Human Rights, Justice, and Human Flourishing in Nigeria: Insights from Christianity and Islam

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Abstract
This paper examines how Christianity and Islam can contribute to the promotion of the common good of Nigerian citizens and human flourishing, through justice and human rights. The article argues that, as the two major religions in the Nigerian society, Christianity and Islam, not only have a stake in shaping the moral bearing of the country but also have a considerable impact on human flourishing. The essay adopts a mixed method of research through the analysis of both primary and secondary sources from the Bible, Church documents, Qur'an, Hadith, and some of the articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Through a systematic and comparative analysis, the study identifies basic similarities and dissimilarities between the religious understanding of justice and human rights and universal ethical principles. Similarly, the article demonstrates that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are not antithetical to Islamic and Christian values – they indeed align with the ideals of practical religious values that promote human flourishing. Through the functionalist theory, the essay analyses some of the concomitant challenges Christians and Muslims face in the promotion of justice and human rights in Nigeria. While highlighting how the prioritisation of justice and human rights can lead to socio-economic transformation in Nigeria, the paper further outlines poverty, social inequality, weak governance, security, intergroup trust, and political engagement as some of the challenges and opportunities in propagating the socio-religious and political virtue of justice and human rights. The paper concludes by recapitulating the major findings of the research and offering some recommendations for sustainable human flourishing in Nigeria.

Key words: Justice, Human Rights, Christianity, Islam, Human Flourishing

1.0 Introduction

Justice and human rights have emerged as central concerns in both religious ethics and global discourse on human dignity and development. Within Christianity and Islam, justice is not merely a legal or political concept, but a moral imperative rooted in divine authority and oriented toward the protection

of human dignity. Human rights, understood as fundamental entitlements inherent to every human person, are closely linked to justice in both traditions. While secular legal documents like the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights are frequently linked to contemporary human rights frameworks, religious traditions, especially Christianity and Islam, have long expressed moral visions that uphold justice, human dignity, and the prerequisites for human flourishing.

In Christianity, justice is a theological truth derived from God's essence and manifested in proper interpersonal relationships rather than just a legal concept. The idea that all people are made in God's image (imago Dei) and have intrinsic dignity is the foundation of human rights. According to Genesis 1:26-27, justice in this context necessitates respect for life, equality before God, and concern for the weak. Therefore, justice and human rights are inextricably linked in Christianity, which sees them as manifestations of love, charity, and the pursuit of the common good. Starting with the biblical underpinnings of justice and moving on to the theological and doctrinal evolution of human rights within Christian theology, this paper explores the Christian understanding of justice and human rights. Christianity provides a foundation for understanding human flourishing as holistic, encompassing spiritual, moral, social, and material well-being, by basing justice and human rights on divine revelation and moral theology.

This paper argues that Christianity and Islam, despite their theological differences, converge in grounding justice and human rights in divine authority, and that when these principles are properly applied, especially within the Nigerian context, they provide a strong ethical foundation for promoting authentic human flourishing.

2.0 Methodology

The essay adopts a mixed method of research through the analysis of both primary and secondary sources from the Bible, Church documents, Qur'an, Hadith, and some of the articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Through a systematic and comparative analysis, the study identifies basic similarities and dissimilarities between the religious understanding of justice and human rights and universal ethical principles.

3.0 Theoretical Framework

The contribution of religious traditions and organisations to human flourishing can be studied using different theoretical frameworks and analytical methods. Theories such as mutual transformation theory, symbolic interactionism, and functionalist theory can be adopted to understand how Christianity and Islam impact societies, especially through the promotion of the common good of all. However, for this essay, the functionalist theory is used. The functionalist theory was developed by Émile Durkheim towards the end of the nineteenth century. The theory was further developed in the twentieth century by Bronisław Malinowski, Talcott Parsons and Robert K. Merton. Also known as

structural functionalism, the functionalist theory is often used in sociology to unpack and understand the structure of society and its various components, and how they operate in contributing to the stability of society. The functionalist theory sees religion as a vital social institution that promotes harmony and integration among members of a society by accentuating social bonds and collective identity (Wienclaw, 2021). Meanwhile, one of the weaknesses of the functionalist theory is that it does not adequately explain religion or religious experiences. When applied to the Nigerian context, the functionalist theory helps to explain how Christianity and Islam in Nigeria can leverage the values of their faiths to impact positively on the socio-economic and political well-being of the country. Though adherents of both religions may have certain differences, they can both benefit from what unites them, rather than see themselves in an adversarial context.

a. Justice and Human Rights in Christianity

According to Christian ethics, justice is a virtue that regulates interpersonal relationships in line with God's will. In Christianity, justice is relational, restorative, and focused on human dignity rather than being limited to retributive or procedural fairness. Scripture is the foundation of the Christian conception of justice, which is expanded upon by theological contemplation and social instruction. The biblical understanding of justice has its roots in God's nature. The Hebrew words *mishpat* (judgement or justice) and *tsedaqah* (righteousness), which both imply loyalty to covenantal relationships and moral integrity, are used throughout the Old Testament to indicate justice. God is frequently portrayed as a fair judge who protects the underprivileged, widows, orphans, and strangers (Deut. 10:17–18; Psalm 146:7–9). Therefore, justice is tangible action on behalf of the oppressed rather than abstract legality. The prophetic tradition places a high value on social justice. "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:24), declares the prophet Amos, denouncing religious devotion that lacks fairness. In a similar vein, Micah summarises the covenant's ethical requirements as walking humbly with God, loving compassion, and practising justice (Micah 6:8). These writings define justice as a moral duty that includes social responsibility, economic equity, and adherence to God's law.

In the New Testament, Jesus radicalises the call to justice by integrating it with love and mercy. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus blesses those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (justice), indicating that justice is central to participation in the Kingdom of God (Matt. 5:6). His ministry consistently affirms the dignity of the poor, sinners, women, and social outcasts, challenging structures that dehumanise and exclude (Luke 4:18-19; Luke 10:25-37). The parable of the Last Judgment (Matthew 25:31-46) explicitly links justice to acts of compassion, making care for the vulnerable a criterion for divine judgment. Thus, the biblical foundation of justice in Christianity reveals justice as both a divine attribute and a human responsibility, one that seeks right relationships and upholds the dignity of every person. Human dignity in Christianity is rooted in the belief that human beings are created in the image of God (*imago*

Dei). This belief establishes the intrinsic worth and equality of all people, independent of social status, ethnicity, or gender. Because human dignity is God-given, it cannot be revoked by the state or society (Gen. 1:27).

Through the natural law tradition, which maintains that moral principles are anchored in divine order and accessible to human reason, Christian theology advances human rights. According to Aquinas, justice necessitates giving everyone their due; this idea subsequently serves as the cornerstone of rights-based ethics (Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*). Human rights are now openly acknowledged in Christian social teaching as being crucial to justice and peace. A thorough list of rights, such as the right to life, education, religious freedom, and involvement in public life based on human dignity, is outlined in Pope John XXIII's *Pacem in Terris*. The Second Vatican Council's *Dignitatis Humanae* further affirms religious freedom as a fundamental human right rooted in the dignity of the human person. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that respect for human rights flows directly from justice and charity and is necessary for the common good. Protestant traditions similarly affirm human rights, emphasising freedom of conscience, equality before God, and social responsibility. In Christianity, therefore, human rights are not merely legal entitlements, but moral claims grounded in divine creation and sustained by justice and love. When upheld, these rights enable individuals and communities to flourish in accordance with God's design.

b. Justice and Human Rights in Islam

Justice and human rights occupy a central place in Islamic moral and theological thought, just as they do in Christianity. Although each tradition possesses distinctive theological frameworks, both conceive justice as fundamental to human dignity and as a set of obligations that are simultaneously divine and social. Islamic scholars consistently argue that justice functions as the ethical bridge between divine authority and human welfare, thereby protecting rights and fostering human flourishing (Esposito and Twomey, 2001). This section examines the Islamic understanding of justice and human rights through its theological foundations, Qur'anic principles, and ethical implications, arguing that when justice and rights are properly enacted, they create the conditions necessary for individual and communal flourishing (Kane and Noonan, 2008).

The theological foundation of justice and human rights in Islam is rooted in *tawḥid*, the doctrine of the oneness and sovereignty of God. *Tawḥid* establishes Allah as the ultimate source of moral authority, from whom all ethical norms, including justice and human dignity, derive. Human beings, as God's creation, possess dignity not by social convention but by divine bestowal (Motahari, 1980). The Qur'an affirms this intrinsic dignity by declaring that God has honoured all children of Adam (Qur'an 17:70). Justice in Islam (*'adl*) is therefore both a divine attribute and a social ethic. It obliges individuals and institutions to act in ways that preserve balance, fairness, and accountability. The objectives of Islamic law, known as the Maqasid al-Shari'ah, seek to preserve religion, life,

intellect, lineage, and property—core necessities that correspond closely to fundamental civil, social, and moral rights (Iqbal, 2016). Scholars argue that these objectives demonstrate that Shari'ah is fundamentally concerned with human welfare (*maṣlaḥah*) and flourishing rather than rigid legalism (An-Na'im, 2008). In what follows, the Qur'anic understanding of justice as a model and command, as a universal virtue, as protection of the vulnerable, and as upholding the sanctity of human life is discussed.

c. Divine Justice as Model and Command

The Qur'an presents God as perfectly just and incapable of wrongdoing, establishing divine justice as the ultimate moral standard. Justice is not optional but a divine command binding upon all believers. God commands justice and excellence (iḥsan) while condemning oppression and corruption (Qur'an 16:90). This divine command provides moral authority for protecting human dignity and enforcing human rights.

d. Universal justice

Justice in Islam must be applied universally and impartially, even when it conflicts with personal or communal interests. The Qur'an commands believers to stand firmly for justice, even against themselves or their relatives (Qur'an 4:135). This principle reinforces equality before the law and supports human-rights norms such as non-discrimination and due process (An-Na'im, 1996). Islamic scholars emphasise that justice loses its moral legitimacy when it is selectively applied or manipulated for political or sectarian ends (Nader and Qureshi, 2009).

e. Protection of the vulnerable

A defining feature of Qur'anic justice is its concern for the vulnerable—particularly the poor, orphans, women, and the oppressed. The Qur'an repeatedly condemns exploitation and commands the protection of orphans' property (Qur'an 4:2) and the redistribution of wealth through zakah (Qur'an 9:60). These injunctions establish social and economic obligations that correspond to basic human rights, including the right to subsistence and social security.

f. Dignity and Sanctity of Human Life

The Qur'an affirms the sanctity of human life by equating the unjust killing of one person with the killing of all humanity (Qur'an 5:32). This principle underscores the inviolability of life, bodily integrity, and security as core elements of justice. Islamic scholars consistently identify this verse as foundational for the Islamic right to life and human dignity (Maududi, 1976).

g. Justice in Legal and Communal Affairs

The Qur'an establishes procedural justice by emphasising truthful testimony, written contracts, and equitable dealings (Qur'an 2:282). Justice in legal matters requires proportionality, fairness, and moral restraint. These principles align

closely with contemporary rule-of-law standards and legal protections for human rights, including property rights and due process (Iqbal, 2016).

h. Mercy as the Complement of Justice

Although justice is central, the Qur'an consistently balances it with mercy (raḥmah). God is repeatedly described as "The Most Merciful," and believers are encouraged to forgive where possible. This balance introduces a restorative dimension to justice, emphasising reconciliation and rehabilitation rather than mere punishment. Such an approach contributes directly to social harmony and human flourishing.

i. Foundations of Human Rights in Islam

In Islamic thought, human rights derive from divine authority rather than human consensus alone. The Qur'anic affirmation of human dignity (*karamah*) establishes rights as moral claims rooted in God's will. This theological grounding distinguishes Islamic human rights discourse from purely secular frameworks (Esposito and Twomey, 2001). Scholars such as Maududi (1976) argue that human rights in Islam are not granted by the state but recognised as God-given and therefore inviolable. The *Shari'ah* and its objectives (*maqaṣid*) provide a normative framework for rights protection, emphasising the preservation of essential human goods. This teleological orientation allows Islamic ethics to prioritise human well-being while remaining faithful to religious principles (Nader and Qureshi, 2019).

j. Rights and Duties in Islamic Thought

Islamic human rights discourse emphasises the interdependence of rights and duties. Rights are balanced by moral responsibilities toward others and accountability before God. This reciprocity ensures that individual freedoms do not undermine social justice or communal welfare (An-Na'im, 1996). Contemporary Muslim scholars have engaged international human rights frameworks while advocating interpretations of Islamic law that support civil, political, economic, and social rights (Arifinsyah, Dalimunthe, and Riza, 2025). Although tensions remain, efforts to bridge faith-based ethics and universal human-rights norms continue to gain scholarly support. The distinction between moral entitlements and legally enforceable claims has also inspired reforms aimed at translating ethical teachings into legal protections compatible with both Shari'ah and global standards (An-Na'im, 2008).

The Islamic tradition provides a robust moral framework linking justice and human rights to human flourishing. While interpretive disagreements persist, Islam's commitment to human dignity, protection of life, care for the vulnerable, and the pursuit of the common good offers strong ethical foundations for justice-oriented societies. Through theological resources such as tawhid, maqasid al-shari'ah, and Qur'anic ethics, Islam presents flexible yet principled pathways for translating religious imperatives into practical advances for human flourishing and interfaith cooperation (Kane and Noonan, 2008).

4.0 Discussion

a. Justice, Rights, and Human Flourishing in Christianity and Islam

In both Christianity and Islam, justice and human rights are not treated as abstract ideals or merely legal constructs; rather, they function as essential conditions for human flourishing. Understood as the holistic well-being of persons and communities, human flourishing encompasses spiritual fulfilment, moral integrity, social harmony, and material sufficiency. Within these religious traditions, justice provides the moral structure through which human rights are protected, enabling individuals to live in dignity and to realise their God-given potential.

From a Christian perspective, human flourishing is inseparable from right relationship with God, with others, and with every part of creation. Justice serves as the social expression of love (agape) and charity, ensuring that human rights are respected not simply as entitlements but as moral obligations grounded in the dignity of the human person. The Christian tradition emphasises that without justice, love becomes sentimental, and without love, justice becomes cold and legalistic (Augustine, 410). The common good, a central theme in Christian social teaching, depends on structures that safeguard human rights such as the right to life, work, education, and participation in society (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, nos. 164–170). When these rights are upheld, individuals are able to develop spiritually, socially, and economically, thus contributing to the flourishing of the entire community.

The biblical vision of flourishing is often described in Hebrew terms of *shalom*—a state of peace, tranquillity, wholeness, and harmony that goes beyond the absence of conflict (Plantinga, 1995). Justice is indispensable to this vision, as the prophets insist that peace cannot exist where injustice prevails (Isa. 32:17; Amos 5:24). In the New Testament, Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom of God presents human flourishing as both a present moral reality and an eschatological hope, realised through just relationships, mercy, and care for the vulnerable (Matthew 25:31–46). Human rights, in this framework, function as practical safeguards that allow persons to live in accordance with their dignity and vocation.

Similarly, Islam conceives human flourishing (*falāḥ*) as success and well-being in both this life and the hereafter. Justice (ʿadl) is foundational to this vision, serving as the axis around which social order, moral conduct, and spiritual growth revolve. The Qur'an presents a just society as one in which rights are protected, oppression is rejected, and balance (*mīzān*) is maintained (Qur'an 55:7–9). Human rights in Islam, such as the right to life, dignity, education, and property, are embedded within the ethical objectives of the Shari'ah (Maqāṣid al-Shari'ah), which aim to preserve essential aspects of human existence (Kamali, 2008).

Islamic ethics emphasises that true flourishing cannot be achieved through individual freedom alone but requires social justice and moral responsibility. Rights are inseparable from duties, ensuring that personal flourishing does not come at the expense of communal well-being. The Qur'anic insistence on economic justice through zakāh, fair trade, and the prohibition of exploitation illustrates how justice operationalises human rights in ways that sustain social cohesion and collective prosperity (Qur'an 9:60; 83:1–3).

In this sense, Islamic human rights discourse is inherently communitarian, seeking to balance personal dignity with social harmony. Since there are theological and methodological differences, Christianity and Islam converge on several key principles. Both affirm that human dignity is divinely bestowed, that justice is a moral imperative rather than a human invention, and that human rights serve the broader purpose of enabling individuals and societies to flourish. Both traditions reject oppression, exploitation, and discrimination as violations of divine justice and human dignity (Benedict XVI, 2009). Furthermore, both insist that legal frameworks alone are insufficient; justice must be internalised as a moral virtue and expressed through ethical conduct. Where they differ is largely in emphasis: Christianity tends to frame human flourishing in relational and Christocentric terms, highlighting love, grace, and the transformation of the heart, while Islam articulates flourishing through a comprehensive moral-legal framework that integrates worship, law, and social ethics. These differences, however, are complementary rather than contradictory. Together, they offer rich moral resources for addressing contemporary challenges related to justice, human rights, and sustainable human development.

In a world marked by inequality and conflict, the combined ethical insights of Christianity and Islam provide a compelling vision of human flourishing grounded in justice and respect for human rights. By affirming both divine authority and human dignity, these traditions challenge societies to build just structures that promote peace, solidarity, and the full realisation of human potential.

b. Justice, Human Rights, and Human Flourishing in Contemporary Nigerian Society

In examining how Christian and Islamic principles of justice and human rights can promote human flourishing in Nigeria, it is essential to situate this religious-ethical analysis within contemporary socio-political realities of the country. Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation and the most populous black nation in the world, grapples with several challenges, such as widespread poverty, hunger, endemic corruption, insecurity, and recurring religious and communal violence, which hinder human flourishing and test the ability of moral systems to shape public life. A Christian and Islamic ethical response to these conditions must engage both structural injustices and communal tensions to contribute meaningfully to justice and human rights in Nigerian society.

Nigeria's population is vast and youthful, presenting both opportunities and challenges for development. Estimates place the country's population at roughly 237.5 million people in 2025, making it the most populous country in Africa and sixth in the world (World Population Review, 2025). Religiously, Nigeria is almost evenly divided between Muslims and Christians, with a small minority practising traditional indigenous religions (Beshay and Hackett, 2025). Nigeria's population is almost evenly split between Muslims (56.1%) and Christians (43.4%), making it one of the few countries in the world with such large populations of both faiths. This balance contributes to Nigeria's reputation as a deeply religious society (Beshay and Hackett, 2025).

Despite these strengths, Nigeria's development indicators are troubling. According to global estimates, over 86 million Nigerians live in extreme poverty, reflecting deep structural inequality and limited access to necessities (Koko and Amadi, 2025). Youth unemployment remains a critical challenge, with an estimated 33 per cent of young Nigerians under 30 unemployed, contributing to social instability and making youth vulnerable to recruitment into violent networks (Nkwuda and Nwosu, 2025).

c. Corruption and Public Trust

Endemic corruption continues to erode justice and human rights in Nigeria. In Transparency International's 2024 Corruption Perceptions Index, Nigeria scored 26 out of 100 and ranked 140th out of 180 countries, a marginal improvement from its 2023 position of 145th. This persistent governance failure undermines institutional legitimacy, entrenches inequality, and obstructs the fair distribution of national resources (Transparency International, 2024). Although Nigeria's anti-graft agencies have achieved notable success in recovering significant illicit assets and securing numerous convictions, recent actions have raised suspicions that their efforts may be driven by vendettas against political opposition. Despite these recoveries, corruption remains deeply entrenched across institutions (Reuters, 2025). The pervasive perception that leaders and public officials act in self-interest erodes citizens' trust in the state and weakens civic engagement, critical elements for flourishing.

Religion plays a complex role here: while religious communities espouse moral teachings that categorically denounce corruption, the disconnect between religious devotion and ethical public behaviour often weakens collective action against corrupt practices (Yagboyaju, 2017). Religious affiliation thus becomes both a potential source of moral resistance to corruption and a lens through which Nigerians interpret governance failures.

d. Religious, Communal, and Ethno-Religious Violence

Nigeria's multi-religious fabric has, at times, been strained by religious and intercommunal violence, highlighting how justice deficits and perceived inequities can catalyse conflict. Historical episodes, such as the 2000 Kaduna riots, the 2001 and 2010 Jos massacres, and the Yelwa massacre of 2004, illustrate

how political, legal, and administrative decisions, particularly the introduction and enforcement of Sharia law in northern states, have acted as flashpoints for deadly confrontations between Christian and Muslim communities (Higazi, 2011). These conflicts were not merely spontaneous eruptions of violence; they were often fuelled by underlying grievances related to governance, unequal resource distribution, and perceptions of marginalisation. The Kaduna riots, for instance, erupted after the announcement of Sharia law in the state, leading to widespread destruction of property and the deaths of thousands (Alao and Mavalla, 2016). Similarly, the Jos crises revealed how ethnic and religious identities became politicised, with disputes over land ownership, political representation, and indigene-settler status intensifying the violence (Human Rights Watch, 2001). The Yelwa massacre further underscored the cyclical nature of these clashes, as retaliatory attacks perpetuated a culture of vengeance and insecurity.

Collectively, these episodes have resulted in the loss of tens of thousands of lives, the displacement of communities, and the destruction of social infrastructure. More importantly, they have entrenched deep mistrust between groups, eroded interfaith dialogue, and weakened the legitimacy of state institutions that were perceived as either complicit or ineffective in preventing the bloodshed. The legacy of these conflicts continues to shape Nigeria's political landscape, reinforcing divisions and complicating efforts at national integration and peacebuilding (Human Rights Watch, 2005).

More recent incidents, such as the 2023 Plateau State massacres in central Nigeria, involving ethnically and religiously mixed communities, show that conflict remains a present danger in a context of land disputes, herder-farmer violence, and militia activity, often involving ethnic and religious identities. However, broad analyses indicate that religiously targeted violence represents only a portion of Nigeria's overall conflict landscape. Data spanning 2020–2024 suggests that religious factors are cited in approximately 4.3 per cent of conflict events, with ethnic and communal violence often accounting for higher mortality overall (Ahmad, 2025). This underscores how justice deficits intersect with economic, ethnic, and governance issues, and cautions against simplistic attributions of conflict purely to religion.

e. Implications for Human Flourishing

The contemporary Nigerian context, defined by abject poverty, corruption, and persistent violence, presents both moral challenges and opportunities for both Christian and Islamic teachings on justice and human rights to contribute to human flourishing within the society:

i. Poverty and social inequality

Given that over 86 million Nigerians live in extreme poverty, defined by the World Bank's updated global poverty line of $3.00 per person per day, and youth unemployment remains high, equitable distribution of resources is

essential (World Bank Group, 2025). Justice in both Christian and Islamic traditions emphasises care for the poor and vulnerable. In Christian social teaching, the preferential option for the poor calls for economic policies that prioritise the marginalised (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004). Islamic ethics similarly emphasises economic justice in the form of zakāh (obligatory almsgiving) and fair economic relations to reduce inequality and provide for basic needs (Qur'an 9:60).

ii. Corruption

The widespread corruption that threatens access to public goods and human rights emphasises the need for moral leadership based on ethical accountability. Religious communities can use ethical precepts to demand open government and civic duty, such as the Islamic teaching against *fasād* (corruption and disorder) and the Christian emphasis on integrity and stewardship.

iii. Harmony, security, and trust

Persistent insecurity due to communal, farmer-herder clashes, banditry, and insurgency highlights the urgent need for justice that transcends sectarian boundaries. Both Christianity and Islam promote peace and reconciliation: Christianity through the imperative of peace-making and forgiveness, and Islam through the emphasis on social harmony and justice as central to community life. When applied to Nigerian society, these teachings call for dialogue, equitable legal protections, and inclusive governance that respect the rights of all citizens regardless of faith.

f. Role of religious institutions and leadership

Religious leaders, in their various capacities, can play a pivotal role in promoting human rights and justice, as they command significant moral influence in Nigeria. Surveys show that trust in religious leaders often exceeds that in public institutions, suggesting a potential avenue for advancing ethical engagement in public life. Initiatives that translate religious moral capital into support for justice, human rights, and anti-corruption advocacy can contribute significantly to human flourishing.

Religious teachings in both Christianity and Islam can play a transformative role in advancing human flourishing in Nigeria, but this requires a deliberate alignment between moral norms and public policy. When institutions are strengthened to uphold rights, promote economic justice, and embed peacebuilding processes that draw upon religious perspectives, societies are better positioned to rebuild trust and break recurring cycles of violence and exclusion (Oyebanji and Oyunwola, 2024).

To achieve this, religious communities must critically engage with Nigeria's socio-economic structures, moving beyond spiritual guidance to active advocacy for policies that embody ethical commitments to human dignity,

justice, and equitable development. This involves challenging systemic inequalities, supporting inclusive governance, and ensuring that development strategies reflect the moral imperatives of compassion and fairness found in both faith traditions (Hashimu et al., 2024). Equally important is the responsibility of religious leaders to resist the politicisation of religion, which has often deepened divisions in Nigeria's multi-faith society. Instead, leaders should emphasise the unifying aspects of their teachings, positioning religion as a catalyst for social justice and reconciliation rather than a tool for exclusion or conflict. Interfaith dialogue initiatives, for example, have shown promise in fostering peaceful coexistence and reducing tensions between Christian and Muslim communities (Oyebanji and Oyunwola, 2024).

5.0 Conclusion

This study has examined the intrinsic link between justice and human rights in Christianity and Islam, demonstrating that both traditions ground these values in divine authority and human dignity. Through biblical and Qur'anic foundations, justice emerges as a moral obligation directed toward the protection of life, equity, and communal well-being. In the Nigerian context, where poverty, corruption, and religious tensions continue to challenge social cohesion, Christian and Islamic ethical teachings provide vital resources for promoting human flourishing. When justice and human rights are upheld beyond religious boundaries, they foster peace, mutual respect, and sustainable development. Consequently, interfaith collaboration rooted in shared moral values offers a credible pathway toward a more just and flourishing Nigerian society.

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