

Introduction

I chose this research after reading and studying the history of the church. I realize that most of the Christians who have professed Jesus as their Savior are yet to understand the genealogy, labor and opposition that occurred to defend the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It's much like what black people have gone through and to see the millennials of today take so much for granted and not realize the sacrifice that has been made for them to have the privileges of today.

If there was ever a time to be apologetic regarding our Christendom it is now, with so many falling away to other sources of religions. The one thing that holds true is that Christianity has been attacked from the beginning of time. Attacked because of its truth, effectiveness and power to change the life of anyone who believes. Acts 16:31, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved." This rescue from sin that God create for His people has been a discussed, argued and modified topic for ages.

The Church Fathers, philosophers, theologians, preachers, teachers, priests and protestants have curved off commentary, creeds, doctrines and traditions from the original message of the Father in creation, Son in redemption and the Holy Spirit in regeneration. This modification has led to many different religions and movements that appeal to the nature of man's ego, intellect and pride therefore, bringing descension in the gospel.

The bible states in Romans 2:11 "For there is no partiality with God'. God's plan for man cannot be imitated or revised to appease the many different human personalities or attitudes. Reviewing the differences between salvation and religion. One question that comes to mind is how religion became a part of such a divine and powerful demonstration of the Holy Spirit.

In the beginning was God, who spoke the word and made heaven and earth, created man and made woman. He commanded Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply, the only rule God gave the two is not to eat from the tree of knowledge. Eve being deceived by the

serpent ate of the tree and gave it to Adam. By this sin entered the world. The two were cast out of the garden and a nation was born.

As the world developed and multiplied so did sin. The tower of Babel was the first separation of people and languages by God. This brought about a difference in languages and culture. Amongst these nations, God's chosen people of Israel a blessed nation rule by God. Leaders raised up by God for every dispensation to care, and protect His people, God raises up Priests, Kings, Prophets and Judges in the Old testament.

Civilizing governments, statues, ethics, and laws to help the people live in His righteousness. Yet, during nations that worshipped idols, and pagan gods, God's people struggles to live by His laws. *The only significance the other nations had during this time was to teach or show Israel how God was in control.*

To further investigate the scope of religion we will have to transition to the New Testament, the Grace Dispensation. God's remedy to man's sin, thereby, sending his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ into the world to save us back on to him, the Messiah Jesus Christ that was foretold in the Old Testament had come to fulfill the promise of God.

This prophecy has been foretold by the prophets throughout the ages of the Old Testament but here we are in the New Testament and the promise is alive and among the people. Receive by many rejected by some even in the mist of the signs and wonders that Jesus performed as he walked the earth.

In this great transition from the Old Testament to the New Testament were a specific group from Israel known as the Sadducees and Pharisees the scholars and priest of old that governed the laws of God, stuck in tradition, stagnated by unbelief. Holding on the days of old in their beliefs and customs, seeking popularity, acceptance by public ceremonial acts.

In efforts to maintain their influence and statue they challenged Jesus Christ with pseudo spiritual nonsense. Refusing to accept and honor the Savior because He didn't not look or act like the people in their own sect. Looking for a particular personality, or presentation of what

they could comprehend, hence rejecting the Chief Cornerstone. This was the root of Religion as we know it today.

Religion according to Mike Ruffin, an ordained minister, author and creator of website, www.devotions.com. "RELIGION depends on our behaving; SALVATION depends on our believing." That's why Acts 16:31 says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved." He also states that "RELIGION clothes us with the robes of our own righteousness and God tells us in Isaiah that our righteousness are as filthy rags. SALVATION clothes us in the perfect righteousness of Christ, which alone can make us acceptable in the sight of God." Titus 3:5 warns "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit."

I propose to investigate and study 3 different religions to present and intersect the transformation of the individual's experience as a result to practicing a religion.

Buddhism, founded in the late 6th century B.C.E. by Siddhartha Gautama (the "Buddha"), is an important religion in most of the countries of Asia (<https://www.britannica.com>). It has become very popular in the 21 centuries because of its belief in self-empowerment for everything. The art of this religion revolves around rebirth through meditation, opening themselves up to release issues, heart breaks and hurt.

The interview:

Me: Can you tell me what was the reason you chose Buddhism?

Buddhist: I was able to relate to the history, it seem more realistic that to think that some guy is going to come out of the sky and take everyone with him.

Me: Have you ever tried or experience Christianity, before making a judgmental call?

Buddhist: Well, I went to church as a child and my family was in the church pretty much, but I didn't see any difference from anybody else. Except when they were at church they act

different. I was not impressed with the whole church thing, it did nothing for me.

Me: So... what does Buddhism do for you?

Buddhist: It makes me feel better, its my escape. I am able to release stuff the troubles me.

Me: Do you believe in heaven and hell? Where will you spend your eternity.

Buddhist: Nirvana is the way to escape suffering and bad things permanently. I only think about what happens while I am alive, death will take care of itself.

Me: Thank you for your time.

My gathering of this interview, Buddhism gives individuals a temporal way of dealing with issues, but no permanent benefit for their soul. No change in the internal man which leaves the person in a un-rescued state. Buddhism is about the individual with no view for the fellowman. This religion was derived by mere man and his philosophy of what he saw in his own journey. Siddhartha Gautama, moved by compassion to give hurting people an escape, He taught that awakening comes through your own direct experience, not through beliefs and dogmas. I am not sure about depending on myself to be enlightened, I need a Savior that can save me from myself. Looking inwards for answer resembles looking for treasures in a junkyard. It's not about me but what God's wants to do through me, also, God's image is to love one another and to go into the highways and byways and compel the people to come.

The next religion is Muslim (Islam), a religion that holds "One billion people from a vast range of races, nationalities and cultures across the globe--from the southern Philippines to Nigeria--are united by their common Islamic faith. About 18% live in the Arab world; the world's largest Muslim community is in Indonesia; substantial parts of Asia and most of Africa are Muslim, while significant minorities are to be found in the Soviet Union, China, North and South America, and Europe", according to the website of "GainPeace, a non-profit organization whose main goal is to educate the general public about Islam and to clarify many misconceptions they may hold". I will first give you the interview, afterwards my Apologetic reasoning.

The interview:

Me: Thank you for agreeing to meet with me, my first question is how did you come to being a part of the nation of Islam?

Muslim: I grow up in a pretty mess up situation and could never get my life together. One day I ran into one of my childhood friends, he looked good and had it altogether. I asked him what he was doing, and he began to talk to me about his life as a Muslim. It seemed like a way out of my situation, so I converted. I have become more conscious of who I am.

Me: When you say you have become more conscious of who you are, what do you mean?

Muslim: Becoming a Muslim help me become educated mental and my get in touch with my awareness. I read more, my life is now organized. My awareness helps me understand who I am and where I came from. Memorizing the Quran has help me develop my guidance.

Me: You obviously feel you have become a better man, what do you do with the new found person you are?

Muslim: I am still learning a lot of new things, like the history of Islam. To know things like this makes me feel like a real man, being part of a nation of men I see that are well informed. I am starting to get in touch with Allah, it's a good feeling and makes me want to be better.

Me: That's great, are you encouraged to share what you have found with someone else?

Muslim: I am working on that, I first have to get familiar with everything myself. As a part of Islam, I will eventually share with others to become a part of our organization.

Me: Ok, my last question, according to what I have read, everything is a taught, learned and practiced experience, even the position in prayer. Do you sometimes feel controlled or restricted?

Muslim: Not really, I mean it's a lot to learn but the benefits I get in learning it all makes it worth it. Coming from a life of nothing, this makes me feel like someone special.

Me: Thank you for your time.

My synopsis of this Religion was very interesting, I can see the good it produces for those who lost socially, educationally and even mentally. It gives directions, and guidance for the individual who needs a sense of belonging. However, in reading the background and listening to the Muslim I found quite a few erroneous concepts. The denial that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God, makes this religion to be limited if not of no effect in the power of transformation from the old man.

The individual is left to empower himself and practice a change of life, rather than being renewed by the power of God, which again makes this a temporal effect. Muslim, in my opinion have half-truth. A very positive religion, yet, as the bible says in 2 Timothy 3:5 King

James Version

5 Having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

Literature Review

According to Cairns, Earle E.. Christianity Through the Centuries: A History of the Christian Church. The Muslim or Islam religion was derived from the illegitimate son of Abraham, Ishmael. Ishmael was birth by Sarah's handmaid Hagar, after Sarah coerced Abraham to lay with her to bring about the promise child of God. In disobedience, Sarah and Abraham was faced with a problem after the birth of Ishmael and was told by God to send the child away, but not without a blessing, this is the origin of the nation of Islam. Isaac was indeed the promise child to which God promised to make a nation. This is where our heritage begins.

There are many reasons we all accede to what we believe to be the truth and answer to our life's journey. I can truly say that my story was a miracle that only God, through His Son Jesus Christ could have done. However, as I have learned in Church History the breakdown and separation of the church has led to many religions with different beliefs, creeds, doctrines and denominations.

As I interviewed the two religions, what stood out to me was that the supreme of their core was simply bettering themselves or feeling free. No evidence of their life being an example to heal, encourage and help others. This is where Christianity differs for these other religions.

According to an article by World Pastor Tony Alamo, "Those who believe in a religion take the initiative to serve what they think is a god, while those who believe in Christ serve

God after they have been prompted and touched by God. For this reason, I say that one should not be in a hurry to serve a god that is a fiction, to serve a mere religion. We serve God only when He, by His Spirit, is within us.¹⁸ If we serve God without God first living in us, we are into religion rather than into salvation. Figuratively speaking, many people today hang the sign “Christian” outside, but inside they are engaging in a religious enterprise. They are Christians in their own minds, but, they are only religious”.

Jake McWhirter a blogger, stated” Religion is a system of beliefs or a code of moral conduct that judges (qualifies or disqualifies) a person based on their adherence and obedience to certain codes, rules, laws, traditions, or the performance of required acts”.

The religion I decided to compare to Christianity would be Islam, its origin was foretold in the bible. However, to show the adverse reaction to taking the supernatural power of Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit out, it becomes control by man to gain power of the people. The Chart below displays the Apologetic reasoning for the Worlds two oldest religions that solidifies the Christianity vs. Religion view.

Term	Christianity	Islam
Date Founded	Approx. 30 AD (CE)	622 AD (CE)
Founders, Leaders	Jesus, Peter, Paul	Muhammad
Where Founded	Palestine (Israel)	Arabian Peninsula
Major Branches	Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant	Sunni, Shiite
Bible	The inspired and inerrant word of God. (2 Tim. 3:16). Consists of Hebrew scriptures of Judaism (Old Testament); and later writings recording the lives and teachings of Jesus and his followers (New Testament).	Respected word of the prophets but the Bible has been corrupted through the centuries and is only correct in so far as it agrees with the Koran. (3:78)

Koran (Qur'an)	The work of Muhammad. It is not inspired, nor is it scripture. There is no verification for its accurate transmission from the originals.	The final revelation of God to all of mankind given through the archangel Gabriel to Muhammad over a 23 year period. It is without error and guarded from error by Allah. Accepts the Christian Bible (2:136, 4:163, 10:94)
Basic Doctrine	Creed (Apostle's or Nicene – One God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). We are sinners, but God loves us, Jesus died for us; believe in him and you are saved. (John 3:16)	Six Articles of Faith (No God but Allah, angels, sacred books (Torah, Psalms, New Testament, Koran), prophets, day of judgement, Allah's predestination
Major Sacred Rituals or Practices	Baptism, Communion (Eucharist)	Five Pillars: prayer, pilgrimage to Mecca, fasting, confession of faith, almsgiving and charity (to Muslims only)
Religious Law or Commands	Ten Commandments (Ex 20:1-17), Greatest commandment (love God, love others – Mark 12:29-31), Great commission (make disciples of all nations, baptize them, teach them. – Matt 28:19-20)	Sharia (Islamic Law) regulates every aspect of a Muslim's devotional and personal life as well as the governing of Islamic nations. Also specifies harsh punishments for crimes.
Leaving the faith	Discouraged	Punishment is death
God	God is a trinity of persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Trinity is not three gods in one god, nor is it one person who took three forms. Trinitarianism is strictly mono-theistic. There is no other God in existence. The Lord God and Allah are not the same.	God is known as Allah. Allah is one person, a strict unity. There is no other God in existence. He is the creator of the universe (3:191), sovereign over all (6:61-62).
Trinity	One God in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit	Christian Trinity is denied. (4:171, 5:116) Islam trinity sometimes considered to be The Father, Jesus, and Mary.
Jesus	Second person of the Trinity. He is the word who became flesh (John 1:1, 14). He is both God and man (Col. 2:9).	A very great prophet, second only to Muhammad. Jesus is not the son of God (9:30), not divine (5:17, 75) and was not crucified (4:157).

		Some say he will come back to earth as a Muslim, marry and have children, die, and be buried near Muhammad (19:33-34).
Son of God	Term used to designate that Jesus is divine. He is the spiritual son of God not a literal physical son (John 5:18).	A literal son of God. Therefore, Jesus cannot be the son of Allah.
The Word	“In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God...and the word became flesh and dwelt among us...” (John 1:1, 14).	Allah’s command of existence which resulted in Jesus being formed in the womb of Mary.
Death of Jesus	By crucifixion	Did not die, but ascended bodily into heaven. A disciple died in his place.
Crucifixion	The way in which Jesus atoned for the sins of the world. It is only through this sacrifice that anyone can be saved from the wrath of God (1 Pet. 2:24).	Jesus did not die on the cross. Instead, God allowed Judas to look like Jesus and he was crucified instead. (4:156-158)
Atonement	The sacrifice of Christ on the cross (1 Pet. 2:24) whereby His blood becomes the sacrifice that turns away the wrath of God from the sinner when he believes and receives by faith the work of Christ on the cross. (1 John 2:2, John 1:12, Rom. 5:1)	There is no atonement work in Islam other than a sincere confession of sin and repentance by the sinner.
Resurrection of Jesus	Affirmed. Central part of faith.	Denied, since he did not die
Holy Spirit	Third person of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit is fully God in nature.	The arch-angel Gabriel who delivered the words of the Koran to Muhammad.
Muhammad	A non-inspired (by God) man born in 570 in Mecca who started the Islamic religion.	The last and greatest of all prophets of Allah whose Qur’an is the greatest of all inspired books.
Angels	Created beings, non-human. They are very powerful; they represent God and carry out his will. Angels have free will and some fell into sin and became evil.	Created beings without free will that serve God. Angels were created from light.

Devil (Satan)	A fallen angel who opposes God in all ways. He also seeks to destroy humanity (Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:13-15).	Iblis, a fallen jinn. Jinn are not angels nor men, but created beings with free wills. Jinn were created from fire, (2:268, 7:11-18, 114:1-6).
Heaven (Paradise)	The place where God dwells. Heaven is the eventual and eternal home of the Christians who are saved by God's grace. (Ps. 73:25, Is. 33:17, 60:19-20, 1 Cor 2:9-10, Rev. 21:3-4, 21:10-22:5)	Paradise to Muslims, a place of unimaginable bliss (32:17), a garden with trees and food (13:35,15:45-48) and virgins where all the desires of faithful Muslims are met, (3:133, 9:38, 39:34, 43:71, 53:13-15, 56:8-38, 88:8-16).
Hell	A place of torment in fire out of the presence of God. There is no escape from Hell (Ps. 63:9, Is. 30:33, Matt. 13:49-50, 25:46, 2 Thess 1:9, Rev. 20:10).	Hell is a place of eternal punishment and torment (14:17; 25:65; 39:26), in fire (104:6-7) for those who are not Muslims (3:131) as well as those Muslims whose works and faith were not sufficient (50:24-26, 78:21-30).
Judgment Day	Occurs on the day of resurrection (John 12:48) when God will judge all people. Christians go to heaven. All others to hell. Two judgements: entry to heaven based on faith; position in heaven based on deeds. (Matt. 25:46, Rom. 2:5-11, Heb 4:13).	Occurs on the day of resurrection when God will judge all people. Muslims go to paradise. All others to hell (3:142, 183-85, 196-98). Judgment is based on deeds (5:9; 42:26; 8:29). Judgement is bypassed if one dies on a Friday, dies of stomach ache, or dies as a martyr.
Afterlife	Christians will be with the Lord in heaven (Phil. 1:21-24), in resurrected bodies (1 Cor. 15:50-58). Non-Christians will be cast into hell forever (Matt. 25:46). Catholics believe in an intermediate state, purgatory.	There is an afterlife (75:12) experienced as either an ideal life of Paradise (29:64), for faithful Muslims or Hell for those who are not. Until Judgement, the dead are in an intermediate state, <i>barzakh</i> .
Resurrection	Bodily resurrection of all people: Christians to eternal life in heaven, non-Christians to hell (1 Cor. 15:50-58).	Bodily resurrection, faithful Muslims to heaven, others to hell (3:77, 15:25, 75:36-40, 22:6).
Man	Made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26). This does not mean that God has a body, but that man is made like	Not made in the image of God (42:11). Man is made out of the dust of the earth (23:12) and Allah

	God in abilities (reason, faith, love, etc.).	breathed life into man (32:9; 15:29).
Original Sin	The term used to describe the effect of Adam's sin on his descendants, i.e., all humans (Rom. 5:12-23). The sinful nature that originated with Adam is passed down from parent to child. All humans are by nature children of wrath (Eph. 2:3).	There is no original sin. All people are sinless until they rebel against God. They do not have sinful natures. People have an equal ability to do good or evil.
Salvation	A free gift of God (Eph. 2:8-9) to the person who trusts in Christ and His sacrifice on the cross. He is our mediator (1 Tim. 2:5). No works are sufficient in any way to merit salvation (Isaiah 64:6).	Forgiveness of sins is obtained by Allah's grace without a mediator. The Muslim must believe Allah exists, believe in the fundamental doctrines of Islam, believe that Muhammad is his prophet, and follow the commands of Allah given in the Koran.
Forgiveness	Central to Christian faith. More than 50 verses about it. God forgives any and all when asked, but humans must also forgive.	Allah does not forgive except infrequently as an arbitrary act. (4:48, 35:7)
Crusades (Christian) Jihad (Muslim)	The Crusades (1096-1291) were a reaction to Islamic jihad and an attempt (unsuccessful) to reopen the Holy Land to Christian pilgrims and worshipers.	Muslims are required to go to war with non-Muslims to conquer them and add their territory to the "House of Islam." (2:191, 9:5, 9:29)
Main Locations	Europe, North & South America	Middle East, Southeast Asia
Adherents Today	2 billion worldwide 180 million USA & Canada	1.3 billion worldwide 1.6 million USA & Canada
Place of Worship	Church, chapel, cathedral, basilica, meeting hall, store front, etc.	Mosque only
View of the other religion	Islam is respected as a fellow monotheistic religion, but with major differences about the Trinity, Jesus, salvation, and forgiveness. Muhammad is not seen as a true prophet.	Christians are respected as "People of the Book," but they have mistaken beliefs and only partial revelation. Islam is the only religion acceptable to God. (3:85)

Conclusion

In efforts to break down the barriers of religion one would have to understand and study the nature of its impact on the many followers. Analyzing some of the historical religions that still exist among us today and why.

Citations:

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