

From: Glen Coulton
Sent: Tuesday, 8 November 2011 11:21 PM
To: NFP Reform Consultation
Subject: Definition of charity

I strongly oppose the assumption that advancing religion serves a charitable purpose.

Some religions engage in commendable charitable activities as adjuncts to the prosecution of their religious purpose. I believe that such activities should be recognised as charitable and rewarded accordingly, but there should be an onus on all religions that claim to perform charitable work to

1. demonstrate that their charitable work does provide a substantial public benefit without harm, and
2. distinguish carefully and honestly between those of their activities that are truly charitable and those that only provide some sort of assumed personal emotional benefit to members of their flocks.

I am also uneasy about regarding any activity as charitable that claims to advance education. Education, in most respects, is a service that should be provided by the state and which might be alternatively provided by a non-government agency to those who are able to afford it, and choose to avail themselves of it. If you regard charity as a form of support provided to citizens who have a need that cannot be met by the state, or which the state is unable to provide even though it could be argued that it should, then it is difficult to see how education — at least normally understood school education — can be regarded as a charity.

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