

On the Difference between Cultural and Religious Identities

Authors : Mputu Ngandu Simon

Abstract : Culture and religion are two of the most significant markers of an individual or group's identity. Religion finds its expression in a given culture, and culture is the costume in which a religion is dressed. In other words, there is a crucial relationship between religion and culture which should not be ignored. On the one hand, religion influences the way in which a culture is consumed. A person's consumption of a certain cultural practice is influenced by his/her religious identity. On the other hand, cultural identity plays an important role in how a religion is practiced by its adherents. Some cultural practices become more credible when interpreted in religious terms just as religious doctrines and dogmas need cultural interpretation to be understood by a given people in a given context. This relationship goes so deep that sometimes the boundaries between culture and religion become blurred, and people end up mixing religion and culture. In some cases, the two are considered to be one and the same thing. However, despite this apparent sameness, religion and culture are two distinct aspects of identity, and they should always be considered as such. One results from knowledge, while the other has beliefs as its foundation. This essay explores the difference between cultural and religious identity by drawing from existing literature on this topic as a whole before applying that knowledge to two specific case studies: Christianity and Islam in some African and Asian countries.

Keywords : culture, religion, identity, knowledge, belief

Conference Title : ICCACMG 2022 : International Conference on Cultural Anthropology, Culture, Migration and Globalization

Conference Location : Tokyo, Japan

Conference Dates : April 25-26, 2022