations had taken place since 2004. Since then, the one who preside, at present, the Nigerian Conference of Catholic Bishop has become an ardent defender of the dialogue between Christians and Muslims. If the religious fundamentalism is one of the main reasons for the violence, the Bishop is quite eager to denounce regularly the lack of means to fight effectively against the rise of the extremists, not only by defending effectively the minorities, but equally because there exist no system of education, worthy of the name and because unemployment is endemic at more than 14%.

We were not many that evening on June 14, at the level of the Old “Librairie Atwater”, founded in 1828, in Westmount. A strange place indeed, very British, with old photos of King George V, King of the United Kingdom, on the walls of the mezzanine which offered a bird’s eye view of the shelves below, filled with books coming from another era.

To cut it short, I admire this peaceful Bishop, with his broad smiles: “I have established very good relations with the Muslims who live in the diocese of Jos. I have frequent contacts with the Imams who consider me as their father and who ask me some advice quite often. In spite of all the problems of insecurity that we encounter, I have a great hope of building one day a larger cathedral”.

Hope is often more powerful than fear.