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CREMATION AS A CHALLENGE TO CONTEXTUAL EXPRESSION OF CHRISTIANITY IN MODERN KENYA

The aim of this paper is to describe and analyze the contestation of the validity and implications of cremation on the contextualization of Christianity in Kenya. Viewed as a 'strange' phenomenon, this practice threatens to destabilize the existing tacit settlement on the proper interment of the dead and accompanying rituals. It should be noted that in the Kenyan context, death rites (Mourning and funeral rituals) are a classic exhibition of the synthesis of gospel and cultural beliefs and practices. This has revitalized questions on the Christian doctrines on the disposal of the dead and the implications of cremation on the concept of the afterlife.

Data for the paper is sourced from personal interviews and secondary sources from assorted written literature on death rituals. The research is modelled around the concept of contextualization. It is envisaged that the detailed analysis of the research will give an insight into the impact of cultural rituals upon the understanding and practice of Christianity in Kenya today. The findings also have an implication on the missiological strategies for the African church in the 21st century. This is especially as it relates to the relevance of the Christian faith, to a people who are struggling to indigenize Christianity, while at the same time grappling with the effects of globalization and secularization.