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## Religions in Philippines : History, Culture and Faith

*Li Jia*

*International College, Krirk University, Thanon Ram Intra, Khwaeng Anusawari, Khet Bang Khen, Krung Thep, Maha Nakhon 10220, Thailand*

### ABSTRACT

The paper contextualizes the religion in the Philippines<sup>1</sup>. Qualitative in nature, implementing documentary analysis from various sources, it traces its historical background as a prelude to the tapestry of different religious institutions that have made their way into the lives of Filipinos, thus the treatment of the paper is focused on this selected major religions only. These were analyzed in relation to their basic doctrines of the personal of God and what he symbolizes for each one. It also presents similarities in support of the theory of Universality among these religions were also discussed. Finally, the conclusion leads to an analysis on how religion impacts culture and traditions and this is reflected in a treatment that shows specific traditional practices being practiced in the Philippines to mark rites of passage and timeline events in the lives of Filipinos as evidence of how religious influence has made its mark among Filipinos to this day.

**Keywords:** Religion and culture, Filipino traditional practices, influence of religion on tradition, Universality and Christianity, the concept of God amongst religions

### 1 Introduction

Religion is defined as a set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe, especially when considered as the creation of a superhuman agency or agencies, usually involving devotional and ritual observances, and often containing a moral code governing the conduct of human affairs. It is a belief in and reverence for a supernatural power or powers regarded as creator and governor of the universe.<sup>2</sup>

The development of religion from a global perspective takes on different forms from the vantage point of different cultures. Thus culture or life ways impacts the way religion is viewed and practiced. There are religions that place emphasis on belief, while others emphasize practice. Some of the world's religions focus on the subjective experience of the religious individual, while others consider the activities of the religious community to be most important. There are also those that claim that religion is universal, believing they espouse a set of laws that is binding for everyone. On the extreme view, other religions tend to be practiced only by a closely defined or exclusive localized group. In many places of the world, religion has been associated with

<sup>1</sup> This paper is a lecture summary for the course Religion Studies the author has taught for the past 10 years. It is educational purposed and the sources comes from various media forms the writer encountered during the years. [filipinokastila.tripod.com](http://filipinokastila.tripod.com), [www.scribd.com](http://www.scribd.com), [wikipedia.org](http://wikipedia.org), [www.mc.maricopa.edu](http://www.mc.maricopa.edu), and many others that makes this teaching material possible. Due to long time, some source information might be missing. Please kindly contact the author for relevant acknowledgment and apology in advance in case such issue happens.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/religion#:~:text=a%20set%20of%20beliefs%20concerning,the%20conduct%20of%20human%20affairs>. last accessed: Jul 7, 2021

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: [1146043158@qq.com](mailto:1146043158@qq.com)

public institutions such as education, social community, government, and political hierarchies.

Religion in the Philippines is defined as spiritual beliefs from a culturally context held by Philippine citizens. Religion holds a central place in the life of the majority of Filipinos. It is central not as an abstract belief system, but rather as a host of experiences, rituals, ceremonies, and adjurations that provide continuity in life, cohesion in the community and moral purpose for existence. Religious associations born out of specific religious denominations in the Philippines are part of the system of kinship ties, patron-client bonds and other linkages outside the nuclear family.

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## 2 History and Background of Religion in the Philippines

The pre-Hispanic belief system of Filipinos consisted of a pantheon of gods, spirits, creatures, and men that guarded the streams, fields, trees, mountains, forests, and houses. Bathala, who created earth and man, was superior to these other gods and spirits. Regular sacrifices and prayers were offered to placate these deities and spirits--some of which were benevolent, some malevolent. Wood and metal images represented ancestral spirits, and no distinction was made between the spirits and their physical symbol. Reward or punishment after death was dependent upon behavior in this life (Miller, 1982).

It is ingrained in this belief system that anyone who had reputed power over the supernatural and natural was automatically elevated to a position of prominence. Every village in the islands had its share of shamans and priests who competitively plied their talents and carried on ritual curing. Many gained renown for their ability to develop "anting-anting", a charm guaranteed to make a person invincible in the face of human enemies. Other sorcerers concocted love potions or produced amulets that made their owners invisible. Upon this indigenous religious base, two foreign religions were introduced -- Islam and Christianity -- and a process of cultural adaptation and synthesis began that is still evolving. Spain introduced Christianity to the Philippines in 1565 with the arrival of Miguel Lopez de Legaspi. Earlier, beginning in 1350, Islam had been spreading northward from Indonesia into the Philippine archipelago. At the time of the Spanish arrival, the Muslim areas in the south had the highest and most politically integrated culture on the islands under Muslim influence. But the Spaniards were bent to quell Muslim dominance just as they did in other colonies, nevertheless, dominance over Muslims in the south of the Philippine archipelago was never achieved during three centuries of Spanish rule. During American rule in the first half of this century the Muslims continued. Since independence, particularly in the last decade, there has been resistance by large segments of the Muslim population to national integration. Islam was contained in the southern islands, Spain's influence conquered and converted the remainder of the islands to Hispanic Christianity. When the United States took over the Philippines in the first half of the century, the justifications for colonizing were to Christianize and democratize. The feeling was that these goals could be achieved only through mass education (up until then education was reserved for a small elite). Most of the teachers who went to the Philippines were Protestants, many were even Protestant ministers. There was a strong prejudice among some of these teachers against Catholics. Since this Protestant group instituted and controlled the system of public education in the Philippines during the American colonial period, it exerted a strong influence. Subsequently the balance has shifted to reflect much stronger influence by the Catholic majority (Faustino, 2010).

During the period of armed rebellion against Spain, a nationalized church was organized under Gregorio Aglipay, who was made "Spiritual head of the Nation Under Arms." Spanish bishops were deposed and arrested, and church property was turned over to the Aglipayans, hence they were a religion to contend with. Another dynamic nationalized Christian sect is the Iglesia ni Kristo, begun around 1914 and founded by Felix Manolo Ysagun. Along with the Aglipayans and Iglesia ni Kristo, there have been a proliferation of Rizalist sects, claiming the martyred hero of Philippine nationalism, Jose B. Rizal as the second son of God and a reincarnation of Christ. Leaders of these sects themselves often claim to be reincarnations of Rizal, Mary, or leaders of the revolution; claim that the apocalypse is at hand for non-believers; and claim that one can find salvation and heaven by joining the group.

The current challenge to the supremacy of the Catholic church comes from a variety of small sects -- from the fundamentalist Christian groups, such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventists, to the Iglesia ni Kristo, Rizalists and of late The Dating Daan group led by Eli Soriano. The Roman Catholics suffer from a lack of personnel (the priest to people ratio is exceedingly low), putting them at a disadvantage in gaining and maintaining popular support. The Catholic church is seeking to meet this challenge by establishing an increasingly native clergy and by engaging in programs geared to social action and human rights among the rural and urban poor.

Today Philippines proudly boasts to be the only Christian nation in Asia. More than 86 percent of the population is Roman Catholic, 6 percent belong to various nationalized Christian cults, and another 2 percent belong to well over 100 Protestant denominations. In addition to the Christian majority, there is a vigorous 4 percent Muslim minority, concentrated on the southern islands of Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan. Scattered in isolated mountainous regions, the remaining 2 percent follow non-Western, indigenous beliefs and practices. The Chinese minority, although minimal as compared to Christians and Muslims, has been culturally influential in coloring Filipino Catholicism with many of the beliefs and practices of Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism.

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## 3 Theoretical Framework: Universality in a Culture that Impacts Religion

Culture can be considered as the entire social heritage of man; specifically, it is the tradition of a particular human group, a way of living learned from, and shared by, the members of that group. Understanding the concept of culture is key to understanding human behavior.

Religion, like culture itself, consists of systematic patterns of beliefs, values, and behavior, acquired by people as a member of their society. These patterns are systematic because their manifestations are regular in occurrence and expression: they are shared by member of a group. Within all religions, however, there is not homogeneity; there are differences of interpretation of principles and meanings.

There are numerous ways we can define religion, these ways are set in the following as components of such a definition:

- System of beliefs in supernatural forces with symbols and rituals that make life meaningful;
- Concerned with the expression of social values in a given setting, and attempts to safeguard them by endowing them with divine sanction;
- A system of symbols with acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long lasting moods and motivations by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these perceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic . In other words, this symbol must help to construct how a society will view the world around them.

What becomes important is to recognize what is implied by the nature of the "sacred." For some this means that when you enter a church sanctuary or temple you adjust your attitude toward the sacredness of the place and the reason that you have went there for. To others in different cultures, sacredness takes on the importance of life itself.

Clifford Geertz, an American anthropologist gave strong support for and influence on the practice of symbolic anthropology theorized religion in the context of culture and meaning. In his seminal work *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973), Geertz outlined culture as "a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which people communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life". He treats religion as a vital component of cultural meanings. He argues that religion carries symbols which establish especially powerful moods or feelings, help explain human existence by giving it an ultimate meaning, and purport to connect us to a reality that is "more real" than what we see every day. The religious sphere thus has a special status above and beyond regular life.

To this end, the concept of God can be viewed as universal. Universality in its primary meaning refers to religious, theological, and philosophical concepts with universal ("applying to all") application or applicability. Religion in this context is defined as a set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe, especially when considered as the creation of a superhuman agency or agencies, usually involving devotional and ritual observances, and often containing a moral code governing the conduct of human affairs. Universality is a term used to identify particular doctrines considering all people in their formation. Universality in the religious context claims that religion is a universal quality.

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#### 4 Objective of the Study

The study aims to explore the concept of God in the context of culture amongst a selection of different religious institutions in the Philippines.

- To enumerate the different concepts of God from different religions.
- To discuss similarities among religions in support of universality.
- To discuss the impact of religion on culture and tradition.
- To analyse how religion in a multicultural setting as in the Philippines can be contextualized to embrace a universal doctrine that espouses co-existence and inter-relatedness in the acceptance of all regardless of religious affiliations.

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#### 5 Methodology

The paper is qualitative in nature and made use of data gathered from various resources available in the internet documents, journal articles and books related to the topic. It is limited to a treatment of a selection of major religions being practiced here in the Philippines. It is also delimited by selected doctrines alluring to who God is and their central belief about God. The impact of culture on religion is also treated in this study limited only to two (2): Roman Catholicism and Christianity which were the most influential in the lives of Filipinos. A subsequent documentary analysis ensued to present the discussions relevant to the postulate of the paper.

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#### 6 Results and Discussion

The following are summary data findings that the paper have gathered in relation to its objectives.

##### God Among Major Religions of the Philippines

God (or his equivalent symbolic form or meaning) in most religions is most often conceived of as the supernatural creator and overseer of the universe. Theologians have ascribed a variety of attributes to the many different conceptions of God. The most common among these include omniscience

(infinite knowledge), omnipotence (unlimited power), omnipresence (present everywhere), omnibenevolence (perfect goodness), divine simplicity, and eternal and necessary existence. God has also been conceived as being incorporeal (immaterial), a personal being, the source of all moral obligation, and the "greatest conceivable existent"<sup>3</sup>.

God in various cultural settings is at the core of all religious practice of any religious sect or denomination and whose interventions give meaning and reason to man's existence and oversees people in all aspects of life.

**Table 1. The Concept of God Across Different Religions in the Philippines**

Religious Institution	Concept of God
<b>Islam</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;There is one almighty God, named Allah, who is infinitely superior to and transcendent from humankind.</li> <li>&gt;Allah is viewed as the creator of the universe and the source of all good and all evil. &gt;Everything that happens is Allah's will. He is a powerful and strict judge, who will be merciful toward followers depending on the sufficiency of their life's good works and religious devotion.<sup>4</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Hinduism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;Hindus worship one Being of ultimate oneness (Brahman) through infinite representations of gods and goddesses.</li> <li>&gt;These various manifestations of gods and goddesses become incarnate within idols, temples, gurus, rivers, animals, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Buddhism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;Buddhists do not worship any gods or God. People outside of Buddhism often think that Buddhists worship the Buddha.</li> <li>&gt;Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama) never claimed to be divine, but rather he is viewed by Buddhists as having attained what they are also striving to attain, which is spiritual enlightenment and, with it, freedom from the continuous cycle of life and death.</li> </ul>
<b>Christianity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;Christians believe in a loving God who has revealed himself and can be personally known in this life.</li> <li>&gt;With Jesus Christ, the person's focus is not on religious rituals or performing good works, but on enjoying a relationship with God and growing to know him better.</li> <li>&gt;Faith in Jesus Christ himself, not just in his teachings, is how the Christian experiences joy and a meaningful life. Jesus claimed to be God in human form.</li> </ul>
<b>Roman Catholicism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;Catholics predominantly profess that Jesus is the Christ the only Son of the Living God, the Lord and the eternal Word.</li> <li>&gt;They profess Jesus to be the second of three divine persons of the Holy Trinity: Jesus the Son constitutes, together with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, the single substance of the &gt;One God. Jesus is defined to be one person with a fully human and fully God, a doctrine known as the Hypostatic union.</li> </ul>
<b>Iglesia Ni Cristo (INC)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;The Iglesia ni Cristo believes that God the Father is the only true God.</li> <li>&gt;The church believes that God is omnipotent, and that He created all, including Jesus Christ, the Son. Meanwhile, the Holy Spirit is the power sent by God in the name of Jesus.</li> <li>&gt;The Holy Spirit is in the INC ministers giving them the exclusive ability to interpret the Bible correctly.</li> </ul>
<b>Protestants</b>	<p>Protestants believe in an all-powerful God who is perfectly good, loving, and holy. share the orthodox Christian view of Jesus as fully human and fully divine. Traditionally they believe in angels and the devil.</p>
<b>Jehovah's Witness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;Jehovah's Witnesses believe in one God, the Creator of the universe and the God of the Hebrew and Christian scriptures. They stress the fact that God has revealed his personal name to humanity, which is Jehovah.</li> </ul>
<b>Church of Latter Day Saints</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is often referred to as the LDS Church or Mormon Church. The Church emphasizes its central belief that Jesus is the Christ.</li> </ul>
<b>United Methodist Church</b>	<p>The United Methodist Church affirms a Creator God and supports the scientific study of creation. It recognizes science as a legitimate interpretation of God's natural world.</p>
<b>Seventh-day Adventist</b>	<p>They belief in an imminent, pre-millennial, universally visible second advent, proceeded by a time of trouble when the righteous will be persecuted and a false second coming where Satan impersonates the Messiah.</p>

<sup>3</sup>Gods of Chaos & Fantasy Wiki.[https://godsofchaosfantasy.fandom.com/wiki/God\\_\(Heaven\)](https://godsofchaosfantasy.fandom.com/wiki/God_(Heaven)).last accessed:Jul 7,2021.

<sup>4</sup><https://www.coursehero.com/file/36136087/Hinduism-and-its-beliefsdocx/>.last accessed:Jul 7,2021.

Table 1 shows the different concepts of God in different religious institutions here in the Philippines. It reveals the different symbols of who God represents to these religions. While God is called by many names in the religions enumerated above, the descriptions about God quite the same in referring to him as creator of the universe and savior of his people.

**The Similarities of Religious Concepts**

There are basically three different ways that people approach religion. They are the exclusive, inclusive, and universal approaches. The exclusive approach is where people believe, for one reason or another that there is only one right way, and that everyone else is excluded. This is reflected in some religions here in the Philippines such as the Iglesia ni Cristo and a newly formed religion called "Dating Daan" headed by their leader Pastor Eli Soriano. The inclusive approach also accept the passage about Jesus being the way, the truth, and the life, but people stress that being saved by Jesus does not necessarily require that one be aware of his name or even that they be aware that they are saved. The universal approach says that God may have only used Jesus to communicate to a particular culture, and he may have used such people as Mohammed or the Buddha to communicate his will to other cultures. In other words, sincere non-Christians are not regarded as being spiritually deprived just because they have not come to knowledge about Jesus Christ. They may be totally saved in accordance with the teachings of their religion, on the basis that God gave them their religion to meet their needs, and he gave one's religion (Christianity) to meet his needs (Chaffee 2002).

Comparing the major religions explored in this study, we note similarities of certain doctrines in support of Universality.

**Table 2. Universality among Doctrines in Different Religions**

Religion	Universal Thought
Christianity	All humans either be saved or not through Jesus Christ and eventually come to harmony in God's kingdom.
Hinduism	The whole world as a single family that deifies the one truth, and therefore it accepts all forms of beliefs and dismisses labels of distinct religions which would imply a division of identity. All religions are true and therefore worthy of toleration and respect.
Islam	Recognizes to a certain extent the validity of the Abrahamic religions, the Qur'an identifying Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, and "Sabi'un" or "baptists" as "people of the book".
Roman Catholicism	The Church has a single intention: that God's kingdom may come, and that the salvation of the whole human race may come to pass. Believes in Jesus Christ desires the salvation of all, and He is the guarantee of universal salvation for all.

Table 2 shows selected doctrines alluring to universalism that selected major religions in the Philippines espouse. Universalism is reflected when these religions note the inclusion of other (religions) aside from them, warding off exclusivity. And in the case of Roman Catholicism, the Church denotes the plan of salvation is for all of mankind regardless of his religious affiliations.

**Impact of Religion on Culture Among Filipinos**

Cultures have molded traditions that Filipinos most often follow. In this country, culture is influenced by religion, in this case Christianity which Spanish rule of more than 300 years have bequeathed to the people of this country. The Catholic Church had been a very visible pillar of Christianity in the Philippines, becoming an institution itself. It has delved not only into tradition but also in values formation, the system of society including the law and education, and the acculturation of Filipinos. Traditions in the Philippines vary with different occasions and situations. It cannot be denied that aside from Christianity these traditions are also influenced by folk religion that Filipinos had practiced earlier. These traditions bring in some superstitions and rituals that passed on through generations<sup>5</sup>.

The following table list a few of these traditional practices often indulged in by Filipinos influence by their Religion (Roman Catholic and Christian).

**Table 3. Traditional Practice Related to Religion Among Filipinos**

Religious Beliefs	Traditional Practices
Strong devotion to Virgin Mary and Santo Nino	>They clothe the statues in rich brocade, treating the Child Jesus as a princely guest in their homes  >Peñafrancia Festival, is held on a tributary of the Bicol River where a barge called "pagoda" parades the image of the Virgin before her devotees lining the banks of six provinces.
Supplications for a good harvest, for rain, for the right spouse, for children.	>Veneration of saints. Celebration to please selected saints symbolic to the supplication.
Healing rituals with water/oil.	>Performance of sacrament of Baptism and Confirmation

<sup>5</sup> Please refer to <https://www.scribd.com/> for more details and papers on this point.

Acting out biblical stories.	>Rituals of Lent such as “pabasa” and “way of the cross” including flagellation and reenacted crucifixion.
Asking for divine guidance for interventions.	>Recitation of novenas and offerings of eggs, harvest and other goods to selected saints. Festive dances and other rituals during important dates.
Celebration of important Christian events such as Christmas and Easter.	>Use of “parol”, celebrating long Christmas season, processions for and re-enactment of Easter as well as pageants.
Wedding, burial and houseblessing ceremonies.	<p>&gt;Wedding traditions incorporate different ceremonies even before the wedding itself. They have what they call the pag-aalay in the patron of the place and the Blessed Virgin Mary. Some wedding traditions also include the sabog wherein some couples are pinned with money offerings or given gifts as a help for them to start on their own. After the wedding, custom was to shower the newlyweds with bigas.</p> <p>&gt;In burial ceremonies, it is a custom to have 3-4 days of wake before burying the dead. It will be followed by a 40 days of prayers called the padasal. Commemoration of All Saints Day at the cemetery.</p> <p>&gt;House blessing that is assumed to eliminate evil spirits that resides in the place. House owners light candles and guide the priest that blesses each corner and room in the house. &gt;Throwing coins before family formally moves into their new house early in the morning.</p>

Table 3 shows Filipino culture and traditional practices influenced by religion. It indicates many ritualistic rites of passage and practices that finds its roots on religious believes and adherence to Church doctrines.

Filipinos are deeply religious in nature. Even before Christianity came into the picture, they already acknowledge the presence of someone greater than them. They already know how to show their gratitude and pay their respect to them. It has affected their way of living and has shaped their attitude towards other people. The Spaniards came and introduced Catholicism to the Philippines. As a result, the religion fused with the existing animistic belief that is later called folk religion. This fusion of Christianity and folk religion was called syncretism. The Filipinos have their Christian faith but at the same time they still can't ignore their belief in the forces of the supernatural which is evident in some of their practices<sup>6</sup>.

The Catholic Church has been a very influential factor in Filipino society. It does not only concern the important aspect of the society, the family, but also became a watcher of the government in this country. It has created a voice of itself and continued to be a driving force in the society. The religion has become an instrument for Filipinos enlightenment, captivation, unity and hope. Although the Christian faith of Filipinos is not truly that pure, it cannot be denied that Filipinos are faithful to their religion. But the thought lies on are they really capable of acknowledging the responsibility that accompanied this faith.

### **Analysis on the Contextualization of Religion Among Filipinos**

The Filipino culture is seep in tradition borne out of the influence of colonizers in its rich past. The three decade long Spanish rule and Muslim colonizers before them has paved the way to make Christianity and Islam two of the most influential religions that bears impact on the lives of Filipinos and their cultural and traditional practices. Both of these religions have been superimposed on ancient traditions and acculturated. The unique religious blend is what has resulted and reflects the strong personal faith of a majority of Filipinos. In the Philippine religious context, religion retains its central role in society.

Roman Catholicism is the predominant religion and the largest Christian denomination, with estimates of 80% of the population belonging to this faith in the Philippines. The country has a significant Spanish Catholic tradition, and Spanish style Catholicism is highly embedded in the culture, which was acquired from Spanish priests who brought this religion to the country. Traditions such as Misa de Gallo, Black Nazarene procession, Santo Niño Festivals (Santo Niño de Cebu, Ati-Atihan and others) and Aguinaldo procession, where large crowds gather, honouring their patron saint or saints are testimonies to this. Processions and fiestas are conducted during feast days of the patron saints of various barrios or barangays. Roman Catholicism is also the de facto state religion in the Philippines(Hoh,2018).

Every year on November 1, Filipino families celebrate the Day of the Dead, on which they spend much of the day and evening visiting their ancestral graves, showing respect and honor to their departed relatives by feasting and offering prayers. On November 1 Filipino families celebrate All Saint's Day, where they honor the saints of the Catholic Church. November 2 is All Soul's Day.

Christmas in the Philippines is a celebration spanning just more than the day itself. Christmas season starts in September. Many traditions and customs are associated with this grand feast, along with New Year. Holy Week is also an important time for the country's Catholics.

But while tradition reflects the rich religious influence of the past, Christian doctrine also espoused the theory of universality where a universal religion is one, which is open to the entire mankind, which is not based on distinctions of colors, creed and race etc, which aims at wiping out such

<sup>6</sup>Please refer to <https://www.scribd.com/> fro more details and papers on this point.

distinctions and endeavors to raise man from the narrow confines of regional to universal. This religion doctrine paves the way for espousing a perfect existence among a multicultural setting such as the Philippines where many religions co-exist.

It regards the entire humanity as one family, so it fosters real brotherhood in the widest sense of the word. Filipinos believe this and as they also believe the wisdom of their religious and spiritual traditions should be shared for the health and well being of all. Therefore, as communities of faith and interdependent people rooted in their faith, unite in the Philippines for the sake of peace and healing among religions and peoples the benefit of the earth and all living beings. Filipinos because of their innate open nature and deep faith learn from the wisdom of our religions they inter relate with. They believe the very same God they worship in Christ is the God of everyone regardless of religious affiliations.

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## 7 Conclusion

Religion serves many functions. It can be a catalyst for change, or it can serve to preserve social ideals and traditions. The role of religion as a way to preserve the traditions of the society is based in the main functions of religions. Religions are intended to reinforce group norms. This accomplished through defining actions as either good or evil as defined in their doctrines.

In the Philippines, the multicultural setting has give rise to many religions which find their roots in the country's past. These are: Christianity (Roman Catholicism), Protestatants, Islam, Hinduism, Aglipayas, Iglesia ni Cristo (INC) among others. Religion is contextualized in this setting as it is reflected in the Filipino culture and traditional practices reflective of the people's way of life. They are mirrored in Filipino rites of passage such as birth, death, courtship and marriage, supplication for good harvest, festivities and other ritualistic activities set in a timeline that is endemic to Filipino culture. Religious practice is therefore synonymous to traditional Filipino practices which is the fusion of a unique blend of religious influences.

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