Hope and people living without Hope: An Old Testament and Contemporary Perspectives.

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Abstract

In the Old Testament, there are countless incidences and record of experiences and conditions that led many into depression. People with debilitating diseases like leprosy (Lev.13), loathsome sores (Job 2) and other 'strange' diseases suffered considerably. Their pains included not only the effect of the affliction but the attitude of the people among whom they lived which involved stigmatization and rejection. Just like those who became hopeless as a result of health complication and disease, many in the Old Testament Jewish society suffered quite remarkably. In juxtaposition with the contemporary Nigerian society, the condition of the aforesaid group seems to be very similar. Now and then, disasters, religious and ethnic riots, militant insurgency, youth unrest etc have left many Nigerians in utter hopelessness. Terminally ill patients and others with serious health problems have not faired any better in our society today. Many are in a very deplorable state with shattered hope of survival. It is based on the foregoing submissions that this work has among other salient things, dialectically examined the efficacy of hope in the lives of the hopeless. Suggestions on how the therapeutic cum 'placating' concept (hope) could be harnessed and utilized became one of the major thrusts of this paper.

Introduction

It is a fact that people who live with protracted/terminal disease experience stigmatization, abhorrence and hatred from others who once might have loved them. It is not uncommon also for terminally sick patients to feel insecure, hopeless and depressed. The aforesaid supposition is most likely 'considering the negative reaction of people in the other divide in relation to others living with protracted disease' (Ugwueye: 2004). In the Old Testament for example, people who contract diseases that seem never-ending: leprosy (Leviticus 13 and 14) and loathsome sore (Job 1-42) are