

WORDS

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Words:

Some faith-inspired organizations will avoid explicitly mentioning beliefs, but will still use language that aligns with a particular religion. Organizations whose expression comes in this form do not openly profess their faith, but a website visitor will see word usage that points directly to the religious affiliation of the organization. This disclosure can occur as references to religious stories, displays of religious icons, or mentions of commonly used phrases drawn from religious text or evolved from religious communities. Some examples of faith expression via words include phrases such as “Being the hands and feet,” (Christianity) references to religious characters like “Good Samaritans,” (Christianity) or the use of religious words like “Inshallah,” (Islam) or “Shalom” (Judaism).

Organizations within this group encompass a variety of purposes. Whether the work includes humanitarian aid or faith development, these nonprofit organizations frequently imply, but do not explicitly state, that their religious beliefs drive the work they do.

On the other hand, some organizations carry out work that is typically associated with religion, although it is not obviously tied to religion. This is frequently done in an attempt to draw in a collection of individuals from different religious and non-religious backgrounds. This approach can be seen in advocacy-based nonprofits that push for principles backed by their faith, but may also coincide with the beliefs of other religions. This can also be seen in art-based nonprofits that aim to draw in talented artists, actors, or musicians from different backgrounds, but will produce faith-inspired works of art with the religiously heterogeneous group.

Case Study: Islamic Relief USA

Islamic Relief USA is a non-profit humanitarian organization that provides aid and development programs to people in need, both in the United States and around the world. Based on their website, the organization’s faith expression is a significant part of their mission and approach to their work. However, these tenants are neither expressed in the mission statement nor with scripture, but rather in words and text elsewhere on the website.

The [website](#) states that Islamic Relief USA works to provide “relief and development in a

dignified manner regardless of gender, race, or religion, and works to empower individuals in their communities and give them a voice in the world.” They do work in many different sectors including, but not limited to, refugee aid, education, food aid, health, microfinance, and water. These missions do not have a clear religious basis.

The organization highlights the importance of spirituality and faith-based practice in their work—providing resources for Muslims, including prayer times and guidance on performing religious duties while on humanitarian missions. Additionally, the organization’s partnerships with local communities and organizations, including mosques, are featured on their website, highlighting the role of faith communities in supporting their work. These are all attributes of the website that fall into the “words” category because they are not present in a guiding statement of the organization, but do clearly, in written form, connect to a specific religious tradition.

Additionally, the organization’s faith-based approach is emphasized in certain areas. One of these is a page titled “Islamic Giving.” This page includes specific words that refer to Islamic values such as zakat (charitable giving) and sadaqah (voluntary giving), which are considered to be essential acts of worship in the Islamic faith.

Overall, Islamic Relief USA’s faith expression is a significant part of their mission and approach to their work, with a strong emphasis on Islamic values and practices. While the organization seeks to alleviate poverty and suffering for people of all backgrounds, their faith-based approach is prominently featured on their website and is an essential aspect of their identity as a humanitarian organization. Thereby, this organization fits into the middle of the scale when it comes to the degree of faith-expression.

Through the text and words on the website, there is a more direct connection to a faith than there would be if only Islamic symbols were present, and at the same time the faith connection does not go as far as having Islam mentioned in the mission statement or some other guiding principle. This middle-of-the-road approach to their expression of faith is mimicked in the actions of the organization. Most of the activities are secular and do not directly relate to any religious tenant, but there are portions of the group’s activity that do narrowly align with Islam.