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**CHERROPIHTUN**

**THE COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN BUDDHISM  
AND CHRISTIANITY ON PEACE AND WAR**

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## **Acknowledgment**

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.

I do not give to you as the world gives.

Do not let your hearts be troubled

And do not be afraid.

(John 14:27)

First of all, I give praise and thank the Blessed Trinity for the marvelous gift of life. Secondly, I thank my parents who give much support from afar. Thirdly, my gratitude reaches to my Sisters the Missionary Dominican Sisters of the Rosary, especially Sr. Teresa Errea OP, and Sisters in the community who give a lot of care, support, and helped me with much patience. I would like to thank also José Lai Bishop of Macau. I would like to give my very special thanks to my supervisor Fr. Franz Gassner (SVD) who guided and supported me during this whole time. Finally, I would like to thank Father Peter Stilwell, Professor Arnold Monera, Father João Eleutério who support and guide me with different ways, all my professors, and friends who accompanied me along my five years of study at the University of St. Joseph in Macau.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

As it was in the beginning is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

## Abbreviations

<i>Dhp</i>	<i>Dhammapada/Dharmapada: The Buddha's Path of Wisdom</i> , Kandy, Sri Lanka, BPS, 1985. In verse.
<i>S.</i>	<i>SamyuttaNikaya</i> (Th.); (tr. C. A. F. Rhys Davids and F.L. Woodward), <i>The Book of Kindred Sayings</i> , 5 vol., London, PTS, 1917-30.
<i>Vism.</i>	<i>Visuddhimagga</i> [of Buddhaghosa] (Th.); (tr. BhikkhuNanamoli), <i>The Path of Purification</i> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> edn, Kandy, Sri Lanka, BPS, 1975, and 2 vols. Berkeley, Calif., Shambhala, 1976.
OT	Old Testament
NT	New Testament
Gen	Genesis
Exod	Exodus
Lev	Leviticus
Dt	Deuteronomy
Jos	Joshua
Jdgs	Judges
Ps	Psalms
Is	Isaiah
Mic	Micah
Matt	Matthew
Mk	Mark
Lk	Luke
Jn	John
Rev	Book of Revelation
Eph	Ephesians
Col	Colossians
1 Thess	1 Thessalonians
CCC	<i>The Catechism of the Catholic Church</i> (1994)

<i>CSDC</i>	<i>Compendium Social Doctrine of the Church</i>
<i>EG</i>	<i>Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel)</i>
<i>NA</i>	<i>Nostra Aetate</i>
Cf.	Confer, compare
Esp.	Especially
Ibid.	Ibidem (meaning: in the same place.)
P	Page
Trans.	Translator, translated by
Vol	Volume
Vs.	Verses
Bodhichattta	According to ThichNhatHanh (2003), it “is our great aspiration to wake up, transform our suffering into compassion and serve all beings as a bodhisattva- a person of great compassion” (p. 39).

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## **Introduction**

In today's world, the experience of conflicts is very likely. Violence, injustice, war are almost everywhere; more conflicts between countries, religions, and different ethnicities and even among families are arising. What are the reasons or causes for such human-made disasters? According to Oliver Rambotham, a conflict can originate in the context of an economic differentiation, of social change, cultural formation, psychological development and political transformation.<sup>1</sup> Poverty, and injustice, human exploitation and abuse and many other factors are a reality today, which are forms of open and hidden violence in societies. Pope John Paul II speaks here of “structures of sin” as obstacle for authentic development. Where can we find solutions for these miserable situations? Perhaps, religions may provide us with a crucial key for finding an answer and a way towards a better understanding and a solution.

Certainly, most religions teach nonviolence and peace among people; they teach to live morally correct and to be basically always good towards other. Nonetheless, the world is still suffering so much violence, injustices, and abuses. This is really one of the biggest challenges, which people are facing right now in today's world. In this situation and challenge, people start to look at religions more and more in order to find solutions; thus, religions play a crucial role in handling these human-made disasters, and in responding to the conflicts and hostile situations in a wiser and better way. It is therefore

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<sup>1</sup> Oliver Rambotham et al., *Contemporary Conflict Resolution* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), 7.

a right and duty for religions to take up responsibility to work towards the prevention of conflicts and towards reconciliation and peace among people and all peoples in our world.

It is very interesting when the word peace is described in different languages. For instance, the Chinese character “peace” means “equality”, “harmony”; the word “peace”, in Korean “peace” means “tranquility”, “harmony”, “no war”, “no fighting”, or “everyone can eat his/her meal in equality”; in Burmese, the word “peace” means “calmness”, “unity”.<sup>2</sup>

Everyone in every country wishes to live peacefully together. But how come that in our world, so many people are fighting for peace, so that there’re many ongoing conflicts and wars. This situation called my attention to study more and write about it. My focus and goal is to look deeper and see what peace really means in the perspective of the teaching of two major world religions: Buddhism and (Catholic) Christianity. I believe that research on this topic can help and deepen mutual understanding and it can also clarify the mission of Jesus Christ, who is called the “Prince of Peace”, by promoting and working for peace following in his footsteps. This investigation can also serve as a help and reference for others who are seeking and working for peace.

Therefore, in this practicum paper, I would like to present the two world religions and their respective teaching on peace: Buddhism and Christianity. My intention is to find some solutions for the human-made disasters mentioned above from their teachings, especially regarding their perspectives on peace and war.

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<sup>2</sup> Franz Gassner, SVD Class discussion to *LCS 508 Christian Attitudes towards War, Peace, and Revolution*, University of St. Joseph, Seminary Campus: Macau, September- November 2015.

First of all, 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.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, also Christian moral teaching speaks about peace, reconciliation, forgiveness, and love. Indeed, there are many striking similarities between these two world religions, especially when they speak about peace and prevention of violence and war. 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 paper is to make a comparative study between Buddhism and Christianity regarding peace and war; thus, the paper will try to gather some similarities and differences between these two religions regarding their teaching on peace and war.

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<sup>3</sup> Damien Keown, *Buddhist Ethics: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 20.

# 1. Buddhist Perspectives on Peace and War

In this first chapter “Buddhist Perspectives on Peace and War”, the writer will discuss how the Buddhists understand peace and war. The writer chose Buddhism due to the fact that it is known as a religion of peace and nonviolence and also because the writer comes from a country with a strong Buddhist history and background, Myanmar. This chapter will include how Buddhism understands the human being and the society, the important teachings in Buddhism, and the way to attain and keep peace.

## 1.1. 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.<sup>4</sup> “All that we are, is the result of what he have thought; it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thought”, says Buddha.<sup>5</sup> 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,

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<sup>4</sup> Lvlanfu, "The Influence of the Buddhist View of Life on Universal Values in Modern Society." *PrajnaVihara* 13, no. 1/2 (January 2012): 271-281. *Humanities International Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed June 12, 2015).

<sup>5</sup> James Allen, *The Path to Prosperity* (Waiheke Island: Floating Press, 2008), 18.

focusing on one's own mind, the arousal of the thought, cultivating the mind, realization of heart to Bodhicitta.<sup>6</sup>

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.<sup>7</sup> All living beings and the inanimate nature go always together harmoniously in order to fulfill the needs of each being. With this holistic understanding of relatedness of all sentient and insentient beings, Buddhism differs to the tradition of a crude anthropocentrism. In fact, the basic teaching of Buddhism in view of the nature of humankind is to do good deeds and avoid evil.

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". In this sense a human being is ontologically different in 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

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<sup>6</sup> Ianfu, "The Influence of the Buddhist View of Life," (accessed June 12, 2015).

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*

ontological nature of a human being means that a human person does not exist in any way separated from the world.<sup>8</sup>

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.<sup>9</sup> For instance: all sufferings are the same. The goal of Buddhism is to end suffering, to overcome it by dissolve oneself ultimately in Nirvana. For Michael Carrithers, the ‘Self’, here is an eternal, perfectly unified, seamless whole, self-identical, beyond phenomenal appearances and unanalysable.<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>11</sup>

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. Every society is made

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<sup>8</sup> Sallie B. King, *Buddha Nature* (Albany: University of New York Press, 1991), 141.

<sup>9</sup> Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics: Foundations, Values and Issues* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 36.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Carrithers, *Buddha: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 41.

<sup>11</sup> Carrithers, *Buddha*, 39-46.

up of human beings, therefore in order to create a good society it is necessary to start with individual human beings. Discipline is required by everyone to live harmoniously in a society, but a society itself can also influence positively or negatively human beings.

Responsibilities are important in a society, for instance to treat each other justly. For being a good member of a society, it is important not to harm others, not to steal from others and not to cheat on others. In the view of Buddhists, the society should contribute to the ending of suffering, and to nurture the awareness and practice of caring for all living beings. In other words, all people are responsible for a good development and for the overall welfare of a society.<sup>12</sup>

## **1.2. Buddhist Perspectives on Peace and War**

All religions care about values, such as respect for human beings, ethical behavior, modesty, hope, love and assisting people in need. Usually, they reject and condemn acts of killing, raping, injuring or offending any innocent person.<sup>13</sup> In fact, peace is one of the central teachings of Buddhism, but war is not. Moreover, Buddhism is praised by both insiders and outsiders for its doctrine of love and compassion. In the early Buddhist tradition, the concept of peace was expressed with the word “*santi*” (tranquility, peace).<sup>14</sup> One of the primary goals of Buddhism is the attainment of perfect inner peace. The practice of a good life involves a harmonious living together with one’s fellow human beings including with all living or sentient beings.

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<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Nicholas Turner, Reichberg Gregory M. and PopovskiVesselin. *World Religions and Norms of War*. Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2009. *eBook Collection (EBSCOhost)*, EBSCOhost (accessed February 17, 2015).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

Buddhism does not consider a conflict to have a positive value. It is a religion that is very much focused on positive thinking and to experience positive values in life, like harmony and peace that are commonly viewed as being associated with non-violence. This does not mean that Buddhists have always been peaceful and have always lived harmoniously with everyone along the history of Buddhism. They also have their fair share of conflicts and war resulting from their own reasoning and historical justifications. Therefore, there is a gap or difference between theory and practice in Buddhism. It remains a great challenge for Buddhism to continually reflect on these issues and to develop a proper understanding and to respond adequately to these challenges. There is also need for further research on these issues.

Throughout the history of Buddhism in Asia, in countries such as Sri Lanka, Japan, Korea, Thailand, Burma, China and Tibet, one can find plenty of examples of war situations. In 1592 a Japanese army under General Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537-1598) invaded Korea. The peaceful history of Buddhism in Korea changed radically during the Choson dynasty. In order to defend their own country and people, Buddhist master Kihodang Yong-gyu, a disciple of Sosan Hyujong (1520-1604), gathered 600 monk soldiers and fought against the Japanese.<sup>15</sup> In 1636, there was an invasion again by the army of Ch'ing into Choson. The monks Pyogam Kaksong (1575-1598) and Hobaek Myongjo were the leaders of a monks' army. According to the teaching of Buddhism, their behavior was in contradiction to the teaching of Buddha which created a serious moral problem. However, today this military success of the monks' army in

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

Korea and their involvement is viewed to have safeguarded the integrity of the Korean nation in the face of a hostile foreign invasion.<sup>16</sup>

From the 10<sup>th</sup> century onwards in Japan, the great monastic foundations of Nara and Mount Hiei maintained private armies that terrified the courtiers and citizens of the capital with their religious and military power. The Sengoku Period, the period of warring States in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, was a time when the Japanese monk warfare developed. The word “sohei” means “warrior monk”, which consists of a two-character compound with “so” meaning a Buddhist priest or monk, and “hei” meaning soldier or warrior.<sup>17</sup> There were major monasteries that had monk-armies such as Enryakuji (the Tendai Buddhist headquarters on Mt Hiei), Onjoji (the Tendai-jimon headquarters in Shiga prefecture), and Kofukuji (the Hosso headquarters in Nara). These monastic militias were eliminated from Japan by the warlords Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582) and ToyotomoHideyoshi (1537-1598).<sup>18</sup>

In 2007, the Saffron Revolution in Myanmar, which involved an estimate of 30,000 to 100,000 people, mostly monks, took place in Yangon after the suppression of a peaceful street walk by monks in September in Pakokku, northern Burma.<sup>19</sup> The purpose of this peaceful rally was to address issues related to costly living, the regime’s disrespectful behavior towards the revered *sangha* (the Buddhist’s clergy), and generally

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Stephen R. Turnbull, *Japanese Warrior Monks AD 949-1603* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2003), 4.

<sup>18</sup> Turner, Reichberg and Vesselin, *World Religions and Norms of War*. 62.

<sup>19</sup> *Burma’s “Saffron Revolution” is not over: Time for the International Community to act*, FIDH, December 2007), 9. <https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/BURMA-DEC2007.pdf> (Accessed on June 20, 2015).

the lack of civil and political freedom in Burma.<sup>20</sup> However, the rally, well known as Saffron Revolution, ended up in brutal violence and tragedy as a common practice of the Military Junta. Thousands of monks and other activists were beaten to death or severely injured during these protest.<sup>21</sup>

Today, there is also an unfinished conflict between Rohingya and Rakhine in Myanmar. The Rohingyas, a Muslim minority group residing in the northwestern part of the Arakan (Rakhine) State in Burma, have not been recognized as a national minority by the state since 1974 when Ne Win government denied officially their citizenship. They have suffered from oppression as form of hidden violence under the Burmese government and the Burmese Army. Every year, many flee from their home as refugees to other countries.<sup>22</sup> This issue started around 1974, until today there is no solution and no reconciliation. Concerning the issue of Rohingya Muslims, the Dalai Lama urges Aung San SuuKyi to speak out for them. However, the government leaders of Myanmar and Aung San SuuKyi do not give a very clear solution to this issue. On the side of Catholic Church in Myanmar, Cardinal Charles Bo calls for compassion, and mercy towards Rohingyas, saying, “We strongly urge the government not to allow discourses of hatred to subvert its glorious tradition of compassion. Myanmar citizens have a moral

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<sup>20</sup> Andrew Selth, *Burma and the Threat of invasion: Regime Fantasy or Strategic Reality?*, Griffith Asia Institute, p.15. <http://www.griffith.edu.au/business-government/griffith-asia-institute/pdf/Andrew-Selth-Regional-Outlook-17v2.pdf> (Accessed on June 20, 2015).

<sup>21</sup> *Burma's "Saffron Revolution" is not over*, p. 10-12.

<sup>22</sup> Kei Nemoto, *The Rohingya Issue: A Thorny Obstacle between Burma (Myanmar) and Bangladesh*. [http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs14/Kei\\_Nemoto-Rohingya.pdf](http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs14/Kei_Nemoto-Rohingya.pdf) (Accessed on 8 July, 2015).

obligation to protect and promote the dignity of all human persons...”<sup>23</sup> This is a clear stance on the side of human dignity, truth, and justice.

In such a situation of conflict and war, it is a challenge for Buddhists to give a justification for it, since Buddhism is popularly regarded in the world as being a very peaceful religion. The historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama, preached against war. However, even he himself could not avoid the threat of war. On two occasions, the historical Buddha was forced to become directly involved in a conflict. The first occasion was a dispute between his own relatives, the Sakyans and the Koliyans, because of sharing the rights to the water of the Rohini River, which divided their two territories. In the second occasion the problem was Prince Vidudabha and the Sakya, who learnt from a contemptuous remark made by a slave woman in the Sakyan kingdom that his mother, who was given into marriage to his father King Paswnadi by the Sakyans, came from a low caste. The Sakyans were too proud to intermarry with King Pasenadi, and instead gave the slave woman to the king. That was the reason why prince Vidudabha took revenge. Though Buddha wanted to stop this revenge, in fact he could not. Prince Vidudabha destroyed the Sakyans in the war.<sup>24</sup> It is very clear that to pursue peace or to make peace is not an easy task for anyone.

Furthermore, Buddhism is known as a religion of tolerance and showing reverence for all life. Buddhist philosophy and tradition of whatever branch of Buddhism

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<sup>23</sup> UCAN Directory: Database of Catholic Dioceses in Asia. <http://directory.ucanews.com/news/cardinal-bo-calls-for-compassion-mercy-towards-rohingyas/2283> (Accessed on 8 July, 2015).

<sup>24</sup> Turner, *World Religions and Norms of War*, 62.

teaches and advocates strongly non-violent ways of life.<sup>25</sup> There are many teachings of Buddha which are very useful and important for human beings, for instance, the Five Precepts, the Four Noble Truths, and many other famous teachings of Buddha. All of these teachings are meant for human beings to reflect on them and to follow them. Today, unfortunately, most Buddhists just take these teachings for granted but actually neglect them in their daily practical life.

**The Five Precepts (*pañcaśīla*)**

This is the most widely known list of precepts in Buddhism, comparable in influence to the Ten Commandments of Christianity. The Five Precepts are undertaken as voluntary commitments in the ceremony of 'going for refuge' when a person becomes a Buddhist.

They are as follows:

1. I undertake the precept to refrain from harming living creatures.
2. I undertake the precept to refrain from taking what has not been given.
3. I undertake the precept to refrain from sexual immorality.
4. I undertake the precept to refrain from speaking falsely.
5. I undertake the precept to refrain from taking intoxicants.

Figure 1: The Five Precepts (Source: Keown, *Buddhist Ethics*, 9)

As can be seen from the First Precept, Buddhist teachings strongly oppose the use of violence, considering violence as the result of greed (*rāga*), hatred (*dvesa*), and delusion (*moha*).<sup>26</sup> Many Buddhist writings contain numerous references to war. The

<sup>25</sup> Samuel Ngun Ling, *Communicating Christ in Myanmar: Issues, Interactions and Perspectives* (Yangon: Myanmar: Judson Research Center, 2010), 83.

<sup>26</sup> Keown, *Buddhist Ethics*, 70.

Buddhists are not allowed to fight in wars because a war involves killing, and killing is a breach of the First Precept, it is morally wrong to fight in either offensive or defensive wars. That is one of the reasons that Buddhism did not develop a just defensewar theory. According to Buddhism, warriors who die in battle do not go to heaven but to a special hell because at the moment of death their minds are intent on killing living beings. Killing causes a bad karma, even in the case of self-defense and even defending family and friends is not allowed. A real Buddhist must not kill, in time of resistance for oneself; he/she must allow himself to be slaughtered rather than breaking the First Precept. *Dhammapada* vs. 405 says, “He who has renounced violence towards all living beings, weak or strong, who neither kills nor causes others to kill him do I call a holy man.”<sup>27</sup>

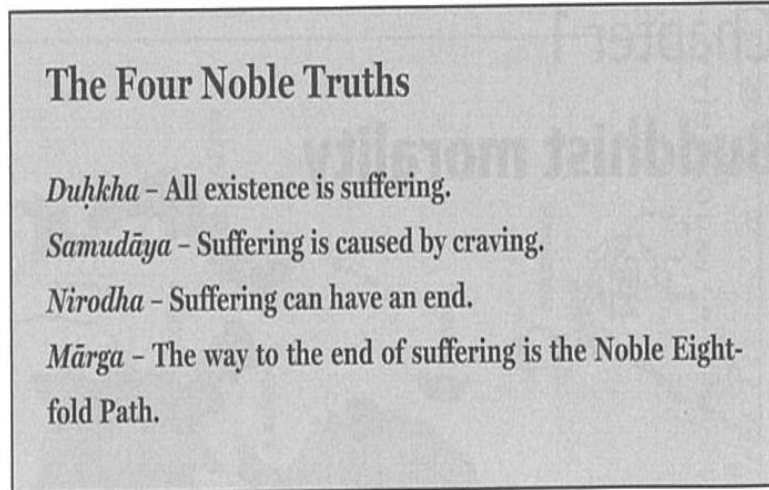
The teachings and theories of Buddha are really amazing. However, the question is how many Buddhists are really following his teachings. Unfortunately, conflicts, hidden violence and even wars are going on even in Buddhist countries. The fact is that humankind is weak by nature and lacking in self-control.

There are many teachings in Buddhism. One of the basic teachings of Buddhism are The *Four Noble Truths*, which are *Dukkha*, meaning all existence is suffering, *Samudāya* which means suffering, is caused by craving, *Nirodha* meaning suffering can have an end, and *Mārga*, meaning the way to end suffering as the *Noble Eight-fold Path*.<sup>28</sup> The Four Noble Truths are illustrated in the following Figure 2:

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>28</sup> Keown, *Buddhist Ethics*, 4.



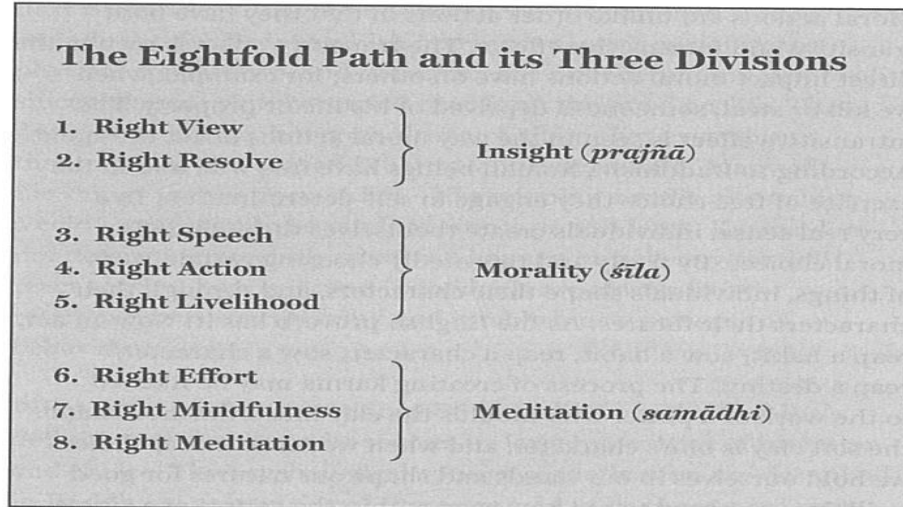
**Figure 2: The Four Noble Truths (Source: Keown, *Buddhist Ethics*, 4)**

Everyone can adopt these *Four Noble Truths* because they are the basic teachings that can be understood by everyone.<sup>29</sup> The last or fourth Noble Truth is called *Mārga* as the way to end suffering. *Mārga* is also called *The Noble Eight-fold Path*. It can be divided into three divisions, which are Insight (*prajñā*), right view and right resolve, Morality (*śīla*) as right speech, right action and Right Livelihood, and the last division is called Meditation (*Samādhi*), comprising right effort, right mindfulness and right meditation (see Figure 3).<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Alexander N. Chumakov, Ivan I. Mazour and William C. Gay, *Global Studies Encyclopedic Dictionary* (Amsterdam, New York: Editions Rodopi, 2014), 46.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.



**Figure 3: The Eightfold Path and its Three Divisions (Source: Keown, *Buddhist Ethics*, 5)**

The *Four Noble Truths* and The *Eightfold Path* are very important elements in the teaching of Buddhism. Buddhism encompasses a vast philosophy about the reality and circumstances of life. Buddhism can be defined as a religion which forecasts what will happen after our present lives. It believes in reincarnation which means that after death there is always rebirth into another earthly life, either as human being or even as an animal.<sup>31</sup> A good or bad form of reincarnation in the next life depends strongly on the present life of a person (*Karma*).

One key concept in Buddhism is *Nirvana*, which marks the most joyful and blissful state that a human being can achieve. The Buddhist doctrine is based on the understanding and belief that suffering is *the* essence of this life. According to Buddha, “life is suffering” and he explained what suffering means. According to Buddha, every suffering has a reason and it is very important to get to know what these reasons for our

<sup>31</sup> Edward P.H. Woo, *Buddhism: The Big Picture Explained* (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, 2008), 9.

sufferings are, because knowing these reasons can help us to stop suffering. And to end human suffering is the very goal of Buddhism, ultimately experienced when reaching *Nirvana*. “Nirvana is a state beyond human thought, beyond life and death and reincarnation.”<sup>32</sup> “The way to eradicate suffering is through the destruction of its cause, ignorance, and thence the cessation of craving. The result of this is enlightenment, nirvana.”<sup>33</sup>

### **1.3. The Buddhist Viewpoint on the Causes of Violence**

The roots of all unwholesome actions are greed, hatred and delusion which can be considered to be at the root of human conflicts.<sup>34</sup> The nature of human being is to possess things more and more which leads to greed. Everyone desires to have a fair share of wealth in life. It is good to have the necessary things what we need in our life; however, when people want to possess more things than they need, the tendency to become excessively attached to possessions can easily grow. That is one of the reasons that can lead to conflicts on the micro, meso, or macro level. Conflicts often arise from cultivating too much attachment to material and worldly things: pleasures, property, territory, wealth, economic dominance, ideas, race, nationality, culture or political superiority.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Carrithers, *Buddha*, 73.

<sup>33</sup> Williams, *Buddhism*, 14.

<sup>34</sup>Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics*, 239.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*

Conflicts and violence start from human's immorality.<sup>36</sup> To eliminate conflicts and violence and to live harmoniously with all, we need to think of others mutually and to treat them only good. The Buddhist perspective on the causes of violence and conflict is arrayed along external and, internal causes,<sup>37</sup> to which we will now turn to.

a. The External Causes of Violence

In the Buddhist perspective, the external causes of violence and conflicts as their consequences come from a general orientation common to all living beings: not to harm and obtaining happiness. Anything that contradicts with this will result in disturbing one's peace and leading to conflict. People who want to pursue happiness without harming have to start to avoid causing harm to others, physically and verbally at the personal level, since people are afraid of physical violence and resent harsh words. Using physical and verbal harm can usually cause others to hate, which leads to conflicts, which will bring harm to us and diminishes our happiness.<sup>38</sup>

Every human being wants to live in happiness and peace. People are searching for it. Sometimes endless searching for happiness and comfort generates the destruction of everything. Buddha teaches that if we want to live peacefully, we need to start doing something that can make us peaceful within ourselves. It is important to become

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<sup>36</sup> L.P. Raju and Gunde Gowda, "Buddhist Philosophy: an Ideal Source of World Peace", *Indian Journal of Research*, Vol. 3 (2014), 1-2.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Theresa Der-LanYeh, "The Way to Peace: Buddhist Perspective", *International Journal of Peace Studies*, Volume 11, Number 1, Spring/Summer 2006, 1-4.

patient with everyone. Harsh words can create negative emotions and hatred. This, in turn, can lead to conflicts and violence.<sup>39</sup> One passage of the Buddhist scripture says,

All fear death, None are unafraid of sticks and knives seeing yourself in others,  
Don't kill don't harm (*Dhammapada* 18, translated by Taisho 4: 210).

Bad words blaming others, Arrogant words humiliating others from these  
behaviors, Come hatred and resentment (*Dhammapada* 18, translated by Taisho  
4: 210).<sup>40</sup>

#### b. The Internal Causes of Violence

The words that we speak out, the things that we put in our actions are based on what is in our mind. It matters what we think! For instance; normally when someone hurts us, we want to respond (reciprocate) to this issue in the same manner as we have been hurt. Sometimes, if the involved problems are very serious, the responses can be also quite dangerous and can even lead to violence, conflict, and even wars. It is said that physical and structural violence are the product of human mental states such as fear, anger, and hate. All of these are to be considered in Buddhism as internal causes of violence and conflicts.<sup>41</sup>

Moreover, there are also conflicts because of our inner noises such as our desire, pride, attachment, greed and our selfishness.

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<sup>39</sup> Herman Wong, *Seeing into the Golden Eyes of Buddha* (Baltimore: Herman Wong, 2010), 59.

<sup>40</sup> Dr. L.P. Raju and Dr. Gunde Gowda, *Buddhist Philosophy: an Ideal Source of World Peace*, Vol. 3 (2014), 1-2.

<sup>41</sup> Der-Lan Yeh, *The Way to Peace: Buddhist Perspective*, 1-4.

For the sake of greedy desire, kings and kings are in conflict, So are monks and monks, people and people, regions and regions, states and states (*The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, Taisho28: 1547)<sup>42</sup>

Since human beings are social beings (a person is not an island unto himself/herself, they have to relate to society in any situation), good things or bad things can easily affect the social surrounding, community and entire society. It can be said, that the root of violence or conflict is based on the individual being. If every individual person stays calm or peaceful, there will be no outbreak of violence at all. However, if a person is violent and not proper balanced within himself, there is no way for peace to prevail. It is the same case as with conflicts between countries. Most wars happened because the countries involved did not stay calm or peaceful as they should have. There is a Chinese Proverb saying that, “Clapping with the right hands only will not make a noise.”

#### **1.4. The Buddhist Viewpoint towards Attaining Peace and Reconciliation**

Buddhism is generally characterized to be a religion of peace. According to the tradition of Buddhism, it is important to overcome on the individual level of each person three basic evil vices in life, which are hatred, greed, and delusion. Hatred is the adversary of loving kindness, compassion, and good will towards others. Greed is the basic enemy of generosity, and delusion hinders us to be open to reality and it can even destroy human wisdom. Therefore, it is very important to develop good virtues within ourselves in order to stay calm and peaceful and to practice non-violence.

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

Thus, true peace in the Buddhist understanding has to start within ourselves on the level of individuals. First we have to be peaceful within ourselves. Without inner peace, it is very difficult to share our lives properly and to live or make peace with others. According to Buddhism, meditation about loving kindness and mindfulness is the approach to develop inner peace and a propensity towards nonviolence.<sup>43</sup> In the Buddhists understanding, to attain peace is within the reach of one's own efforts and possibilities of self-transformation.

Buddhism describes peace within the context of a peaceful mind, peaceful human relationships and a peaceful society. A peaceful society is where people live happily and harmoniously together. Unfortunately, we cannot find this kind of society in this world yet. A society can only become peaceful when all people's virtuous conduct coincides with a proper degree of wealth. The role of the leader is important to create a peaceful society because it is very likely that a virtue or vice of the leader will influence all other people. If the leader is a good and virtuous person, it is more likely that the majority of people of the state or community will build an upright society. All the members of the society can then enjoy peace and prosperity.<sup>44</sup>

In order to achieve and keep peace, forgiveness and forbearance are also very important values. When there is a conflict between two parties, it is important that each side shows forbearance towards the other side. That people are getting hurt is quite normal in life and can hardly be avoided all the time. Thus, it becomes necessary and

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<sup>43</sup> Daniel M. Mayton II, *Nonviolence and Peace Psychology Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Societal, and World Peace* (New York: Springer, 2009), 79.

<sup>44</sup> ChanjuMun and Ronald S. Green, *Buddhist Exploration of Peace and Justice* (United States of America: Jung BupSa Buddhist Temple of Hawaii, 2006), 197-199.

very important to learn to forgive, to reconcile and to forget which requires patience and time. One of the texts of the Buddhist Scriptures says in this regard,

Worse of the two is he who, when reviled, reviles again. He who does not, when reviled, revile again, wins a twofold victory. He seeks the welfare of both himself and the other, who, having known the anger of another, mindfully maintains his peace. (S. 1.222; *Vism.* 324)<sup>45</sup>

A peaceful human relationship means to consider all the people as close friends. For a peaceful human relationship there are four mental states necessary which are called “Four Boundless States:” *mettā* (loving-kindness), *karunā* (compassion), *muditā* (sympathetic joy), and *upekksā* (equanimity). Everyone has to process friendliness (*mettā*), it is good to share the suffering of our neighbor (*Karunā*), not only to share their sadness and suffering but also their joyfulness (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekksā*), a state of mind that remains unmoved by pleasure and pain.<sup>46</sup> If we can develop these mental states in our relationships with others, hopefully this will reduce or even avoid any war or violence on earth and the earth will flourish with peacefulness.

One of the most essential teachings of the Buddha is to achieve inner peace. It is very clear that without reaching inner peace, we cannot promote peace to others as well as we cannot be truly peacemakers in our community and society. Another interesting issue of Buddha’s teaching, which is also very educative, is that Buddha not only teaches about the virtue of nonviolence but also never attempted to create something like a Just Defense War Theory. We often overlook the crucial element of Buddha’s nonviolent solution thoroughly therefore we waged many wars and conflicts in the name of a so

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<sup>45</sup>Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics*, 246.

<sup>46</sup>Keown, *Buddhist Ethics*, 15.

called Just Defend War. Buddha never considered war to be good or a solution. According to Buddhism, every war is bad. Buddha tried to live in harmony with nature and all living beings and showed his own good example towards all other fellow human beings. A ‘Prayer for Peace’ which SamdechPreahMahaGhnosananda, who was a highly revered Cambodian Buddhist monk, has composed includes the words:

*The suffering of Cambodia has been deep.*

*From this suffering comes Great Compassion.*

*Great Compassion makes a Peaceful Heart.*

*A Peaceful Heart makes a Peaceful Person.*

*A Peaceful Person makes a Peaceful Family.*

*A Peaceful Family makes a Peaceful Community.*

*A Peaceful Community makes a Peaceful Nation.*

*A Peaceful Nation makes a Peaceful World.*

*May all beings live in Happiness and Peace. (Ghosananda,*

1992:28)<sup>47</sup>

But we have to admit that, even though Buddhism did not develop any form of Just Defense (War) Theory, there were many conflicts and wars in Buddhist societies and countries. How this could happen is an issue for further reflections and research.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Harvery, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics*, 280-281.

<sup>48</sup> Kewon, *Buddhist Ethics*, 83.

## **2. Christian Perspectives on Peace and War**

In this chapter, the writer is going to discuss Christian perspectives on peace and war. For this purpose, the writer will go back and see the root where “peace” comes from according to the Biblical Scriptures and the teaching of the Church on peace. Christianity is one of the world religions that talk a lot about love, forgiveness, developing virtues, and promoting reconciliation and peace. Today, in our society, to talk about peace might be easier than its practical implementation. The fact that wars are unlikely to end brings along awareness that Christianity and other religions are facing a heavy task in working and striving for peace in the world. Wars are everywhere and many people are longing and thirsting for peace. For instance: in the Middle East, in African countries and even at the door of Europe (Ukraine, Macedonia). Meanwhile, the Church continues her teaching on peace in this challenging world to give witness to hope and reconciliation. However, it is still a question for the writer whether the teaching of the Church can help people to attain lasting peace, especially when the Just War Theory is misunderstood and abused. A main task to achieve peace is to promote love, forgiveness, reconciliation, and justice, which takes center stage in Catholic Social Teaching. Ultimately, Christians believe that peace is a gift from God.

### **2.1. 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.” Furthermore, God created the world and He entrusted everything to human beings as responsible stewards of all creation. This concept of stewardship dates from the beginning of time, when God entrusted the world to Adam and Eve and their offsprings (cf. Gen 1:26-28). Many people misunderstood this biblical concept and have tried to impose a destructive dominion over all creation instead of governing and stewarding God’s creations. This led to the negative effects on the environment today causing a lot of pollution and natural disasters.

God created human beings in his “image and likeness” and gave them the gift of free will (Gen 1:26; Deut 7:6). In the letter to the Hebrews, we read, “But solid food is for the mature, for those whose faculties have been trained by practice to distinguish good from evil” (Hebrew 5:14). The purpose of giving free will to human beings is for them to be able to think what is right and wrong, to love others freely, to discern and to make good decisions for themselves according to their consciousness and human dignity. 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. This is one of the reasons that Jesus says the two greatest commandments are to love God and to love our neighbor as ourselves (cf. 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,<sup>49</sup> and “God is love” (1 John 4:8).

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<sup>49</sup> Shirley C. Guthrie, *Christian Doctrine* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 199-202.

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.<sup>50</sup>

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.<sup>51</sup> 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.

Among all the creatures human beings are superior because they are social, reasonable, responsible, and spiritual beings. Though human beings are superior to other creatures in the sense of intellectuality, and self-consciousness, there are a lot of common things which human beings share with other living creatures. We all share the same environment and habitat on the planet. 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

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<sup>50</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2402.

<sup>51</sup> *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no.149.

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.<sup>52</sup>

The creation of a good society is based on truth. St. Paul expressed this as follows: “Putting away falsehood let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another” (Eph 4:25). However, we all are experiencing the challenges of finding the truth in today’s world. Since many people desire to be recognized by others in society, they wear masks and are using words which are not coming from their hearts. It is one of the biggest challenges to build a good and peaceful society.

A society, in the Christian perspective is:

A group of persons bound together organically by a principle of unity that goes beyond each one of them. As an assembly that is at once visible and spiritual, a society endures through time: it gathers up the past and prepares for the future. By means of society, each man is established as an "heir" and receives certain "talents" that enrich his identity and whose fruits he must develop. He rightly owes loyalty to the communities of which he is part and respect to those in authority who have charge of the common good.<sup>53</sup>

For building a good society, it is necessary for everyone to follow after the guidance of justice, respect the rights of others and to be a responsible person. Moreover, it is important for people to be animated by love which can make people feel the needs of others as being like their own, and this should lead them to share their own goods with their neighbors especially the neediest and the poor.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> John C. Meyer, *Christian Beliefs and Teachings* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1981), 85.

<sup>53</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1880.

<sup>54</sup> John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, no. 35-36.

Henceforth, any society is more than just the sum of individuals. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* mentions, a society endures through time: it gathers up from the past and prepares the present generation for the future. The purpose of a society is not just an organization but it goes further to enable people to do good things so that they help each other when people are in need. According to the *Catechism*, a human society contains a spiritual dimension which means there are spiritual values existing in a society regardless of boundaries between religions.<sup>55</sup> A society, therefore, is more than an organization, building on different cultures, and different religions for the common good of the people.

## **2.2. Jewish Perspectives on Peace and War**

Violence and wars are very much present in the history of the people of God, particularly from the Exodus period to the monarchy. Israel presented God as the one who leads the Hebrews in battle, protects them from their enemies, and makes them victorious over their enemies (cf. Dt 1:30; 20:4; Jos. 2:24; Jdgs 3:28).<sup>56</sup> The use of the metaphor, God as Warrior, has many purposes such as to provide the people with a sense of security, that God is powerful and a call to faith and to trust in God alone.

For the Israelites, war was a constant fact because of various political, social and religious reasons. This helps us also to understand how deeply the people longed for peace. It is striking how many times the prophets condemned Israel's militarism and how they longed for peace. For instance, the Prophet Hosea scolded the Northern Kingdom of

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> The National Conference of Catholic Bishops, "A Pastoral Letter on War and Peace", *The Challenges of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response*. Washington: D.C. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Inc. May 3, 1983.

Israel for mistrusting God and only trusting in human power, “Trusted in your power and in the multitude of your warriors” (Hos 10:13). Moreover Prophets Isaiah and Micah strongly maintained their hope of lasting peace (Is 2:2-4; 9:5; 11:1-9) and (Mic 4:1-7) were startling in the light of the constant threat of warfare that hung like a dark shadow over the land.<sup>57</sup> Many people misjudge the Hebrew Bible (for Christians the Old Testament) because it seems to be too gruesome. But in fact it is good that the Hebrew Bible does not hide or cover up violence. In fact, the Bible does not only uncover violence but struggles honestly towards a society that becomes free from violence and war. To stop the cover up of hidden and open violence is the first bold step to overcome violence and wars. Many prophets voice out against violence, injustice and were promoting peace by trusting God. “If you do not stand firm in faith, you shall not stand at all” (Is 7:9) means, to be faithful only to the commandments that Yahweh had given to them. Peace is always the result of fidelity to God’s covenant. Moreover, there will be no war anymore according to the prophesy of Isaiah,

In days to come, the mountain of the Lord’s house, Shall be established as the highest of the mountains, And shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it. Many peoples shall come and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.’ For out of Zion shall go forth instruction and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many people; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more, (Isa 2:2-4).

This is a most wonderful promise of overcoming violence, crimes, and wars. This will be accomplished by ‘the’ servant of God, which is described in the 4 songs of the

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<sup>57</sup> John A. Wood, *War in the Old Testament* (Waco, Texas: Center for Christian Ethic at Baylor University, 2004), 3.

servant in Isaiah. Let us reflect on the last, the Fourth song of the servant in Isaiah 52:13-53:12, because it shows very clear the way away from violence in the Hebrew Bible:

See, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. Just as there were many who were astonished at him, so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of mortals, so he shall startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard they shall contemplate...Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors (Is 52:13-53:12).

The Hebrew Bible shows in Isaiah a clear Exodus from violence, accomplished by the Servant of God, who does not take recourse to violence anymore, but only fully trusts God. For Christians, this great promise has been fulfilled in word and in deed (fact) by the historical person of Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah or Christos.

### **2.3. The Road from Violence: Jesus Christ**

In the Christian tradition, the history on war and peace is a long and complex one. Though the purpose of all the religions is to work for the common good for all people, there are moments that people get involved in wars and struggle for working for peace due to different reasons, among them Christianity is one. In the history of Christianity the understanding of peace was not the same over time. Peace evolves in time. Christians always regarded peace as a gift from God as the result of fidelity to God's covenant and His instructions. The Church's teaching has always understood peace in a positive term and as something to strive for and to preserve.

The New Testament mostly offers a counter-war option. The person of Jesus and his entire life is a perfect example of an anti-violence and anti-war attitude. For instance, he saved the Woman caught in adultery from being stoned. "Whoever is without sin,

might throw the first stone onto her”, he said. Nobody threw a stone, not even he himself. This is the true turning point in the history of violence. But of course this was very dangerous for himself and he took on violence on himself, as the true Servant of God. His death on the cross signifies the strongest example of a non-violence choice in fulfillment of the songs of the servant in Isaiah.<sup>58</sup>

One of the outstanding teachings of Jesus on non-violence is the Sermon on the Mount, which made a deep impact on Mahatma Gandhi, “You have heard that it was said, ‘an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth’ (Exod 21:24; Lev 24:20; Deut 19:21). But I say to you, do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also (Matt 5:38-39). Jesus also says in the Gospel of Luke, “Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on one cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt” (Lk 6: 27-29).<sup>59</sup>To love and to forgive others is the starting point on the way to reconciliation and lasting peace.

For Christians, Jesus is the model of love, nonviolent action and for justice. He shows the meaning of peace and nonviolence by his teachings and good deeds. The people of Israel were hoping for the powerful intervention of God, who will impose justice by destroying the enemies of Israel. Their expectation was totally different from Jesus’ experience. Jesus is a healer, not a destroyer of life; he loves justice, he does not reject sinners but accepts and forgives them. His teachings are challenging to live and

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<sup>58</sup> Norbert Lohfink, *Church Dreams: Talking against the Trend*, trans. Linda M. Maloney (Texas: Bibal Press: North Richland Hills, 2000), 89- 94.

<sup>59</sup>Lohfink, *Church Dreams*, 89- 94.

some of the expressions in his teachings are scandalous even today. He simply proclaims a way of acting that tests the limits of the possible.<sup>60</sup> In fact, the reign of God requires a world organized not around violence, but around peace, love, compassion, and truth. Jesus himself fulfilled what Isaiah wrote about the Servant of God (Is 52:13-53:12). He takes violence silently upon himself and opens the window of an exit from violence for humanity. His life, example, and his way are the true “road from violence” (Lohfink).

In order to attain peace, the teaching of Jesus is the model for Christians to achieve lasting peace. As mentioned above, Jesus is the model and way for nonviolence and peace. He, himself is the peace, a true gift from God the Father. Among his teachings, the “Golden Rule” is one of the teachings, which we have to apply while working to attain peace. The expression “Golden Rule” is used specifically with reference to the precept of Jesus Christ in the Gospel of Matthew in the context of the Sermon on the Mount: “In everything you do to others as you would have them do to you: for this is the law and the prophets” (Matt 7:12). There is another version which we find “Do to others as you would have them do to you” (Lk 6:31). As a disciple of Jesus or a Christian, we are obliged to be proactively doing things for others, the positive things that we would want others to do for us. Christa Steward stated, “The golden rule is a rule Jesus told us to cherish because it is worth much more than gold.”<sup>61</sup> This is one of the moral teachings of Jesus to put into action while we are searching for peace.

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<sup>60</sup> José Antonio Pagola, *Jesus: An Historical Approximation*, trans. Margaret Wilde (New Delhi: Convivium Press: Theological Publishing in India, 2012), 254-257.

<sup>61</sup> Christa R. Steward, *The Little Frog Learns the Golden Rule* (Mustang, OK: Tate Publishing House, 2010), 7.

For Christians, God is the God of peace (1 Thess 5:23) and Jesus Christ, the Messiah, is the Prince of Peace (Is 9:5), our peace (Eph 2:14). One of the purposes of Jesus' in being sent into the world is to bring peace and to renew all things. After his resurrection, he used to greet his disciples with the words "Peace be with you" (Lk 24:36; Jn 20:19). Indeed, Jesus himself is a peace-maker and the true peace which the world cannot give. Through his death and resurrection he reconciled God and humankind, and the whole universe with himself (Col 1:20). In fact, before he left our world, he gave one special to his disciples: "Peace I bequeath to you, my own peace I give you, this is my gift to you" (Jn 14:27).<sup>62</sup>

The New Testament uses the image of war, for instance: in the apocalyptic images of the final moments of history, as they are depicted in the Book of Revelation. War is represented as image of the eschatological struggle between God and Satan, where the Lamb is victorious (Rev 17:14).<sup>63</sup>

It is very clear that the scriptures do not provide detailed answers to the specific questions and challenges which we face today concerning issues of war and peace. For instance: they never mention a nuclear war or nuclear weapons. However, the scriptures and the Catholic Social Teaching provide and give the right principles and direction to face today's challenges. In fact, the fullness of eschatological peace remains before us in hope and yet the gift of peace is already ours in the reconciliation effected in Jesus Christ.

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<sup>62</sup> Fausto B. Gomez, *Social Ethics: Doctrine and Life* (Manila:Santo Thomas University Press, 1991), 52.

<sup>63</sup> The National Conference of Catholic Bishops, "A Pastoral Letter on War and Peace", *The Challenges of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response*. Washington: D.C. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Inc. May 3, 1983.

These two profoundly religious meanings of peace inform and influence all other meanings for Christians.<sup>64</sup> Peace is a gift of God and also a task for the people of God to seek ways in which forgiveness, justice and peace of God prevails over violence so much present in this world today.

Though Christianity is known as a religion that works for peace, it has been much involved in war. There are three approaches to war that have been most relevant for the Church: a holy war or crusade, just war or justifiable war, and pacifism. The first crusade was called in November 1095 by Pope Urban II in the town of Clermont in central France. The Pope made a proposal: “Whoever for devotion alone, but not to gain honor or money, goes to Jerusalem to liberate the Church of God can substitute this journey for all penance”.<sup>65</sup> With that mentality people of all social ranks joined the first crusade. The crusaders killed hundreds of men, women and children in their victorious entrance into the city. Until the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, groups of crusaders sought to gain ground in the Holy Land through short-lived raids that proved little more than an annoyance to Muslim rulers in the region. Those events were some of the bloodiest in Christian history.

There is no such a theory as a ‘just war theory’; there are rather views regarding the circumstances under which recourse to force in defense is allowed. It is the latter which goes by the name of the “Just War Theory”, which should be better called “Just

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<sup>64</sup>TheNational Conference of Catholic Bishops, “A Pastoral Letter on War and Peace”, *The Challenges of Peace: God’s Promise and Our Response*.

<sup>65</sup> Jonathan, Phillips. "THE CRUSADES. (Cover story)." *History Today* 65, no. 5 (May 2015): 26-34. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed May 21, 2015).

Defense Theory”.<sup>66</sup>The Just War Theory has often been used to justify going to war, even in the present day. It is often thought that St. Augustine was the originator of the Just War Theory. In fact, Augustine’s Theory of Just War is to a large extent based on Cicero’s own Theory of Just War, which Augustine modified with his own political, philosophical and theological ideas into a concept that was acceptable to him and his Christian outlook. Thus, the idea of a ‘Just War’ Theory started with Cicero (106-43 BC) who emphasized the justice and order that should belong to the Roman government; he sees war as governed by the same code of law that rules over all society.<sup>67</sup> He thinks that war must be declared in a legal way:

No war is just, unless there has been an official demand for satisfaction submitted or unless a warning and formal declarations have been first given.<sup>68</sup>

Cicero wishes to retain the primacy of peace and reasons but without losing the values of courage and bravery. War is to be resorted to only when diplomacy fails. “War, therefore, is to be undertaken in such a way that it should be seen that it seeks nothing else but peace”.<sup>69</sup> His purpose was to seek peace through waging war as the last resort.

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<sup>66</sup> Paul Ramsey prefers to translate the Latin *justum bellum* as ‘justified war’ rather than ‘just war’. (Ramsey, Paul, “The Just War According to St. Augustine,” in Elsthain, Jean Bethke (ed), 1992. *Just War Theory*. New York: New York University Press, 8-22, esp. 8.) However, even this name can be misleading if it suggests that the purpose is to look for ways for justifying war. In fact the major presupposition is that war is never just, but this is not an absolute dictum and hence there may be circumstances in which it is not unjustified. From the book of Edmund Ryden, *Just War and Pacifism: Chinese and Christian Perspectives in Dialogue* (Taipei: Taipei Ricci Institute, 2001), 15.

<sup>67</sup> Edmund Ryden, *Just War And Pacifism: Chinese and Christian Perspectives in Dialogue* (Taipei: Taipei Ricci Institute, 2001), 16.

<sup>68</sup> Cicero, (Miller, Walter (tran.)), *De Officiis*, Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library Cicero XXX, 1913, Book I Ch XI [#36]...*nullum bellum esse iustum, nisi quod aut rebus repetitis geratur aut denuntiatur ante sit et indictum*. From the book of Ryden, *Just War and Pacifism*, 15.

<sup>69</sup> Ryden, *Just War And Pacifism*, 16.

Although St. Augustine uses the term ‘just war’, his interpretation goes beyond the original idea. For him, peace is the order intended by God and when this order is disturbed, it is under specific circumstances legitimate to reestablish the natural order, which is the peace to protect the innocent and weak.<sup>70</sup> For Aquinas, every war is bad and to be avoided. Later on St. Thomas Aquinas revised Augustine’s version, creating three criteria for a Just Defense War: the war needed to be waged by a legitimate authority, have a just cause, and is pursued with the right intention, and only as last resort.<sup>71</sup> Firstly, a defense war can be waged only by the legitimate authority. No war is just, unless there has been an official demand for satisfaction submitted or unless a warning and formal declarations have been first given.<sup>72</sup> Secondly, a just cause is necessary, which is the central condition for many discussions over the justification of a war. If a Just Cause cannot be shown, many people will rightly and should reject the call to war. Thirdly, there must be the right intention. The only intention of war has to be seeking nothing else but peace.<sup>73</sup> In this concept war can be used only as a last resort and as a lesser evil, hoping the victory is the result of the just defense war. In fact, the idea and the purpose of creating the Just Defense War Theory is not to create wars or not to blind ourselves with this theory but to use it as an effort to prevent violence and war and to have strong and strict criteria in the case of a just defense: only if war cannot be rationally avoided, does

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<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> Fausto B. Gomez, *The Praxis of Justice and Solidarity* (Manila: UST Social Research Center, 1988), 133.

<sup>72</sup> Ryden, *Just War And Pacifism*, 16.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

the teaching then seek to restrict and reduce its horrors with strong reasons in favor of peace and against war.

Pacifism was definitely the dominant viewpoint within the Church in its first three centuries.<sup>74</sup> But the word “pacifism” came into use around 1900, apparently first in Europe, to describe a generalized attitude of opposition to war. A more restricted sense was found in early Christianity designating the absolute refusal to use force against persons (often called nonresistance, from Jesus’ admonition in Matthew 5:39, “But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also”).<sup>75</sup> In early Christianity, pacifism was grounded in the example and teachings of Jesus, Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:38-48). Christians practiced this method up to the fourth century including the rejection of the bearing of arms and of joining the military service, even at the cost of martyrdom. There are several types of pacifism, for instance: “absolutist pacifism” which includes personal pacifism (opposition to all killing) and political pacifism (opposition to all war). Both types of pacifism are “absolutist”, but in different ways.<sup>76</sup>

All the Christians are called to follow the example of Jesus who did not resist arrest and allowed himself to be crucified for the love of humankind. Jesus says, “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friend”. (Jn 15:13). But Jesus asked the question “...but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?” (Jn 18:23)

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<sup>74</sup> Turner, *World Religions and Norms of War* (accessed March 23, 2015).

<sup>75</sup> As it is quoted in “Pacifism,” in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, ed. Erwin Fahlbusch, Geoffrey Villiam Bromiley, Volume 4 (Grand Rapids: Michigan, 2005), 2-6.

<sup>76</sup> Cheyney Ryan. "Pacifism, Just War, and Self-Defense." *Philosophia* 41, no. 4 (December 2013): 977-1005. *Humanities International Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed May 25, 2015).

when he was slapped during his trial by soldiers. He wanted to bring awareness into their actions of violence by asking question and by focusing on truth, the way things are.

Looking back into the history of Christianity, it has been involved in wars and conflicts. On the other hand, Christians also worked and tried to promote peace by different ways based on the teachings of Jesus.

#### **2.4. Catholic Social Teaching on Just Defense**

After the second Vatican Council, there are many documents concerning with Just defense saying that not only just defense is allowed but it is even a duty and obligatory to do it. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* writes in this regard:

Legitimate defense can be not only a right but a grave duty for one who is responsible for the lives of others. The defense of the common good requires that an unjust aggressor be rendered unable to cause harm. For this reason, those who legitimately hold authority also have the right to use arms to repel aggressors against the civil community entrusted to their responsibility (*CCC 2265*).

When defending peace, the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* states that “every member of the armed forces is morally obliged to resist orders that call for perpetrating crimes against the law of nations and the universal principles of this law.”<sup>77</sup> Everyone has the duty to protect the innocent even by using force. Those who devote themselves to the military service of their country should regard themselves as the agents of security and freedom of the people by fulfilling their role properly (*GS 79*). These are some reasons why the Church allows a just defense based on the strict and narrow rules of the Just Defense Theory. This marks also a difference to Buddhism,

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<sup>77</sup>*CSDC*, no. 503.

which did not develop any form of Just Defense Theory. The following Figure 4 gives an overview of the main principle of the so called Just Defense War Theory:

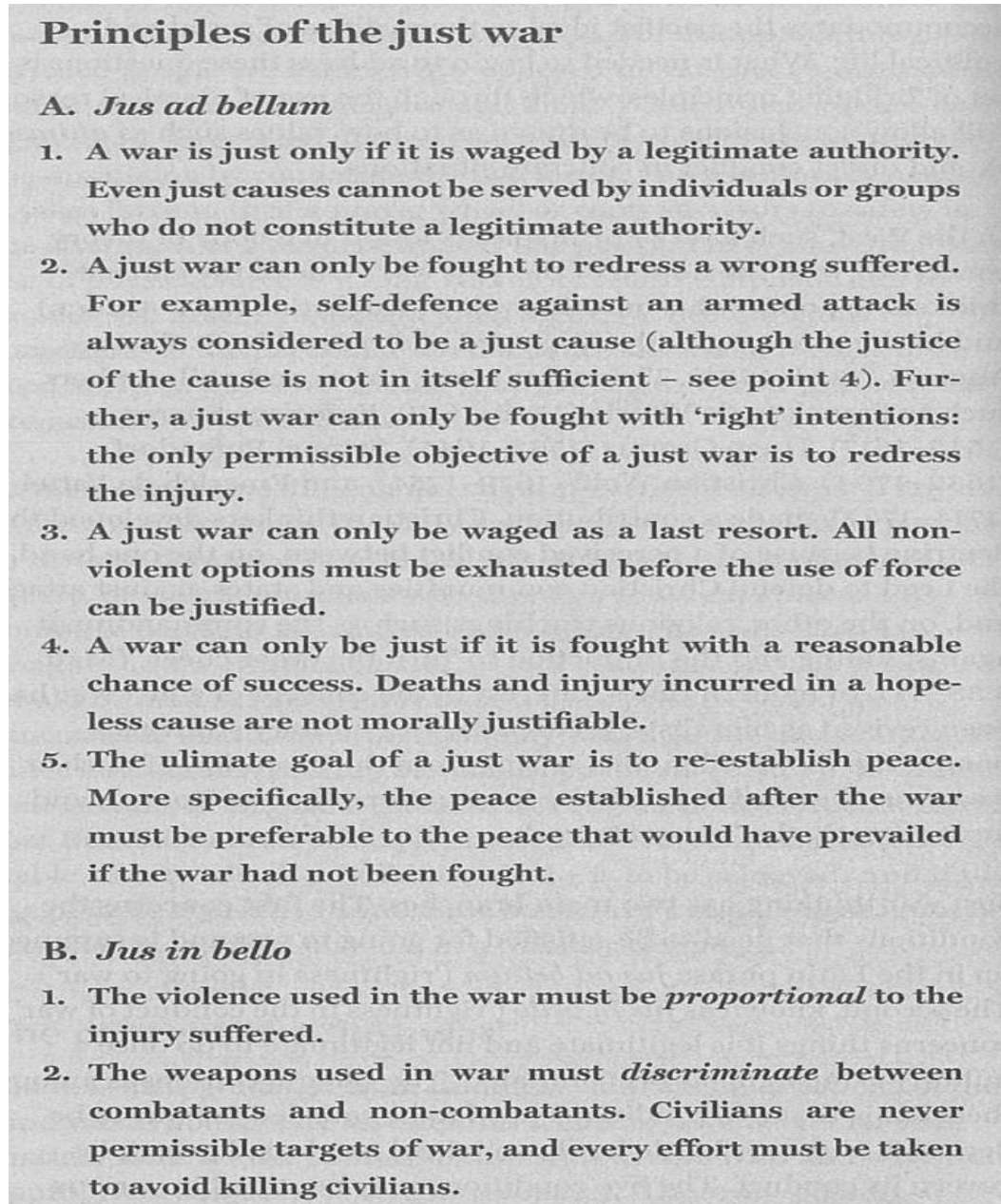


Figure 4: Principles of the Just Defense War (Source: Keown, *Buddhist Ethics*, 80)

## **2.5. No Peace without Justice - No Justice without Love and Forgiveness**

Concerning the promotion of peace, Christianity is one of the religions that work hard by her teaching as well as by actions. To work for peace is very challenging, today, because violence does not only happen between nations or peoples but also between religions which are supposed to be good models for peace. There is a lot of teaching of the Church on peace as well as many theologians wrote intensively about peace. Last year, when Pope Francis prayed for peace in Syria, he said, “peace is a precious gift, which must be promoted and protected. Never has the use of violence brought peace in its wake. War begets war, violence begets violence.”<sup>78</sup> Everyone is responsible to promote peace in our world and to abstain from violence individually and politically.

St. Augustine and St. Thomas analyzed violence and an unjust aggression as a violation of charity. All people are called to love and to be loved and Jesus even commanded us to love even our enemy. Love is the greatest commandment for Christians. Jesus summarized all the commandments and laws into two great commandments: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt 22:36-40). It is radical to love others as ourselves and even more to love our enemies. In the face of violence, especially of terroristic violence, Christians usually declined to apply “pure” retributive justice, which is “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth...” Jesus answered to this with his antithesis: “Love your enemies and pray for your persecutors;

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<sup>78</sup>Pope Francis’ Appeal, [http://www.hindleycatholic.org.uk/drupal/article\\_080913](http://www.hindleycatholic.org.uk/drupal/article_080913) (accessed on May 12, 2015).

only so can you be children of your heavenly Father” (Matt 5:44-45).<sup>79</sup> Only love can stop the vicious circle of violence and Jesus himself lived up to this love in practice.

Violence has to be differentiated from force, which is a kind of power which can affect positively (power to build life) or negatively (power to destroy life) a society, or humankind, including nature and animals. Contemporary dictionaries define ‘force’ as strength or energy as an attribute of a physical action or a movement. Many people usually think and understand violence in a negative sense to mean an overpowering force (physical, moral, structural) which influences negatively the dignity, rights and the freedom of a person or of a social group.<sup>80</sup> For Christians, the main root of social violence is “Sin”,<sup>81</sup> which is a “No” of mankind to live according to the plan of God. Sin separates from God and from one another and from nature.

Sin makes humankind accomplices of one another and causes concupiscence, violence, and injustice to reign among them. Sins give rise to social situations and institutions (structures of sin) that are contrary to the divine plan and goodness (CCC, 1869). The Social Teaching of the Catholic Church strongly condemns war that is accompanied by massive violence and destruction. In fact, war and violence often result from fear, anger, intolerance, impatience, injustices, and aggression which are endangering peace.<sup>82</sup> Subsequently, “Any act of war aimed indiscriminately at the

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<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.

<sup>80</sup> Gomez, *The Praxis of Justice and Solidarity*, 131.

<sup>81</sup> CCC, 1849: Sin is an offense against reason, truth and right conscience; it is a failure in genuine love for god and neighbor caused by a perverse attachment to certain goods. It wounds the nature of man and injures human solidarity. It has been defined as an utterance, a deed or a desire contrary to eternal law.

<sup>82</sup> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Confronting a Culture of Violence: A Catholic Framework for Action*, 1994. <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and->

destruction of entire cities of extensive areas along with their population is a crime against God and man himself. It merits unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation”(*Gaudium et Spes*, 80). Moreover, the Church continues to teach:

Whatever is opposed to life itself, such as any type of murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia or willful self-destruction, whatever violates the integrity of the human person, such as mutilation, torments inflicted on body or mind, attempts to coerce the will itself; whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children; as well as disgraceful working conditions, where men are treated as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons; all these things and others of their like are infamies indeed. They poison human society, but they do more harm to those who practice them than those who suffer from the injury. Moreover, they are a supreme dishonor to the Creator (*Gaudium et Spes*, 27).

“All things desire peace”, says St. Augustine. And yet, we turn around and see wars, violence, division, injustice, oppression and hate.<sup>83</sup> The whole witness and social ministry of the Christians is aiming at peace. “There is no way to peace; peace is the way”, A.J. Muste states. Moreover, promoting justice is a way to peace. This work for justice includes also the environment. Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI says, “If you want to cultivate peace, protect creation”.<sup>84</sup> All men and women of good will have to work for peace which is our world’s most needed gift of God and the most urgent task of all people. Everyone is called to work for peace in our world.

The Christian scriptures are written in the Hebrew and Greek language. The word “peace” in Hebrew is “*shalom*” which people use even for their greeting in daily life.

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[dignity/violence/confronting-a-culture-of-violence-a-catholic-framework-for-action.cfm](#) (accessed on June 16, 2015).

<sup>83</sup> Gomez, *Social Ethics*, 52.

<sup>84</sup> Benedict XVI, *If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation*. <http://www.michaeljournal.org/peacecreation.htm> (accessed on May 29, 2015).

*Shalom* generally translates as a single word as peace, rest, favor, safe, health, welfare and prosperity. The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedi* refers to peace as “a basic meaning of totality or completeness including fulfillment, maturity, soundness, and wholeness.”<sup>85</sup> The Greek word most often translated in the New Testament as “peace” is “*eirene*” which means joining what had previously been separated or disturbed. *The Daily Study Bible Commentary* by William Barclay expresses that peace means not just freedom from trouble but everything that makes for a man’s highest good.<sup>86</sup> Peace therefore, never connotes a negative meaning.

Peace, as explained by John XXIII in his encyclical letter *Pacem in Terris*, is a dynamic concept: that is, a process from conflict to dialogue, from injustice to justice from selfishness to love, from error and falsehood to truth, from slavery to freedom. “Peace will be but an empty sounding word unless it is founded on an order based on truth, builds according to justice, vivified and integrated by charity, and put into practice in freedom.”<sup>87</sup> In order to attain peace, truthfulness, justice, charity and freedom are necessary elements to nourish and sustain it.

The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* states, “Mutual forgiveness must not eliminate the need for justice and still less does it block the path that leads to truth. On the contrary, justice and truth represent the concrete requisites for

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<sup>85</sup> Bible verses about Peace (From Forerunner Commentary), <http://www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Topical.show/RTD/cgg/ID/597/Peace.htm> (accessed on March 9, 2015).

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, no. 167; cf. Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, nos. 78 and 73. See also H. Hendrickx, *Peace, Anyone? Biblical Reflections on Peace and Violence* (Quzon City: Claretian Publications, 1986). See also Gomez, *The Praxis of Justice and Solidarity*, 153.

reconciliation”.<sup>88</sup> True peace is made possible only through forgiveness and reconciliation.<sup>89</sup> Personal experience shows that the process of forgiveness is not easy in life. Jesus said to his disciples to forgive seventy-seven times (Matt 18:22). Here the use of seventy-seven is symbolic which means he wants us to forgive countless times. All Christians are called to forgive and to love all kinds of enemies such as personal enemies, those who harm the family, group adversaries, and the oppressors of the people.

Peace means overall harmony and concord internally and externally. There are four columns building up peace which are freedom, truth, justice, and love.<sup>90</sup> Peace therefore requires working together in love by loving one another. Emeritus Pope *Benedict XVI* said at the occasion of the World’s Day of Peace in 2013, to work for peace includes, “to say no to revenge, to recognize injustices, to accept apologies without looking for them, and finally, to forgive”.<sup>91</sup>

To become authentic peacemakers, it is fundamental to keep in mind our transcendent dimension and to enter into constant dialogue with God, the Father of mercy, whereby we implore the redemption achieved for us by his only-begotten Son. In this way mankind can overcome that progressive dimming and rejection of peace which is sin in all its forms: selfishness and violence, greed and the will to power and dominion, intolerance, hatred and unjust structures.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> *CSDC*, no.518.

<sup>89</sup> *CSDC*, no.517.

<sup>90</sup> Fausto B. Gomez, *A Pilgrim’s Notes: Ethics. Social Ethics. Bioethics* (Manila:UST Social Research Center, 2005), 88.

<sup>91</sup> Emeritus Pope *Benedict XVI*, *For the Message of the World Day of Peace*, 2013. No.7. [http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/peace/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_mes\\_20121208\\_xlvi-world-day-peace.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20121208_xlvi-world-day-peace.html) (accessed on 27 April 28, 2015).

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid*, no.3.

Peace is a gift of God and at the same time a task for the people as mentioned. It is a grace of God through Jesus and a responsibility for the peoples rooted in that divine grace.<sup>93</sup> While we are waiting for the second coming of Jesus here on earth, we need earthly peace. Earthly peace “is the image and fruit of the peace of Christ, the messianic ‘prince of peace’” (CCC, 2305). All Christians are called to bring more fruits of truth, justice, virtues, and peace. To work for peace or peacemaking in this challenging world is not easy and very demanding. But the kingdom of God belongs to those who practice the beatitudes: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, the gentle, the merciful, the persecuted for the sake of justice... and the peacemakers” (Matt 5:3-10). Before we work for peace, it is important to be a peaceful person within oneself. As Pope Paul VI says: “peace begins within our hearts”. Indeed, as the song exclaims: “let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me”. To have peace within ourselves, we need to have peace with God, for we are sinners who are lacking of true peace in our hearts.<sup>94</sup> It is very obvious that we cannot share with others what we do not have or possess.

The great Protestant theologian Karl Barth once said: “Any Christian who wishes to live responsibly must read two things: the Bible and the daily newspaper and never one without the other!”<sup>95</sup> His intention was to draw attention to what was happening in the world in order to see through faith and to be committed in these situations and to improve present situations. Also today, unfortunately, wars and violence are happening. The whole humankind is responsible and is called to condemn violence and aggression in

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<sup>93</sup>Gomez, *A Pilgrim's Notes*, 89.

<sup>94</sup>Fausto B. Gomez, *Blessed are the peacemakers*, <http://www.dominicansmacau.org/?p=1679>(accessed on 27 April 28, 2015).

<sup>95</sup> Harry Kawilarang, *Quotations on Terrorism* (Victoria, B.C.: Trafford, 2004), 51.

their different forms. To be authentic, this must be shown in deeds, personal and collective good deeds in favor of life promoting justice and solidarity. According to the Catholic moralist and theologian Fausto Gomez, Christians are doubly obliged by our humanity and faith to denounce physical and structural violence: the violence of torture and murder, the violence of injustice and corruption, and the violence that can harm humankind and the creation.<sup>96</sup> Violence is never good anywhere and at any times, since, violence is against God and against the dignity of humankind and the beauty of all creation.

Everyone is responsible to protect peace and to work for peace. Is it possible to obtain peace in our conflictive situations? Emeritus Pope says in his World Day of Peace Message that “peace is not a dream or something utopian; it is possible”.<sup>97</sup> We only need to go to turn deep into our heart and listen what our conscious is telling us to do discerning the reality. We all are called to be peacemakers, in a special manner the Christians, as St. Francis Assisi teaches us in his prayer,

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.  
Where there is injury, pardon.  
Where there is doubt, faith.  
Where there is despair, hope.  
Where there is darkness, light.  
And where there is sadness, joy.*

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<sup>96</sup> Gomez, *Social Ethics*, 161-163.

<sup>97</sup> Benedict XVI, For the Celebration of the World Day of Peace (1 January, 2013). [http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/peace/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_mes\\_20121208\\_xlvi-world-day-peace.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20121208_xlvi-world-day-peace.html) (accessed on 27 May, 2015).

### 3. Similarities and Differences between Buddhism and Christianity in Their Teaching on Peace and War

In this chapter, the writer is going to focus on the similarities and differences between two world religions, Buddhism and Christianity concerning their understanding of peace and war. Buddhism originated from the East and also Christianity has its origin in the East but developed in the last 1000 years strongly in the west. Nevertheless, the author wants to delve deeper to discover ways of overlap, complementation and unity in their common quest for peace.<sup>98</sup> The purpose of writing this chapter is in spite of differences in their teachings both religions can still work together for the common goal which is peace.

The prayer of Pope John XXIII at the opening of the Vatican II was, “O Holy Spirit, Come down upon the Church and renew it with a new Pentecostal experience.” This prayer seems to be answered because the Church’s attitudes towards other religions have become positive and more open. The greatest proof of this is the document “*Nostra Aetate*” which talks about interreligious dialogue with others religions.<sup>99</sup> It is very challenging to dialogue about the Christian and Buddhists’ faith. The Church does not consider that the faith of Buddhism and other religions are wrong. That is not to say that Buddhists whose sights are set on *Nirvana* will not be saved. “Blessed are the pure in

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<sup>98</sup> Juliet Bennett, *Religion War and Peace* <http://www.julietbennett.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/Buddhism-and-Christianity.pdf> (accessed on May 27, 2015).

<sup>99</sup> George Varghese Tothamkara, *Vincentian Charism and Formation in Asia Oacific: Church documents on Interreligious Dialogue* <https://cccprf.wordpress.com/2011/02/05/church-documents-on-interreligious-dialogue/> (Accessed on 19 July, 2015).

heart, for they shall see God.” Buddhism appears to be a path for the pure in heart, the poor in spirit, the meek, and the merciful.<sup>100</sup> The document *Nostra Aetate* recognizes the salvific value of other religions but at the same time hold on to the proclamation of Jesus Christ:

The document also recognizes the salvific value of other religions. The Church does not reject any thing found as holy and true in true in these religions. Indeed the practices, lifestyle, laws and theories in these religions are different from that of what the church believes and teaches. Yet the Church looks at them with sincere respect, because in all of them there is the reflection of the rays of that truth which enlightens all men. Indeed, she proclaims and must ever proclaim Christ, ‘the way, the truth, and the life’ (Jn 14:6), in whom men find the fullness of religious life, and in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself (*NA 2*).

### **3.1. Similarities between Buddhism and Christianity in their Teaching on Peace and War**

#### **3.1.1. The Importance of Peace in Buddhism and Christianity**

One of the common goals of Buddhism and Christianity is to achieve and preserve peace. Both of them believe also that nonviolence is the effective way to overcome violence, injustice and to attain peace. If the people practice the old saying, “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,” it is important to remember what Gandhi responded to it, “An eye for an eye will only make the whole world blind.” Further, he also says, “Nonviolence is a weapon of the Strong.” One concrete example of this is that Jesus taught nonviolence and practiced nonviolence by dying on the cross.

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<sup>100</sup> Stratford Caldecott, *Catholic and Other Religions: Introducing Interfaith Dialogue* (London: CTS Publications, 2009), 36-38.

The Buddhist tradition offers rich resources for peacemaking and the cultivation of non-violence.<sup>101</sup> In our contemporary time, we all are aware that there is a rising level of violence around us. In Buddhism one of the core teachings is non-violence (*Ahimsa*). Ahimsa can mean not only non-injury or non-violence, but also love.<sup>102</sup> Love is the beginning of all good actions. Love can conquer everything. In Christianity this is expressed by St. Paul, “Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Cor 13: 4-7). A peaceful world is the wish of God. In Christianity everyone is called to live harmoniously and constructively to advance the fullness and the wholeness of life with other fellow human beings. Jesus said to his disciples, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). To live harmoniously with everyone, love is needed again in our hearts. John Paul II, in his World Day of Peace in 2002 says, “Peace is the work of justice and love”. True justice comes only together with true love.

Everyone wishes to live in peace. Why is peace so important for all people? Because without peace the world will be destroyed. Peace is important not only in every religion but also in every single thing that exists in this world. Along the history, many people worked for peace in different ways because they knew the importance of peace.

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<sup>101</sup> Edgar Javier, "Advocacy for Justice and Dialogue with Buddhism." *Philippiniana Sacra* 42, no. 127 (January 2008): 99-112. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed June 4, 2015). See also Christopher Queen, “The Peace Wheel: Non-violent Activism in the Buddhist Tradition” in *Subverting Hatred: The Challenge of Nonviolence in Religious Traditions*, ed. Daniel Smit-Christopher, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1998), 25.

<sup>102</sup> Edgar Javier, "Advocacy for Justice and Dialogue with Buddhism." *Philippiniana Sacra* 42, no. 127 (January 2008): 99-112. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed June 4, 2015).

All religions believe that peace is important not only in the external or societal realm but also in the internal or spiritual realm. In Buddhism, peace can lead to the ultimate goal which is *Nirvana*. In Christianity, before the ascension of Jesus into heaven, He gives his peace to his disciples as his precious gift. It is precious because that peace will make them strong; give them courage to go on for their mission, and to overcome fear. “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid” (Jn 14: 27).

It is a fact that both religions are trying their best to work for peace among challenging situations. In the contemporary world, Buddhist scholars and leaders have sought to apply Buddhist ethics to moral questions such as abortion, war, euthanasia, animal rights, environmentalism, economic justice and issues of this age such as education, poverty, pollution, and sickness. The teachings of Buddhism provide rich ethical virtues. In spite of all these teachings, there are still unsolved issues and questions. Buddhist scholars discover that many of the current ethical issues are related to the first Buddhist precept: not to harm other beings. There are also some people who stand for a model of nonviolence, such as NhatHanh, Daiai Lama, Aung San SuuKyi, and Mahaghosananda.<sup>103</sup> On the other hand, Christian Churches are also facing challenges by ethical problems such as same-sex marriage, euthanasia, abortion and social problems in spite of the moral teachings. In order to solve these problems, it is needed to plant love, especially the love for peace and truth in everyone’s heart.

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<sup>103</sup> Barbara E. Reed, “Ethics”, *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, Vol.1, edited by Robert E. Buswell, Jr. (New York: Thomson Gale), 261-265, esp. 264.

Today monks, priests, nuns, and religious people are also taking part in the work for peace by deeds and through their prayers, in both religions. Though their efforts do not seem to be effective they are continuing on their mission by believing in their good results in the long run.

### 3.1.2. Respect for Life

Religions contain teachings of respect for lives as one way to reach peace. In the Five Precepts of Buddhism, one of them is “to observe the precept of abstaining from the destruction of life”. In the Ten Commandments of Judaism and Christianity one of them is “You shall not murder” (Exod 20:13). Christianity’s goal is to protect the powerless from the powerful and to say and defend that every life has an intrinsic value. A world where the powerful have more opportunities to kill, the principal and direct beneficiaries of the moral prohibition against killing are the powerless.<sup>104</sup> In fact, nonviolence is based on people’s hearts where there is sympathy and compassion for fellow people.

### 3.1.3. Relevance of Virtues in Buddhism and Christianity

The virtues are very important in our life because they form people to become a good person. Only good people have a good will. The will of good people is to live harmoniously with others and to create a peaceful world. Both religions are strongly concerned with the teaching of virtues: e.g., to be compassionate, to love our neighbors, to respect all lives, to forgive, and many others good habits. The precepts are important in Buddhism, but for Buddhism the actual moral life is more important than following rules. Rules must not only be followed, but followed for the right reasons and with the correct

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<sup>104</sup>Kyeongil Jung, "Just Peace: A Buddhist-Christian Path to Liberation." *Buddhist-Christian Studies* no. 1 (2012): 3. *Project MUSE*, EBSCOhost (accessed May 27, 2015).

motivation. Buddhist morality as a whole may be likened to a coin with two faces: on one side are the precepts (rules) and on the other are the virtues. According to Buddhism, the task of the virtues is to counteract negative dispositions called *klesas*. There are three cardinal virtues in Buddhism, non-attachment (*arāga*), benevolence (*advesa*), and understanding (*amoha*) which are the opposite of the “three poisons” or “roots of evil”, namely greed (*rāga*), hatred (*dvesa*), and delusion (*moha*).<sup>105</sup> Furthermore, there are also other or “foundational” virtues, such as “mindfulness”; and “self-regarding” virtues, such as humility, self-control, and equanimity; and “other-regarding” virtues, such as non-violence and responsibility.<sup>106</sup> Buddhist moral teachings emphasize self-discipline, generosity (*dāna*), non-violence (*ahimsā*) and compassion (*karunā*). Buddhism never imposes moral obligations on anyone but whoever wishes to lead a moral life, such a person has to become the embodiment of Dharma, which is the “universal law which governs both the physical and moral order of the universe.”<sup>107</sup> Damien Keown summarizes briefly the relevance of virtue ethics in Buddhism:

It is fair to say that the growing consensus among scholars is that Buddhist ethics bears a greater resemblance to virtue ethics than any other Western theory. There are sufficient points in common to speak at least of a ‘family resemblance’ between the two systems. This is because Buddhism is first and foremost a path of self-transformation that seeks the elimination of negative states (vices) and their replacement by positive or wholesome ones (virtues). This is the way one becomes a Buddha. The transformation of the ‘man in the street’ into a Buddha comes about through the cultivation of particular virtues (paradigmatically

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<sup>105</sup> Keown, *Buddhist Ethics*, 12-13.

<sup>106</sup> *Buddhist* *Morality*,  
[http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=6&ved=0CEMQFjAF&url=http%3A%2F%2Freading.buddhistdoor.com%2Fresources%2Fget%2Fec7e872848323fceab848046bf2a0fd216b098d9&ei=Px-jVcD7G4upuwSJnomgAQ&usq=AFQjCNG\\_DWldNsTErIRupLkhvjioJBYzEg](http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=6&ved=0CEMQFjAF&url=http%3A%2F%2Freading.buddhistdoor.com%2Fresources%2Fget%2Fec7e872848323fceab848046bf2a0fd216b098d9&ei=Px-jVcD7G4upuwSJnomgAQ&usq=AFQjCNG_DWldNsTErIRupLkhvjioJBYzEg) (Accessed on 13 July, 2015).

<sup>107</sup> Keown, *Buddhist Ethics*, 3.

wisdom and compassion) leading step by steps to the goal of complete self-realization known as nirvana.<sup>108</sup>

Virtues are also central in Christianity and there are different kinds of virtues such as the acquired Cardinal virtues (prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance), and infused theological virtues (faith, hope, and charity). Infused virtues are a gift and given out of grace (Sacraments, Prayers) by God. They go beyond the acquired virtues based on the own efforts of the people.<sup>109</sup> Moreover, a Christian believes that the moral life of a Christian is sustained by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. There are seven gifts of the Holy Spirit which are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord.<sup>110</sup> These gifts from the Holy Spirit are freely given to everyone like the infused virtues. Thomas Aquinas understands virtues according to the following table:

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<sup>108</sup> Keown, *Buddhist Ethics*, 25.

<sup>109</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1804-1829.

<sup>110</sup> CCC, no. 1830-1831.

TABLE OF THE VIRTUES		
NATURAL VIRTUES		
<i>Intellectual Virtues</i>	{ Habits of the Speculative Intellect	{ 1. Understanding 2. Science 3. Wisdom
	{ Habits of the Practical Intellect	{ 4. Art 5. Prudence
<i>Moral Virtues</i>	{ A habit of the Will	6. Justice
	{ A habit of the Concupis- cible Appetite	7. Temperance
	{ A habit of the Irascible Appetite	8. Fortitude
SUPERNATURAL VIRTUES		
<i>Theological Virtues</i>	{ A habit of the Intellect	1. Faith
	{ Habits of the Will	{ 2. Hope 3. Charity
<i>Infused Cardinal Virtues</i>	{ A habit of the Intellect	4. Prudence
	{ A habit of the Will	5. Justice
	{ A habit of the Concupis- cible Appetite	6. Temperance
	{ A habit of the Irascible Appetite	7. Fortitude

**Figure 5: Aquinas Table of Virtues (Source Sullivan, *An Introduction To Philosophy*, 149)**

To summarize virtues are highly relevant in Buddhism and Christianity. In Buddhism, the focus is only an acquired virtue and the self-improvements of the character of the individual. In Christianity, in addition to the relevance of acquired virtues by good education and training, there is the other dimension of grace or infused virtues as the free gift from God through following Christ and a life of sacraments and prayer.

In both the teachings in Buddhism and Christianity, the virtues of forbearance and forgiveness are important in order to attain peace. If some conflict exist between two parties, to heal their relationship again needs the forgiveness of each other. To take revenge on each other will never bring solutions in a conflict, but rather will lead to deepen the conflict and to more violence. Further, it is important to know how to respond properly to the words of a fool who is full of anger and committing verbal onslaughts, by

responding oneself remaining calmly, not by any harsh measures. Only in that way the situation will de-escalates and peace will prevail. In fact, forbearing patience is a sign of real inner strength, unlike the deceptive and apparent ‘strength’ of a fool: “Worse of the two is he who, when reviled, reviles again. He who does not, when reviled, revile again, wins a twofold victory. He seeks the welfare of both himself and the other, who, having known the anger of another, mindfully maintains his peace. (S. I.222; *Vism.* 324)”<sup>111</sup> Also, in the teaching of Jesus the theme forgiveness takes on a highly prominent role. Jesus always teaches his disciples to forgive. “Jesus said to him, ‘Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy seven times’” (Matt 18:22). Again Mk 11:25 says, “Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.” Jesus shows how to forgive on the cross. “Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.’” (Lk 23: 34). He also takes the focus on the heart, and its inner values.

#### 3.1.4. Altruism/ Selflessness

Both religions teach and believe that it is more blessed to give than to receive. In Buddhism, selflessness is important in order to gain nirvana. “Whoever, seeking his own happiness, Harms with sticks, Pleasure- loving beings, He gets no happiness hereafter” (*Dhp.* 130). Similarly, also Jesus said that we have to lose ourselves in order to gain new life. Matt 10:39 and 16:25 say, “Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it”.

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<sup>111</sup>Harvery, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics*, 246.

The virtue of selflessness leads to overcome human desires, greed, anger, hatred and help a person to become detached with the world which will lead to the ultimate goal of oneself. The reason of having Lent season is not only to reflect on oneself for one's own spirituality but also to observe the need of others. In both religions, during Lenten Season people use to make retreat, prayer, fasting, and donation. This sort of Lent season can help a person to become sensitive to the need of others. Though the world is changing so fast because of technology, there are still people who want to make self-sacrifice for others such as monks and religious people. They usually try to become a person detached of the world, prayerful person, and a person sacrificing for others.

### 3.1.5. Not Judging Others

As a human person, it is very easy to judge other people without knowing the reality. Knowing this Buddha and Jesus taught their followers not to make any judgment about others. That's why the teaching 'not to judge others' can be found in both religions. Buddha says,

The fault of others is easily perceived, but that of oneself is difficult to perceive; a man winnows his neighbor's faults like chaff, but his own fault he hides, as a cheat hides the bad die from the gamble. (*Dph* 252)

Similarly, also Jesus teaches his disciples not to judge others, when he says:

Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? Or how can you say to your neighbor, "Let me take the speck out of your eye", while the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor's eye, Matt 7:1-5.

This is a great and common challenge for the believers in both faith traditions.

### 3.1.6. Love of Enemies

Both religions teach that love is the best way to overcome hatred and violence. Many of Jesus' most famous sayings- turning the other cheek, loving your enemies, and the idea that one who takes the sword will die by it, are mirrored in the words of the Buddha.<sup>112</sup> For instance: Luke 6:31 says, "Do to others as you would have them do to you." *Dph* 10.1 says, "Consider others as yourself." Furthermore, Jesus says, "...Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you..." (Luke 6: 27-31). *Dph* 1.5 and 17.3 says, "Hatreds do not ever cease in this world by hating, but by love; this is an eternal truth...overcome the liar by truth." This striking similarity that only love can heal hate and violence is also a great challenge for the practical life of Buddhists and Christians.

### 3.1.7. The Golden Rule

The Buddha taught that we all live in one big network of relationships. In Buddhism to practice the Golden Rule is an expression of altruism. "Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful." *UdanaVarga* 5:18.<sup>113</sup> The Golden Rule is one of the cornerstones of Buddha's ethics. The principle occurs in many places and in many forms throughout the *Tripitaka*, the collection of Buddhist scriptures. "One who, while himself seeking happiness oppresses with violence other beings who also desire happiness, will not attain happiness hereafter" (*Dph* 10). For Jesus, the Golden Rule is not simply one of reciprocity but of unqualified altruism and love in imitation of the

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<sup>112</sup> Marcus J. Borg, Jack Kornfield and Ray Rigert, *Jesus and Buddha: The Parallel Sayings* (Ulysses Press: Berkeley, Calif, 1997), 13.

<sup>113</sup> Craig Considine, *Tag Archives: UrdanaVarga 5:18*. <http://craigconsidinetcd.com/tag/urdana-varga-518/> (Accessed on 13 July, 2015).

divine love. He also turns the Golden Rule into a positive sentence. Matt 7:12 says, “In everything *do* to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets”. Again Lk 6:31 says, “Do to others as you would have them do to you”. The Golden Rule, Christa Steward expresses, “is a rule Jesus told us to cherish because it is worth much more than gold.”<sup>114</sup>

These are some common teachings (theory) between Buddha and Jesus. The question now is about the daily *practice* in both religions. The teachings are so rich but it is quite difficult to assess their practical implementation. As both have similarities, they also have some differences since they emerged and developed in different times and at different places and cultures. In the following the author will deal with some differences of concepts and teachings between Buddhism and Christianity especially in relation to the issues of Peace and War.

### **3.2. Differences between Buddhism and Christianity on Peace and War**

War and peace is the epic saga of humanity.<sup>115</sup> The purpose of a religion is to serve the people and to lead them to the truth in God. Each religion has its own unique belief system, tradition, practices, and way of life. What then, are the differences between Buddhism and Christianity in view of peace and war?

Different religions work for peace in different ways as many rivers flow to a great one ocean. While Buddhism is a path from inner peace to external peace, Christianity is a

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<sup>114</sup> Christa R. Steward, *The Little Frog Learns the Golden Rule* (Mustang, OK: Tate Publishing House, 2010), 7.

<sup>115</sup> “All of Us: Beset by birth, decay, and death”, by Sister Ayya Khema. Access to Insight (Legacy Edition), 30 November 2013, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/khema/allofus.html#ch5> (accessed on May 12, 2015).

path from personal love, justice, and truth to peace.<sup>116</sup> 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.<sup>117</sup> Both their paths towards peace are different, by putting a different emphasizes which can certainly complement each other, but which have also be seen in their own unique and different way.

### 3.2.1. Buddhism as Path from Inner Peace to External Peace

A Buddhist understands peace as something that comes from within oneself. In order to attain peace, people have to put their own effort to it, for instance: peace can be attained through meditation. To gain inner peace one has to make unrelenting efforts in one’s own mind and heart. One cannot achieve it through delusion or just waiting for it. Some people have an idea that peace and happiness are synonymous with doing nothing, having no duties or responsibilities, being looked after by others. That’s rather an ethics of laziness. For Buddhism, in order to promote peace one needs to empty oneself from all desires within our mind and heart until there is an open space to be filled with peace.<sup>118</sup> Peace is also seen to be more on the individual level in Buddhism than in the social realm.

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<sup>116</sup>Kyeongil Jung, Just Peace: “A Buddhist-Christian Path to Liberation.” (Accessed May 27, 2015).

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> “All of Us: Beset by birth, decay, and death”, by Sister AyyaKhema. Access to Insight (Legacy Edition), 30 November 2013, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/khema/allofus.html#ch5> (accessed on May 12, 2015).

Ghosananda, who is a well known Buddhist monk from Cambodia, teaches that the path towards peace includes: compassion, the skill of listening, mindfulness, selflessness, and wisdom. It has to start always with oneself to become a peaceful internal and external person. According to Harvey, “Non-action is the source of all action. There is little we can do for peace in the world without peace in our minds. And so, when we begin to make peace, we begin with silence-meditation and prayer”.<sup>119</sup> Furthermore, peacemaking is:

[...] the middle path of equanimity, non-duality and non-attachment. Peacemaking means the perfect balance of wisdom and compassion, and the perfect meeting of humanitarian needs and political realities. It means compassion without concession, and peace without appeasement. Loving kindness is the only way to peace.<sup>120</sup>

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. 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.”<sup>121</sup> That is why the Buddha teaches that “hatred does not cease by hatred, but only by love” (*Dph*, 5). By doing so, Buddhists do not mean to escapethe

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<sup>119</sup>Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics*, 283.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>121</sup> Jung, *Just Peace: A Buddhist-Christian Path to Liberation*, 3. From the book of John Makransky, *Awakening through Love: Unveiling Your Deepest Goodness* (Boston: Wisdom, 2007), 128.

confrontation with the victimizers but to confront every situation with compassion. Sometimes, using the path of compassion does not exclude the necessity of justice.<sup>122</sup> For instance: I am working for the poor. One day there is a conflict between the poor and someone who is rich. In their conflict, the rich is right. If I judge according to the path of justice, I have to be with the rich. But in this case, I do not have compassion with the poor. That's why; working for justice is a challenging task. The Catholic answer to this situation is that love and truth is important for peace. The truth as the way things are has to be told in love, as Emeritus Pope Benedict expresses: *Caritas in Veritate*.

However, in practice many Buddhists neglect this theory or teaching. For instance we can mention the issue of the Rohingya in Myanmar. Even some of the Monks cannot accept the Rohingya and allow them citizenship. They say that they are not insulting the culture of Islam but they are protecting Burmese's people from the danger of the crude and savage Muslim majority. In fact, the Buddhists in Myanmar fail to see others through the eye of Buddha or through their own religion. Many fail to live up in practice to the ideals of Buddhism.

### 3.2.2. Christianity is a Path from Love, Truth and Justice to Peace

Peace in Christianity is ultimately a gift from God and his love. Jesus Christ is called the prince of peace. Jesus Christ says "My peace I give you" and added "not as the world gives". People usually understand peace as the absence of war, and violence. However, Jesus promises to his disciples to give a peace which comes from God, and not from this world, which is a peace of heart and mind that goes beyond the understanding

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<sup>122</sup> Jung, *Just Peace: A Buddhist-Christian Path to Liberation*, 5.

of human beings. It is only when peace reigns in the person's heart, that there will be no room for coveting or selfish thinking. The letter of James writes,

Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you? You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your pleasures. (James 4:1-3)

Christians understand God to be always just, as Isaiah 61:8 says, "For I the Lord Love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them" and the God who loves the oppressors and the weak, Ps 12:5 says, " 'Because the poor are despoiled, because the needy groan, I will now rise up', says the Lord; 'I will place them in the safety for which they long.'" The God who revenges the weak, 1 Cor 1:27, "But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong". A Christian should always be concerned about justice to respond to the suffering of humankind with compassion. Buddhists believe that compassion is for both the victims and victimizers because they all suffer. However, they suffer differently. That is why Christians love the victims and victimizers somehow differently. The love shown by Christians towards the victims is taking sides with them (Option for the Poor), and to love victimizers means confronting them with the truth of their committed injustice, which is the way things are in fact.<sup>123</sup> For Christians, only the truth will make free and will bring lasting and stable peace (Jn 8:32).

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<sup>123</sup>*Ibid.*

These are what the Christians suppose to know and practice in their daily life. Unfortunately, quite few people are following this teaching; most of them just take these teachings for granted. That's one of the reasons that most of the Christian countries are facing corruptions, poverty, and economic crisis.

Buddhists usually hesitate to use force for the sake of impartial compassion in order to achieve peace while Christians are more open to the possibility of using force to protect the weak for the sake of justice. However, there are examples of compassionate violence in Buddhism as well. In the previous lives of Buddha, he was a merchant. When crossing a river on a ferry, the merchant found that the ferryman planned to kill all 499 passengers. Out of compassion and in order to save the lives of these men, the merchant killed the ferryman.<sup>124</sup> Christians use force out of compassion in order to protect the weak and powerless against an unjust aggressors. This is one of the reasons that Christianity has developed the Just Defense War Theory. Christians believe that it is not enough just to have compassion for the poor or powerless but they need protection which is an expression of love, compassion, and justice. Working for justice is not easy because it can lead sometimes to conflict and even using force to protect the weak. Isaiah 32:17 says, "The effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever". Again Pope Paul VI says, "If you want peace, work for justice". Therefore, peace cannot be attained without justice, but it needs also love, compassion, and forgiveness.

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<sup>124</sup> Jung, *Just Peace: A Buddhist-Christian Path to Liberation*, 10. From the book of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, *The Good Heart: A Buddhist Perspective on the Teachings of Jesus* (Boston: Wisdom, 1996), 108.

Many Buddhists believe that one of the main causes of war are people being selfish and with limitless desires. Moreover, a conflict often arises from attachment to material things: pleasure, property, territory, wealth, economic dominance, or political superiority.<sup>125</sup> To fight the desire leads not only to peace in oneself and the society but leads also to the ultimate goal which is *nirvana*. *Nirvana*, for Buddhists is the ending of all desires and violence, through enlightenment, whereby one experiences perpetual rebirth until this ultimate harmony is achieved.

Christians believe that violence and sin has been overcome on the cross. Jesus died violently on the cross in an act of supreme personal non-violence and loving others. Jesus said to his disciples whom want to follow in his footsteps to carry one's cross, Mark 8:34 says, "He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If anyone wants to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.'" In fact, to carry one's cross with love is important because love is the greatest issue of all teachings of Jesus. St. Paul wrote in the letter of Corinthians, "And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor 13:13). His supreme love, shown on the cross, ends violence, hatred and builds a new world where his peace reigns.

### 3.2.3. Self/ Other

Buddhism and Christianity both care about the *Self* and the *Other*, but the order is reversed. Buddhists believe that in serving his/her self one can serve others, focusing on the personal path to enlightenment, and practicing loving-kindness, will lead to social

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<sup>125</sup>Harvery, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics*, 239.

transformation and world peace.<sup>126</sup> On the other hand, 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. Personal responsibility is important in both religions. However, for Buddhist to attain *Nirvana* is only through the personal achievement of by self-transformation.

#### 3.2.4. Self-liberation (Buddhism) vs. 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. 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. In Jesus came God's help and grace to us. A Christian receives graces through the Sacraments, prayer etc. Christians find fulfillment and peace in the personal encounter with a loving God.

#### 3.2.5. Pity and Ending Suffering vs. Love and Giving Meaning to Suffering

Buddhism regards suffering as an evil to overcome. However, in Christianity suffering has a salvific purpose and a deep meaning. For instance: Jesus came into the world in order to experience the suffering of human being. The French poet, Paul

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<sup>126</sup> Juliet Bennett, Buddhism and Christianity: Comparing Peace Traditions <http://www.julietbennett.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/Buddhism-and-Christianity.pdf> (accessed on May 19, 2015).

Claudel, put it this way: “Jesus did not come to explain suffering, not to take it away; he came to fill it with his presence.” 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.<sup>127</sup> In fact, the word ‘compassion’ means *com* ‘to feel pity,’ from ‘com’ is ‘together’ and ‘pati’ is ‘to suffer’, meaning ‘together suffer’ or ‘suffering with’.<sup>128</sup> Instead *karunā* is ‘pity’. Christians are taught to love one another as oneself, because only love can fill the heart and leads to peace.

### 3.2.6. The Way to Overcome Violence and War

In Buddhism violence and war is overcome through the efforts of the individual by stopping any desire and reaching Nirvana. In Christianity, violence and war is conquered and overcome by Jesus Christ on the cross. He opened the exit from violence, sin and death for those who follow him (Church).

There are lot of teachings how to overcome violence and war in both religions which the author already mentioned above, such as being peaceful oneself can overcome violence in Buddhism and loving others in Christianity. One of the challenges is that

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<sup>127</sup> Caldecott, *Catholic and Other Religions*, 30-31.

<sup>128</sup> *Online Etymology Dictionary*, <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=compassion> (Accessed on 19 July, 2015).

there are lot of Buddhists and Christians who do not know the teaching of their own religion. However, through the preaching and Sunday's homilies we can let people know about one's own religion. The best way to show is by being peaceful, showing compassion and loving our neighbors.

For overcoming violence, forgiveness and reconciliation are needed between the two different parties affected. In fact, "forgiveness is a personal choice, a decision of the heart to go against the natural instinct to pay back evil with evil..."<sup>129</sup> Moreover, the word to "forgive" itself is an expression that 'for- before, ahead' and give. Forgiveness is something that we have to give something ahead from the heart.

Though the ultimate goals of Buddhism and Christianity are different, there are also many commonalities in the teaching of Buddha and Jesus. Whoever we may be and to which religion we belong to, still we share the same heaven and the same earth. We all have responsibilities to care for each other while we are traveling to our ultimate goal. Through differences we learn from each others, walk towards the same goal on different paths as different drops of water are falling in the same ocean.

These are some differences between Buddhism and Christianity. Differences do not mean that we have to go against each other but that we have to learn from each other what is good for one and others. To build a better and a more peaceful world, we have to learn to practice goodness, love, and justice by the help of our diverse faith traditions.

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<sup>129</sup> John Paul II, *Message For the Celebration of the World Day of Peace*, 1 January 2002. [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_mes\\_20011211\\_xxxv-world-day-for-peace.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20011211_xxxv-world-day-for-peace.html). (Accessed on 14 July 2015).

## Conclusion

Hans Kung says, “No peace among the nations without peace among the religions. No peace among the religions without dialogue between the religions. No dialogue between the religions without investigation of the foundation of the religions.”<sup>130</sup> In order to achieve peace, it is necessary that all the religions work together. Before they work together it is needed to be in dialogue in order to get to know each other better. Both sides have to be open-minded to accept the differences of others and to learn from each other. Pope Francis wrote, “True openness involves remaining steadfast in one’s deepest convictions, clear and joyful in one’s own identity, while at the same time being open to understanding those of the other party and knowing that dialogue can enrich each side...” (EG 251).<sup>131</sup>

Regarding the teaching of peace in Buddhism is a result of self-transformation from all the delusion of the world and being detachment person from the world. Through being peaceful individually will lead to the social peace for others. Killing a living being is not allowed according to Buddha. To be a good Buddhist is to follow in the footsteps of the Buddha. However, today many Buddhists do not seem to understand the teachings of the Buddha. As a result, many wars are ongoing, violence, and conflict are happening in Buddhist’s countries such as Myanmar, Vietnam, and Cambodia. For this violence and war there is no solution to give yet. It is a question for all of us to think and to reflect.

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<sup>130</sup> Quote by Hans Kung, <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/157789-no-peace-among-the-nations-without-peace-among-the-religions> (Accessed on 27 July, 2015).

<sup>131</sup> Pope Francis, *The Joy of The Gospel*, “*Evangelii Gaudium*” (Vatican City: Vatican Press, 2013), 187. See also Donald Senior. "Dialogue and the Quest for Peace: Biblical Foundations." *Bible Today* 52, no. 5 (September 2014): 277-283. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed June 8, 2015).

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. However, many Christians seem to forget the teachings of Jesus such as the Sermon on the Mount, to love the enemies, and to love the least of our brothers and sisters. In fact, the Church allows Just Defense Theory under strict conditions. In order to defend the poor and weak, force is needed and there were times when many lives were lost.

For Buddhists peace comes from within oneself and is an accomplishment of oneself, while Christians believe that peace is ultimately a gift from God, ultimately achieved through Jesus Christ on the cross. For Buddhism, peace is more on the individual level while for Christianity it is also on the communal and social level. Moreover, 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.

It is a challenge to work for peace in the plurality of our modern society, with its cultures, religions, organizations, which derive from different traditions with their own unique identities. It is a good opportunity that modern plurality let us experience the riches and differences with the chance to learn from each other. After learning from each other, it is time to work together to build a better world and to attain lasting peace.

For the writer, it is a challenge to write on this topic due to the fact that there is no solution for ongoing wars and violence. However, writing this research paper, I could

learn many things which I believe can help me in my further mission for my own country  
Myanmar.

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