

**A Comparative Analysis of Buddhism, Wesleyanism,
and Process Theology
Implications for Holistic Transformation in Myanmar**

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Introduction

Myanmar, predominantly a Buddhist nation, also embraces Christianity, with 87.9% and 6.2%¹ of the total population practicing Buddhism and Christianity, respectively. With this in mind, and with the recognition of the significant role of religion in societal transformation, this paper explores the similarities and differences between Buddhism, Wesleyanism, and Process theology. The aim is to identify aspects or elements within these traditions that have potential applicability and relevance for our approach to holistic transformation in Myanmar.

Context of Buddhism, Wesleyanism, and Process Theology

Historically, these philosophies and theologies originated in distinct times and settings. Buddhism traces its roots back to as early as the sixth century B.C.E., following the enlightenment experience of Siddhattha Gotama, also called “the Buddha.”² Wesleyanism, founded on the belief and teachings of John Wesley (1703-1791), the founder of Methodism, emerged in the eighteenth century, emphasizing holiness in personal and social life.³

¹ Nina Evason, “Myanmar (Burmese) Culture,” Cultural Atlas, accessed October 6, 2023, <https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/myanmar-burmese-culture/burmese-myanmar-culture-religion>.

² Richard Francis Gombrich, *Theravada Buddhism: A Social History from Ancient Benares to Modern Colombo* (London: Routledge, 1995), 32.

³ Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism*,

Process theology developed as a theological movement two centuries after Wesleyanism, specifically in the mid-twentieth century.⁴ Alfred North Whitehead's philosophy significantly influenced its formation and development, serving as the foundation for American process theology. Charles Hartshorne, John Cobb, and others greatly influenced by Whitehead's metaphysics or philosophy played significant roles in the development and popularization of process theology.⁵

The context in which Buddhism emerged was often viewed as a protest or reform movement against the costly rituals and sacrifices initiated by the Hindu Brahmins. Gotama, the Buddha, sought to replace these practices with moral training and mental discipline, leading individuals toward ultimate liberation, or *Nibbana*.⁶ Some liken Gotama's reformation from Hinduism to the reformation initiated by Martin Luther from Roman Catholicism.⁷ Similarly, Wesley intended his Methodist movement, focusing on spiritual renewal, to be a revival within the Church of England and not a separate rival from it. Indeed, Wesley remained a member of the Anglican Church throughout his life.⁸

Process theology emerged as an attempt to reconcile traditional Chris-

2nd ed. (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2015), 59; "Wesleyanism," Messiah University, accessed November 02, 2023, https://www.messiah.edu/info/20265/the_three_traditions_that_shape_our_mission_and_why/328/wesleyanism.

⁴ John B. Cobb, *Process Theology as Political Theology* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982), 19.

⁵ Cobb, *Process Theology as Political Theology*, 19; Ewert H. Cousins, "Introduction: Process Models in Culture, Philosophy, and Theology," in *Process Theology*, ed. Ewert H. Cousins (New York: Newman Press, 1971), 5.

⁶ Rudi Maier, "Salvation in Buddhism," *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* 10, no. 1 (2014): 12, <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/jams/vol10/iss1/3/>.

⁷ Pat Alexander, ed., *Eerdmans' Handbook to the World's Religions*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1994), 226.

⁸ Robert Black and Keith Drury, *The Story of the Wesleyan Church* (Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2012), 17–18.

tian thought with scientific advancements, particularly the concept of process and change. This theological perspective responded to the changing social conditions in a context dominated by democracy and science. The theologians behind process theology believed that it was essential to reformulate the teachings of the church to align with the changing context, emphasizing a shift from historical to scientific methods in the study of religion that would also adapt to the evolving intellectual landscapes.⁹

Buddhism, Wesleyanism, and Process Theology: Core Doctrinal Teachings

This section provides a comparative analysis of the doctrinal teachings of Buddhism, Wesleyanism, and Process theology under three sections: Buddhism and Wesleyanism, Wesleyanism and Process theology, and Process theology and Buddhism.

Buddhism and Wesleyanism

Buddhism and Wesleyanism, representing atheistic¹⁰ and theistic frameworks respectively, clearly differ when it comes to theological concepts. Buddhism, rooted in the Buddha's teachings, is concerned with human predicament and its solution.¹¹ This is systematically organized into the Four Noble Truths, namely the Truth of Suffering (*dukkha*), the Cause of Suf-

⁹ John B. Cobb, Jr., "Process Theology," Process and Faith, accessed November 15, 2023, <https://processandfaith.org/resources/articles/process-theology/>.

¹⁰ S. Dhammika, *Good Question Good Answer* (Singapore: Buddha Dhamma Mandala Society, 2006), 7. Indeed, many considered Buddhism as a philosophy rather than a religion, for instance, when asked, a Buddhist monk by the name Dhammika replied that Buddhism is "the supreme philosophy." It is "the philosophy of awakening" from the word, *budhi*, meaning "to wake up."

¹¹ "One thing only does the Buddha teach, namely, suffering and the cessation of suffering." Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, trans., *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya* (Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1995), 235.

fering (*samudaya*), the Cessation of Suffering (*nirodha*), and the Path leading to the Cessation of Suffering, or the Way (*magga*) called the Noble Eightfold path.¹² Life is seen as suffering, with desire as its cause, and the Noble Eightfold Path¹³ as the means to end suffering and the attainment of *Nibbana*.¹⁴ In contrast, Wesleyanism, based on a theistic framework, holds on the Biblical account of the existence of God, the God three-in-one (1 John 5:7).¹⁵ Wesley summarized the core doctrines of Wesleyanism into three: “1) That Men [and women] are all by Nature *dead in Sin*, and consequently *Children of Wrath*,¹⁶ 2) That they are *justified by Faith* alone,¹⁷ and 3) That Faith produces inward and outward Holiness.”¹⁸

Despite their theological disparities, Buddhism and Wesleyanism share fundamental concepts that are significant for social transformation. Love

¹² Weragoda Sarada Maha Thero et al., *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta: The First Sermon of the Buddha* (Singapore: The Singapore Buddhist Meditation Center, 2017), 11-13.

¹³ The Noble Eightfold Path are Right View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration. They are categorized into three-fold disciplines such as morality (*sila*) is made up of Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood; Concentration(*samadhi*) is made up of Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration; and wisdom(*panna*) is made up of Right View and Right Thought. Mehm Tin Mon, *Kamma, The Real Creator* (Yangon: Mehm Tayzar Mon, 2007), 16.

¹⁴ Matthew Meghaprasara, *New Guide to the Tipitaka: A Complete Reference to the Pali Buddhist Canon* (Regina: A Sangha of Books, 2013), 384.

¹⁵ See Wesley’s sermon, “On the Trinity,” available at Wesleyan-Holiness Digital Library, https://whdl.org/sites/default/files/resource/book/On_the_Trinity_Sermon_55_-_John_Wesley_0.pdf?language=en.

¹⁶ See Wesley’s sermon, “Original Sin,” sermon #44, available at Wesleyan-Holiness Digital Library, <https://whdl.org/sites/default/files/resource/book/EN-JohnWesley-Sermons.pdf?language=en>.

¹⁷ See Wesley’s sermon, “Justification by Faith,” sermon #5, available at Wesleyan-Holiness Digital Library, <https://whdl.org/sites/default/files/resource/book/EN-JohnWesley-Sermons.pdf?language=en>.

¹⁸ John Wesley, *A Short History of Methodism* (London: Foundery, 1765), 7, Internet Archive.

holds a central role in both traditions. The teachings of Buddhism are rooted in love and compassion (*karuna*).¹⁹ The opposite of love, anger, or hatred (*dosa*) is considered one of the three roots of evil.²⁰ Similarly, Wesleyanism, according to Wynkoop, can be better described as “a theology of love” than “a theology of holiness,” with love being central to the whole message of John Wesley.²¹

Another commonality lies in the emphasis on morality and good works. However, good works and morality for Buddhism serve as a stepping stone towards liberation or *Nibbana*.²² In Wesleyanism, these are seen as the result or fruit of one’s spiritual experience or genuine faith, with inward and outward holiness expressing one’s spiritual experience.²³ To quote Wesley, “For our corruption thro’ Original Sin is so great, that all our faith, charity, words and works, cannot merit or deserve any part of our justification for us.”²⁴

Holiness is another shared element between the two traditions. Wesleyanism, often referred to as the Holiness tradition, asserts the possibility of attaining Christian perfection or entire sanctification in this life.²⁵ Wesley’s concept of Christian perfection or entire sanctification is not about flawlessness or “the absence of sin” but “the active presence of love ex-

¹⁹ Walpola Rahula and Paul Demieville, *What the Buddha Taught*, 2nd ed. (New York: Grove Press, 1981), 46.

²⁰ Mon, *Kamma*, 15.

²¹ Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love*, 27; See Wesley’s sermon, “On Love,” sermon #139.

²² Acharya Buddharakkhita, trans., *The Dhammapada: The Buddha’s Path of Wisdom* (Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1985), 47.

²³ John Wesley, *The Principles of a Methodist* (London: Printed for the Author, 1796), 8.

²⁴ Wesley, *The Principles*, 7.

²⁵ Theodore Runyon, “Introduction: Wesley and the Theologies of Liberation,” in *Sanctification and Liberation: Liberation Theologies in Light of the Wesleyan Tradition*, ed. Theodore Runyon (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1981), 10.

pressed not only in word but in deed: from God to humanity, from humanity to God; from God through human beings, to their fellow human beings.²⁶ Similarly, Buddhism insists on eliminating all defilements as a prerequisite for liberation and the attainment of *Nibbana*.²⁷

Despite these similarities, it must be noted that they diverged in the means to overcome defilements (Buddhism) or attain Christian perfection (Wesleyanism). Buddhism emphasizes personal effort with the Buddha as the Path shower,²⁸ while Wesleyanism emphasizes divine assistance, with the Holy Spirit playing a crucial role in leading believers into the ever-increasing likeness of Christ, enabling them to forsake their sinful nature. In his sermon, entitled “On Grieving the Holy Spirit,” Wesley expressed,

²⁶ Runyon, “Introduction,” 34; see Wesley’s sermon, “On Perfection,” sermon #76; “Christian Perfection,” sermon #40; “The Scripture Way of Salvation,” sermon #45; also, his book entitled, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*.

²⁷ Meghaprasara, *New Guide to the Tipitaka*, 387. Compare a liberated person in Buddhism with the marks or characteristics of a Methodist described by Wesley. “He [or she] is the happiest being in the world, free from all “complexes” and obsessions, the worries and troubles that torment others. . . . He [or she] appreciates and enjoys things. . . . He [or she] is joyful, exultant, enjoying the pure life, his [or her] faculties pleased, free from anxiety, serene and peaceful. As he [or she] is free from selfish desire, hatred, ignorance, conceit, pride, and all such defilements, he [or she] is pure and gentle, full of universal love, compassion, kindness, sympathy, understanding, and tolerance.” Rahula and Demieville, *What the Buddha Taught*, 43. “A Methodist is one, who has the love of God shed abroad in his [or her] heart, by the Holy Ghost given unto him: one who loves the Lord his God with all his [or her] heart, and with all his [or her] soul, and with all his [or her] mind, and with all his [or her] strength. . . . He [or she] is therefore happy in God, yea, always happy, . . . overflowing his [or her] soul with peace and joy. . . . He [or she]” cannot but rejoice, . . . he [or she] loves his [or her] brother also. And he [or she] accordingly loves his [or her] neighbor .. loves every man [and woman] as his [or her] own soul. His [or her] heart is full of love to all mankind, . . . a man [or woman] is not personally known to him [or her] is no bar to his [or her] love; repays hatred for his [or her] good-will. . . . And he [or she] hath now put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering.” John Wesley, *The Character of a Methodist* (London: G. Paramore, 1747), 5-8, Internet Archive.

²⁸ “It is the greatest battle to fight against defilements . . . But the Buddha showed the way how to fight and conquer them peacefully by the Noble Eightfold Path.” Mehm Tin Mon, *Meditation: The Buddha’s Way* (Yangon: Mehm Tayzar Mon, 2013), 19.

“There can be no point of greater importance to him [or her] who knows that it is the Holy Spirit which leads us into all truth and into all holiness.”²⁹ Furthermore, in “The Scripture Way of Salvation,” he asserted, “We are enabled ‘by the Spirit,’ to mortify the deeds of the body,’ of our evil nature.”³⁰

Buddhism and Process Theology

Buddhism and Process theology represent distinct philosophical and religious traditions. While Buddhism does not necessarily suggest a personal deity, Process theology incorporates a dynamic and relational understanding of God. Despite these foundational differences, some significant parallels can be drawn.

Firstly, both traditions share “the denial of substance,”³¹ or a fixed or unchanging reality, emphasizing impermanence or a process-oriented understanding of reality. In Buddhism, impermanence (*Anicca*) is one of the three marks or characteristics of existence (*Ti-lankkhana*), along with suffering (*Dukkha*) and no-self or soullessness (*Anatta*).³² These three marks are fundamental to Buddhist teachings.³³ Similarly, Process theology, as the

²⁹ John Wesley, *Sermons on Several Occasions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1771), 1227, <https://whdl.org/sites/default/files/resource/book/EN-JohnWesley-Sermons.pdf?language=en>.

³⁰ Wesley, *Sermons*, 452.

³¹ John B. Cobb, Jr., and David Ray Griffin, *Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1976), 137. Process theology is indeed traced back to Gotama, the Buddha.

³² Rahula and Demieville, *What the Buddha Taught*, 20.

³³ The dialogue between the Buddha and the monks about the three marks of existence goes like this, “The body (*rupa*), O Bhikkhus, is soulless (*anatta*). If O Bhikkhus, there were in this a soul then this body would not be subjected to suffering. But since this body is soulless, it is subjected to suffering. What thinks ye, O Bhikkhus, is this body permanent or impermanent? “Impermanent (*anicca*) Lord.” Is that which is impermanent happy or painful? “It is painful (*dukkha*) Lord.” Bhikkhu Bodhi, trans., *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1994),

word “process” suggests, denies “static actuality,” asserting that all actuality is process.³⁴ It emphasizes becoming and relation over being and absolute-ness.³⁵ Whitehead’s “philosophy of organism”³⁶ greatly influenced Process theology. According to Whitehead, “. . . the flux of things is one ultimate generalization around which we must weave our philosophical system.”³⁷

Secondly, both Buddhism and Process theology reject the idea of the existence of a permanent soul in an individual. In Buddhism, an individual is composed of an ever-changing mind and matter (*nama-rupa*). Instead of an eternal soul, Buddhism suggests a dynamic life-flux (*santati*) that flows *ad infinitum* as long as it is fed with ignorance and craving and contends that there is no eternal soul beyond this dynamic life-flux.³⁸ Indeed, to believe in the existence of a permanent soul for Buddhists is an illusion. Process theology similarly posits that individuals are “a series of events.”³⁹ There is no real thing beyond this. According to Whitehead, “‘Actual entities’—also termed ‘actual occasions’ are the final real things of which the world is made up. There is no going behind actual entities to find anything more real. . . . The final facts are, all alike, actual entities; and these actual entities are drops of experience, complex and interdependent.”⁴⁰

Thirdly, both traditions emphasize the interconnectedness of all things.

1133-1135.

³⁴ Cobb, and Griffin, *Process Theology*, 7.

³⁵ Charles Hartshorne, “The Development of Process Philosophy,” in *Process Theology*, ed. Ewert H. Cousins (New York: Newman Press, 1971), 47.

³⁶ Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: The Free Press, 1929), 22.

³⁷ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 240.

³⁸ Venerable Narada Mahatthera, *The Buddha and His Teachings* (Taipei, Taiwan: The Buddha Educational Foundation, 1998), 360, 402.

³⁹ Norman Pittenger, *Process-Thought and Christian Faith* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968), 13.

⁴⁰ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 23.

One of the core doctrines of Buddhism, the concept of Dependent Origination (*paticca-samuppada*), explains that nothing exists in isolation, and all phenomena are interconnected.⁴¹ The concept of the law of *kamma* (action or deed) and *samsara* (the wheel of birth and rebirth) also explains this interconnected nature of existence.⁴² Similarly, a fundamental concept in Process thought is the idea of an interconnected society of “occasions.” One cannot exist in isolation from others, their immediate environment, their past, the broader human history, the natural order, or potential future developments. Our being encompasses all the influences that have shaped us, our surroundings, external pressures, and the collective human experience.⁴³ It rejects a dualistic understanding between self and the world. Instead, it proposes a unified reality where our being is inherently connected to the world we inhabit, and both mutually shape each other.⁴⁴

Process Theology and Wesleyanism

With both being rooted in Christian thought, Process theology and Wesleyanism diverge significantly in their theological foundations and perspectives on God’s nature and interaction with the world. While Wesleyanism maintains a more traditional view of God, Process theology, on the other hand, introduces a fresh perspective that challenges the traditional understanding of God and God’s relation to the world, which I will discuss briefly before exploring the similarities between the two traditions.

Firstly, Process theology portrays God as a more relational, dynamic,

⁴¹ Venerable Narada Mahatthera, *The Buddha and His Teachings* (Taipei, Taiwan: The Buddha Educational Foundation, 1998), 338.

⁴² Dhammapada 1: 127, “What we are today comes from our thoughts of yesterday, and our present thoughts build our life of tomorrow: our life is the creation of our mind. If a man speaks or acts with an impure mind, suffering follows him as the wheel of the cart follows the beast that draws the cart.” Juan Mascaro, trans., *The Dhammapada: The Path to Perfection* (New York: Penguin Books, 1973), 35, 53.

⁴³ Pittenger, *Process-Thought*, 12-13.

⁴⁴ Cobb, and Griffin, *Process Theology*, 81.

and evolving deity in a continuous process of becoming. Rejecting the traditional understanding of God as an unchanging, timeless, unaffected by “his” creation, and independent of the world, Process theology suggests that “God is essentially dynamic and interrelated with the world, rather than changeless and independent of the world.”⁴⁵ God is constantly engaged in a process of “self-creation, synthesizing in each new moment of his experience the whole of achieved actuality with the plenitude of possibility as yet unrealized.” Thus, God is intimately connected to the evolving world.⁴⁶

Secondly, Process theology challenges the idea of God as “the ruling Caesar, or the ruthless moralist, or the unmoved mover.”⁴⁷ According to Whitehead, God has a primordial and consequent nature. The primordial nature refers to the eternal and unchanging aspects of God’s existence. In this aspect, God is the ground of all possibilities. “He is the unlimited conceptual realization of the absolute wealth of potentiality,” said Whitehead. “He is the lure for feeling, the eternal urge of desire.”⁴⁸ The consequent nature reflects God’s dynamic interaction with the evolving world where “the world reacts upon God.”⁴⁹ In this consequent nature, God is influenced by events, choices, and actions in the world. He is being affected by and actually enriched by the activity that occurs in his world.⁵⁰

Thirdly, Process theology diverged from the traditional concept of God as the creator of the world. Rather, according to Whitehead, God is “the poet of the world, with tender patience leading it by his vision of truth,

⁴⁵ Catherine E. Keller and Austin J. Roberts, “Panentheism and Process Theism,” *Modern Living* 63, no. 2 (Spring 2022): 122, <https://doi.org/doi:10.3828/mb.2022.8>.

⁴⁶ Schubert M. Ogden, “The Reality of God,” in *Process Theology*, ed. Ewert H. Cousins (New York: Newman Press, 1971), 123.

⁴⁷ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 404.

⁴⁸ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 405–406.

⁴⁹ Cousins, “Introduction,” 13.

⁵⁰ Pittenger, *Process-Thought*, 22–23.

beauty, and goodness.”⁵¹ The world, as a whole, according to Process philosophy, is “*in process* and is *a process*; it is not a finished and settled system composed of discrete entities which are inert, changeless, static.”⁵²

Also, Process theology rejects the idea of God being in complete control and all-knowing. Instead, it emphasizes a loving God whose “richest perfection possible is perfection in relationships and not ‘absolute power’ or unchanging substance.”⁵³ Therefore, God’s activity in the world is perceived as a loving and creative activity that is “persuasive, not controlling.” Therefore, “each divine creative impulse into the world is adventurous, in that God does not know what the result will be.”⁵⁴ According to Whitehead, “God’s own life is an adventure . . . in the sense of being a risk since God will feel the discord as well as the beautiful experiences involved in the finite actualizations.”⁵⁵

Despite this significant divergence in the nature of God and God’s interaction with the world, some central claims of Process theology align with the Wesleyan theological framework. Cobb, for instance, considers Wesley as a process thinker due to the resonance between his perspective and that of a process thinker. This is evident in Wesley’s emphasis on God’s involvement throughout an individual’s life, “the emergence of faith, growth in love, falling back into sin.”⁵⁶ Furthermore, he observed how Wesley’s preaching and theology focus extensively on the various stages of this dynamic process and God’s involvement in them.⁵⁷

⁵¹ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 408.

⁵² Pittenger, *Process-Thought*, 12.

⁵³ Pittenger, *Process-Thought*, 22.

⁵⁴ Cobb, and Griffin, *Process Theology*, 57.

⁵⁵ Cobb, and Griffin, *Process Theology*, 61.

⁵⁶ John B. Cobb, “Wesley the Process Theologian,” (lectures, Point Loma University, San Diego, February 2000), available at *Religion Online*, <https://www.religion-online.org/article/wesley-the-process-theologian/>.

⁵⁷ Cobb, “Wesley the Process Theologian.”

Wesley's emphasis on Prevenient Grace (grace that goes before), human free or uncoerced will to respond to this grace, and his rejection of the concept of predestination that says, "everything is determined from the outset by God's one, unchanging act of the will,"⁵⁸ resonates with Process theology that focusses on God's divine love in the form of his creative activity in influencing human's decision.⁵⁹ According to process theology, divine love is persuasive rather than controlling.⁶⁰ Indeed, Oord believes that among various theologies, process theology enriches our understanding of Christian love as it describes "God's love as both creative and responsive."⁶¹

Both traditions emphasize the significance of human and divine cooperative work for transformation. Wesley's model of synergism, where humans partner with the divine in the redemptive and transformative process, parallels the concept of co-creation in Process theology. Wesley insists that humans have a significant role in transformation as God involves them in the process. They labor with God as God works in and through them.⁶² Similarly, Process theology emphasizes the co-creative role of humans with God. According to Hartshorne, "Process philosophy, fully thought out, is creationism! . . . Creativity, if real at all, must be universal, not limited to God alone."⁶³ Both traditions, thus, affirm the role of individuals in shaping the world and their future in collaboration with the divine.

⁵⁸ Cobb, "Wesley the Process Theologian."

⁵⁹ Cobb, and Griffin, *Process Theology*, 51.

⁶⁰ Cobb, and Griffin, *Process Theology*, 69.

⁶¹ Thomas Jay Oord, "Process and Wesleyan Theologies," *Thomas Jay Oord* (blog), August 15, 2011, https://thomasjayoord.com/index.php/blog/archives/process_and_wesleyan_theologies.

⁶² Runyon, "Introduction," 28.

⁶³ Hartshorne, "The Development," 53-54.

Implications for a Holistic Transformation Approach in the Myanmar Context

The comparative analysis of the three philosophical and theological frameworks not only enriches our understanding of holistic transformation but also provides significant philosophical-theological frameworks for affecting holistic transformation in the context of Myanmar.

Buddhism and Wesleyanism

Buddhism and Wesleyanism, both emphasizing love or lovingkindness, holiness, ethical living, compassion, and good works as integral parts of one's religious experience, have profound implications for a holistic individual and societal transformation in Myanmar. In a diverse ethnic and religious landscape like Myanmar, the emphasis on lovingkindness that extends to all creation or "universal love"⁶⁴ (Buddhism) and love towards all people⁶⁵ (Wesleyanism) is crucial for societal transformation, fostering tolerance and peace. Also, this approach of lovingkindness will contribute to promoting social justice and reconciliation and create a more harmonious and compassionate society, which is the pressing need in Myanmar.

Their shared emphasis on ethical living, good works, generosity, and social action is significant for holistic transformation in the context of Myanmar, a context stricken by poverty, crimes, political instability, and the presence of systems or structures that promote oppression, exclusivism, and inequality among the people. This approach can not only help bridge the widening economic gap but also promote justice that will result in a more just, safe, and equal society.

⁶⁴ Rahula and Demieville, *What the Buddha Taught*, 43.

⁶⁵ Wesley, *The Character of a Methodist*, 8-9, 11.

Buddhism and Process Theology

Buddhism and Process theology's emphasis on impermanence can have significant implications for holistic transformation in Myanmar. The recognition of the need for adaptability and openness to change is crucial, especially in the context of Myanmar. This adaptability and openness are crucial for change that will lead to transformation.

Additionally, both emphasis on the interconnectedness of things and the idea that nothing exists in isolation can have significant implications for social transformation. This will lead to the advocacy for inclusive, collaborative, and empathetic approaches to social transformation. Also, this will direct our actions for the greater good as we shape one another.

While the concept of no permanent soul in an individual suggested by both may contradict our Biblical faith, it holds a significant conceptual implication for addressing the prevailing corruptions in society that are caused by selfishness. This idea of "no self" or "selflessness" is a transformative force in fighting against selfishness and the consequences it brings to society that will contribute to the realization of a society marked by other-centeredness.

Wesleyanism and Process Theology

Wesleyanism's emphasis on prevenient grace and Process theology's emphasis on God's creative love and engagement in the world offers a valuable framework for holistic transformation in Myanmar, where religious and cultural superiority and nationalism prevail. This framework encourages a positive perspective on differences, believing in God's work in diverse contexts.

Wesley's synergism and Process theology's co-creative process provide a new perspective on human-divine cooperation for a better society. Considering the current socio-political landscape of the country, this concept of co-creating or co-transforming with the divine can instill in us a sense of agency and responsibility for personal and social transformation that will motivate us to actively engage in shaping the future of our country.

Also, the rejection of predestination (the idea that God has the past,

present, and future already decided) in Wesleyanism with the concept of the consequent nature of God in Process theology can serve as a motivating factor, particularly for Christians in Myanmar to believe in the power of prayer that can bring positive changes in our nation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Buddhism, Wesleyanism, and Process theology, although emerging in different times and settings with distinctive theological and philosophical frameworks, share concepts that offer unique perspectives for perceiving and affecting holistic transformation in Myanmar. Drawing elements from them and integrating them into a holistic approach can address the complex challenges facing Myanmar today that will pave the way for the realization of a holistic, meaningful, and lasting transformation in Myanmar.

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