

Humanitarianism as the New Face of Religion Practice: A Nigerian Experience

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Abstract : As the world gets more and more engulfed in both man-made and natural disasters, the call for religious intervention becomes intrinsically louder to the extent that any religious inclination that does not devolve into societal or humanitarian adventures makes no meaning. Wars, conflicts, environmental disturbances have thrown new challenges hitherto unknown to the doorsteps of religious groups for intervention as the last hope of humanity. In Nigeria, since the last two decades, many things have fallen apart that have led to humanitarian crisis from the North to the South and from the East to the West. Over five million Nigerians live in internally displaced camps all over the country due to the various forms of social unrest as well as natural disasters, especially floods. These problems have brought forth the significance of various religious groups who through their interventions have often shown to be the hope of the people. This paper examines the latent potentials of religion in not only making people to cope with difficult situations they find themselves in, but also giving succor to the many who otherwise are despondent and at the edge of life. Many religious groups have well developed plans of interventions in various humanitarian situations. The efforts of religions such as Christianity, Islam and the indigenous African religion is examined and assessed for proper evaluation. The paper finds out that the most potent and effective means of attending to humanitarian crisis today in Nigeria is through the various religious organization as governments at various levels have lost credibility in such exercises.

Keywords : humanitarianism, religion, Nigeria, society, practice

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