

Christianity and islam

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Religion refers to a set of beliefs concerning the nature, cause and purpose of the universe especially when considered as the creation of superhuman agency (ies) and involve devotional and ritual observances. The beliefs encompass moral codes that govern human behavior and conduct. It is also defined as a set of beliefs and practices that agreed upon by a majority of persons for example the Christian religions and Islam among others. There are many religions in the world today and all these religions have varying beliefs, practices and followers.

The leading world religions include Christianity, Islam and Buddhism. There are other religions that include Hinduism, Judaism, witchcraft (Wicca), Confucianism, Jainism, Shinto, Taoism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, cults and occults. However, there are small religions that continue to form in the current day that are in most cases not accounted for statistically. There are countries that put together religion and the state; religion forms the basis on which decisions are made at any given point (Feuerbach, 2004). Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria among others have been declared Muslim states with over 70% of the population being Muslims by faith (Ruthven, 2000). Brazil, Burundi and Chile on the other hand have been declared Roman Catholic states.

Most leading religions are divided into various branches; Christianity has numerous denominations the leading ones being catholic, Anglican/protestants, Methodist, Pentecostal churches and evangelical churches among others (Jenkins, 2002). Islam is divided into Sunni, Shiite, and Hindu Islam among others. Below is a pie chart presentation of global representation of world religions. Graphical Representation of Various

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Religions Basic Beliefs, Traditions and Practices in Christianity and Islam

Owing to the branching of churches in to numerous denominations, belief, practices and traditions are not always similar across the Christian denominations. Jenkins (2002) stated that there are common beliefs and practices that are shared among many denominations.

The Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches were the first Christian denominations and hence have practices that are different not just from Islam but also from other Christian denominations. Whereas the Catholics believe that the authority of the church lies with the hierarchy thereof, the Protestants believe that the believer has the authority of the church (Feuerbach, 2004). Most Christians believe in the bible as the most holy book and the guiding principle of human conduct and morality. Feuerbach (2004) studied that most Christian denominations also believe in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ who died and resurrected for the forgiveness of man's sins, baptism (by water as well as the Holy Spirit), and life after death. Christians also believe in the holy trinity though different denominations attach different levels of importance to each of the deity.

Although the above practices are practiced in most Christian settings, the timing of the activities varies from one denomination to another (Jenkins, 2002). For example, Catholics have the sacrament of baptism in which infants are baptized whereas most Protestants, evangelicals and Pentecostal churches believe in baptizing a grown up individual who has confessed Christ as personal savior and knows the significance of baptism. In addition, the Catholics believe that an individual who has sinned can achieve forgiveness by a church ritual through the assistance of a priest whereas the

Pentecostals and Protestants believe in the forgiveness of sins through individual confession and repentance of known sins (Jenkins, 2002). The Muslims on the other hand believe in the Quran as the most holy book that guides the morality of the adherents both in public and in private. The Quran is written in Arabic which is also believed to be the most authoritative language (Ruthven, 2000).

The Muslims believe in Allah as the creator, all knowing, transcendent and the judge of the universe. The five pillars of the Muslim faith that are cited in the Quran include Salat, Shahada, Zakat, Sawm and Hajj. Salat is the ritual worship that is carried out five times a day, zakat is giving of alms, sawm is fasting that is usually observed globally as the holy month of Ramadan, shahada is the daily confession of ones faith, and hajj is pilgrimage that happens in the holy city of Mecca (Ruthven, 2000). Appeals of Religion Christianity appeals because it allows the freewill of individuals to choose on a denomination they want to join (Jenkins, 2002). Individuals are therefore always free to join any church across the globe as long as they feel comfortable being in those churches. Islam on the other hand appeals because of its willingness to support the needy in society who are members of the religion.

This is usually met through alms that are given in mosques (Ruthven, 2000). Questions about Religions and their Traditions There have been numerous questions as to why the Christian fraternity has many denominations some of which have different doctrines from the mainstream churches (Jenkins, 2002). The authenticity of the bible have also been questions given that different churches or perhaps individuals do have different interpretations of <https://assignbuster.com/christianity-and-islam/>

the bible which they claim to be the basis and foundation of moral order in the religion. In addition, traditions like baptism and order of church services differ from one church/region to another thereby raising question on the true universality of the church which is also called the body of Christ (Feuerbach, 2004). As for Muslims, the extent of the practice of Muslim principles of defending the religion has raised legal and ethical questions in the wake of world security concerns.

Strong Islamic movements have been quoted as being some of the world transmitters of global violence and insecurity (Ruthven, 2000). Theodicy Christianity states that the loving God is not the author of evil or sin. Much as God is omnipotent and ever-present, humans have the freewill to choose what they want and how they want to go about their decisions. Every decision has a cost. Islam also supports personal responsibility where evil in word or deed is concerned. Religion continues to impact on individual reasoning and belief patterns (Feuerbach, 2004).

Although the world is slowly loosing the grip on Christianity, religion is bound to dictate actions today and in the near future especially among the community more so on issues of morality and dressing.