

African traditional religion, christianity, and islam essay sample

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



African Traditional Religion, Islam, and Christianity are three extremely different religions that have very different belief systems. They believe different things about life after we die on earth, they believe that different things are and are not God, and they believe different types of people are and are not prophets and priests. Though these three religions have so many differences, they have some similarities. Let's look at some of the definitions of religion. Durkheim defines religion as a system of beliefs related to sacred things.

Kung defines religion as a social and individual relationship that is vitally realized in tradition and community through doctrine, ethos, and rituals with something that transcends with man and his work. Kung believes that religion is a lived experience. Reverend Opol defines religion as a relationship with God manifested through people. All three of these have different aspects of religion tied into them. I believe that all three religions, African Traditional Religion, Islam, and Christianity, have all three of these aspects even though they are very different from each other.

All of these definitions except the one of Reverend Opol deal with outward rituals, but we will focus on the theology and the inward beliefs of these three religions. Religion is all embracing; it involves every aspect of life. We will see how different aspects of religion affect its followers. The first similarity that I found in all three religions is that all three believe in a Supreme God. This God governs all, knows all, controls all, and created all. African Traditional Religion believers believe in other gods that help them with their everyday lives.

They know that there is a supreme God and Creator that is often called Katonda or Nyamuhango. They feel that the Supreme God is too busy and far away to help them in their daily lives, therefore; they believe in many other gods that can do what the Supreme God cannot. Islam actually was derived from a pagan religion that believed in 360 gods. One of the gods were Al Illa which means " The God. " The prophet Muhammad believes that the angel Gabriel came to him and told him that Al Illa is the only God. As a result he created the religion of Islam and denounced the other gods and made Al Illa the only one.

Christianity was derived from Judaism which always believed in one God and one God only. Christians believe in Christ, the son of God, as well as the Holy Spirit, but these are both a part of the one true God. All three religions also believe that God has helper, both human and not human. Believers of African Traditional Religion believe that the other gods help the Katonda. They worship these other gods and sacrifice to them to keep them happy and to get what they need from them. They also believe in witchcraft; priests and diviners assist them in performing different rituals that will bring them what they want or need.

Muslims believe that God uses angels and prophets to help his people. A perfect example of this is the one I used earlier. The angel Gabriel went to the prophet Muhammad and spoke to him, therefore; Muhammad spoke to the people. Christians believe in angels and prophets too. Christians also believe that everyday people can help each other too. Christians believe that Christ calls everyone to be a disciple and to help their brothers and sisters in

Christ, even those who are not in Christ. So not only are angels and prophets/pastors helpmeets to God, but ordinary Christians are His helpers as well.

Another thing that is common between all three religions is that they all believe that religion should be all embracing. There is a slight difference in how African Traditional Religion advocates it than Islam and Christianity. This is because African Traditional Religion is a natural religion while Islam and Christianity are salvation religions. The nature of the two classes of religions are very different from each other. Natural religions are indigenous and automatically a part of the person's life, while salvation religions have to be converted into.

African Traditional Religion is automatically intertwined throughout the life of its believers. African Traditional Religion is a huge part of its believers' culture; it's one of the main parts of culture in Africa. In Africa you are automatically born into your African Traditional Religion, unlike Christianity and Islam where you have to be converted. Though African Traditional Religion is different in the sense that it is indigenous, still all three religions believe that the religion should indeed be all embracing and all encompassing.

Muslims and Christians are taught to make their religions all embracing and they have to put effort into practicing that, but African Traditional Religion believers don't even realize that they do it because it's a part of who they are from the day that they are born. `All three religions have rituals that

encourage the religion to be all embracing. Most of these rituals involve community as well. African Traditional Religion has ceremonies that help make the religion and the community one with each other.

Islam has worship at the mosque and prayer that involves their religion in their everyday life and with their community. Christianity has worship at church as well as prayer that intertwine their religion with fellowship and talking to God about what is happening in their daily lives. The prayers of Christians and Muslims are different because most of the prayers of Muslims are recited from passages in the Koran, while Christians can talk to God about whatever they please. Another thing that I see similar amongst the three religions is that they all believe that their religion is the correct one.

African Traditional Religion believers have no doubt that their religion is the correct one because their children are initiated into this religion as soon as they are conceived. Again African Traditional is a little different because it is a natural religion. It is not preached to them that their religion is correct; it is simply assumed and unthought-of. Islam is taught that Al Illa is the only God. The Islam beliefs are slightly similar to Christian beliefs. Muslims do not believe that Jesus is the son of God. They believe that Jesus was just a prophet.

Muslims believe that the Jews and Christians who wrote the Bible were corrupted so they denounce the parts of the Bible that declare Jesus as the son of God. Christians believe that you have to believe in Jesus Christ as the son of God and the savior in order for you to be saved and go to heaven. If

you do not believe that Jesus is the son of God and the savior of the world, you are going to hell. The final similarity is that all religions believe in life after death. African Traditional Religion believers express this through their belief in ancestors.

They believe that even though the person has died their spirit still lives on and interacts with the people on earth. The people who have passed on are still very much a part of the community that they were in before they died. Muslims believe 'Da le Islam' which means 'House of peace' and 'El Hurb' which means 'House of war.' They believe that only Muslims will go to 'Da le Islam' and everyone else will be sent to 'El Hurb.' As I mentioned earlier Christians believe that God the Father except they go through Christ. If you don't have Christ you will not go to heaven which is when the Kingdom of God will be revealed.

You will be sent to hell, where you will eternally burn and be punished. So you see, the three religions have certain aspects in common with each other. Even within their similarities there are differences. I am personally beginning to believe that we all worship the same God, Katonda, or Al Illa, but there are fundamental differences that determine whether we are in the right or wrong religion. The religion that God really has for us; the truth. We are all trying to find the truth and many religions were derived in doing so.