ATLANTIC INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

A NEW AGE FOR DISTANCE LEARNING

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL AND HUMAN STUDIES

NAME: MARK OBENG ANDOH

ID: a9UD65057

MAJOR: THEOLOGY (DOCTORATE)

COURSE TITLE: **PHILOSOPHY AND CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY**

ATLANTIC INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

APRIL 2022

**Introduction**

The study of Christian Theology which deals with the belief, practices and traditions of the

church, goes with the study of other related disciplines which help grant the student the

required understanding.

For some time now my worries are why philosophy, what has philosophy which deals more

with reasoning gotten to do with theology which to me deals with spiritual things?

Is this not about sacred verses mundane issues? This perception has propelled me to

undertake the study to help find out how the two discipline can work hand in hand.

**Objectives**

In this study, I am looking at the study of Philosophy and Christian Theology to find out

their definitions, historical backgrounds, who is a philosopher, and also a theologian?

Is philosophy beneficial? Philosophical questions, what does Philosophy offer with regard to

the philosophical questions in Christian Theology.

Why philosophy and Christian Theology (Relationship)? And Categories in Philosophy.

The study dwells and dilates on the following which serves as its contents:

1. The Definitions of Philosophy and Christian Theology

2. Brief Historical backgrounds of Philosophy and Christian Theology.

3. Is philosophy beneficial?

4. The Rise of ‘’Analytic Theology

5. Who is a Philosopher, and who is a Theologian?

6. What are some of the philosophical questions in Christian Theology?

7. What does philosophy offer with regard to philosophical questions in Christian Theology?

8. Why Philosophy and Christian Theology? (their relationship)

9. How does Philosophers critique Christian Theology?

10. Categories of Philosophy

Person Experience

Lessons

Conclusion

Bibliography

1. Definitions of Philosophy and Christian Theology

**Philosophy**

‘’Is the study about the concepts that tries to understand the reasons or basis for things,

and also how things should be. Or the study of general and fundamental questions, such as

those concerning existence, knowledge, values, reasons, mind, and language which are

often posed as problems to be studied or resolved.

Or the study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence.

Philosophy derives from an ancient Greek word ‘’Philosophia’’ meaning ‘’love of wisdom.’’

So philosophy is the search for wisdom. It is also a way of thinking about the world, the

universe, and society.’’

**Christian Theology**

‘’Christian Theology is the study of Christian belief or doctrine, practice and traditions that

are generally accepted by all Christians while also highlighting the theological diversity of

the Christian churches.’’(Boisi Center Papers on Religion in the United States)

2. Brief Historical backgrounds of Philosophy and Christian Theology

**Philosophy**

Socrates of Athens is among the most famous figures in world history for his incredible

contributions to the development of ancient Greek philosophy which provided the bedrock

for all of Western philosophy. He is, in fact, known as the ‘’Father of Western Philosophy’’ in

this regard(i. c. 470/469-399 BCE- Socrates-World History Encyclopedia).

Based on the study of words (etymology), it has been discovered that, the meaning of the

word ‘Philosophy’ is ‘love of wisdom.’ It emerged from Greek word ‘Philosophia,’ with

‘Philo’ meaning ‘beloved’ and ‘Sophia’ meaning wisdom.

There are several different types of philosophy from different times and places. Some

philosophers hailed from Ancient Greece, such as Plato and Aristotle. Others hailed from

Asia, such as Confucius or Buddha and Laozi. Some philosophers were from the Middle Ages

in Europe, such as William of Ockham or Saint Thomas Aquinas.

Philosophers from the 1600s, 1700s and 1800s included Thomas Hobbes, Rene Descartes,

John Locke, David Hume, and Immanuel Kant. Philosophers from 1900s included Soren

Kierkegaard, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Jean-Paul Sartre.

From the time of Ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle to the 19th century, ‘’natural

philosophy’’ surrounded astronomy, medicine, and physics. For instance, Newton’s 1687

Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy later became classified as a book of physics.

In the 19th century, the growth of modern research universities led academic philosophy

and other disciplines to professionalize and specialize. Since then, various areas of

investigation that were traditionally part of philosophy have become separate academic

disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, linguistics, and economics.

In our time, major subfields of academic philosophy include ***metaphysics***, which is

concerned with the fundamental nature of existence and reality; ***epistemology***, which

studies the nature of knowledge and beliefs; ***ethics***, which is concerned with moral values;

and ***logic,*** which studies the rules of inference that allow one to deduce conclusions from

true premises. Other notable subfields include ***philosophy of science*** which deals with

foundations, methods, history, implications and purpose of science***, political philosophy***

which is the study of government and the relationship of individuals, or families or clans to

communities including the state, ***aesthetics*** which is the study of beauty, ***axiology*** which

deals with values, ***eschatology*** which deals with the end time events, ***natural philosophy***

which has split into various natural sciences, especially ***physics*** that deals with matter and

energy and their interaction, ***chemistry*** that deals with the composition of substances and

their properties and reactions, ***biology*** the study of living organisms, **c*osmolog***y that deals

with the origin and evolution and structure of the universe, ***teleology*** which explains

phenomena by their ends or purposes, ***philosophy of language*** which explores the nature,

origins, and use of language , and ***philosophy of mind*** which deals with what the mind,

body, and consciousness are.

Formerly, it referred to any body of knowledge. Philosophy is closely related to religion that

deals with questions that involve religion and religious ideas from philosophical neutral

perspective, mathematics, natural sciences that are physics, astronomy, chemistry, biology

and cosmology which have been earlier defined. Education, and politics which is the study

of government and the relationship of individuals to communities including the state.

Every major science, including physics, biology, and chemistry, are disciplines that were

once considered as philosophy. Medicine was always considered a practical art, however.

As fact about nature became more understood, these subjects branched away. Psychology

only split a century and a half ago. In our time, subjects such as conscious studies, decision

theory, and applied ethics have increasingly found independence from philosophy as a

whole. Because of this, philosophy seems useful because it produces new kinds of science.

**Christian Theology**

It is discovered that Origen Adamantius, was the father of Theology. He was an early

Christian scholar, ascetic, and theologian who spent the first half of his career

in Alexandria. He was a prolific writer who wrote almost 2000 treatises in multiple branches

of theology, including textual criticism, biblical exegesis and hermeneutics, homiletics, and

spirituality (Origin-Wikipedia -https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Origin).

The history of Christianity includes the basics of Christian Theology which was initiated by

the ***Catholics and the Protestants*** who were all Christians and do share some basic and vital

similarities in their religious beliefs and practices based on the belief in monotheistic God.

The two worship the monotheistic God revealed in Trinitarian (three in one) form; they

believe that all human beings are sinners; saved from their sins by the grace of God through

Jesus Christ; they profess that the Bible is God’s Word; and accept the fact that worship and

prayer are very important; they ascribe to sacramental practices; and make conscious effort

to lead ethical lives.

The following core beliefs evolved by the church fathers after a long period of debates upon

which Christian Theology stands. These are briefly summed up as follows:

**GOD**

Christians believe in the monotheistic God who is everywhere. He is believed as present

within the world (immanent), and also possessing the existence far beyond the world and

beyond human imagination and experience (transcendent).

Christians believe that individual persons and groups can enjoy a personal relationship with

God, yet God invariably remains a mystery beyond human comprehension.

Both catholic and Protestants share this view of God in common, even though Catholics

often emphasizes on God’s immanence more than Protestants.

**Jesus Christ**

Christians’ beliefs about Jesus Christ is based on Scripture and other historical artifacts and

documents. Once, few of these other documents contain information about Jesus Christ,

most of the things concerning Him emanated from the Christian Scriptures.

The four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) tell the story of Jesus Christ’ life and

Ministry, while the rest of the Christian Scriptures include letters were written by Apostle

Paul and others from first generations of Christianity. These documents portray the early

communities’ faith in the message of Jesus’ ministry and how the message was propagated.

Christians also believe that Jesus brings God’s forgiveness of sin to humanity. They call this

‘’salvation’’ or ‘’atonement.’’

‘’Salvation’’ means sin is taken away and people are reconciled with God.

**Trinity**

The Christians believe that God Is present with them in three ways. This doctrine of the

Trinity remains one of the most difficult points of Christian theology to explain. According to

this belief, God is One Being who is revealed to humanity in three ways: God the Father, the

Son,(Jesus Christ), and Holy Spirit.

**The Bible and Church Authority**

Catholics and Protestants alike view the Bible as a revealed Word of God and the primary

authority for Christian life and worship. All Christians respect the ability of the individual

persons to read and interpret the Bible for themselves, but they do so in various ways.

The Protestants churches on the one hand tend to follow a *central principle of sixteen*

*century Reformations in assigning absolute authority to individual Christians to interpret the*

*Bible for themselves.*

On the other hand, the Catholic church emphasizes that individual Christians who are

reading the Bible should also consider the long tradition of church interpretation of the

scripture. When pondering over the Catholic and Protestant interpretation of the Bible,

further exploration of each one’s notion of church is needed. This section gives a general

account of the slightly theology differences behind the Christian churches.

Protestants view church as a group of Christians believers who converge together to offer

worship to God, and also to support each other in their efforts to live a Christian life.

Scripture serves as the final authority of the church; it is interpreted individually by each

member as well as collectively by the group. According to Luther’s principle of the

priesthood of all believers, ‘’any individual may be called forth by the community to serve as

its spiritual leader or pastor’’. The pastor is not assumed to have a special understanding of

the Bible compared to the other church members. Since they understand church as a

particular community of believers, Protestants—especially evangelical Protestants tend to

read and interpret the Bible as relevant to their current situation with less attention to how

it has been interpreted in the past.

Some Protestant churches, such as Lutherans, Methodists, and especially Episcopalians,

proceed formally in training and assigning their leaders.

In the Episcopalian church, which wields theologically a blend of Catholic and Protestant

principles, leaders succeed one another in a formal fashion similar to that of the Catholic

Church. This ‘’apostolic succession’’ traced its theological back to Apostle Peter, one of Jesus

Christ’ closest disciple who is now perceived as the first bishop of Rome (i.e. the Pope).

In these Protestant churches, as in the more evangelical churches, the emphasis in scriptural

interpretation is usually on its present meaning, not on a tradition or past interpretation.

Whereas Catholics define church as a much larger community. They are of the opinion that

church includes not only the believers in a particular faith community, but also all Catholics

around the world and even all believers who have died and whose souls are believed to be

with God.

The Catholic church has a very formal training or ‘’ordination’’ process for its leaders; its

leadership consists of a hierarchical structure of priests, who lead individual parishes, and

bishops, who lead all the parishes in a given region.

Catholics believe that any Christian can read and interpret the Bible. However, in

accordance with the Catholic understanding of the church as a community that includes all

believers, even those who have died, contemporary interpretation of scripture takes into

account past interpretations. The Catholic tradition of successive church leadership dates

back to before most people were literate, when only priests and bishops could actually read

and had to interpret the Bible for the people. Often these interpretations were written

down and have been preserved as the collective wisdom of the church.

Because official church leaders and those trained in church history and theology have a

broad knowledge of this historical tradition of scriptural interpretation, their opinions also

carry weight with individual Catholics as they read the scriptures. Thus, the Catholic church

has a long tradition of scriptural interpretation.

However, Catholic church emphasizes the final authority of the individual conscience. It

teaches that individual Catholics who sincerely pray and study the scriptures should follow

their consciences regarding spiritual matters, even if they disagree with church leaders and

even if, as sometimes happens in extreme circumstances, this leads to their

excommunication from the church.

Traditional Catholic teachings derive from and are interdependent with scripture. Catholics

regard the sacred writings of the Bible as the inspired Word of God, written by humans who

were guided by the Holy Spirit. For Catholics, the Bible is not free from human error, yet it

nevertheless constitutes the record of God’s revelation and design for the world. Catholic

tradition helps distinguish the divine elements from the human elements in the Bible.

In summary, both Protestants and Catholics believe that the church is composed of humans

gathered together to confess their faith in Jesus Christ and worship God.

All Christians agreed that the Bible is the fundamental authority for Christian life.

**Sin and Reconciliation**

With their acceptance of the Bible as unadulterated Word of God, Christians subscribe to

the belief that human beings were created in the image of God, indicating that they were

completely good. But people used their free will given them to turn away from the Creator

God, following their own desires rather than God’s Will.

This helped promote a universal human tendency toward evil that Christians call ‘’original

sin’’; individual sinful acts are perceived to be grounded in this condition.

Regardless of their sinfulness, Christians are with belief that humans are still the image of

God.

Catholics hold a more optimistic view than Protestants about the extent to which the image

remains present. Even though humans retain a tremendous capacity for good, the

disposition toward sin often out weights the impelling force toward good. This caused a

universal human need for *salvation from sin and reconciliation with God.*

Christians understand reconciliation with God as something or a feat accomplished by Jesus

Christ’s life, death, and resurrection which helped unveil God’s love and mercy, which has

been embraced by the Christian in faith.

**Sacraments**

In Christianity, sacraments are ritual practices that are perceived to draw people into

tangible union with God. Sacraments are understood as visible signs of God’s grace for when

a sacrament is performed, prayers are said and elements such as water, wine, bread, and oil

may be used.

Protestants usually celebrate two sacraments, while Catholics, in accordance with their

greater emphasis on God’s immanence, celebrate seven.

Almost all Christians observe sacraments of baptism and Eucharist (Communion).

For Catholics, the other five are confession, confirmation, matrimony, holy orders, and

anointing of the sick. Therefore, sacraments often mark important eras in a Christian’s life.

**Baptism and Eucharist**

Baptism marks a person’s entrance into the Christian family. In some denominations such as

Catholicism and Lutheranism, people are baptized as infants or from infancy; in others,

baptism is performed when the person request it. The Christian scriptures reveal that, the

tradition of baptism began with Jesus Christ, who, following the Jewish custom, was

baptized with water at the beginning of His ministry. since then, the tradition continues as

Christians have been baptized to symbolize their new identity as God’s children as they

begin life as Christians.

The Eucharist, usually accepted among the Protestants as the Lord’s Supper or communion,

is the second sacrament Christians observe regularly. In Catholic churches the Eucharist is

observed daily, whereas Protestant churches may observed it every week or once a month.

**Christian spiritual practices: Worship and Prayer**

Communal Worship is a informal or formal services during which Christians converge to give

praise and thanksgiving to God. This is important or central to all Christian denominations.

Communal worship may be held throughout the week, but Catholics and Protestants usually

attend services on Sunday mornings. The style and mode of these services differ greatly

among the denominations.

The Catholic Mass is a liturgical celebration that includes songs of praise, formal prayers,

readings from the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, a word by the priest interpreting the

scriptures called ‘’sermon’’ or ‘’homily’’ the recitation of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan

Creed, and the sacrament of Eucharist.

The Mass is often termed as ‘’high church’’ because of the strict organization of the liturgy

or Eucharist, the formal prayers, and the ceremonial robes worn by the priest.

Protestants worship ranges from ‘’high church’’ to ‘’low church’’ forms.

Lutheran and Episcopal services are quite similar to the catholic Mass, while evangelicals

worship often consists more simply of singing, a scripture reading, and a sermon.

With the Christians belief in God as a personal Being who listen to individuals, and because

Jesus Christ entreats His followers to pray in the Christian Scriptures, Christians do pray to

sustain and maintain their relationship with God.

Prayer takes several forms, including the ritualize prayers of worship service, personal

prayer, group prayer, and even Bible Study. Prayers may be silent or spoken aloud;

contemplative or meditative, nonverbal forms of prayer are also practiced.

Intercessory prayer, asking others to pray on one’s behalf, is also common.

For Catholics, as earlier said, the church includes all believers, even those who have died,

therefore, Catholics sometimes plead with saints including Mary, the Mother of Christ Jesus,

to ‘’intercede’’ with God in their behalf. Among all Christians, the Lord’s prayer or ‘’Our

Father,’’ which Jesus Christ taught His disciples to pray in the Gospels, is the most-recited

prayer.

**Ethical Christian living**

How do these basic principles of Christian theology transfer into action in the lives of

Christians? The answer is not easy, it is complex, for the multiple expressions of Christian

faith brings to the fore various understandings of the ethical Christian life. in general,

however, our Lord Jesus Christ teaches in the four Gospels that Christians are to love God

and their neighbors as themselves, whether the neighbor is a friend or enemy.

Christians do not always succeed in doing or obeying in full this command; however, it is

manifested in the Christian ideals of vocation, justice, and missionary activity.

**Vocation**

A Christian must work to earn a living, and most do not have jobs in churches. But

Vocation refers to the sentiment that people serve God through their everyday work. How

does the ordinary labor of Christians relate to their spiritual lives? Take it this way, Christian

believes that any work that serves the neighbor and the community, ‘’the common good,’’

also serves God. Virtually any labor can become an extension of Christian faith. The work of

doctors, lawyers, and politicians has no greater spiritual value than that of carpenters,

builders, drivers, etc., what matters is their faithful exercise for the benefit of the others.

This ideal is extends to Christians’ personal lives as well; Christians have the obligation to

serve relatives and friends charitably and responsibly.

**Justice**

The command to love one’s neighbor also brings to the fore the primary ethical position of

Christians. The gospels record Jesus Christ’ own love for His neighbors and His concern for

justice: He cares for the poor, the sick; and the outcasts of society, and speaks out against

the political, social, and economic circumstances that worsen their plight.

Christian today are called to imitate Jesus Christ, working to transform the world through

love and advocacy for justice, as they themselves have been transformed by the love and

forgiveness of God.

**Missionary Activity**

The Christian life is distinguished by missionary activity or evangelism. In the Gospels, Jesus

commands the disciples to preach the good tidings about God to the entire world. They

believe this command or task is ongoing, and it must be synthesized with the their

understanding of vocation and justice. Possessing one’s vocation and working toward justice

model the Christian faith for those who are not Christians, and doing so is a form of

evangelism. However, ‘’evangelism usually goes with making conscious effort to tell the

unbeliever about Jesus Christ with the intention and hope of bringing him to the Christian

faith. Because of the belief that Jesus Christ is the main avenue to reconciliation with God

and His eternal life.

At its best, Christian evangelism is an act of love which is the ultimate obedience to the

command to love your neighbor.

The reason for the historical background of Christianity is to unearth the basic theological

tenets.

We have also divisions of Christian Theology. They are known as sub-disciplines:

**Apologetics/Polemics** – it is the study of Christian Theology as it compares to non-Christian

worldviews in order to defend the faith and challenge beliefs that lie in contrast with

Christianity.

**Biblical Hermeneutics** – interpretation of the Bible, often with particular emphasis on the

nature and constraints of contemporary interpretation.

**Biblical studies** – interpretation of the Bible, often with particular emphasis on historical-

critical investigation.

**Biblical theology** – interpretation of the Bible, often with emphasis on links between biblical

texts and topics of systematic or dogmatic theology.

**Constructive theology** – it is the another name for systematic theology; also specifically a

postmodernist approach to systematic theology, applying feminist theory (right for

women), queer theory (gay), deconstructionism, and hermeneutics to theological topics.

**Dogmatic theology** – undertaking the study of theology (or dogma) as it developed in

different church denominations.

**Ecumenical theology** – comparing the doctrines of the diverse churches (e.g., Eastern

Orthodox, Roman Catholic, the various Protestant denominations) with the goal of

promoting unity among them.

**Exegesis** – interpretation of the Bible.

**Historical theology** – Endeavoring to know Christian theology through the thoughts of other

Christians throughout the centuries.

**Homiletic**s – in theology the application of general principles of rhetoric to public preaching.

**Moral theology**- also known as Christian ethics – explores the moral and ethical dimensions

of the religious life.

**Natural theology** – the treating of those areas of theology that can be investigated without

the help of revelation scriptures or tradition (something contrasted with ‘’positive

theology’’).

**Patristics or Patrology** – studying the teaching of church fathers, or the development of

Christian concepts and practice in the period of the Church Fathers.

**Philosophical theology** – the use of philosophical methods in developing or analyzing

theological concepts.

**Pragmatic or practical theology** – studying theology as it relates to everyday living and

service to God, including serving as a religious minister.

**Spiritual theology** – studying theology as a means to **orthopraxy**; scripture and tradition are

both employed as guides for spiritual growth and discipline.

**Systematic theology** – (doctrinal theology, dogmatic theology, or philosophical theology)

focus on the attempt to arrange and interpret the current ideas in the religion. It is also

associated with constructive theology.

**Theological aesthetics** – interdisciplinary study of theology and aesthetics/the arts.

**Theological hermeneutics** – the study of the manner of construction of theological

formulations. (Related to theological methodology).

There are also major topics in Christian Theology:

**Bible** - the nature and means of its inspiration, etc.; including hermeneutics (the

development and study of theories of the interpretation and understanding of texts and

topic of biblical law in Christianity).

**Eschatology** – the study of the last things, or end times. Covers subjects ranging from death

and the afterlife, the end of history, the end of the world, the last judgment, the nature of

hope and progress, etc.

**Christology** – the study of Jesus Christ, of His nature (s), and of the relationship between its

Divinity and Humanity.

**Divine providence** – the study of Sovereignty, superintendence, or agency of God over

events in people’s lives and throughout history.

**Ecclesiology** – the study of the Christian church, including the institutional structure,

sacraments and practices (especially the worship of God).

**Mariology** – area of theology which concerns Mary, the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Missiology** – God’s will in the world, missions, evangelism, etc.

**Pneumatology** **–** the study of the Holy Spirit**.**

**Protology** – the study of first things, such as God’s creation of all things.

**Soteriolog**y – the study of nature and means of Salvation.

**Hamartiology** – the study of sin. (it may include God’s law and the Gospel which is the study

of the relationship between the Divine Law and Divine Grace, justification, sanctification.

**Theological anthropology** – the study of humanity, especially as it relates to the divine.

**Theology proper** – the study of God’s Attributes, Nature, and Relationship to the world.

May include:

**Theodicy**- attempts at reconciling the existence of evil and suffering in the world with the

nature and justice of God.

**Apophatic theology** – (God is unknowable)-negative theology which seeks to describe God

by negation(the act of denying) (e.g., immutable-unchangeable, impassible-not passable). It

is the discussion of what God is not, or the investigation of how language about God breaks

down. Apophatic theology often is contrasted with ‘**’cataphatic theology**- the belief that

God can be known to humans positively or affirmatively).’’

(Apophatic – God cannot be known. Cataphatic – God can be known).

**A traditional pattern**

The four Great Departments of theology are:

**Exegetical Theology**

**Historical Theology**

**Systematic Theology**

**Practical Theology**

These are subdivided as follows:

**Exegetical Theology** – Biblical studies – analysis of the contents of Scripture.

**Historical Theology** – the study of how Christian theology develops over time.

**Systematic Theology** – Prolegomena (first principles), and Theology proper.

**Practical Theology** – Moral theology- Christian ethics and casuistry (conscience or conduct).

3. Is Philosophy beneficial?

Is philosophy beneficial to us? Does it do any good? I am of the opinion that only a handful

of people would contend that it does us no good. It is helpful to contend that it is a good

thing, for the simple reason that it helps us think more lucidly. It helps us to apprehend the

world and the manner people behave and think. Philosophy assists us to understand the

reasons or basis for things, and also how things should be. Philosophers are of the belief

that posing philosophical questions is crucial and also useful because it engenders wisdom

and assists us to learn deeper things about the world and each or one other.

Philosophy has helped to bring into our notice how to think about what happens to the soul

after death, how does the soul enter into the body before death? Why are human beings

born? Why should we live? Why are there so many hurdles in life? how do one overcome

suffering in life? what is the importance of the material life? Will the universe exist forever?

What is beauty? Do human being possess free will? Does God exist? What is truth, etc.

It has also helped bring about the study of metaphysics which deals with the fundamental

nature and existence and reality, epistemology the study of nature of knowledge and belief,

ethics which deals with moral value, logic which deals with the rules of inference or reasons

that allow one to deduce conclusions from premises or assumptions.

Also, Philosophy of science which explores the foundations, methods, history, implications

and purpose of science, Political philosophy which is the study of government and the

relationship of individuals to communities including the state. it includes questions about

justice, law, property and the rights and obligations of the citizen. Aesthetics which is the

critical reflection on art, culture and nature. It addresses the nature of art, beauty and taste,

enjoyment, emotional values, perception and with creation and appreciation of beauty,

Philosophy of language which explores the nature, origins, and use of language, philosophy

of mind which asks: what is a mind, what is a body, and what is consciousness?, meta

philosophy which explores the aims of philosophy, its boundaries and its

methods, philosophy of religion which deals with the questions that involve religion and

religious ideas from philosophically neutral perspective (as opposed to theology which

begins from religious convictions), philosophical theology which is the use of philosophical

methods in developing or analyzing theological ideas or concepts.

However, some are of the view that, it is not beneficial but rather harmful, the reason being

that it encourages free-thinking, and most often questions and fights the cherished beliefs

of others.

For instance, studies undertaking by some existentialists concerning existentialism which

produces a view that, ‘’there is no meaning to life or human existence, except the meaning

that we create or invent.’’ Some religious adherents are against this view or the beliefs of

existentialism.

4. The Rise of Analytic Theology

Oliver Crisp and Michael Rea published their edited volume, ‘’Analytic Theology:

New Essay in the Philosophy of Theology.’’ (Oliver Crisp, Michael Rea, 2009)

This volume contributors collectively endeavor to make the case that analytic philosophy

offers a valuable and neglected resource for Christian theologians. A totally new research

program evolved in its make or kind, and the subsequent years have experienced the

emergence of a self-identified school of ‘’analytic theologians.’’ Who leveraged the tools

and methods of analytic (using or skilled in using analysis) philosophy to address Christian

theological topics.

At the moment, it is not clear whether there is any meaningful distinction between Christian

‘’analytic theology’’ and Christian ‘philosophical theology,’’ which has been handled as a

kind of philosophy.

As the foregoing discourse or discussion shows, analytic philosophical theology has been

produced largely by Christian philosophers working in philosophy departments, rather than

by theologians in departments of theology or divine schools.

Classic works of philosophical theology like Swinburne (1994) and Adams (2000) seem like

analytic theology ‘**’avant la lettre’’** for example, and much recent work called ‘’philosophical

theology’’ or even a philosophy of religion’’ (e.g., Mullins 2016). Till now some self-

described analytic theologians have insisted that Christian analytic theology is really a form

of theology (Torrance {Alan] 2013:Torrance [Andrew] 2019; Crisp, Arcadi, and Wessling

2019).

They maintained that Christian analytic theology is an internal project of faith seeking

understanding that, as theology holds itself accountable to scripture and church tradition.

Till now whether Christian analytic theology is properly regarded as a kind of philosophy or

a kind of theology depends on how we draw the basic difference between philosophy

and theology – if we really show such difference at all.

5. Who is a Philosopher, and who is a Theologian?

‘’A Philosopher is a person who does philosophy, or is deeply versed in philosophy. He is a

kind of a thinker or researcher. He establishes the central ideas of some movement, cult,

etc. he regulates his life, actions, judgments, utterances, etc., by the light of philosophy or

reason.

He is rationally or sensibly calm, especially under trying circumstances.

He offers views or theories on profound questions in ethics, metaphysics, logic, and other

related fields. Whereas a theologian is someone who studies the nature of God, religion,

and religious beliefs.

He examines the several different religions of the world and their impact on society.’’

(Philosophy- Simple English Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia-

https://simple.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy).

6. What are some of the philosophical questions in Christian Theology?

Several Christian doctrines raise difficult philosophical questions stemming from the fact

that, example, Christians have traditionally maintained that they offer worship to a single

God, while at the same time identifying that, God trinity consists of three numerically,

distinct, fully divine persons: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

It is not all that easy to see how three divine persons add up to one God.

Similarly, Christians have claimed that a human man, Jesus Christ of Nazareth, is also God-

the-Son, the second person of the divine trinity. It is not all that easy to see how human

man, who is born, lives, and dies, could also be fully divine being.

We consider also the chemistry between the divine providence (the guardianship,

protective care and control of God) and human freedom (a social concept that recognizes

the dignity of individuals). Are human beings free to accept or reject God, or does God alone

decide who will accept or reject Him? Does God exist? What is truth, and what is evil? What

happens to a soul after death how does soul enters the body before death? How a human

nature and a divine nature can co-exist in one person? How Jesus Christ is fully and forever

fully God (divine) and fully human in one sinless person at the same time, etc.

7. What does philosophy offer in these theological questions?

It has been discovered that, Christian thinkers have always drawn on philosophy (the search

for wisdom, or basing on reasoning) to help answer these kind of questions.

In the earliest years of Christianity, spanning from the 2nd to the 7th centuries C.E., and

often called the ‘’Patristic’’ (early theologians or fathers and their writings) era, the

emerging Christian church confronted the intimidating or daunting task of defining doctrinal

orthodoxy or belief in the face of the experienced challenges within and without.

In pursuing this task, Patristic thinkers most of the time did not understand themselves as

‘’theologians’ being different from philosophers.’’ Indeed, they couldn’t have accepted or

admitted any sharp difference between philosophy and theology at all, yet they still

reasoned about their Christian commitment on the intellectual languages of the ancient

Mediterranean world, which was the language of Platonic, Aristotelian, and Stoic

philosophy.

Philosophy, or Christian thinkers who think philosophically are the people who most of the

time do so inside intellectual framework to help address or answer those daunting

questions and set things in order which often becomes an authoritative theology.

Philosophy, or Christian thinkers provide a normative framework (set of rules, ideas, beliefs)

within which this philosophical reflections occurs by demarcating the logical space that

constrains the field of acceptable solutions.

Philosophy therefore is a good thing because it helps theologians or people who are

undertaking its study to think more clearly. It helps people to question and understand

issues pertaining to the Christian doctrines, beliefs and practices.

It helps answer the posed philosophical questions which are useful because they bring

wisdom and help people to learn more about religion and other beliefs, and the way things

are done toward their beliefs.

8. Why Philosophy and Christian Theology (Relationship)

Philosophy and Christian Theology, each plays a major part toward the understanding of the

study of God, beliefs, doctrine, practices and traditions of Christianity, but they are not just

placed side by side for comparison, they are dove-tailed by what we call natural

relationship. They help answer a question which arises from man’s spiritual nature

concerning God, faith and about himself.

There is a relationship between philosophy and theology.

The works of theology or theologian, and the philosophy or philosopher are geared toward

the fundamental questions about the purpose and meaning of life, about good and evil,

about happiness and suffering, about death and the life after. The questioner himself

cannot find answers to these questions with the help of only the theologian.

The theologian needs the philosopher in order to learn how to use reason with rigor and

insight as he investigates the human dimensions of action and to provide him with the

necessary categories and language for a sound explanation of the riches of the Gospel and

the Christian experience.

Philosophy and Theology are not at war with each other, they do not destroy each other but

rather perfect each other.

In practice, when the history of Christian thought is surveyed, considerable overlap between

philosophy and theology is noticed.

However, with respect to their topic of inquiry, philosophers and theologians alike ask

questions about **epistemology** (the study of knowledge), **axiology** (the study of

values and value judgment), and **political theory** (the study of government and the

relationship of individuals, or families or clans to communities including the state, as well as

about **metaphysics,** the study of the most general features of reality, such as existence,

time, objects and their properties, wholes and their parts, events, processes and causation

and the relationship, and **fundamental ontology**, the study of the nature of being and

existence.

With regard to their methods of inquiry, they alike interpret authoritative texts, deploy

arguments, and marshal evidence to support their conclusion.

Christian theology claims are grounded by appeals to ‘’faith’’ or authority’’, whereas

Philosophical claims are grounded by appeals to ‘’reason.’’

This seems contrast is promising when suitably evolved, but is not sharp as one might

initially thought, for the simple reason that, theology also makes appeal to common sense

and ordinary human reason, and philosophy also has its version of faith and authority.

Of the making of typologies or categorization there is no end, but it is still *worth examining*

some of the most common ways that Christian thinkers throughout centuries have

understood the *chemistry* between philosophy and theology.

Without the foregoing bedrock, it becomes almost too easy to draw this chemistry without

proper information or in naïve, not in correct chronological historical time, and too simple

manner.

As a matter of fact, no single interpretation of philosophy and theology can claim

overwhelming support from the Christian tradition. From outside the Christian tradition,

where a lot of non-Christian thinkers see philosophy and theology as quite clear,

others deliberately blur the distinction between them, the reason being that theology is

actually just misguided philosophy.

The relationship between Philosophy and Theology in the Christian tradition rests on ‘

’**integration**’’ and ‘’**contrast**’’ views.

*Integration view* does not distinguish philosophy and theology at all, whereas contrast view

does.

The **contrast view** has three compartments: **Cooperation, Disjunction, and Conflict views.**

We cannot remove the ‘’contrast’’ category from ‘’cooperation’’ views, Disjunction’’

views, and ‘’Conflict’’ views.

The most prominent *cooperation view* treat philosophy as a valuable, perhaps even

necessary tool for theological enquiry, and still allow some degree of overlap between

them.

Disjunction views, by contrast, regard philosophy and theology as non-overlapping forms of

inquiry, which feature *distinct and ultimately unrelated goals and methods.*

**Conflict** views treat philosophy and theology as not only distinct but mutually antagonistic.

In fact, however, few Christian thinkers have endorsed outright conflict between philosophy

and theology. But it is still worth discussing the conflict view explicitly, because some

prominent Christian theologians throughout history – for example, Tertullian, Martin Luther,

or Karl Barth – initially seem to advocate conflict.

Upon closer inspection, however, their views are closer to those in the Disjunction category.

**Integration**

The integration view treats philosophy and Christian theology as continuous, integrated

activities. On this view, rational inquiry about God does not sharply divide into separate

activities called ‘’philosophy’’ and ‘’theology.’’ Instead, there is simply the single, continuous

intellectual task of trying to understand God, and all things in relation to God, using all of

one’s intellectual resources.

This account does not deny the importance of faith or revelation to the Christian intellectual

life; rather, it denies that faith and revelation properly belong to a separate activity called

‘’theology’’ in distinction from another actually called ‘’philosophy.’’

According to this view, when we engage in relational inquiry of any sort, we should draw on

every available source of knowledge that is relevant to the inquiry. So when we engage in

relational inquiry about Christian topics, we should draw on scripture, church tradition, and

other such sources of knowledge, whether we call the resulting inquiry ‘’theology,’’

philosophy’’, or something else.

To do something else would be unstable of our inquiry from the onset, according to

integration view. This account of the relationship between philosophy and theology has

deep roots in the Christian tradition.

**Contrast**

Unlike the integration model, the contrast view insists that philosophy and theology are

fundamentally different forms of inquiry. Truly, there can be several different contrast

models, because the relevant sense of ‘’contrast’’ comes in degrees.

The study focuses on three: ***Cooperation, Disjunction, and Conflict.***

On the Cooperation account, philosophy and theology remain closed cousins.

They seemed overlap in their respective topics of inquiry, sources and methods.

Nevertheless, the Cooperation account holds that their overlap between the two is only

partial, because they each begin from different intellectual starting points and appeal to

different sources of evidence (Baker-Hytch-2016; Chigell-2009:117; Simmons-2019).

On another version of the contrast view, Disjunction says, philosophy and theology are

even further apart: although they still do not conflict, and may even consider the same

topics in a reduced sense, their starting assumptions and methods of investigation are

different enough that they share no significant conclusions.

On Cooperation account, philosophy and theology are perceived to be different but

mutually supporting intellectual activities. For Christian thinkers who advocate cooperation,

philosophy and theology form a consistent, and mutually supporting **the whole**. They are

not in conflict with respect to their conclusions, since truth cannot contradicts truth, but

they differ with respect to their foundational axioms, goals, and the source of evidence.

Philosophy is perceived as a preamble to theology, while theology completes and fulfills

philosophy (Thomas Aquinas-Summa Theologiae 1.1.1-8; Summa Contra Gentiles 1.1.1-9;

Hankey 2001).

**Disjunction**

Like Cooperation, the Disjunction view holds that philosophy and theology are different

forms of inquiry. Similarly, like Cooperation, the Disjunction view also agrees that there can

be no real conflict between the conclusions of philosophy and theology at all. However,

Disjunction does not subordinate philosophy to theology or treat philosophy as an essential

tool for theology.

Instead, to borrow a term from contemporary science and religion debates,

philosophy and theology are ‘**’non-overlapping magisterial’’ (functions)-** (Gould-1997).

In conclusion, it has been realized and embraced that, none of the three views considered

so far: Integration, Cooperation, and Disjunction assume any real , essential conflict

between philosophy and theology. All three views allow for apparent conflict, due to errors

of reasoning or interpretation.

9. How does philosophers critique Christian Theology?

A philosopher endeavors to understand the reasons or basis for Christian Theology by

employing wisdom and knowledge to do critical evaluation through questioning and

reasoning.

The philosopher raises an argument on presupposed theology’s contradictions, errors,

unapproved occurrences that are lacking scientific proof, and some mysteries or mysticisms.

The philosophers begin by appropriating a better sense of the relevant historical

background of the theological subject or course at stake. And endeavor to appreciate what

the best contemporary work in analytic philosophical theology actually looks like.

They seek to know the relationship between Philosophy and Theology in the Christian

tradition.

They do this by asking questions and looking for good definitions of words to help them

apprehend what a question means, because they are of the opinion that the only thing

needed to answer a question is to find out what it means.

Philosophers use both real and imaginary examples to make a point. For instance, they may

write about a real or fictional person in order to show what they consider a good person or

a bad person is like. They use logic to critique, solve and answer questions, claiming that

logical consistency is a cornerstone of any acceptable theory. If they find a contradiction,

this gives reason to reject that theory. If they do not discover an inconsistency, the

philosopher might claim that the theory leads to a conclusion which is either unacceptable

or ridiculous.

**10. Categories in Philosophy**

The discipline can be categorized into different families, depending on the types of inquiry

or questions that it poses. One possible list of answers to these questions can be called a

‘philosophy.’ There are several different ‘philosophies’, simply because all of these posed

questions have several different answers according to different people. The questions asked

by the philosophers differ. Below is a list of questions which are divided into groups.

**Metaphysics:**

It is sometimes split up into **ontology**- the *philosophy of real life and living things (being and*

*knowing)*, the ***Philosophy of mind***, and the ***Philosophy of religion***; but these perceived sub-

branches are dovetailed together.

**Ontology**.

Under this branch, questions such as, What is the world that we see around us? (what is

reality?)

Is there more to the world than what we see or hear?

Do other worlds exist?

Is there anything very significant or special about human being or being alive at all?

**Meta Philosophy**

What are aims of philosophy, its boundaries and methods?

**Philosophy of mind:**

What is mind?

What is body?

What is consciousness?

Do people make choices, or can they only choose to do one thing? Do people have free will?

**Philosophy of Religion**:

Do people have souls?

Is there a GOD who created the Universe?

What are religion and religious ideas?

**Other branches are:**

**In Epistemology**:

What is knowledge?

How can we know anything?

**In Ethics**

What are right and wrong, good and bad?

Should people do some things and not others?

**In Aesthetics:**

What is beauty?

What if one person thinks a painting is beauty, but another person thinks the painting is

ugly? Can the painting be beautiful and ugly at the same time?

**In logic:**

What do the words we often use mean?

How can we say things in a way that only has one meaning?

**In Axiology**:

What has value?

Does love, beauty, or justice hold any value?

Is time really money? or have we made so?

**In Eschatology**:

Do we have to think about the end time events?

**Mind and language:**

Questions on nature and origins, and the use of language.

**Philosophy of science**:

Where comes the foundations, methods, history, implications and purpose of science?

**In Politics:**

Question on relationship that exist between government and individuals.

**In Teleology:**

An argument for the existence of God.

Considering the design and the orderly manner the universe works, cant we attribute its

creation to God who exist eternally?

**In Theology:**

Does GOD exist?

How can we explain three in one God?

**Personal Experience**

Having studied Philosophy and Theology, I am now in a position to attest to the fact that

there will invariable be a serious deficiency in interpretation and presentation of any

minister who will do away with the study of these disciplines. Because, without the study,

he may haphazardly tackle the Word of God which eventually will not benefit his hearers to

grow in the Lord. The minister will also wobble when it comes to the handling of

philosophical questions in theology.

Even though Holy Spirit is always available to help us apprehend the deep things of God, He

causes us also to study to help reason and ask questions about the things that we do not

understand. Thinking philosophically about the things of God, and reasoning to find out how

things were initiated and done is the work of the Holy Spirit. The Bible in the book of Isaiah

1:18 says, “Come and let us reason together.” Philosophy in theology helps us to reason to

come up with answers to philosophical questions.

In our time, there are a lot of adulterated messages within our churches, which

have a potential to derail people from the path of God, as a result of deficiencies detected in

our preparations and presentation of the Word of God.

Philosophical theology or the use of its methods in developing or analyzing theological ideas

as the study has taught me, has really broaden my horizon as a reverend minister.

I have now come to believe that philosophy and theology work hand in hand to make things

clear to benefit both Christians and theologians.

**Lesson**

It has been learned that Philosophy and Christian Theology are not at war as hitherto

thought, even though they are two distinct disciplines, their operations help each other to

offer understanding to people.

Philosophy is the search for wisdom, or the love of wisdom, whereas Christian theology is

the study of God, Christian belief or doctrines, practices, based on Old and New Testament

as well as on Christian tradition.

Philosophy employs wisdom and reason to critique to help embrace the theological topics

or theories. It endeavors to question and also address the seemed or alleged theological

errors, and the theories that have no scientific proofs.

It assists to come up with philosophical questions which are presumed in Christian theology,

such as the doctrine, trinity—One God revealing Himself in three distinct ways: God the

Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Also, the Divinity of Jesus Christ, who is born as man,

lived and died be regarded as God. These and many more are some of the philosophical

questions .

There are several branches of philosophy based on the posed questions, which have

contributed immensely to engender understanding for all and sundry who are undertaking

the study of the two disciplines.

Christian Theology on the other hand has enlightened us more on the existence of God, and

things about Him. It has also taught us the Christian beliefs or doctrines, practices and

various traditions. It unveils that, even though all Christian traditions uphold one belief,

their practices differ in several ways according to their apprehension of the doctrine or

belief. These differences which do not undermine Christian belief are experienced due to

sometimes the interpretation of the Scripture.

**Conclusion**

Philosophy and Christian Theology are two notable distinct disciplines which indisputably

have contributed a lot to offer huge opportunities to know more about God, Christian belief

or doctrine, practices, and traditions.

My objectives for undertaking the study, being to acquaint myself with the definitions which

reveal that: philosophy is about the concepts that endeavor to understand the reasons or

basis for things, and also how things should be. Also, the study of general and fundamental

questions, such as those concerning existence, knowledge, values, reasons, mind, and

language which are often posed as problems to be studied or resolved, or the study of the

fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence. Whereas, Christian theology: is

the study of Christian belief or doctrine, practices and respective traditions that are

conventionally embraced by all Christians. Additionally, it is the study that highlights the

theological diversity of the Christian churches.

History reveals that Socrates of Athens was among the most famous figures for his

incredible contributions to the evolvement of ancient Greek philosophy which served as

bedrock for all of Western philosophy, that earned him an accolade, ‘’Father of Western

Philosophy.’’

Major subfields of academic philosophy include metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, logic,

science, politics, aesthetics, axiology, eschatology, physics, astronomy, chemistry, biology,

cosmology, teleology, and others which have been defined and explained earlier.

History again reveals that, Origin Adamantius was the father of theology. He was an early

Christian scholar, ascetic, and theologian who spent the first half of his career in Alexandria.

He was a prolific writer who wrote almost 2000 thesis or books in multiple branches of

theology. The history of Christianity includes the basics of Christian Theology which was

initiated by the Catholics and the Protestants who were all Christians and do share some

basic and vital similarities in their religious beliefs and practices based on the belief in

monotheistic God.

The benefits accrued from philosophy, the rise of analytic theology, who is a philosopher

and a theologian? What are some of the philosophical questions in Christian theology, the

contributions of philosophy in theological questions, and many more have been dealt with

in the study. It has been also known and discussed that even though philosophy and

relationship are two different disciplines, their relationship seems to network their

resources to help people particularly, theologians and Christians to handle the disciplines

with apprehension.

Having achieved my objectives through the study, I can now emphatically and confidently

recommend the study of the topics to people who want to know more about Philosophy

and Christian Theology.

**Bibliography**

**‘**’aesthetic.’’ Lexico. Oxford University Press and Dictionary.com

‘’aesthetic’’ Merriam-Webster Dictionary. Retrieved 9 May 2020.

‘’Aesthetic.’’ Merriam-Webster Dictionary. Retrieved 9 May 2020

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy.

Burrel, David. Freedom and Creation in Three Traditions. Notre Dame: University of Notre

Dame Press, 1994

‘’Christian Theology.’’- Wikipedia

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wikipedia.org/wiki/christian\_theology.~:texts=christian%30

‘’Christian tradition-‘’ – Wikipedia

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki.christian\_theology

Dormor, Duncan et al. eds. Anglicanism, the Answer to Modernity. London: Continuum, 2003

Entwistle, David N. Integrative Approaches to Psychology and Christianity. 30 June 2015

p.148. ISBN 9781498223485.

‘’Epistemology.’’ Merriam-Webster Dictionary. Retrieved 8 May 2020

‘’Epistemology.’’ Encyclopedia Britannica. Retrieved 22 June 2020.

‘’Epistemology.’’ Standard Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Retrieved 30 June 2020.

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy

‘’Ethics.’’ Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Retrieved 6 July 2020.

Gorringe, Timothy. Crime, Changing Society and the churches Series. London: SPCK, 2004

‘’Metaphysics.’’ Merriam-Webster Dictionary. Retrieved 8 May 2020

Migliore, Daniel L. Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology.

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004

‘’Online Etymology Dictionary.’’ Etymouline.com. Retrieved 22 August 2010

‘’Outline Of Christian Theology.’’- Wikipedia

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/outline\_of\_christian\_theology

Plantinga, Alvin., Zalta, Edward N. (ed.) Religion and Science. Spring. 2014

(Spring. 2014 ed.)

ShelbySpong, John. Why Christianity Must Change or die. New York: Harper Collins, 2001

The definition of Philosophy is ‘’1. Orig., love of, or the search for, wisdom or knowledge 2.

Theory or logical analysis of the principles underlying conduct, thought, knowledge, and the

nature of universe.’’ Webster’s New World Dictionary (second college ed.).

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy

‘’The Place of Philosophy in Moral Theology.’’ University of Fribourg, Switzerland.

https://www.3.nd.edu/-afreddos/courcses/406/pinckaers.htm

Wood, W. ‘’Philosophy and Theology.’’ 2021

https://plat.standard.edu/entries/christiantheology-philosphy/

Zangwill, Nick. ‘’Aesthetic Judgment’’ (Revised ed.), Standard Encyclopedia of Philosophy. 9

May 2020