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# Christian Ethics and Hospitality: Responding to the Needs of Nigeria's Internally Displaced Persons

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**ABSTRACT:** The plight of Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria is among the most severe and deteriorating humanitarian crises in the world, disproportionately affecting women and children among the millions impacted in the North Eastern and North Western part of the country. A 2023 survey in the National Bureau of Statistics reported appropriately 1, 134, 828 internally displaced persons across 251, 082 households in seven Nigerian Northern states. Notably, children under the age of 18 accounted for 50% of this population. This paper examines Christian teachings on hospitality as a framework for responding to the needs of internally displaced persons in Nigeria. This paper employs historical, analytical, and exegetical methodologies. The findings indicate that applying biblical teachings on compassion and care for the needy and marginalized can significantly alleviate the hardship experienced by internally displaced persons in Nigeria.

**KEYWORDS:** Internally Displaced Persons, Christianity, Hospitality, Christian Ethics, Marginalized, Poverty alleviation.

## INTRODUCTION

Nigeria faces a significant humanitarian crisis in recent times due to internal displacement, where millions of people are forced to flee their homes as a result of conflict, violence and natural disasters. These people often lived in overcrowded and inadequate conditions, where they lack access to basic necessities like food, healthcare and education. The IDPs are vulnerable to poverty, social exclusions, discrimination and various forms of exploitation. Unlike the refugees, the IDPs have not crossed an international border to find safety, they stay within the borders of the country and remain under the protection and responsibility of the government.

In Nigeria, internal displacement is driven largely by armed conflict and insurgency, particularly in the north east, where Boko Haram and other armed groups have devastated communities by destroying homes, schools and livelihoods. Other drivers of internal displacement include communal violence, banditry and natural disasters – such as flooding, and poor urban planning. It is important to mention that internal displacement is a serious global issue affecting millions of people. Countries affected include Syria, Ukraine, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Columbia, Yemen, Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan and Nigeria (Tasiu 196). According to Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), more than five million people were internally displaced due to conflict and violence in 2020, coupled with the restrictions imposed as a result of COVID-19, it was difficult for the government to provide humanitarian assistance to the needs of the IDPs (International Displacement Monitoring Center).

Against this backdrop, this paper examines how Christian ethical principles of hospitality can be applied to address the challenges faced by internally displaced persons in Nigeria.

## CONCEPT OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSON

The United Nations guiding principles on Human rights defines Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) as persons or group of persons who have been forced, or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflicts, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized border. The IDPs due to their forced displacement are inherently vulnerable to deprivation, further displacement and other protection risks, such as, lack of access to basic services, family separation, trafficking, discrimination and harassment (United Nations Commission on Human Rights)

In view of the above vulnerabilities of IDPs, the United Nations Guiding Principles on internal displacement seeks to guarantee that IDPs, as citizens or habitual residents of their country, enjoy equally and without discrimination the same rights and freedoms under international and national law as do other persons in their country. These rights include freedom of movement, access to basic human needs, right to safety, right to health and protection and so on.

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Unlike the refugees, internally displaced people remain under the protection of their government, even if their reason for fleeing was similar to that of refugees. The refugees are people who have crossed an international boarder to find refuge in another country, and have been granted refugee-like status or temporary protection. According to the 1951 refugee convention, a refugee is someone who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside their country of nationality and is unable to avail themselves of the protection of that country. In this sense, there is a clear distinction between an internally displaced person and a refugee. The internally displaced person enjoys the protection of his/her home government.

In the reports of Akinrolie et.al (45), about 55 million internally displaced persons are found globally and over 11.1 million (27.4%) are domicile in sub-Saharan Africa due to perennial conflicts and disasters. It was also stated that, the population of IDPs worldwide exceeds that of refugees in 2018 (55 million vs 26 million). United Nations Refugee Agency stated that it is usually challenging to support IDPs due to geographical dispersion and bureaucratic bottlenecks, which makes them highly vulnerable.

Internally displaced persons are faced with multifaceted and complex challenges such as difficulties in accessing fundamental services such as healthcare, education, food and sanitation. They are also at the risk of various human rights violations, including social and gender based violence, exploitation and forced recruitment into armed groups. It is important to mention that IDPs are vulnerable set of people. They may be in transit from one place to another, they may likely be forced towards unhealthy or inhospitable environments. The social organization of displaced communities may have been destroyed or damaged by the act of physical displacement; family groups may be separated or disrupted, women may be forced to assume non-traditional roles or face particular vulnerabilities. Internally displaced populations, especially groups like children; the elderly or pregnant women, may experience profound psychosocial distress related to displacement. Economically, the IDPs are removed from their sources of income and livelihood. Internal displacement can also disrupt the education of younger ones. In some cases, they are subjected to armed attack by bandits and terrorist. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) tens of million people around the world are displaced every year within their countries by conflict, human right violations, natural disasters and climate change.

**INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN NIGERIA**

Internally displaced persons in Nigeria are people that are forced to flee their homes as a result of conflicts, attacks, violence and natural or man-made disasters. They are often deprived of basic human facilities and are frequently exposed to various forms of human rights violations and exploitation. However, the number of IDPs in Nigeria have been growing overtime due to the security situation of the country. This position is supported by National Bureau of Statistics (10) when it opines that the IDPs in Nigeria are faced with precarious situations that demand sustained attention and intervention from both national and international humanitarian organisations. The body also observed that IDPs constitutes one of the most pressing humanitarian crisis in Nigeria. The survey conducted in 2023 by the National Bureau of Statistics across seven states namely; Adamawa, Yobe, Borno, Sokoto, Katsina, Benue and Nasarawa reveals an estimated total of IDP population of 1,134, 828 and 251,082 displaced households. Borno state recorded the highest number of displaced households (206,753) and 877,299 IDPs, representing 77.3 percent of the entire surveyed population.

Further analysis reveals that out of the total population of surveyed IDPs, 50.3 percent were mainly minors below the age of 18 years. Only 49.7 percent were within the age of 18 years and above, the reports show that males are slightly higher with 50.5 percent than their female counterpart with 49.5 percent. Furthermore, more than half of the IDPs never attended school. As of mid-2025, roughly 8.18 million internally displaced persons were recorded in Nigeria accounting for nearly 44% of all IDPs in the West African region. It should be stated that the IDPs are faced with numerous challenges such as inadequate health services, inadequate food, and lack of power supply, inadequate clothing and bad toilet facility. In addition, 5.5 percent of households suffered abduction and 6.0 percent are faced with sexual assault.

**CAUSES OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN NIGERIA**

There are many factors that triggered internal displacement in Nigeria. They shall be examined below:

a. **Armed Conflict and Insurgency:** Armed insurgency such as the Boko Haram insurgency is one of the major factors that triggered internal displacement in Nigeria, especially in North East. Since 2009, the Boko Haram have been attacking villages in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria killing people and destroying properties. For this reason, millions of people have been displaced.

b. **Banditry and Kidnapping:** This is also rampant in the North West and North-Central part of Nigeria. Villages are raided and people are kidnapped by armed bandits.

c. **Farmer-Herder Clashes:** Activities of cattle rustlers is a major cause of internal displacement especially in states like Benue, Plateau and other parts of the Northern Nigeria. Farmers are reportedly attacked in their farms by the herders. The conflicts usually arise from competition over land, water and grazing routes and so on. The clash between farmers and herders triggered the anti-open grazing law, in Benue State, which in turn intensified tensions. These clashes often spiral into reprisal attacks, escalating violence and worsening displacement. Sometimes they involve ethnic, religious and political undertones (Aliyu, et.al 121)

d. **Communal and Ethnic Violence:** Long-standing disputes over land, religion and ethnicity across the country is a contributing factor to internal displacement in Nigeria. For instance, in 2001, 2008 and 2010, Plateau State recorded ethno-religious clashes between Christian and Muslim communities over political control, land ownership and identity. Thousands of people were killed across several outbreaks, properties destroyed and thousand displaced. Also, Tiv-Jukun crisis in Taraba and Benue States in the 1990s, 2001, 2019 led to killings and displacement (Aliyu etal).

e. **Natural Disasters:** This is another determinant of internal displacement in Nigeria. Seasonal floods displace thousands annually, particularly along the Niger and Benue rivers. Couple with this is desertification and drought in the far North, and soil erosion in some other parts of the country. There is also the issue of climate change, sometimes due to geographical and environmental mismanagement,

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which has led people to vacate their homes and end up in displacement camps. In 2022, floods affected 33 states, killed over 600 people, destroyed farmlands and homes, and displaced more than 1.4 million (Federation of Red Cross 8).

f. **Development Projects:** Although development is good, sometimes it has some adverse effects on the people. Infrastructural projects such as the construction of dams, urban expansion, and road construction lead to forced evictions. Also, oil exploration and environmental degradation, due to oil spills and gas flaring have displaced communities especially in the Niger Delta region.

g. **Governance and Security**: Failure on the part of government is another source of internal displacement in Nigeria. The inadequate provision of security and porous border leads to frequent attacks by armed bandits and insurgents. Villages in the northern part of the country share boundaries with neighbouring countries like Niger, Chad and Cameroon, which allows for free access into the country.

h. **Socio-Economic Pressures:** Another major factor that intensifies internal displacement in Nigeria is poverty and unemployment. High youth unemployment provides a steady pool of recruitments for insurgent groups, militia and bandits gangs, who lure them with money. Also, competition over scarce resources among communities fuel inter community clashes in Nigeria.

**EFFECTS OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT**

The effects of internal displacement in Nigeria can be grouped into social, economic, political and environmental impacts;

i. **Loss of Lives and Livelihoods:** People lose their farms, businesses, and other sources of income.

ii. **Family separation:** children are orphaned or separated from parents during attacks and displacement.

iii. **Poor living conditions in IDP Camps:** IDP camps are mostly overcrowded coupled with lack of clean water, poor sanitation and inadequate shelter.

iv. **Health Crisis:** The IDPs are exposed to diseases such as cholera, malaria and malnutrition.

v. **Education Disruption:** Many children in IDP camps lack access to education, thereby worsening the rate of illiteracy in Nigeria.

vi. **Gender-Based Violence:** Women and girls are vulnerable to sexual violence, exploitation and early marriage.

vii. **Increased Poverty:** Displaced persons lack access to economic opportunities thereby increasing the rate of poverty.

viii. **Psychological Trauma:** IDPs suffer emotional depression and anxiety due to their inhuman conditions.

ix. **Environmental Effects:** Internal displacement can lead to overuse of natural resources and environmental degradation.

**EFFORTS TO ADDRESS INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN NIGERIA**

Internal displacement has become an issue of great concern for national and internal organizations. Muguruza and Amado ( 316 ) opines that, inspite of the work done in the last twenty years to increase awareness of IDP rights, issues such as the recent rise of violent extremism and terrorism worldwide is decreasing instead of increasing international attention on the plight of internally displaced people.

Furthermore, Tasiu et.al assert that the IDPs in Nigeria are experiencing a severe humanitarian crisis that requires urgent attention and action. They said further that it is crucial for global actors, policy makers and humanitarian organizations to collaborate and ensure the protection, respect for rights and fulfillment of needs for IDPs. Accordingly, protection involves all activities aimed at ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law, such as, the human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law (Farris 278).

It is imperative for us to look at the efforts made by the government and international bodies to address the issue of internal displacement in Nigeria.

a. **Government Efforts:** The Nigerian government through the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) has been able to coordinate disaster through the distribution of relief materials to IDP camps. In June, 2025, NEMA distributed food items to households across the three camps in Adamawa State benefitting over 3,200 persons (The Guardian Nigeria News). In the same year, NEMA provided food items for the flood victims in Mokwa Local Government Area of Niger State, in Plateau State relief materials were given to victims of violent attacks in Bokkos L.G.A of the State (Health wise).

The state government through the State Emergency Management has been able to handle displacement issues at the state level especially in the North East. The National Policy on Internally Displaced Persons provides a framework for protection, humanitarian assistance and durable solutions. Also, military operations and security initiatives have been established by the government to reclaim territories from Boko Haram and other armed groups so that displaced persons can return home.

The Federal Government has initiated some rehabilitation and resettlement programmes, such as rebuilding the communities that have been destroyed by violent attacks. At the International level, humanitarian organizations such as the United Nations High Commissions for Refugees (UNHCR), UNICEF, International Organization for Migration (IOM) has been providing food, shelter, healthcare, education and protection for IDPs in Nigeria. Couple with these are the civil society and community-based efforts to relief the IDPs with the provision of food items and other relief materials. The government has also embarked on developmental solution such as skills training, microfinance and agricultural supports and infrastructural rehabilitation to help IDPs.

However, one can say that despite these interventions, there are still some challenges such as; insecurity, under funding of humanitarian programmes, corruption and mismanagement of aid, overcrowded IDP camps with poor conditions and so on.

**CONCEPT OF HOSPITALITY**

Hospitality is a universal value that is connected with values like kindness, attentiveness and respect. While hospitality is universally recognized as a shared value, its interpretation can vary across different times and cultures. According to Alflen (15) people perceive hospitality when they sense a warm welcome, a human touch, autonomy, accountability and the freedom to choose. Hospitality is a sentiment that emerges from interpersonal relationships and is shaped by an individual's personal encounters. In the opinion of Nwansa (2), hospitality is more than just

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providing shelter or a meal, it is about creating a welcoming environment where everyone feels valued and cared for. It involves showing warmth and kindness to all, regardless of differences. True hospitality is about genuine connection, empathy and listening to other's needs. It built community, fosters relationships and promotes understanding. It has the power to transform lives, promotes healing and create a more inclusive society.

In ancient times, hospitality was viewed as a fundamental aspect of humaneness and ethical conduct. The absence of hospitality was equated with a deficiency in civilization (Stockham 121). It is perceived as a way of welcoming strangers or guests. The Latin term 'hospes' signifies 'guest' while 'hostis' originally refer to a foreigner (Vijrer 22). This implies that the term 'hospitality' derive its roots from Latin. In earlier eras, hospitality was closely tied to the act of hosting individuals, particularly welcoming foreigners. It is also viewed as a religious obligation.

In Africa, hospitality is perceived as the act of generous giving without expecting anything in return. It can also be described as an unwavering willingness to share unconditionally, encompassing both social and religious aspect (Echema 35). It entails the readiness to offer help, support, love and shoulder each other's burdens without expecting profit or rewards. In the Yoruba adage, 'igi kan ko le da igbo se' meaning 'the immensity of a forest is recognized by the number of trees'. This underscores the importance of valuing every individual for their contribution to the community.

**CHRISTIAN APPROACH TO HOSPITALITY**

It is pertinent at this juncture to examine the Christian teachings on hospitality. It is important to assert that Christianity and hospitality are deeply connected. Hospitality is seen not just as kindness but a spiritual duty and expression of love. However, for clarity sake, we shall be looking at hospitality from the biblical perspective of the Old and New Testament respectively.

**HOSPITALITY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

The dominant Old Testament text on hospitality is derived from the story of Abraham. He served as the exemplar of biblical hospitality through his encounter with three 'men' who turned out to be angels. This encounter holds such significance that it is cited repeatedly in Jewish and Christian literatures. For example, the writer of Hebrews, probably alluding to Abraham's experience, admonishes his learners "do not neglect hospitality for by this, some have unknowingly hosted angels" (Hebrews 13:2).

In Genesis 18: 1-16, Abraham was sitting in the doorway of his tent in the heat of the day, when he saw three men standing nearby. He ran to greet them and bowing down in front of them, he urges them to stop and rest under the tree, and also offered them water and bread as refreshment. It was in the process of entertainment that one of the men prophesy that Sarah, the barren wife of Abraham will have a son (V10). Sarah, who over heard the conversation, laughed because both she and Abraham was too old to have a child. Eventually, at the appointed time, Sarah conceived and had a son. Through Abraham's generosity, God blessed him by granting Sarah a child. Unexpectedly, the strangers became a harbinger of divine abundance (Reynolds ).

Abraham's story is not the only narrative of hospitality in the Old Testament. The widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17: 8 -24) gave her last bit of food to Prophet Elijah, and was rewarded with miracles. Firstly, she and her son were miracously sustained through a time of drought. Secondly, when her son became ill and died, he was raised from the dead through Prophet Elijah. These stories of divine blessings upon the host became the foundation for Christians to give hospitality a deep theological meaning. According to Anderson (13) the purpose of hospitality is to prepare a welcoming space for encounters with God.

Another story in the Old Testament that relates to hospitality is that of the Shunamite woman in II Kings 4: 8-37. Prophet Elisha often passed through the town of Shunem, where the woman (referred to as the Shunamite woman) lived. She recognised the Prophet as a holy man of God and, along with her husband, built a furnished upper room for him to stay whenever he visited. In return for her hospitality, she was blessed with a son through the Prophet. Some years later, the child died, but was brought back to life through the intervention of Prophet Elisha. The lesson derived from this story is that hospitality brings blessing.

The Old Testament contains many commands and instructions that emphasize the importance of hospitality. In Leviticus 19: 33-34, God commands Israel to treat foreigners as native-born and love them as themselves. In Deuteronomy 10: 18-19-God loves the stranger, giving them food and clothing; Israel is called to love strangers too, remembering their own time as foreigners in Egypt. Prophet Isaiah also asserts that a true fast includes sharing food with the hungry and bringing the homeless poor into one's house.

The Old Testament takes into account our mutual dependency and requires that the stronger members of the community care for the weaker members. Widows, orphans, resident aliens, the sick, and the poor are particularly needy and vulnerable; therefore, the law provides safeguards for their protection. The Old Testament law imposes strong penalties for oppressing the weak. It also declare that all humanity depends upon each other and upon God (Martin 9).

**HOSPITALITY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

The New Testament places strong emphasis on hospitality as a core expression of Christian faith, love and community life. It is an essential Christian virtue, emphasizing the generous and warm reception of others, particularly strangers and the needy, as a demonstration of love for God and fellow humans. The Greek word pliloxenia ('Love for Strangers') is commanded in many passages of the New Testament. It is also a recurring event in Jesus' three years of public ministry. During this time, Jesus participated in hospitality and requested his followers to a higher standard of hospitality.

Numerous passages reveal Jesus entering a house and participating in hospitality (Mark 1:29; 5:40; Luke 7:36; 8:51, Matthew 8:14; 9:28). In Luke 14 for example, Jesus at the banquet urges those in attendance to practice hospitality with the least of human beings, not expecting anything in return, he also said to the one who has invited him, "when you give a lunch or a dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or

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sisters, your relatives or your rich neighbours because they might invite you back, and you would be repaid. On the contrary, when you host a banquet, invite those who are poor, maimed, lame or blind, and you will be blessed because they cannot repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous" (Luke 14: 12-14, CSB).

Hospitality was demonstrated by Jesus in Luke 5:29 at the house of Levi and Matthew 8: 14-15 at Peter's mother-in-law house. According to Ross (2), the biblical record of hospitality shown by Jesus in his public ministry is overwhelming, leaving us to conclude that if hospitality was a significant part of the earthly ministry of Christ, it should be a significant part of the current ministry of his church.

Jesus also demonstrated the virtue of hospitality by feeding the multitudes as recorded in Mark 6: 30 – 44; John 6: 1-14. This shows he cared for both spiritual and physical needs of people. He also received the sick, poor, lepers, demon-possessed and the marginalized by healing them and restoring them to their communities. He extended his hospitality to children, embracing and blessing them when others tried to turn them away. In his sermon on the mountain, he emphatically pronounced blessing on the merciful "for they shall receive mercy".

Hospitality can be seen as an ethic of the early church in the New Testament. It was a virtue and practice of the early Christians. Apostle Paul uses hospitality as a defining mark of a Christian when he says "share with the saints in their needs; pursue hospitality" (Romans 12: 13 CBS). Although, Paul was making reference to persecuted Christians of his time, but the researchers intend to extend hospitality not only to the saints but anyone that needs help.

In Titus 1:8 and 1 Timothy 3:2; hospitality is a qualification of an elder in the Church. "Now, a bishop must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sensible, dignified, hospitable, an apt teacher" (1 Timothy 3:2 RSV). Titus 1:8 says an elder must be hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, righteous, holy, self-controlled. These passages underscore the importance of hospitality as a crucial part of Christian leadership. Paul encourages believers to identify the evidence of hospitality before someone can be considered qualified to be a church leader.

It can be pointed out further that hospitality is a catalyst for the advancement of the gospel. The early church expanded through the practice of hospitality. Garwood Anderson (76) highlights this connection when he writes "the practices of hospitality have both practical and symbolic functions. Pragmatically, hospitality enabled early Christians to travel when commercial options were limited and unsafe. For Christians, this was especially important for propagating the Christian message and weaving a network of relationship among local church bodies. Hospitality and mission intersect throughout the New Testament.

The Greek root word oikos translated "home, house or households" is used over 180 times in the New Testament with much of its usage signifying the hospitality in the early church. The early church did not function in mega buildings and structures, the primary locations for worship and fellowship were people's homes which involves the practice of hospitality.

The early Christians shared meals and resources together and opened their lives and homes to strangers. By this, they formed communities that transcend and changed conventional understandings of households and expressed new understandings of social relations and political identities (Ross 85).

There are numerous passages in the New Testament where Paul and his companions were welcomed in their missionary journeys. For example, the gospel advanced in the home of Lydia (Act 16:15), at the house of the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:34), with Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth (Acts 21:8) and so on. The early missionaries were depended on the hospitality of people in the regions they travelled. In this sense, the New Testament reveals the catalytic relationship between the spread of the gospel and hospitality in the early church.

**Relevance of Christian Teachings on Hospitality to IDPs in Nigeria**

From the above discourse, one can rightly deduce the relevance of Christian teachings on hospitality to address the plight of internally displaced persons in Nigeria. The Christian scriptures admonish believers to welcome strangers as found in Matthew 25: 35 – 40; Hebrew 13:2; Romans 12:13. In this sense, Christians should see the IDPs as strangers in their father's land that needed their support. Christians need to practically demonstrate the golden rule "love the Lord your God and love your neighbor as yourself". They should see the IDPs as their neighbours that need assistance.

Jesus Christ made use of the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10: 25-27 to illustrate genuine love for one's neighbour, it is therefore expedient for Christians to demonstrate this love for the marginalised in the society. The Samaritan demonstrated love for his neighbour by helping the injured man to the hospital for treatment and also paid his medical bills, while the religious figures in the person of the Levite and priest could not attend to him. This is an indication that religiousity without love is baseless and empty. Christians should play the role of the Good Samaritan by taking care of the IDPs in the society.

The Bible established the fact that all humans are created in God's image. This implies that Nigerians whether Christians or Muslims should see the IDPs as the image of God and part of humanity. As a result, they should be accorded all the rights and priviledges due to humanity. The Church can make provisions for the immediate needs of the IDPs, such as the provision of food items, clothing, water and other relief materials. Jesus in his earthly ministry demonstrated this when he provided for the multitude. In this sense, the Church can take care of both the spiritual and physical needs of the IDPs.

Jesus Christ in his teachings emphasised on mercy, when he says, "Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy". Nigerians should learn to show mercy on the IDPs by demonstrating the act compassion and kindness to them. Luke 6:36 says "be merciful, even as your father is merciful". Helping the poor and vulnerable is an attitude of mercy. Acts of mercy include providing food, shelter or financial help to those in need. It also includes; supporting widows, orphans and the less priviledge. Mercy means going out of one's way to show kindness to those who suffer.

The Bible also teaches justice. God's very nature is just, and His people are called to reflect His justice. Psalm 18: 14 says "righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne". Therefore, Christians (including other religionists) should demonstrate justice to IDPs in Nigeria. Amos 5:24 writes 'But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream". Also the Law Book (Torah) emphasizes protection for the poor, widows, orphans and foreigners (Deut. 10: 18-19, Leviticus 19:15). Justice demands fairness and protection of the weak. Jesus begins his ministry by proclaiming good news to the poor and liberty to the oppressed (Luke 4: 18 – 19).

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Christian ethical teachings on hospitality advocate fellowship, giving and charity. This can also be applied to improve the lives of IDPs in Nigeria. In Acts 2: 44-45, the early Christians shared resources so "there was not a needy person among them". Christians in Nigeria are enjoined to share their resources with the IDPs and the vulnerable in the society. James 1:27 summarizes the discussion when he asserts; "religion that is pure and undefiled before God …… is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world".

**CONCLUSION**

This paper investigates the phenomenon of internal displacement in Nigeria, with particular attention to its causes and consequences. It further examines Christian teachings on hospitality as a framework for responding to the plight of internally displaced persons (IDPs). The study highlights that internal displacement constitutes a pressing global challenge requiring urgent intervention. It concludes that Christian ethical principles of hospitality can serve as a constructive approach to addressing the challenges associated with internal displacement.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The church should mobilize resources such as food, clothing and medical aid to IDPs in Nigeria through collections, donations and church-based NGOs.
- The church should practicalise the Christian ethical teachings on hospitality by showing love to the IDPs.
- The church should provide pastoral care to the victims of internal displacement through counseling, prayer and other support programmes. This will help to restore hope and dignity among displaced persons.
- The church can use its moral authority to advocate for government accountability in protecting and resettling IDPs.
- The church can also mediate in conflict-prone communities to address root causes of displacement, fostering dialogue and forgiveness.
- Interfaith and inter-ethnic cooperation should be encouraged to promote peace.
- The church can also build collaboration with international Christian organizations, NGOs and government agencies for broader support to help the IDPs.
- Government should try to develop programmes that will alleviate poverty in the society.
- Government should ensure the full implementation of the national policy on internally displaced persons.
- Government should provide access to education and skill training for the IDPs.
- Government should enhance security and protection of citizens against attacks from armed bandits and insurgents.

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