

RELIGIOUS DYNAMICS IN CHINA AND NIGERIA: A COMPARATIVE EXAMINATION OF BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Ifeanyi Odinye & Chioma Anagor
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

Abstract

This comparative study explores the similarities and differences between Christianity and Buddhism, two prominent world religions. The research objectives were to identify the similarities and differences between the two faiths. A qualitative approach was employed, utilizing documentary sources from classical and modern texts, journals, articles, and online publications. The findings revealed striking similarities, particularly in their pursuit of peace, with Buddhism emphasizing compassion and Christianity advocating charity, truth, and loving others. Significant differences were also noted in morality, life, love, death, the afterlife, salvation, and teachings attributed to Jesus and Buddha. This study recommends further research comparing Christianity with other world religions, such as Hinduism and Taoism.

Introduction

Religions are organizations of people with regards to their beliefs and customs. In their entirety, religions are there to give mankind directions on how to live their lives in a manner that is pleasing before God and people. They help us find answers to questions that would otherwise be impossible to respond to; the greatest questions, in this case, are why we are here, our ultimate purpose in life and how we ought to behave towards each other (Kombe, 2015). It is pertinent to note that religion has been with man for thousands of years and has become a social institution. It is a common tie of society to build up the world peace and has therefore become a necessary aspect of human life as it regulates one's way of life.

Religion helps to unfold all that is best in man. It inspired him, guided him and took him to the light he has reached. According to Gargi (2020), religion is a mental quest which helps man to realize the infinite. This means that, through religion, people from different spheres of life are able to question and understand the essence of their existence. Therefore, unless these questions are answered, it would be rather difficult to find the true meaning of life. Similarly, the goal of every religion is man's universal thirst for peace and goodness. Man achieves this goal through many ways in which he expresses his beliefs and attitudes. No matter when or how man developed from the time he became man, his irresistible urge to worship has created and will continue to create endless forms of religious behaviour (Dopamu, 2000).

There are similarities and differences in how various religions handle the questions of their existence and some of them form the basis for the differences in the faiths, and considering the fact that each of the world religions embraces varying beliefs and practices, areas of interaction and co-operation are necessary for peaceful co-existence. Dopamu (2000) states that religion whether Islam, Christianity, Taoism, Buddhism or African Traditional Religion, remains a potent factor to reckon with in the scheme of things in the world. Each religion teaches its followers to focus on its own way of thinking and has different ideas about spiritual and other-worldly forces. Since religion is such an abstract topic, it is important to explore it further so that we, as a society, can have a broadened understanding of how the world works and be knowledgeable about what our experiences of life really are (Dopamu, 2000). One key concept is that the basic constructs of each religion can correlate with others in many ways. However, this research centers on two of the largest and most popular religious groups of our current time which are Christianity and Buddhism.

Buddhism is one of the most influential religion of the world that is generally known as a religion of peace that teaches and speaks about virtues such as non-violence, compassion, and 'The Golden Rule'; thus, Buddhist moral teaching emphasizes self-discipline, self-transformation, generosity, non-violence, and compassion (Damien, 2005). Buddhism as a religion offers arguably, similar answers to the questions posed by life. For example, for the first question of why are we here, explains that God created us with an intention to worship Him. According to Makransky (2011), the teachings of Buddhism talk of the final judgment that will befall the non-believers. Buddhism answers the question of the ultimate purpose of human being. The Buddha instructed his followers to multiply and fill the earth. Followers of Buddhism still have the perception that God created them to look after his creation. Finally, the last question of what is a human being and how they ought to behave towards one another is explained. Buddhist doctrines dictate that people were created in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, Buddhism shares some similarities with Christianity.

Christianity, on the other hand, centers on moral teaching which speaks about peace, reconciliation, forgiveness, and love. Thus, Christianity offers unique answers to the big question asked in life. The question of why we are

here in the world, for instance, is answered by the generation creation story. Christians believe that God made human beings to look after His creation. Christians also believe that God made them in His image because He loved them (Poitier, 2000). Christianity adequately provides answers to the second question of what becomes of us in the end. In this case, Christians are told of final judgment and eternal life to the righteous. The Christian religion also answers the last question of how human beings are supposed to behave towards one another. The Bible explains that love is the greatest commandment given by God and that they are to love one another as they love themselves. Contrary to common belief, Christianity does not support racism. Those who make these claims do so for the reason that the Bible does not explicitly condemn the practice of slavery, which is a result of racism. However, looking deeper into the Jesus' teachings, we get the impression that He was against any form of racism (Poitier, 2000).

It is pertinent to note that, Indeed, there are many striking similarities and differences between these two world religions (Christianity and Buddhism), especially when they speak about peace and war, understanding human being and human society and also topics that centers on good and evil. Certainly, also Christianity is known to be a religion that is concerned with peace, love, justice, promoting virtue, and avoidance of violence. The purpose of this research is to make a comparative study between Buddhism and Christianity; thus, the study sought to gather some similarities and differences between these two religions.

Statement of Problem

A host of peculiarities have been identified among the two most powerful religions of the world such as Christianity and Buddhism. While Christianity has their own belief systems, teachings or doctrines about life, the essence of human existence and a host of other variables, the Buddhism Chinese religion also have theirs. As we see in our daily life, in this modern era, we are facing various kinds of alarming problems, religions have their own perspectives in these problems of life. In such an attempt, Buddhism and Christianity religions are no exception. Although the concept of the beginning of the world, nature, God, and destruction found in Buddhism may differ from those found in Christianity, it is therefore interesting to identify the similarities and differences between these two world religions.

However, the importance of both religious beliefs cannot be overemphasized. Even though many researches have been conducted on Buddhist and Christian religious beliefs, and the relevant literature confined to the experiences and challenges of these religious beliefs. Little research is done on similarities and differences between Buddhism and Christianity. Hence, it is on this backdrop that this present study is interested to fill a gap in knowledge by exploring: A Comparative Study of Buddhism and Christianity.

This research is useful and of immense benefit to students and the teachers of Chinese language too. The knowledge and detailed awareness of the belief systems and religious practices of Christianity and Buddhism will help them to accelerate the teaching-learning of the religious practices of the two most powerful religions of the world. The Christianity and Buddhism theologians will also benefit from the findings of this study, they would get to have an in-depth understanding of the historical account and cultural context of the advent of these religions and be able to review their relevance to contemporary societies.

Researchers and other stakeholders in Chinese education in Nigeria will be provided with inputs, materials, data, facts and ideas for other researches through the findings of this study. Lastly, the findings of this study will serve as a literature review and reference point for further related researches.

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

The term conceptual framework is an analytical tool used to make conceptual distinctions and organize ideas. It is useful as an organizing device in empirical studies. It presents convictions that help people understand the writer's concepts. The concepts or ideas are employed to identify the problem of the research in order to tactically explore and present ideas. Thus, the concepts in this study have been put together to build an integrated conceptual framework. Below are concepts that pertains to the study.

The Concept of Religion

Religion is a social phenomenon that centers on humans' relationship with God. According to Tylor (1993), religion is the belief in spiritual beings. This is to say that religion is people's belief system on God who is seen as a spiritual being that cannot be seen with mortal eyes. Similarly, Max (1997) defines religion as a mental faculty or disposition which enables man to apprehend the infinite. Even though man cannot see the infinite being, through religion and its associated practices, man is able to appreciate spiritual beings that made human existence on earth possible. Thus, religion is an important practice as long as spiritual beings and physical being (humans) are concerned.

Religion can also be seen as the worship of spiritual beings from a sense of need. Similarly, Galloway (1914) states that, religion is man's faith in a power beyond himself whereby he seeks to satisfy emotional needs and gain stability in life, and which he expresses in acts of worship and service. According to this definition, religion is religious consciousness of human being. This definition states the cognitive and affective level of human mind. This means that religion is an avenue through which humans communicate with spiritual beings about their needs. Religion is also an avenue through which humans worship and reverence the spiritual beings for mediating in human affairs and meeting the needs of man. It is therefore pertinent to note that, this conceptualization of religion happens in the mind, this is because humans cannot see these spiritual being, but believe in them.

In religion, God is seen as the most supreme spiritual being. According to Unamuno (2005), God is an idea that avails people to universalize all the existence and to conceive their own lives. This is to say that, God penetrates the sensible world and unites it with the transcendent, absolute one through love; hence, love can be seen as the basis for peoples' relationships (Unamuno, 2005). In essence, religion is built on love, this is because, for humans to appreciate and reverence God who is a spiritual being, they must have love for him. Therefore, the doctrine of religion is built on love.

Furthermore, religion describes one's beliefs and practices concerning the world around us and, most importantly, the world beyond us. It focuses on defining the most common and yet most difficult questions about life; systems have been created to provide clarity to these questions (Eliade, 1984). According to Eliade(1984), these systems refer to individual religions and they encompass the intricacies of human behavior and the social institutions which have been developed to give understanding and organization to the world around us.

Religious belief structures can be classified by their celebrations, degradations, and theories which each have a direct link to the culture from which they originated (Partridge, 2005). According to Crawford (2002), they can also be known to bind a worshipper to the deity by the observance if cultic ceremonies and acts of devotion. This shows that a significant relationship occurs between the culture of the people involved and the principal pieces and leaders of each religion. There are many religions in the world, but the focus of this research is on Christianity and Buddhism.

The Concept of Christianity

Christianity is one of the powerful religions of the world. In Christianity, an individual may achieve the highest state of unity with God in many ways – through the light, symbolic and figurative comprehension of the sacred world, through asceticism and monasticism, as well as through apophatic and cataphatic theology (Olga, 2020). However, the basis of all these means is the unifying idea of deification or the perception of the best Divine qualities that lead to salvation and spiritual immortality. Thus Christianity is based on belief in the son of God and salvation through the name of the son of God.

According to Stanciene (2018), Christian theologians have developed holistic moral doctrines using the philosophical categorical apparatus, developed mainly by the thinkers of antiquity and the early middle Ages. Compassion, love for man and God, mercy, pity, understanding, repentance, and prayer are among the fundamental concepts of Christianity (Stanciene, 2018). Yet, the concepts of love and compassion still dominate in these religious systems and define the relationships between an individual and God. The philosophical and religious description of the relationships between an individual and God regularly produces the need for Christians to develop moral relationship with God who is regarded as a supreme being.

The existence of God belongs to the core assumptions of any Christian worldview. If God does not exist, then there is no point in being a Christian. Second, God became human in Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified and resurrected from the dead. If Jesus Christ did not exit, then there is no point in being a Christian, even if God exists (Göcke, 2017). Third, there is life after death and each one of us will be judged according to the moral value of the life one has led (Hebrews, 9:27).

Fourth, the plausibility of the idea that the way we lead our lives and build ourselves as persons with a particular character has an impact on our life after death presupposes that there are objective moral truths according to which we should direct our lives (Göcke, 2017). On Christian faith, the Decalogue (Exodus, 20: 1–17 and Deuteronomy 5: 4–21) and the Golden Rule (Matthew 7: 12) express some of the most fundamental objective moral truths that impose normative constraints on how we should behave. If any of the aforementioned assumptions of a Christian worldview can be shown to be false, then there is no point in being a Christian.

The Concept of Buddhism

Buddhism is another powerful religion of the world. According to Fronsall (2005), Buddhism is a religion and philosophy founded by Gautama, the Buddha, and developed by the subsequent masters throughout its history. The main focus of Buddhism is the human mind, which is stated in the Dhamapada: All experience is preceded by mind, led by mind, made by mind (Fronsall, 2005).

Further, the Surangama Sutra states, The Tathagata has always said that all phenomena are manifestations of the mind and that all causes and effects including (all things from) the world to its dust, take shape because of the mind (Luk, 2001). These statements do not mean there are no objects outside our minds. Rather, they signify that the qualities of things come into existence after the mind, are dependent upon mind and are made up of mind (Lai, 1977). Therefore, on a Buddhist view, the state of the world around us is a reflection of the condition of our mind (Ramanan, 1978).

The main aim of Buddhism is to examine how human mind becomes a root cause of suffering and how it can be addressed (Tanabe, 2016). Therefore, Buddhism centers on the concept of inner peace. Put different, Tanabe (2016) states that inner peace means an awakening to an ultimate inseparability between our own well-being and happiness and that of others, which inspires us to make an effort to gratify the basic needs of all and promote our freedom and justice and that of others equally.

As the condition of our mind frames the state of the reality, the root cause of suffering or problems facing us according to Buddhism religion is also attributed to our mind, as stated in the Dhamapada: Speak or act with a corrupted mind, and suffering follows as the wagon wheel follows the hoof of the ox (Fronsall, 2005). However, when we overcome the cause of suffering, we can achieve inner serenity and well-being: Speak or act with a peaceful mind, and happiness follows like a never-departing shadow (Fronsall, 2005).

Critical reflection on how mind becomes the root cause of suffering and contemplation and practice of the way to resolve it constitute the core of Buddhism (Matsuo, 1981). The Four Noble Truths Doctrine assumes the central role in understanding and addressing human suffering in line with the dynamics of the human mind.

Christian Perception of Good and Evil

A predominantly popular religion in today's world is called Christianity. This system is comprised of an acceptance, belief, and worship of the Holy Bible. It describes the history of God, a divine and omnipresent being, His people's lives, and Jesus Christ, who was the Son of God. The story of how Jesus revealed God to the human race by sacrificing himself on a cross to relieve His people of their sins is also in this book. The Bible is viewed as a testament from God that comes through spiritual channels, whom were its physical authors (Eliade et al, 1991). It is split into two major pieces, those being the Old Testament, which focuses on revealing God's acts, mind, and will, and the New Testament, which hones in on Jesus Christ and his life and teachings.

According to Eliade et al (1991), the concepts of "good and evil" are strewn throughout the entire Bible but a main reference of definition is witnessed in the Old Testament where the Ten Commandments are held. These phrases were messages from God that were inscribed into stone and given to Moses, a prophet. They gave instructions to his people to deem what the moral views of a diligent, obedient Christian should be. God tells his followers to honor their parents and outlines the boundaries that one "shall not" cross. These include killing another, committing adultery, stealing, bearing false witness against another, or coveting.

God punishes his followers that go against these rules that he has set. An example of this occurs in the Bible when Cain killed Abel. God chastised Cain and said, "Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth." (New International Version, 2012) (Genesis 4:11, 12)

Other recordings of God's wishes and expectations of his followers, are presented throughout the Scripture especially in the form of Jesus' teachings and through today's leaders of the religion, such as the Pope, a priest, or a pastor. Pope Paul VI (2007) reiterates God's command to not kill by saying, "The life of man is sacred; no one may dare offend it." If one follows the moral standards that God has declared, they are viewed as being "good" and in turn, closer to the Lord. God rewards those who do what he says. When Job's belongings, hard work, and family were destroyed, God was testing him. Finally, when God saw that Job would not sin He, "restored his fortunes and gave him twice as much as he had before." (New International Version, Job 42:10)

In addition, there are concepts of an entity named Satan, who was a “fallen angel” and became opposed to God and His teachings. He rules the realm of Hell which is the place that is said that people will descend to if they have sinned or if they go against God’s law or these rules. To have sinned is to have committed an act of evil in the eyes of God or to go against his word. Christian followers know this to be true from the verse from (Romans 3:20), “Therefore no one will be declared righteous in His sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.”

It is therefore pertinent to note from the researcher’s perspective that, Christianity revolves around pleasing God and acting in whatever way that He believes is commendable. When a Christian does “good” by following God’s wishes, they believe they will receive salvation from Jesus Christ and go to Heaven. However, when a Christian goes against what God wants, they are doing “bad” by Him and are committing sins. Even a non-Christian who does not believe in His word is deemed a sinner as well. Those who have sinned and have not confessed their sins, have been deemed to go to Hell. Essentially, the Christian view of morality is set up around salvation and God’s word.

Buddhist Perception of Good and Evil

Another popular and quite unique religion that has a historical presence in our world is called Buddhism. Buddhism focuses on teaching its followers how to recognize “the truth” of life so that they are able to overcome “dukkha”, or pain and suffering (Partridge, 2005). The primary goal of a Buddhist is to become enlightened and to follow the path necessary to reach this spiritual level. Having sexual desire, ill will, sloth, anxiety, anger, or jealousy are behaviors that lead to this negative state, or an unskilled place that is not conducive to a Buddhist’s goal of reaching nirvana; both of these ideas relate significantly with the teachings of the Buddha (Partridge, 2005).

The elements that construct the concept of being in alignment with the Buddhist path include having the “right” view, resolve, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and concentration or meditation. These principles can be summarized by a quote from the Dhammapada, V. 183, the avoidance of evil, the undertaking of good, the cleansing of one’s mind; this is the teaching of the awakened ones (Partridge, 2005).

In order to incorporate this core mindset into their lives and to, therefore, avoid what the Dharma recognizes as evil, most Buddhists deem a certain five rules to be the centerpieces of their daily living. Abstinence from “harming any living thing”, from “taking what is not given”, from “sexual misconduct”, from “false speech”, and from “anything that clouds or intoxicates the mind”, are these five precepts (Partridge, 2005). However, even with diligent practice of the Eightfold Path and perseverance towards the goal of Enlightenment, one typically does not reach this stage in one lifetime.

Buddhists believe in reincarnation of a being into five different realms. These include the hells, the animal world, the realm of the hungry ghosts, the realm of humans, and the realm of the gods (Partridge, 2005) Constant reincarnation occurs until, finally, a being surpasses all of these realms and attains nirvana, or a state free of all dukkha. This place of liberation can only be reached by being “right” and following a specific moral path of consciously choosing good over evil or kusala over akusala.

The Buddhist Understanding of the Human Being and the Human Society

A famous saying goes, all living beings have the Buddha nature and can become Buddhas. Meaning to say, everyone can attain Buddha-hood if he/she tries to follow the paths of Buddha; different Buddhist classics give different explanations from different angles about the way of life; for instance: the wisdom and enlightenment of the Four Noble Truths can be seen as the goal of life (Lanfu, 2015). All that we are, is the result of what he has thought; it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thought, says Buddha (Allen, 2008).

The way people are formed and behave follows according to their thoughts, what is inside in their heart. Therefore, Buddhism offers many approaches and methods of practice, focusing on one’s own mind, the arousal of the thought, cultivating the mind, realization of heart to Bodhicitta (Lanfu, 2015).

The understanding of beings in Buddhism includes also all other life forms and even inanimate matter. Beings that have feelings and consciousnesses are called sentient beings while the rest are called insentient beings. Insentient beings make the physical environment of sentient beings, the natural world, although they do not have consciousness and feelings, they are produced and extinguished by nature. Furthermore, they have internal causes and follow general principles regarding their movement and change (Lanfu, 2015). All living beings and the inanimate nature go always together harmoniously in order to fulfill the needs of each being.

According to Buddhism, a human being belongs to the larger world of sentient existing beings. One person cannot be alone as the saying goes, “No man is an island”(Sallie, 1991). In this sense, a human being is ontologically different with regard to other existent beings.

Buddhism understands the human being in two dimensions, namely in an existential dimension and an ontological-metaphysical dimension. The existential dimension means that humans are beings whose nature is to transform themselves, to undergo a radical self-transformation away from the deluded mode of being towards the enlightened mode; the ontological nature of a human being means that a human person does not exist in any way separated from the world (Sallie, 1991).

One of the most important concepts for understanding the human being is *anattā* (Pali) or *anātman* (Sanskrit), not-Self. This is the central dimension of ‘seeing things the way they really are’. The idea of not-Self does not deny that each person has an individual history and character, but it emphasizes that these are compounds of universal factors (Harvey, 2000). For instance: all sufferings are the same.

The goal of Buddhism is to end suffering, to overcome it by dissolving oneself ultimately in Nirvana. For Michael Carrithers, the ‘Self’, here is an eternal, perfectly unified, seamless whole, self-identical, beyond phenomenal appearances and unanalyzable (Carrithers, 2001). It seems for some researcher, that in Buddhism one can have a self, but not an eternal Self, like in the understanding of Christianity (soul).

According to Buddhism, in fact, there is indeed no eternal Self, and that is the path the Buddha eventually took. However, the Self exists, but is not to be attained by yogic methods. Nevertheless, yogic methods can lead to the enlightenment by self-mortification and extreme asceticism (Carrithers, 2001). The human person and the society are interrelated. Whatever a human being does, bad or good, will always have an effect on people and the society.

Christian Understanding of Human Being and Society

In Christianity, human beings are created by God. “So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (Gen 1:27). Creation means that human beings are personally related to God and called by Him in a unique way. God did not create human beings like other creatures but He created them with a special unique dignity and responsibility. Ps 8:5 says, “Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor.”

In the Christian perspective, to be a human being, created in God’s own image, is to live in fellowship with God, to have a good relationship with our fellow human beings, with ourselves, with nature, and to love and to care for all (Shirley, 1994). This is one of the reasons that Jesus says the two greatest commandments are to love God and to love our neighbor as ourselves (Mk. 12:29-31). These two commandments are inseparable, which means that one cannot be fulfilled without the other.

In fact, love is one of the basic teachings of Christianity, (Shirley, 1994) and “God is love” (1 John 4:8). God created human beings with the responsibility to be good stewards for all creatures and of all resources, as the teaching of the Church expresses: In the beginning God entrusted the earth and its resources to the common stewardship of mankind to take care of them, master them by labor, and enjoy their fruits. The goods of creation are destined for the whole human race.

However, the earth is divided up among men to assure the security of their lives, endangered by poverty and threatened by violence. The appropriation of property is legitimate for guaranteeing the freedom and dignity of persons and for helping each of them to meet his basic needs and the needs of those in his charge. It should allow for a natural solidarity to develop between men (John II, 1992).

Human beings are social by nature. The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church states that the human person is essentially a social being because God, who created humanity, willed it so (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 2004). As a social being, relationships are constitutive between people and other beings in various ways.

A human being is the only being that is capable of recognizing one’s own needs and to live in communion with other fellow human beings in relationship and love. For instance: when human being destroys the environment, all creatures are affected by it. Human beings are gifted to have the capacities of loving, reflecting on their own lives and they have the capacity of transcending both time and place by creating culture. Moreover, the purpose of a human being according to Christianity is to love and to be loved (Meyer, 1981).

Theoretical Framework: Functionalism Theory

The functionalist perspective is based largely on the works of Herbert Spencer, Emile Durkheim, Talcott Parsons, and Robert Merton (Mooney et al., 2007). The thesis of functionalism lies in the philosophy of positivism. This is to say that functionalism is a theory that focuses on the functions performed in society by social structures such as institutions, hierarchies, and norms. Within this theory, function refers to the extent to which a given activity promotes or interferes with the maintenance of a system.

According to Durkheim (1895), functionalism is a social phenomenon in which the efficient cause which produces it and the function it fulfills must be investigated separately. The first component of the sociological explanation of functionalism is the 'causal-historical explanation': to delineate the cause(s) which produce a phenomenon by examining historical sources rather than indulging in what Radcliffe-Brown calls 'conjectural history'. The second component is functional, i.e., the contribution that a part makes to society 'in the establishment of...general harmony' (Durkheim 1895).

The stream of functionalism that Durkheim developed is known as structural functionalism. He is one of the founders of structural functionalism. Whereas in functionalism the social structures are studied in terms of its functions for fulfilling the biological or individual needs, in structural functionalism, the functions of social structures for maintaining the social unity is concentrated more. For Durkheim (1895), society is an entity in itself, which consists of several constituent parts. Durkheim rejected reductionist arguments. He argued the society has its own identity different from its constituent parts. His focus was on studying the functions of social facts, social structures, cultural norms, and values, all of which he argued are external to the individual (Kenneth 1982).

According to Broce (1973), Durkheim stressed the importance of studying social phenomena as they function to maintain the solidarity of social structures. Thus functionalism theory is applicable to the study of religion because religion is a social phenomenon. In functionalism theory, religion is seen as a social institution. Therefore, Functionalists analyze religion in terms of its functions or contributions that the religion makes for meeting the functional pre-requisites or basic needs of the society such as social solidarity, value consensus, harmony and integration between different parts of the society etc. According to them religion is functional and ensures the survival of the social system (Haralambos, 1981).

Functionalism theory is therefore adopted as the most suitable theoretical framework for this study on Christianity and Buddhism as two prominent religions in the world. This research therefore uses Functionalism theory to analyze Christianity and Buddhism religions as integrating forces in the society, as a way to show people's belongingness to a particular society. The study gives the people the feeling of having something in common with others in the society when it comes to their religious inclinations and practices.

Functionalism theory shows how people express their collective beliefs concerning their social commitment and solidarity to their religions (Christianity and Buddhism). Thus, for functionalists, any social phenomenal institution that serves these functions can be called religion (Fenn, 2003). Therefore, the researcher adopted a functionalist approach in a bid to conduct a comparative analysis of Christianity and Buddhism.

Empirical Studies

This section of the chapter two deals with the review of related literature or relevant scholarships to this study. Few researchers have been done on Christianity and Buddhism religions. These researches are conducted either by looking at already existing Literature. In these studies, the aim has been to consider the religious beliefs that characterize Christianity and Buddhism. However, this section seeks to identify, locate and evaluate the works and essays of different scholars concerning the topic under study. This helped to avoid duplicating previous studies and to expose the gap that is existing after previous studies which this study is aimed at filling for the advancement of knowledge. The review of relevant scholarships in this research paper are as follows.

Jeong-Kyu (2017) conducted a research on "The Pedagogy of Happiness and Death: From the Perspectives Buddhism and Christianity". The study aimed to review the pedagogy of happiness and death from the perspectives of Buddhism and Christianity. To discuss this study logically, three research questions were addressed. First, what are the concepts of happiness and death? Second, what is the relevance between happiness and death? Last, what are the meanings of happiness and death in the aspect of pedagogy? To defend the research questions, the author utilized a content analysis method with a cross cultural approach. As for the limitations of the study, happiness and death are focused on the lenses of Buddhism and Christianity, particularly the Suttanipata in the Buddhist Sutras, and the Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament.

The significance of this study was to provide the valuable resources and basic theories of happiness education for global education theorists and practitioners, finding meanings of happiness and death in the aspect of pedagogy in Christian and Buddhist religions. Based on the research results of this study, the author suggests that future higher education should strengthen death and happiness education. For future study, it is recommended that this study should be empirically undertaken to explore death and happiness issues in different cultures with quantitative or qualitative research methodology.

Finally, the researcher wishes that this paper would provide basic theories and valuable resources regarding happiness and death education for global education practitioners and theorist of Buddhism and Christianity. However, a major shortcoming of the research is that it failed to identify the similarities and differences between Buddhism and Christianity. It is this gap that this present study hopes to fill.

Michael (2018) also carried out a research on “Duncan Derrett’s Comparative Studies of Buddhism and Christianity”. The study aimed to compare Christianity and Buddhism using a content analysis and qualitative approach. The findings of the research showed that, the essence of the Christian religion is the centre dogma of Buddhism, the doctrine of the worthlessness of terrestrial life.

With this difference only, that Christianity dates that worthlessness from the transgression of our apple-eating forefathers. This modification implied the fiction of a *liberi arbitrii indifferentiae*: but it was required by the necessity of grafting the doctrine of Buddha upon the mythological dogmas of Judaism (Michael, 2018). The myth of the fall offered here the only basis for the insertion of the scion from the East Indian parent-tree. The study also failed to account for the similarities and differences between Christianity and Buddhism. This present study hopes to fill this gap.

Furthermore, Olga (2020) conducted a research on “Understanding of Human Being and Human Freedom in Christian and Islamic Cultural Traditions. The study is a comparative analysis of the philosophical and anthropological ideas inherent to Christianity and Islam. The researcher considers Christianity and Islam as cultural traditions sharing specific features since the early middle ages. The author argues that their philosophical conceptions of the human being’s relation to god brings these religions much closer together. On the basis of texts of the Greek-Byzantine church Fathers.

The study adopts a descriptive research design and a qualitative method of data analysis. The findings of the study traces the formation of the fundamental ideas of Christianity and as human freedom and divine predestination, deification and achievement of spiritual freedom, in particular, through the uncreated light. The author compares the concepts of eastern Christian church Fathers mostly with the postulates of the traditional theology of Islam (Kalam). The study failed to compare Christianity and Buddhism. This present study hopes to fill this gap.

Summary of Literature

The literature reviewed showed that, Christianity and Buddhism are world prominent religions that share distinct religious beliefs and practices. Also, most of the related studies reviewed share a common view on Christianity and Buddhism. The major areas of these studies are focused on the features of Christianity and Buddhism. However, these previous researches failed to conduct a comparative analysis of the two religions (Christianity and Buddhism). This is identified by the researchers as the missing gap in knowledge that previous literatures and essays failed to fill. However, this gap in knowledge instigated this present research a comparative study of Buddhism and Christianity.

Research Methodology

The researchers adopted a qualitative research method for the research. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe qualitative method as a multifaceted research method involving an interpretative and naturalistic approach to subject matter. A qualitative research approach was chosen as the methodology because this approach reinforces an understanding and interpretation of the subject matter and it is favourable for interpreting and giving in-depth insight into the similarities and differences between Christianity and Buddhism which is the major thrust of this research.

The instrument or method of data collection for this study comprised documentary materials such as books, magazines, internet sources and online journals. Thus, in this study, the data are gathered from various documentary sources including classical and modern sources from textbooks, E-library, journal articles including thesis documents, reports, internet publication and newspaper articles on perspectives of Christianity and Buddhism. These sources are analyzed to achieve the research objectives.

Method of Data Analysis

The researcher adopted a content analysis approach as the most suitable method of data analysis. Since the main purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of the similarities and differences that exist between Christian and Buddhist religions, the data gathered was analyzed in a bid to gain an in-depth insight into the similarities and differences between Christianity and Buddhism.

Data Presentation and Analysis

This section deals with the presentation and analysis of data on the similarities and differences that exist between Christianity and Buddhism. It is pertinent to note that, many religions have similar and contrasting thoughts on certain issues, such as life after death and issues of morality and ethics. Buddhism and Christianity are two religions known worldwide and these two religions are not considered to be very alike to each other because they were created in different parts of the world and at very different time periods. However, these two religions do have some similar thoughts on certain central ideas in both of the religions. While these two religions seem unrelated to each other, and there certainly are differences, there are some issues, such as morality, death, and the afterlife, where they have comparative view. Below are similarities and differences between the two religions under study (Christianity and Buddhism):

Similarities between Christianity and Buddhism

Christianity and Buddhism are two different religions that developed and spread at different times and different places. However, both religions share the following similarities.

- 1. Teachings on peace, love, justice, virtue, violence:** First and foremost, Buddhism generally is known as a religion of peace that teaches and speaks about virtues such as non-violence, compassion, and 'The Golden Rule'. Buddhist moral teaching emphasizes self-discipline, self-transformation, generosity, non-violence, and compassion (Damien, 2005). Similarly, also Christian moral teaching speaks about peace, reconciliation, forgiveness, and love. Indeed, these two religions are related with respect to teachings about peace and prevention of violence and war. Therefore, Buddhism and Christianity are both concerned with teachings pertaining to peace, love, justice, promoting virtue, and avoidance of violence.
- 2. Teachings on salvation and eternity:** Secondly, both of these religions are identified to have similar views when it comes to the issue of salvation and eternity in view. While "Heaven" in Christian religion seems to be a metaphysical place that the soul goes to after death, Nirvana in Buddhism religion seems to be a mental state that can be compared to heaven in that true peace is achieved there. Thus, the Ten Commandments in Christian religion and the Five Precepts in Buddhism religion share common beliefs about how to live a good and fulfilled life. The ultimate goal of both of these religions is therefore to show people how to live a good life in order to achieve true peace, this is a striking similarity between both religions.
- 3. Love as the bedrock of both religions:** It is also important to note that both Christian religion and the Buddhist faith are based on the principles of love. If Buddha and Jesus were to meet; obviously, they would not try and convert each other but rather shake hands and smile; the parallels between the two faiths are impressive (EduBirdie, 2023).
- 4. Ethic of reciprocity:** Both Christianity and Buddhism are related with respect to the ethic of reciprocity. This principle seems to be governing authority on interpersonal relationships; it defines how one should treat one another (Archibald, 2009). For example, Christianity is based on the golden rule that dictates that one should do unto others what he would wish to be done to him/her. Buddhism, on the other hand is also based on the notion of reciprocity. Thus, the notion of morality appear in both Christianity and Buddhism. Moral decadence in Christianity thus leads to judgment and punishment on the last day. Enforcement and adherence to the conditions of morality is thus strict when compared to Buddhism (Netland and Yandell, 2009).
- 5. Emphasis on altruism and service of others:** Gautama Buddha was reported to have lived about 600 or 500 before Christ was born. Buddha was born in Nepal, India while Jesus was born in Bethlehem, which is currently located in Palestine. Both Jesus and Buddha emphasize on altruism and always insisted in service of others. They emphasized the need for giving than receiving and both believed in love as the only tool of defeating hatred. Both teachings contained the need not to judge others ((Talim, Jeffrey and Anant, 2015).
- 6. Both Buddha and Christ led a life of poverty.** It is also important to note that both Jesus, the founder of Christianity and Buddha, the founder of Buddhism had poor upbringings and thus led lives of poverty. Both wandered about without a home or a family. They lived like the lilies of the field, and preached to all people, to the rich and poor alike, without distinction of class, the gospel of the deliverance from evil.
- 7. Both Buddha and Christ were exalted at birth:** Furthermore, both Buddha and Christ, according to the canonical books of their respective religions were hailed soon after their birth, as the saviours of the world, by celestial spirits, by a religious prophet, and by sages. In the Christian Gospel, aged women are also mentioned, who, like Anna, bless the baby (Beal, 1998).
- 8. Performance of miracles:** The founders of both religions also performed miracles. Of both religions, we read that they walked on the water. The origin of the Buddhist legend can be traced to the allegorical expression

of crossing the stream of worldliness (samsara) and reaching the other side, which is the shore of celestial rest (Nirvana) (Hing, 1998). Also, at a marriage-feast, both Buddha and Christ miraculously helped the host to entertain his guests. In Buddha's presence, as we are told in the story of the marriage-feast at Jambunada, a small supply of food proves over and over sufficient for a great number of guests. Same is applicable to Jesus turning water into wine, at the marriage at Cana (Hing, 1998).

9. Teaching with the use of parables and pithy aphorisms: Another striking similarity between Christianity and Buddhism is that, both Buddha and Christ were powerful preachers, who were fond of using parables, and concentrating their teachings in pithy aphorisms, which were both impressive and easily remembered (Ashvaghosha, 2004). Both were keen thinkers, and invincible in controversies, as a rule, bringing the debate to a climax by presenting a dilemma, and always pressing the moral application of their theories. Both exercised an extraordinary influence; they looked into the hearts of men and swayed the minds through purity of motive and the authoritative earnestness of their personality. Both objected to the traditional method of clinging to the letter of religious belief which is satisfied with rituals and prayers, and both substituted for it the spirit of religious devotion and moral conduct (Ashvaghosha, 2004).

10. Similarity with respect to birth: Another obvious similarity between Christianity and Buddhism is with respect to the birth narratives of Christ, the founding father of Christian religion and Buddha, the founding father of Buddhism religion. Both figures were born of a Virgin (one conceived by the grace of God and one by the stroke of an elephant). When both were born, it was said that there would be a bright star shining in the east (in Buddhist accounts it was called the "flower-star") (Hernandez, 2013).

11. Similarities between Christian and Buddhist approaches to life's big questions: Evident in both religions is the belief that God made mankind in his image and likeness. In both religions, there is the belief that God had the intention to make human beings and that we were not created out of favour (BBC). God wanted someone to assist Him by taking care of his creation. Christianity teaches that God wanted mankind to multiply and fill the world and so does the Buddhist religion (Makransky, 2011).

12. Repercussion for disobedience: In the two religions, the final judgment is focused on punishing the disobedient. In Christian teachings, eternal life is promised to the faithful followers and this is also a promise in Buddhism. Finally, the last question of how human beings should behave towards each other is the same in both religions. They are encouraged to love and support each other as brothers and sisters (Makransky, 2011)

Differences between Christianity and Buddhism

Asides from the similarities between Christianity and Buddhism, there also exists a host of differences between Christianity and Buddhism. Below are the differences between the two religions:

1. Teachings on peace and love: While Buddhism is a path from inner peace to external peace, Christianity is a path from personal love, justice, and truth to peace (Jung, 2007). The Buddhist starts to work for peace by "being himself peaceful," impartial and no adversarial, whereas Christians seek to achieve peace through charitable work and promotion of justice, with the latter often entailing a preferential and confrontational attitude (Jung, 2007). It is therefore pertinent to note that Christianity and Buddhism have different paths to the actualization of peace and love and both religions see the concepts of peace and love in their own different ways.

2. Teaching on the path to compassion and justice: The path of compassion is important in order to attain peace in Buddhism while Christianity is promoting love and justice and goes from justice to peace though both of them talk about compassion and justice. In theory, Buddhists are mainly concerned about compassion to respond to humankind suffering and to be compassionate to all living beings impartially and by not discriminating between victims and victimizers (Jung, 2007). Furthermore, the path of compassion does not leave any room for hatred of the victimizers believing that "some people do not deserve a wish of love, that they are only to be hated, is the belief that Hitler embraced and took to its extreme. We do not confront someone by joining him (Jung, 2007).

3. Self/Other: Buddhism and Christianity also share contrasting opinions on the issue of self and others. Buddhists believe that in serving one's self, one can serve others, focusing on the personal path to enlightenment, and practicing loving-kindness, will lead to social transformation and world peace. While, Christians are taught to serve others in order to find and serve the self, believing that by following Jesus' instructions and entering the personal relationship with God, the kingdom of God will come, and the world will be at peace (Bennett, 2015).

4. Self-liberation (Buddhism) Versus External Salvation (Christianity): One of the differences between Buddhism and Christianity is between self-liberation (in Buddhism) and external salvation (in Christianity). Most of the teachings in Buddhism lead to self-liberation such as no self, delusion as the root of the evil, and detachment. Anything that one wants to attain, it has to start with oneself through meditation, prayers, and fasting until a person transforms himself/herself to the stage of becoming an enlightened one (Caldecott, 2009). However, Christians believe that a person needs a help from outside (grace) in order to attain the ultimate goal. For instance: Jesus saved people from sins with God's help and grace. A Christian receives graces through the Sacraments, prayer etc. Christians find fulfillment and peace in the personal encounter with a loving God.

5. Pity and Ending Suffering Versus Love and Giving Meaning to Suffering: While Buddhism regards suffering as an evil that one must overcome. Christianity, on the other hand see it as a just cause that every believer

must pass through in order to obtain salvation; thus, a believer must suffer persecution for righteousness sake. For instance: Jesus came into the world in order to experience the suffering of human being. His purpose was to fill and heal everything between God and human being with his presence. For Buddhism, since suffering is regarded as the result of ignorance and craving, an 'enlightened one' does not suffer any more. What Christians mean by love seems also to differ radically from what Buddhists mean by pity and compassion. For the Buddhists, compassion is the response that comes from our heart to the suffering of others that motivates a desire to help. The Buddhists are taught there is ultimately no 'self' to love as well as others. Paul Williams even argues that strictly speaking there is no 'compassion' in Buddhism (Caldecott, 2009).

6. Teaching of the Ten Commandments and the Four Noble Truths: While Christianity is based on the teachings of Jesus Christ, who is considered to be the Savior of the world in the religion, Buddhism is based on the Four Noble Truths.

7. Peacefulness, loving kindness and wisdom (Buddhism) versus faith in the Messiah (Christianity): Another striking difference between Christianity and Buddhism is that, while the practices and principles of Buddhism are founded on such virtues as peacefulness, loving kindness and wisdom; among the fundamental Buddhist's beliefs is their conviction and belief that a happy life full of fortunes is actually possible to attain by all humanity irrespective of one's age, race, gender or social status. However, the fundamental beliefs in Christianity are purely founded on one's faith in the Messiah and one's conviction in Him as the savior. A happy life is purely the reserve of those who walk in the ways of righteousness and holiness. Fortune is not existent according to the biblical principles (Netland and Yandell, 2009). According to the Christian doctrine, the only fortunate people are those whose names have been written in the book of life having overcome the world of sin by believing in the only son of God, Christ the Messiah. Thus, in Christianity a happy life is considered a blessing from God that one enjoys when he/she lives a righteous life. Thus in this, Christianity remains incompatible with Buddhism (Netland and Yandell, 2009).

8. Coolness and tolerance (Buddhism) Versus Punishment for Sin (Christianity). It is also pertinent to note that, while Buddhism is founded on the principles of coolness and tolerance and that there exists certain truths in Buddhist doctrines, it is not compatible with the truths enshrined in Christianity (Archibald, 2009). This is because the Buddhist do not believe that God exists, but Christians believe in the existence of an almighty God who created the universe and supersedes over the earth. For this reason, Buddhists do not believe in punishment for sin on the judgment day, but rather in coolness and tolerance for sin. However, Christianity assert that God punishes all injustice and sin because He is righteous and holy. Punishment and reward that is not outlined in Buddhism exists in Christianity and these are associated with judgment and accountability for one's sins (Netland and Yandell, 2009).

9. Worship of Creation (Buddhism) Versus Worship of Creator (Christianity): Buddhism is founded on faith where creation and not the creator are worshiped (Archibald, 2009). Contrary to this, Christianity believes that only the creator (God) can be worshipped and not the creation (humans). Whereas Buddhists believe that one can save himself, Christianity refutes this on the basis that one can never save himself but only God can save humans.

10. Difference in mode of purification: Because Buddhism does not recognize sin, the concept of the savior is obviously lacking. Even though those practicing Buddhism seek refuge from Buddha, they do not believe that such refuge in Buddha makes one pure (Archibald, 2009). In Christianity however, the only way to salvation and for purification is through believing Jesus and accepting Him in one's life for eternal life. The relationship that exists between Buddha and the followers of Buddhism can be likened to that of a student and a teacher. This implies that Buddha is thus not an incarnation of God as some Hindu followers assert, but in Christianity, Jesus is the incarnation of God Himself (Netland and Yandell, 2009). Therefore while Buddhists try to purify themselves through meditations, giving up of worldly materials, Christianity maintains that all these can never make one right or save one (Netland and Yandell, 2009).

11. Difference in notion of human destiny: In treating the issue of human destiny, Buddhism believes in reincarnation which means that man returns back to life after death and starts another life. Archibald, (2009) cites that this cycle of birth and re-birth thus continue until one is eventually set free. However, Christianity have a contrary belief. Thus, in Christianity, it is believed and predestined that one dies physically once and after this death comes judgment. After judgment has been passed, there is life after death. This belief is therefore lacking in Buddhist religion.

12. Difference in the understanding of God: Buddhists devotedly worship their gods although none of these gods is a true god. Christianity on its part however, has a different understanding of God. So whereas Buddhism is polytheistic, Christianity believes in one sole supreme God (Netland and Yandell, 2009). According to the Buddhist belief, one can attain the same level as Buddha once they reach a state of enlightenment. It is therefore crystal clear that the beliefs and practices of Buddhism are full of pessimism where one does not have any hope of eternal life with God after death, while Christianity is founded on the principles of optimism where there is believe with spending eternity with God hereafter. While Buddhists consider life as full of distress, Christian is always optimistic and devotes itself to the service of humanity.

13. Belief with respect to food and eating: The incompatibility between Christianity and Buddhism is further postulated in the beliefs and practices about food and eating. On this, the doctrines of Buddhism appear to be too strict while Christianity is more liberal (Netland and Yandell, 2009). In Buddhism, one is strictly required to be a vegetarian. Christianity presents all types of food as having been sanctified and fit for human consumption. Eating of chicken or eggs is believed to have the power to make one behave like a chicken. Further, eating of such creatures is considered to make one subject to retribution in the life to come. In this therefore Christianity appears superior to Buddhism as it gives one liberty to use all the creations for his needs (Archibald, 2009). In fact man was given complete authority and dominion over all the creation in the beginning of God's creation.

14. Notion on dominion over death (Christianity) versus non-dominion over death (Buddhism). Whereas both religions are centered behind some historical figures; Jesus and Buddha, only Jesus is presented to have conquered death (Netland and Yandell, 2009). This is contrary to the Buddhist discussions of cycles of birth and re-birth where it is believed that the central figure did not conquer death but is an image. It is only through Christ that one is cleansed of sin and purified. Good deeds as presented in Buddhism does not make one right with God. In Buddhism, atonement of sin is believed to come when one adheres to karma that is impersonal and amoral. Thus, whether one sins or remains righteous, karma is not offended because karma is not a person. Only God reconciles one to Himself through the blood of Jesus who was crucified for the atonement of sins of those who believe in Him. The way to eternal life is to believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins and not being morally upright (Archibald, 2009).

15. Conclusively, Buddhism and Christianity are two distinct religions with beliefs that are peculiar to each other: Generally, the beliefs and practices in Christianity are informed and treasured because compliance to the doctrines makes one right with God. Furthermore, the principles of Christianity are supported and easy to explore and follow contrary to those in Buddhism. A key difference between the two is how Buddha taught followers to lose one's self to receive Nirvana while Jesus encouraged his people to lose one's self in order to receive an everlasting life (Talim, Jeffrey and Anant, 2007).

Summary of Findings

This research focused on a comparative study of two prominent religions of the world (Christianity and Buddhism). In the course of analysis, it was deduced that there abound striking similarities and differences between the two religions under study:

Regarding the teaching of peace in Buddhism is a result of self-transformation from all the delusion of the world and being detached from the world. Being peaceful individually will lead to the social peace for others. Thus, killing a living being is not allowed according to Buddha. This is also applicable in Christian religion where emphasis is on following the saviour, Jesus Christ to actualize peace. Thus, peace in Christianity is a gift from God. Jesus Christ is the reality and model for nonviolence and peace for Christians. To be peace-makers, Christians are called to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ who shows nonviolence on the cross by dying for all.

Moreover, a striking similarity between the two religions is that both of them try to attain peace by different ways but they never contradict each other. Buddhism uses the path of compassion while Christianity uses the way to work for charity, truth and loving others which includes the care for justice to attain lasting peace. However, besides from doctrine on peace and violence, many other similarities and differences were explored with respect to morality, life, love, death, the afterlife, salvation, teachings with regards to the founding fathers of both religions (Jesus and Buddha) etc.

Conclusion

The roles of the religions under study (Christianity and Buddhism) assist in enabling followers know the main reasons why they are on earth. From the comparative study of the dictates of both religions, people have a clear understanding of the primary roles and how they should relate with one another. Secondly, the study has enabled the understanding of the religions better. It is also clear that even though the two religions are different, they find some similarities in answering the big questions in life. The comparative study also assists in making people understand that they have a reason to assist and be there for one another.

In conclusion, through this investigation or comparative study of the two contrasting religions, Christianity and Buddhism, a large range of similarities manifest, contrary to what one could expect to discover. The teachings with respect to laws, ethical stances and a variety of other aspects appear to be in concord. Both Jesus Christ and Buddha, presented illustrations of morality which are related to the notion of love for others. Both Buddhism and Christianity stipulates suffering for people who do not adhere to the ethical rules and guidelines of their faith. Both faiths have love for humanity. Thus, by comparing Christianity and Buddhism, one finds that both faiths

offer their followers a comprehensive list of moral directives namely: the Five Precepts for Buddhism and the Ten Commandments and Christ's 'new commandment' of agape, for Christianity.

Recommendations

The researchers, after a thorough investigation, therefore recommends or suggests that, since a substantial research have been carried out on comparison between Christianity and Buddhism, further researches should be conducted in a bid to incorporate a comparison of Christianity and other religions of the world such as Hinduism and Taoism etc.

References

- Allen, J. (2008). *The Path to Prosperity*. Waiheke Island: Floating Press.
- Ashvaghosha, F (2004). Life of Buddha, verses 39-40. *Sacred Books of the East, (afterwards cited as S. B. of E.)* vol. 19, pp. 1-20.
- Beal, R (1998). Romantic History of Buddha, *Journal of Religion Studies*, 2, 4, pp. 10.
- Bennett, J (2015) *Religion War and Peace*. <http://www.julietbennett.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/Buddhism-and-Christianity.pdf> (accessed on May 27, 2015).
- Broce, G. (1973). *History of Anthropology*. Burgess Publishing Company: Minneapolis
- Caldecott, S (2009). *Catholics and Other Religions: Introducing Interfaith Dialogue*. London: CTS Publications.
- Carrithers, M. (2001). *Buddha: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Crawford, L. (2002). *Six ideas, interpersonal conflict, and philosophical Toism*. In G. M. Chen & R. Ma (Eds.), Chinese conflict management and resolution (pp. 117-126). Westport, CT: Ablex.
- Damien, K. (2005). *Buddhist Ethics: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Dopamu, P. (2000). *Esu: The invisible Foe of Man*, Ijebu Ode: Shebotimo Publications.
- Gargi, M. (2020). *The Concept of Religion*. MacMillan, London.
- Kombe, G. (2015). Comparing Christianity and Buddhism Research Paper. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 33(3): 409-421.
- Makransky, J. (2011). Thoughts on Why, How, and What Buddhists Can Learn from Christian Theologians. *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, 31(1):119-133.
- Poitier, S. (2000). *The Measure of a Man*. New York: Harper San Francisco.
- Denzin, N.K and Lincoln, Y.S. (2005). Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research. *Handbook of Qualitative Research, 3rd Edition, Sage, Thousand Oaks*, 1-32.
- Durkheim, E. (1895). *Durkheim and Functionalism*. University Press: Cambridge.
- Eliade, M. (1984). *A History of Religious Ideas*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- Eliade, M., Ioan, P., and Hillary, W. (1991). *The Eliade Guide to World Religions*. San Francisco: HarperSan Francisco. Print.
- Fenn, R. (2003). *Blackwell Companion to Sociology of Religion*. Durkhdm and Functkmllsm Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Oxford.
- Fronsdal, G. (2005). *The Dhammapada: A New Translation of the Buddhist Classic with Annotations*. Boston: Shambala.
- Galloway, G. (1914). *The Philosophy of Religion*. T. and T. Clark, London.
- Göcke, B. (2017). The Existence of Evil in Christian and Naturalistic Worldviews. *Synthesis Philosophica*, 63(1): 5–20.
- Haralambos, M. (1981). *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*. Oxford University Press: New Delhi.
- Harvey, P. (2000). *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics: Foundations, Values and Issues*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Jeong-Kyu, L. (2017). The Pedagogy of Happiness and Death: From the Perspectives of Buddhism and Christianity. *Two Separate Factors, Death Studies*, 29 (10): 949-958.
- John, P. II. (1992). *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The Vatican City.
- Kenneth, S. (1978). *The Stream of Consciousness: Scientific Investigations into the Flow of Human Experience*. Chichester: Wiley.
- Lai, W. (1977). The Meaning of "Mind-Only" (Wei-Hsin): An Analysis of a Sinitic Mahayana Phenomenon. *Philosophy East and West*, 27(1), 65-83.
- Lanfu, L (2015). The Influence of the Buddhist View of Life on Universal Value in Modern Society. *Humanities International Complete, EBSCOhost*, 13, (1): 271-281.
- Luk, C. (2001). *The Surangama Sutra*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal.
- Matsuo, H. (1981). *The Logic of Unity: The Discovery of Zero and Emptiness in Prajnaparamita Thought*. Translated by Inada Kenneth. Tokyo: Hokuju Shuppan.
- Max, M. (1997). *Philosophy of Religion*. New Delhi: Prentice Hall of India Private Limited.
- Meyer, C. (1981). *Christian Beliefs and Teachings*. Washington, D.C.: University Press of America.

- Michael, L. (2018). Duncan Derrett's Comparative Studies of Buddhism and Christianity. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland*, 16(3), 231-242.
- Mooney, Knox and Schacht, (2007). *The Three Main Sociological Perspectives, Understanding Social Problems. 5th edition* accessed online via <https://laulima.hawaii.edu/access/content/user/kfrench/sociology/The%20Three%20Main%20Sociological%20Perspectives.pdf#:~:text=The%20functionalist%20perspective%20emphasizes%20the%20interconnectedness%20of%20society,of%20policies%20against%20sexual%20harassment%20and%20job%20discrimination>.
- New International Version (2012). *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*. Zondervan. Print.
- Olga, C. (2020). Understanding of Human Being and Human Freedom in Christian and Islamic Cultural Traditions. *Vestnik of Saint Petersburg University. Philosophy and Conflict Studies*, 35 (1), 159–174.
- Partridge, C. (2005). *Introduction to World Religions*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, Print.
- Paul, P VI. (2007). *Christian Values and Virtues*. Ed. Karl A. Schultz. New York: Crossroad Pub.,2007. Print.
- Ramanan, V. (1978). *Nagarjuna's Philosophy As Presented in the Maha-Prajnaparamita-Sutra*. Delhi: MotilalBanarsidass.
- Sallie, B (1991). *Buddha Nature*. Albany: University of New York Press.
- Shirley, C. (1994). *Christian Doctrine*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Stančienė, D. (2018). *Scholastic Philosophy in the High Middle Ages*. LOGOS-Vilnius, Number 94: 55–62.
- Tanabe, J (2016). Buddhism and Peace Theory: Exploring a Buddhist Inner Peace *International Journal of Peace Studies*, 21(2):34-55.
- The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (2004). *Compendium Social Doctrine of the Church*. Manila: Santo Thomas University Press.
- Taylor, E.(1993). *The Philosophy of Religion*. Progressive Publishers, Calcutta.
- Unamuno, M. (2005). *Tragic sense of Life*. New York:Dover Publication.
- Archibald, W.P. (2009). Marx, Globalisation and Alienation: Received and Underappreciated Wisdoms. *Critical Sociology*, 35, 151-174.
- Damien, K. (2005). *Buddhist Ethics: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- EduBirdie (2023). Compare and Contrast Buddhism and Christianity Essay. (Retrieved December 27, 2023 from <https://edubirde.com/examples/compare-and-contrast-buddhism-and-christianity-essay/>)
- Hernandez, D (2013). *Christianity & Buddhism: A Comparison of Faiths*. Paul Ranson\Christ and Buddha 189 Private Collection.
- Hing, R. (1998). Buddhism and Christianity in competition? Religious and ethnic identity in Karen communities of Northern Thailand. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 34(3), 473-490.
- Jung, K (2015). Just Peace: A Buddhist-Christian Path to Liberation." *Buddhist-Christian Studies. Project MUSE, EBSCOhost*. 1, 3.
- Makransky, J. (2011). Thoughts on Why, How, and What Buddhists Can Learn from Christian Theologians. *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, 31(1): 119-133.
- Netland, H and Yandell, K(2009). Buddhism: A Christian Exploration and Appraisal. *Faith and Philosophy: Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers*, 29, 1.
- Talim, R Jeffrey, F and Anant, E(2007). Forgiveness: Similarities and differences between Buddhists and Christians living in China. *The international journal for the psychology of religion*, 17(4), 289-301.