

The Role of Charity in Islam and Christianity: A Comparative Analysis

Moses Adeleke Adeoye¹, Pristiwiyanto²

¹ECWA Theological Seminary Igbaja, Nigeria. ²Institut Al Azhar Menganti Gresik, Indonesia
princeadelekm@gmail.com, ² pristiwiyanto2020@gmail.com

Abstract

This research examines the role of charity in Islam and Christianity, highlighting both the theological underpinnings and practical applications of charitable practices within each tradition. By employing a comparative analysis methodology, the study draws upon primary religious texts, including the Qur'an and the Bible, as well as secondary scholarly sources to explore the definitions, types, and ethical principles associated with charity in both faiths. Key themes such as compassion, social justice, and community responsibility are analysed to uncover commonalities and differences between Islamic and Christian charitable practices. Additionally, the research includes case studies of contemporary charity initiatives in Muslim and Christian communities, illustrating how these traditions address social issues such as poverty, inequality, and crisis response. Through interviews and surveys conducted with religious leaders and practitioners, the study also investigates the impact of interfaith collaborations on charitable efforts. The findings reveal that while both faiths emphasise the importance of charity as a moral obligation, the expressions and institutional frameworks differ significantly. This research contributes to the broader discourse on interfaith dialogue by demonstrating how shared values in charity can foster mutual understanding and cooperation between Muslims and Christians, ultimately suggesting pathways for collaborative efforts to address pressing societal challenges.

Keywords: *Charity, Interfaith Dialogue, Islam, Christianity, Social Justice*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini meneliti peran amal dalam Islam dan Kristen, dengan menyoroti dasar teologis dan aplikasi praktis praktik amal dalam setiap tradisi. Dengan menggunakan metodologi analisis komparatif, penelitian ini memanfaatkan teks-teks keagamaan utama, termasuk Al-Qur'an dan Alkitab, serta sumber-sumber ilmiah sekunder untuk mengeksplorasi definisi, jenis, dan prinsip-prinsip etika yang terkait dengan amal dalam kedua agama tersebut. Tema-tema utama seperti kasih sayang, keadilan sosial, dan tanggung jawab masyarakat dianalisis untuk mengungkap persamaan dan perbedaan antara praktik amal Islam dan Kristen. Selain itu, penelitian ini mencakup studi kasus inisiatif amal kontemporer dalam komunitas Muslim dan Kristen, yang menggambarkan bagaimana tradisi-tradisi ini menangani masalah-masalah sosial

Correspondence authors:

Pristiwiyanto, pristiwiyanto2020@gmail.com

How to Cite this Article

Adeoye, M. A., & Pristiwiyanto, P. (2025). The Role of Charity in Islam and Christianity: A Comparative Analysis. *Jurnal Paradigma*, 17(1), 1 - 17. <https://doi.org/10.53961/paradigma.v17i1.307>



Copyright (c) 2025 Moses Adeleke Adeoye, Pristiwiyanto Pristiwiyanto. Jurnal Paradigma is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (CC BY-SA 4.0)

seperti kemiskinan, ketidaksetaraan, dan respons krisis. Melalui wawancara dan survei yang dilakukan dengan para pemimpin dan praktisi agama, penelitian ini juga menyelidiki dampak kolaborasi antaragama terhadap upaya-upaya amal. Temuan-temuan tersebut mengungkapkan bahwa meskipun kedua agama menekankan pentingnya amal sebagai kewajiban moral, ekspresi dan kerangka kelembagaan mereka berbeda secara signifikan. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada wacana yang lebih luas tentang dialog antaragama dengan menunjukkan bagaimana nilai-nilai bersama dalam amal dapat menumbuhkan saling pengertian dan kerja sama antara umat Muslim dan Kristen, yang pada akhirnya menyarankan jalur bagi upaya kolaboratif untuk mengatasi tantangan masyarakat yang mendesak.

Kata kunci: Amal, Dialog Antaragama, Islam, Kristen, Keadilan Sosial

Introduction

Charity, a fundamental tenet in both Islam and Christianity, serves as an essential expression of faith, community and moral responsibility. This comparative analysis explores the significance of charity within these two major world religions, examining how each tradition interprets the concept, its theological underpinnings and its practical implications for adherents. In a world increasingly marked by socioeconomic disparities and humanitarian crises, understanding the role of charity in these religious frameworks becomes essential not only for interfaith dialogue but also for fostering greater compassion and social justice (Chevalier-Watts, 2019). Charity, known as ‘sadaqah’ in Islam and ‘charity’ or ‘agape’ in Christianity, transcends mere financial assistance; it embodies a holistic approach to human welfare and ethical living (Nickerson, 2011). Both religious traditions view charity as a reflection of divine love and mercy, encouraging followers to contribute to the well-being of others as an expression of their faith. In Christianity, charity is deeply rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ, who emphasized love for one's neighbour as a central commandment. As articulated in the New Testament, particularly in Matthew 25:35-40, acts of charity are equated with serving Christ himself. This scriptural foundation highlights that charity is not just an isolated act but a lifestyle that embodies the essence of the Christian faith. Renowned theologian John Wesley stated, "The gospel of Christ knows of no religion but social; no holiness but social holiness," underscoring the communal aspect of charitable acts (Boaheng, 2024). Similarly, in Islam, charity is a core component of the faith, mandated by the Quran as a means of purifying wealth and fostering social equity (Ali et al., 2024). The Quran explicitly instructs believers to give to those in need with verses such as Surah Al-Baqarah (2:177) emphasizing that righteousness encompasses not only belief in God but also the act of giving. The concept of ‘zakat’, one of the Five Pillars of Islam, further institutionalizes charity, requiring Muslims to allocate a portion of their wealth to support the less fortunate (Santhosh, 2023). Scholar Muhammad Asad notes that "the essence of zakat is to purify one's wealth by sharing it with those who are in need" (Gilani, 2006).

Both traditions position charity not merely as a moral obligation but as a manifestation of faith itself. In Christianity, the Apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 13:3 that even the most profound acts, if not performed out of love, are meaningless. This sentiment is echoed by theologian Henri Nouwen, who asserts that "charity is not a gift I give; it is a way of being" (Nouwen & Mogabgab, 2010). The transformative power of charity, therefore, lies in its ability to reflect the believer's relationship with God and others. In Islamic thought, the notion of charity extends beyond financial contributions; it encompasses acts of kindness, compassion

and community service. The Prophet Muhammad is often quoted as saying, "The best of people are those who are most beneficial to others," highlighting that charity is integral to one's character and spirituality (Sahih Al-Bukhari). The Islamic perspective emphasizes that every act of charity, regardless of its size, holds immense value in the eyes of God. The role of charity in both Islam and Christianity is intricately linked to broader themes of social justice and communal responsibility. In contemporary discourse, the intersection of faith and social action has become increasingly prominent. Cornel West argue that true faith is inseparable from the pursuit of justice, stating, "Justice is what love looks like in public" (West, 2008). This perspective resonates deeply with the teachings of both religious traditions, where charity is not only a personal virtue but a communal imperative aimed at addressing systemic inequalities.

In Christianity, the concept of the kingdom of God is often associated with social justice, where believers are called to advocate for the marginalized and oppressed. The work of organizations such as Catholic Charities and the Salvation Army exemplifies how Christian communities mobilize resources to alleviate poverty and promote social equity. Gustavo Gutiérrez, a prominent figure in liberation theology, emphasizes that "the preferential option for the poor is at the heart of the Christian message" (Gutiérrez, 2012). In Islam, the emphasis on social justice is equally pronounced. The Quran repeatedly calls for the protection of the vulnerable, including orphans, widows and the poor. The principle of 'khilafah' or stewardship, posits that humans are caretakers of the earth and responsible for ensuring the well-being of all creation. This stewardship is embodied in the practice of 'zakat', which not only serves as a means of wealth redistribution but also reinforces the interconnectedness of the community. Amina Wadud articulates that "the practice of charity in Islam is inherently tied to social justice, as it seeks to dismantle the structures of inequality" (Wadud, 2021).

According to Al-Mawardi, a prominent Islamic jurist, 'sadaqah' is any voluntary act of kindness or assistance that one provides to another, emphasizing the voluntary nature of such acts (Abba & Ngah, 2020). Islamic teachings categorize charity into different types, each with its significance and rules. The most recognized forms of charity include 'zakat' and 'sadaqah'. Zakat is a mandatory form of charity, one of the Five Pillars of Islam and is often translated as "almsgiving." It is derived from the Arabic root زكاة (zakā), which means "to purify" or "to cleanse." This reflects the belief that giving zakat purifies one's wealth and serves as a form of spiritual cleansing for the giver. The Quran explicitly mandates zakat, stating in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:177): "Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but [true] righteousness is in one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the Angels, the Book and the Prophets and gives his wealth, despite the love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the

traveller, those who ask [for help] and for freeing slaves; [and who] establishes prayer and gives zakat." This verse emphasizes that zakat is a crucial aspect of righteousness and community responsibility, reinforcing the social dimensions of wealth distribution. In contrast to zakat, sadaqah refers to voluntary charity given out of compassion, love or generosity, without an expectation of return. It can be given at any time, in any amount and for any purpose deemed charitable. The Prophet Muhammad emphasized the importance of sadaqah, stating: "Every act of kindness is a form of charity." This broad definition allows for various forms of giving, including financial assistance, acts of kindness and even a smile (as per the hadith, "A smile is charity"). This inclusivity highlights the Islamic perspective that charity can manifest in diverse ways, reinforcing the notion that the intention behind the act is what truly matters.

Method

This study employs a comparative qualitative research design to analyze the role of charity in Islam and Christianity. The approach is intended to provide an in-depth understanding of the theological foundations, practical applications, and contemporary implications of charitable practices within both religious traditions. A comprehensive literature review was conducted to gather existing scholarly works on charity in Islam and Christianity. Analysis of the Qur'an and the Bible, focusing on verses and passages that address charity, almsgiving, and related ethical teachings. Academic articles, books, and theological commentaries discuss the historical and contemporary practices of charity in both faiths. The study included specific case studies of charitable initiatives from both Muslim and Christian communities. Selection of diverse charity organizations and projects that illustrate the application of charitable principles in real-world contexts. The results from the literature review and case studies were synthesized to draw comparative insights.

Result and Discussion

Common Ethical Principles Underlying Charity: A Comparative Analysis of Christianity and Islam

Charity, as an expression of compassion and social responsibility is a fundamental aspect of both Christianity and Islam. Both religions emphasize ethical principles that guide charitable actions, promoting human dignity, social justice and community welfare. There are three common ethical principles underlying charity such as compassion and empathy, social justice and responsibility, and community and solidarity while comparing their manifestations in

Christianity and Islam. By examining these principles, we gain a deeper understanding of how both faiths approach charity and the moral imperatives that drive charitable actions.

Compassion and Empathy

Compassion involves a deep awareness of the suffering of others, coupled with a desire to alleviate that suffering (Strauss et al., 2016). Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. Both qualities are essential for motivating charitable actions in both Christianity and Islam. In Christianity, compassion and empathy are seen as reflections of God's nature, inspiring believers to act with love and kindness (Pembroke, 2019). Similarly, in Islam, compassion is one of the primary attributes of Allah, and it is emphasized in the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. The Bible places significant emphasis on compassion. For instance, in the Old Testament, God expresses His concern for the oppressed: Exodus 3:7: "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering." This verse illustrates God's empathetic engagement with human suffering, setting a precedent for believers to follow. In the New Testament, Jesus exemplifies compassion through His actions and teachings. The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) highlights the importance of helping those in need, regardless of societal boundaries. Jesus' command to "go and do likewise" urges His followers to embody compassion in their daily lives (Borthwick, 2015). In Islam, compassion is foundational to the faith. The Quran frequently emphasizes the importance of mercy and kindness. For example: Quran 16:90: "Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice." This verse underscores the expectation that Muslims treat others with fairness and compassion. The Prophet Muhammad's life serves as a model of empathy and kindness. He is often referred to as "the Mercy to the Worlds" (Quran 21:107), reflecting his role as a compassionate figure who advocated for the vulnerable and marginalized. His teachings encourage acts of charity, emphasizing that those who show mercy will receive mercy in return (Hadith from Sahih Muslim).

While both Christianity and Islam recognize the importance of compassion and empathy, their expressions differ in some aspects: Divine Model: In Christianity, compassion is modelled after Jesus, who exemplifies love through His sacrificial actions. In Islam, compassion is modelled after Allah and the Prophet Muhammad, with a strong emphasis on following prophetic traditions (Hadith). Community Focus: Both religions stress the importance of community support. However, Christianity often emphasizes personal relationships in

charitable acts, while Islam emphasizes collective responsibility through communal obligations, like Zakat (almsgiving).

Social Justice and Responsibility

Social justice refers to the pursuit of fair and equitable treatment for all individuals while responsibility encompasses the moral obligation to act in ways that promote social equity and address systemic injustices. Both Christianity and Islam advocate for social justice as a fundamental aspect of faith and charity. The biblical tradition emphasizes social justice through the teachings of the prophets and Jesus. For instance, Isaiah calls for justice and care for the marginalized: Isaiah 1:17: "Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow." Here, the call to defend the vulnerable reflects a deep commitment to social justice. In the New Testament, Jesus' ministry is characterized by His interactions with the marginalized, advocating for the poor and oppressed. His message often challenged societal norms, emphasizing that true righteousness involves caring for those in need. Islam places a strong emphasis on social justice as well. The Quran advocates for the fair treatment of all individuals, particularly the poor and marginalized: Quran 4:135: "O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses in justice, even if it be against yourselves or your parents and relatives." This verse highlights the moral obligation to uphold justice, regardless of personal interests. The concept of Zakat is central to Islamic charity, mandating that Muslims give a portion of their wealth to support those in need. This practice not only addresses immediate poverty but also promotes economic justice by redistributing wealth within the community. Both Christianity and Islam emphasize social justice and responsibility but their approaches differ in certain ways:

Foundation of Justice: In Christianity, social justice is often framed within the context of love and personal morality while in Islam, it is framed as a divine commandment linked to the community's obligations. **Mechanisms of Redistribution:** Christianity promotes voluntary giving and charity as expressions of love, while Islam mandates Zakat, establishing a structured system for wealth redistribution.

Community and Solidarity

Community refers to a group of individuals who share common values and support one another while solidarity emphasizes unity and shared responsibility, particularly in the face of injustice or adversity. Both Christianity and Islam advocate for community and solidarity as essential components of charitable actions. The early Christian community exemplified the

principles of community and solidarity through their practices of mutual support: Acts 2:44-45: "All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need." This passage illustrates the early Church's commitment to communal living and support, prioritizing the needs of others. Paul's letters further emphasize the unity of believers as one body in Christ, highlighting the interconnectedness of the community: 1 Corinthians 12:25-26: "So that there may be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other." In Islam, community and solidarity are also fundamental principles. The concept of Ummah refers to the global community of Muslims, emphasizing the shared responsibility to support one another: Quran 49:10: "The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers. And fear Allah that you may receive mercy." This verse underscores the importance of unity and communal support among believers. Islamic teachings promote collective responsibility, encouraging Muslims to engage in charitable acts that strengthen community bonds. The tradition of Sadaqah (voluntary charity) further emphasizes the importance of supporting those in need, fostering a sense of solidarity within the community. While both Christianity and Islam prioritize community and solidarity, their expressions reflect different theological and cultural contexts:

Nature of Community: Christianity often emphasizes local congregations as the primary expression of community while Islam emphasizes the global Ummah, creating a sense of solidarity that transcends local boundaries. Charitable Practices: Both faiths encourage communal charitable practices, but Christianity may emphasize individual acts of charity, while Islam often highlights structured communal obligations like Zakat.

Comparative Analysis of Charity Practices in Islam and Christianity

Charity is a fundamental aspect of both Islam and Christianity, rooted in the ethical and moral teachings of each faith. Both religions emphasize the importance of helping those in need but their approaches, practices and underlying philosophies differ significantly. The contemporary expressions of charity in both Islam and Christianity as well as the challenges and critiques that arise within their charitable practices are examined to contribute to a broader understanding of how charity functions in these two major world religions and the implications for social justice and community welfare.

Contemporary Expressions of Charity

Charitable giving in contemporary Christianity manifests in various forms, reflecting both traditional practices and modern adaptations. Many Christian denominations have established formal organizations dedicated to charitable work. These organizations often focus on specific areas such as poverty alleviation, healthcare, education and disaster relief. For example, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), founded in 1943, operates in over 100 countries, focusing on emergency response, food security, and education (Amanuel, 2022). Similarly, organizations like World Vision engage in community development and humanitarian efforts around the globe, driven by a Christian commitment to social justice. In addition to organized efforts, individual acts of charity remain a vital expression of Christian faith. Many Christians engage in volunteer work, support local charities, and participate in fundraising events. This grassroots approach emphasizes personal responsibility and the belief that each individual can contribute to the common good. The practice of "tithing" or giving a portion of one's income to the church or charitable causes is another significant aspect of individual charitable expression in Christianity (SanPietro, 2014). Contemporary charity often transcends denominational boundaries with many Christian organizations collaborating with other faith groups to address social issues. Interfaith initiatives such as the Interfaith Alliance and the World Faiths Development Dialogue, promote solidarity and collective action among diverse communities, reflecting a broader understanding of charity as a shared human responsibility (Abdullah & Akhtar, 2023). Islamic charity practices are deeply rooted in the faith with Zakat (obligatory almsgiving) and Sadaqah (voluntary charity) serving as key expressions of generosity. Many Muslims fulfill their Zakat obligations through established organizations such as Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid, which channel funds to various causes, including poverty alleviation, education, and disaster relief (Dhifallah, 2024). These organizations often provide detailed reports on fund distribution, emphasizing transparency and accountability. In addition to Zakat, Sadaqah offers Muslims the opportunity to give voluntarily to those in need. This practice can take many forms, including direct donations, community service, and acts of kindness. Local mosques often organize community initiatives, such as food drives and educational programs, reflecting the Islamic emphasis on communal responsibility.

Both Islam and Christianity have adapted their charity practices to contemporary contexts, yet there are notable differences: Formal Obligations vs. Voluntary Giving: In Islam, Zakat is a mandatory act while Christian charitable giving is primarily voluntary. This difference shapes the nature of contributions and the expectations placed on followers.

Organizational Structure: Christian charity often focuses on church-based organizations while Islamic charity includes a mix of religious and secular organizations that address a broad range of issues. **Interfaith Collaboration:** Both religions engage in interfaith initiatives but the extent and nature of these collaborations can differ based on regional contexts and community relationships.

Challenges and Critiques of Charity Practices

Despite the rich tradition of charity in Christianity, several challenges affect its practice today. One significant concern is the potential for dependency among recipients of charitable aid. Critics argue that well-meaning charitable efforts can inadvertently create a cycle of dependency, undermining the autonomy and self-sufficiency of individuals and communities (Torchon, 2020). This challenge prompts a reevaluation of how charity is delivered and the importance of empowering recipients. Critiques regarding the inequality in how charitable resources are distributed also arise. Certain groups may receive more attention and funding than others, leading to disparities in support. This situation raises questions about the criteria used to determine who receives aid and how to ensure equitable distribution of resources (Dworkin, 2018). The involvement of the Church in charity has faced scrutiny with some arguing that the focus on spiritual salvation may overshadow social responsibilities, leading to a disconnect between charitable actions and broader social justice issues (Harvey, 2022). This critique calls for a more integrated approach that combines spiritual and social missions.

Islamic charity practices also face significant challenges that impact their effectiveness and perception. One critical issue in Islamic charity is the mismanagement of funds. Reports of corruption and a lack of transparency within some charitable organizations can undermine public trust and deter potential donors (Smith et al., 2016). Ensuring accountability and transparency is essential for maintaining the integrity of Islamic charitable practices. Sectarian divides within the Muslim community can complicate charitable efforts. Differences between Sunni and Shia interpretations of charity and Zakat may lead to fragmentation in charitable initiatives with some groups feeling marginalized or excluded from receiving aid (Malik, 2018). Promoting unity and cooperation among diverse Muslim communities is vital for effective charity. As Islamic charity adapts to contemporary contexts, there is often tension between traditional practices and modern needs. Some critics argue that rigid adherence to traditional forms of charity may hinder innovative approaches to address current social issues more effectively (Faber et al., 2005). Striking a balance between maintaining religious obligations and adapting to modern challenges is crucial.

Both Christianity and Islam face challenges in their charitable practices, although the nature of these challenges often differs: Dependency vs. Mismanagement: While Christians grapple with issues of dependency and inequality in distribution, Muslims frequently contend with concerns about fund mismanagement and transparency. Community Dynamics: Sectarian divides within Islam can complicate charitable initiatives while Christianity often deals with denominational differences that influence charity practices. Adaptation to Modern Challenges: Both faiths face the challenge of balancing traditional charitable practices with the need for innovative approaches to address contemporary social issues.

The findings of this comparative analysis contribute significantly to our understanding of charity practices in Islam and Christianity. By examining contemporary expressions of charity and the challenges faced by both traditions, several key insights emerge:

1. **Shared Ethical Framework:** Both religions share a common ethical framework that emphasizes compassion and social responsibility. This shared foundation can foster interfaith dialogue and collaboration in addressing social issues.
2. **Diverse Expressions of Charity:** While both faiths prioritize charity, the methods and organizational structures differ. Understanding these differences can inform more effective charitable strategies and initiatives.
3. **Need for Adaptation:** The challenges faced by both traditions underscore the necessity for adaptive strategies in charitable giving. Recognizing the importance of context can enhance the effectiveness of charitable efforts.
4. **Importance of Transparency and Accountability:** The critiques of charity practices in both religions highlight the need for transparency and accountability. Developing frameworks for oversight can enhance public trust and encourage greater participation in charitable initiatives.
5. **Interfaith Collaboration Opportunities:** The potential for interfaith collaboration in charitable efforts is significant. By working together, religious communities can amplify their impact and promote a more just and equitable society.

Implications for Interfaith Dialogue: A Comparative Study of Islam and Christianity

Interfaith dialogue has become increasingly important in our globalized world, where understanding and cooperation among different religious communities are vital for peace and coexistence. This analysis focuses on the implications for interfaith dialogue between Islam and Christianity, two of the world's largest religions, each with rich traditions and teachings that emphasize compassion, justice and community welfare. The two critical areas are building

Bridges Through Shared Values and Collaborative Charity Efforts in Addressing Social Issues. By examining these aspects, we can better understand how interfaith dialogue can foster mutual respect and cooperation between these two faiths.

Building Bridges Through Shared Values

Both Islam and Christianity are grounded in ethical teachings that emphasize the importance of compassion, justice and care for the marginalized. This shared moral framework provides a strong foundation for interfaith dialogue. In Christianity, the teachings of Jesus underscore the importance of loving one's neighbour: Matthew 22:39: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." Similarly, in Islam, compassion is a defining attribute of Allah, and it is reflected in the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad: Quran 21:107: "And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds." This shared emphasis on compassion provides a common ground for dialogue, enabling both communities to collaborate on charitable initiatives and social justice efforts. Social justice is another crucial shared value. Both religions advocate for the fair treatment of all individuals, particularly the marginalized and oppressed. The concept of justice in Islam is deeply embedded in its legal and ethical teachings with the Quran urging believers to uphold justice: Quran 4:135: "O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses in justice, even if it be against yourselves or your parents and relatives." In Christianity, the prophetic tradition calls for justice and mercy, as seen in the writings of the Old Testament prophets: Micah 6:8: "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." These texts suggest a mutual commitment to justice, providing opportunities for both communities to engage in discussions about equity and fairness in society.

Both Islam and Christianity emphasize the inherent dignity of every human being. This respect for human dignity is critical in fostering interfaith dialogue, as it lays the groundwork for mutual respect and understanding. In Christianity, the belief that all humans are created in the image of God (*imago Dei*) underscores the value of every individual: Genesis 1:27: "So God created mankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." In Islam, the Quran affirms the dignity of all people, stating in Quran 17:70: "And We have certainly honoured the children of Adam." This shared understanding of human dignity can serve as a powerful catalyst for interfaith dialogue, encouraging discussions about human rights, social justice, and the common good. The historical interactions between Islam and Christianity have often been marked by conflict but there are also significant instances of

cooperation and mutual influence. Recognizing these shared historical contexts can facilitate dialogue. Throughout history, there have been periods of coexistence and collaboration, particularly during the Middle Ages in places like Al-Andalus (modern-day Spain), where Muslims, Christians, and Jews lived together and exchanged ideas in a spirit of mutual respect. This historical legacy can be a source of inspiration for contemporary interfaith dialogue, highlighting the potential for collaboration and understanding despite past conflicts.

Collaborative Charity Efforts in Addressing Social Issues

Charity is a fundamental practice in both Islam and Christianity, serving as a means to alleviate suffering and promote social welfare. Recognizing the importance of charity can pave the way for collaborative efforts between the two faiths. In Islam, charity is institutionalized through Zakat, which is obligatory for all Muslims and Sadaqah, which is voluntary. Zakat serves as a means to redistribute wealth and support those in need while Sadaqah allows individuals to give freely beyond the obligatory amount. The Quran emphasizes the importance of these practices in promoting social equity: Quran 2:261: "The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed of grain that sprouts into seven ears; in every ear is a hundred grains." In Christianity, charity is expressed through various forms, including tithing, volunteering and supporting charitable organizations. The New Testament teaches the importance of helping those in need: Matthew 25:40: "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." This call to service motivates Christians to engage in charitable actions that address social issues such as poverty, hunger and homelessness.

Recognizing the shared commitment to charity provides a powerful impetus for collaboration between Muslims and Christians in addressing pressing social issues. Interfaith charitable initiatives can serve as a platform for collaboration, allowing members of both faith communities to work together on common goals. Examples include food drives, disaster relief efforts, and educational programs that address poverty and inequality. Organizations such as World Vision and Islamic Relief have engaged in collaborative efforts to respond to humanitarian crises, demonstrating how interfaith partnerships can amplify their impact in addressing social issues (Marshall et al., 2021). Collaborative charity efforts can extend beyond direct aid to include advocacy for social justice. By joining forces, Muslim and Christian organizations can advocate for policies that promote equity, human rights and social welfare. For instance, interfaith coalitions can address issues such as immigration reform, housing

insecurity and healthcare access, leveraging their collective voices to influence public policy and promote social change.

The findings of this analysis contribute significantly to our understanding of interfaith dialogue between Islam and Christianity. Several key insights emerge:

1. **Shared Values as a Foundation:** The identification of common ethical foundations provides a basis for dialogue and collaboration, emphasizing the potential for unity in addressing social issues.
2. **Collaborative Charity as a Pathway:** The focus on joint charitable initiatives highlights the practical applications of interfaith dialogue, showcasing how collaboration can lead to meaningful social impact.
3. **Challenges and Strategies:** Recognizing the challenges inherent in interfaith collaboration emphasizes the need for strategies that promote understanding and trust, which are essential for successful partnerships.
4. **Broader Implications for Society:** The insights gained from interfaith dialogue between Islam and Christianity can inform broader discussions about religious coexistence, social justice, and community engagement in diverse societies.

Conclusion

The study compares charity in Islam and Christianity, revealing similarities and differences in their understanding and practice. Both faiths emphasise charity as a moral obligation rooted in compassion and social justice but their expressions differ significantly. In Islam, charity is institutionalised through mechanisms like Zakat, Sadaqah and Waqf, which provide a systematic approach to wealth distribution. The Qur'an emphasises these practices as essential duties for the faithful. Christianity emphasises voluntary giving, with practices like tithing and almsgiving reflecting individual moral choices. Biblical teachings emphasise acts of service and community support, emphasising the personal aspect of charity. Both faiths actively engage in poverty alleviation and crisis response, highlighting the potential for interfaith collaboration in charitable efforts. Charitable initiatives are essential for fostering mutual understanding and cooperation between Muslim and Christian traditions. To achieve this, it is recommended to organise interfaith dialogues, involving Muslim and Christian leaders in discussions about charitable efforts. Programs should also be developed to involve youth in philanthropic activities, promoting a culture of giving across communities. Additionally, shared charitable programs should be promoted between Muslim and Christian organisations to

address common social issues. These recommendations contribute to a deeper understanding of charity's role in Islam and Christianity.

References

- Abba, R. A., & Ngah, B. B. (2020). Forms of Charity in Islamic Economics: An Analysis in the Quran and Sunna (As Reported in Bukhari and Muslim). *International Journal of Research and Scientific Innovation*, 7(8), 145-166.
- Abdullah, H. M. F., & Akhtar, J. (2023). Religious Freedom: A way to promote Inter-and Intra-faith Harmony for establishing a Just Society. *Tanazur*, 4(2), 70-93.
- Abdul-Rahman, M. S. (2003). *Islam: Questions and answers-Basis for jurisprudence and Islamic rulings*. MSA Publication Limited.
- Ahmed, H. (2004). *Role of zakah and awqaf in poverty alleviation*. Jeddah: Islamic Development Bank, Islamic Research and Training Institute.
- Al-Bawwab, R. A. (2023). Zakat: changing the framework of giving. *Islamic Economic Studies*, 30(2), 86-103.
- Ali, Z., Anjum, G. M., Iqbal, J., & Ahmad, I. (2024). The Role of Islamic Values in Promoting Social Justice and Community Welfare. *International Research Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, 5(1), 575-585.
- Amanuel, R. (2022). *Assessing Challenges, Practices of Monitoring, and Evaluation in Projects: Case Study of Catholic Relief Services* (Doctoral Dissertation, St. Mary's University).
- Anderson, G. A. (2013). *Charity: The place of the poor in the biblical tradition*. Yale University Press.
- Arif, M., Aziz, M. K. N. A., & Abdurakhmonovich, Y. A. (2024). Trend strategy to prevent bullying in islamic boarding schools (pesantren). *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun*, 12(2), 639-670.
- Arif, M., Kartiko, A., Rusydi, I., Zamroni, M. A., & Hasan, M. S. (2024). The Existence of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Based on Pesantren: Challenges and Opportunities in The Digital Era. *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 5(4), 367–382. <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v5i4.1401>
- Awang, S. A. (2017). *An investigation on the patterns and antecedents of charitable giving behaviour among Muslims in Malaysia* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Malaya (Malaysia)).
- Boaheng, I. (2024). John Wesley's Pneumatology and its application to the contemporary Ghanaian public space. *Social Sciences, Humanities and Education Journal (SHE Journal)*, 5(2), 322-339.
- Borthwick, P. (2015). *Great commission, great compassion: Following Jesus and loving the world*. InterVarsity Press.
- Brodman, J. (2009). *Charity and religion in medieval Europe*. CUA Press.
- Cheung, S. W. L., & Kuah, K. E. (2019). Being Christian through external giving. *Religions*, 10(9), 529.

- Chevalier-Watts, J. (2019). Faith, hope and charity—a critical review of charity law's socio-legal reconciliation of the advancement of religion as a recognised head of charity (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Waikato).
- Chittick, W. (2014). Love in Islamic thought. *Religion Compass*, 8(7), 229-238.
- Clinger Jr, M. J. (2016). A Church Built on Charity: Augustine's Ecclesiology.
- Dey, H. W. (2008). Diaconiae, xenodochia, hospitalia and monasteries: 'social security' and the meaning of monasticism in early medieval Rome. *Early Medieval Europe*, 16(4), 398-422.
- Dhifallah, A. (2024). Navigating Dual Commitments: Adherence of Muslim NGOs to Islamic Principles While Integrating Humanitarian Principles-A Case Study on Islamic Relief Worldwide (Master's thesis, Hamad Bin Khalifa University (Qatar)).
- Dworkin, R. (2018). What is equality? Part 2: Equality of resources. In *The notion of equality* (pp. 143-205). Routledge.
- Faber, D., McCarthy, D., & Auriffeille, D. M. (Eds.). (2005). *Foundations for social change: Critical perspectives on philanthropy and popular movements*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Freeburg, D. (2016). Trust and tithing: The relationships between religious social capital and church financial giving. *Journal of Contemporary Ministry*, (2), 39-55.
- Gilani, S. I. M. (2006). Zakat in Pakistan.
- Gutiérrez, G. (2012). Preferential option for the poor. *An Immigration of Theology: Theology of Context as the Theological Method of Virgilio Elizondo and Gustavo Gutierrez*, 99.
- Hamdi, W. B., Aderibigbe, S. A., Idriz, M., & Alghfeli, M. M. (2024). Faith in Humanity: Religious Charitable Organizations Solidarity towards Migrants in the United Arab Emirates. *Religions*, 15(3), 266.
- Harvey, S. (2022). *Disrupting the Shard Perspective: Leading a Culture of Justice for the Reimagined Church*. Doctoral Dissertation, George Fox University
- Ioannidou, F., & Konstantikaki, V. (2008). Empathy and emotional intelligence: What is it really about? *International Journal of Caring Sciences*, 1(3), 118.
- Isgandarova, N. (2010). The Contribution of Muslim Charities in the West to International Development. *OIDA International Journal of Sustainable Development*, 1(01), 39-44.
- Kammer, F. (2004). *Doing faith justice: An introduction to Catholic social thought*. Paulist Press.
- Kunhibava, S., Muneeza, A., Khalid, M. B., Mustapha, Z., & Sen, T. M. (2024). *Islamic Social Finance*. Springer Nature Singapore.
- Malik, S. U. (2018). *A Culture of Charity: American Imams from Cairo to California*. University of California, Riverside.
- Marshall, K., Roy, S., Seiple, C., & Slim, H. (2021). Religious Engagement in Development: What Impact Does it Have? *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*, 19(sup1), 42-62.
- Martin, M. W. (1994). *Virtuous giving: Philanthropy, voluntary service, and caring*. Indiana University Press.
- Meguid, C. A. (2024). *The 40 Divine Values of Well-Being and Success in Islam*. CYNTHIA AISHA MEGUID.

- Nickerson, D. B. (2011). *Interfaith Dialogue: Charity* (Doctoral dissertation, Acadia University).
- Nouwen, H. J., & Mogabgab, J. S. (2010). *A spirituality of fundraising*. Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books.
- Oyer, J. S. (2001). *Lutheran Reformers Against Anabaptists* (Vol. 13). The Baptist Standard Bearer, Inc..
- Pembroke, N. (2019). Empathic and compassionate healthcare as a Christian spiritual practice. *Practical Theology*, 12(2), 133-146.
- SanPietro, I. (2014). *Money, Power, Respect: Charity and the Creation of the Church*. Columbia University.
- Santhosh, A. (2023). Zakat and Social Welfare: The Role of Islamic Charitable Practices in Contemporary Societies. *Jus Corpus LJ*, 4, 590.
- Shapiro, R. R., & Shapiro, R. M. (2012). *Amazing chesed: Living a grace-filled Judaism*. Jewish Lights Publishing.
- Smith, D. H., Eng, S., & Albertson, K. (2016). The darker side of philanthropy: How self-interest and incompetence can overcome a love of mankind and serve the public interest. In *The Routledge Companion to Philanthropy* (pp. 273-286). Routledge.
- Strauss, C., Taylor, B. L., Gu, J., Kuyken, W., Baer, R., Jones, F., & Cavanagh, K. (2016). What is compassion and how can we measure it? A review of definitions and measures. *Clinical psychology review*, 47, 15-27.
- Torchon, M. (2020). *A Methodist Perspective on Aid-Dependency in Haitian Protestantism*. The University of Manchester, United Kingdom.
- Tück, J. H. (2018). *A gift of presence: the theology and poetry of the Eucharist in Thomas Aquinas*. CUA Press.
- Ujházi, L. (2020). *The Significance of Charity (Caritas) in the Governing, Sanctifying, and Teaching Mission of the Church*.
- US Catholic Church. (2012). *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Image.
- Wadell, P. J. (2009). *The primacy of love: An introduction to the ethics of Thomas Aquinas*. Wipf and Stock Publishers.
- Wadud, A. (2021). Reflections on Islamic Feminist Exegesis of the Qur'an. *Religions* 12: 497.
- West, C. (2008). *Hope is on a tightrope*. Hay House, Inc.
- Wuthnow, R. (2012). *Acts of compassion: Caring for others and helping ourselves*. Princeton University Press.
- Yanklowitz, S. (2023). *Pearls of Jewish Wisdom on Living with Kindness*. Wipf and Stock Publishers.
- Yusuf, N., Wuryandini, A. R., & Amaliah, T. H. (2023). Sadaqah Financial Management and Accounting Practices in a Community. *Atestasi: Jurnal Ilmiah Akuntansi*, 6(1), 67-82.