



Religious Conversion In A Commodity Economy

Nguyen Anh Quoc¹

¹*University of Social Sciences and Humanities – Viet Nam National University Ho Chi Minh City (VNUHCM – USSH), Vietnam*

Email: nguyenanhquoc@hcmussh.edu.vn

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6387-2653>

Abstract: The transformation of religion in the commodity economy is presented systematically, and it is affirmed that religious life is the communication of human beliefs. The division of functions, tasks, and job positions for the existence and activities of religion makes the difference between clergy and believers. The loss of faith of believers in clergy becomes a loss of faith in religion. The trust between clergy and believers is the faith of people of the same religion. The systematization of this content is approached from the methodology of humanistic philosophy and social philosophy, at the same time, using qualitative methods, analysis, synthesis, comparison, structural system combination, and inversion methods. The content results have confirmed that religious life is dominated by the commodity economy, causing religion to be distorted, that is, the trend of secularization, the emergence of new religions, or divisions and factions in religious life due to material enjoyment and the influence of money. Religious exchanges are also easy to understand and sympathize with because the clergy are human, and some religious followers are merchants of the commodity economy. The article concludes: first, human life and religious life are different, making human rights and religious rights different; second, religion is a product of humans, religion serves the needs of human life; third, when believers are passionate about religion, it makes the clergy noble and have a better life than other professions; fourth, the religious love of believers is a product of marketing with the enthusiastic language of the clergy.

Keywords: religion, faith, believer, linguistic, philosophy

Received: 08 May 2024 **Revised:** 10 June 2024 **Accepted:** 25 June 2024

1. Introduction

In the context of the increasingly developing commodity economy, religion has also undergone profound changes. The intersection between these two areas creates multidimensional multidimensional impacts, both positive and negative. In order to survive and develop in a competitive environment, many religious organizations have adjusted their activities to suit the principles of the market economy, leading to the commercialization of religious activities. This is demonstrated through the sale of religious products, the establishment of economic enterprises, and the organization of commercial events. In addition, diversifying people's spiritual needs in modern society also promotes the transformation of religion. The emergence of new religions and mixing religion with elements of popular culture and art are clear evidence. However, excessive commercialization can erode the spiritual nature of religion, turning it into a tool for profit. At the same time, competition between religions can lead to conflict and division in society. The transformation of religion in a commodity economy is complex and multifaceted. Religion must balance preserving traditional identity and adapting to social changes to survive and develop sustainably. At the same time, society needs a mechanism to manage and regulate religious activities, ensuring that religion plays an active role in building a civilized and progressive society.

2. Theoretical overview of the main concepts

The relationship between religion and economics is a complex and multidimensional issue that has attracted the attention of researchers over the past decades. In particular, the transformation of religion in the context of the deep globalization of the commodity economy has become an attractive and controversial research focus. This article will provide an overview of the research situation on this issue from historical, theoretical, and empirical perspectives.

The history of research can be divided into stages, such as the early, middle, and modern periods. Interest has expanded to other religions and different geographical regions. Studies focus on the role of religion in promoting or hindering economic development and the influence of economics on religious activities and beliefs. Studies have become more diverse, including perspectives on gender, race, and globalization. Researchers increasingly focus on analyzing the complex interactions between religion and economics and this transformation's social and cultural impacts.

Theoretical perspectives are presented from Weberian, Marxist, social constructionist, and postmodernist approaches. Building on the ideas of Max Weber, researchers remain interested in how religious values and beliefs can influence human economic behavior and the development of different economic systems. Marxist researchers view religion as a tool of the ruling class to maintain power and exploit the oppressed. They analyze how religious ideologies are used to justify social and economic inequality. Social constructionists emphasize the role of religious discourses and practices in creating and maintaining social and economic structures. Postmodernists analyze cultural diversification and hybridization processes in the context of globalization and the rise of new forms of religion and social movements.

Empirical studies, such as comparative studies, case studies, and quantitative studies, show the transformation of religion in the commodity economy. Researchers compare different societies to learn about the relationship between religion and economy in different cultural and historical contexts. Case studies focus on detailed analysis of specific cases to better understand the processes of religious transformation in the commodity economy. Quantitative studies use statistical methods to analyze large data sets to find relationships between religious and economic variables.

The main content of the problem of religious transformation in the commodity economy focuses on research issues such as the commercialization of religion, religion and economic development, religion and social inequality, religion and globalization. Researchers are interested in analyzing the forms of commercialization of religion, such as the sale of religious products, the organization of commercial events, and the development of economic enterprises run by religious organizations. Researchers study the role of religion in promoting or hindering economic development and the impact of economic growth on religious activities and beliefs. Researchers are interested in how religion can contribute to maintaining or challenging social and economic inequality. Researchers analyze the impact of globalization on religious activities and beliefs, as well as the rise of transnational religious movements.

The transformation of religion in the commodity economy is a diverse and complex field of study. Researchers have clarified the relationship between religion and the economy, but many issues still need further study. In the future, research should continue to diversify research methods, expand the scope of research, and focus on analyzing the social and cultural impacts of this transformation. However, the characteristic of Marxism in the study of religion is to grasp the objective, comprehensive, developmental, historical, concrete, and practical perspective in which human liberation is the overarching goal of social development. Karl Marx once commented: "Ultimately, polemic religion is not against a particular philosophical system, but against the philosophy of all given systems in general" (Karl et al., 2002, p. 158). Religious life is diverse and expressed through many different beliefs, faiths, and religions.

This richness is the diversity of beliefs. Beliefs are complex concepts influenced by many factors, such as culture, society, and personal experience. Beliefs in human life become religious beliefs. Religion has been defined in many different ways so far. However, the general concept is that religion is an indispensable part

of many people's lives, playing an essential role in shaping human values, views, and behaviors. "The poverty of religion is the expression of real poverty and the protest against it. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature" (Karl et al., 2002, p. 570). All religious activities and existence are expressed in the lives of priests and believers. However, priests and believers are all human beings. Religion does not satisfy the ability or need for human survival, which makes religion meaningless. Religion only has meaning when it is the ability of priests; it is the need of believers. Therefore, religion does not exist in commandments, precepts, or scriptures but in priests who live and exist for believers. For those who have no need, religion becomes meaningless, and they are called atheists. However, atheists, priests, and believers have different lifestyles and ways of living, but they are all human beings, so there is no discrimination.

Human beings are both outside of religion and in religion. Religious life and human life are both similar and different. Religious life is instinctive, possessing the teachings of religious leaders without knowing enough, not knowing when to stop, constantly feeling lacking, incomplete, and always wanting more. Human life is creative, differentiated into subject and product. The product not only allows the subject to exist but also allows others to live. Therefore, individuals in religious life are outside human life. Religious life is separate from humanity and the way of life and habits expressed in organizations, activities, and rituals. The distinction between customs, rituals, and the organization of activities becomes the distinction between the instincts of the species.

3. Methodology

Based on the content inherited in the overview, the author continues to discuss the topic of transformation in the globalization process from the methodology of humanistic philosophy and social philosophy to clarify the transformation of religion in the commodity economy. Humanistic philosophy and social philosophy provide profound analytical tools to study religion, helping the author better understand the nature of human beings and social relationships. Religious phenomena such as prayer, rituals, and religious experiences are perceived to explore their profound meaning and role in human religious life. At the same time, qualitative, analytical, synthetic, comparative, and inversion methods are used. With the inversion method, the author clarifies the transformation between cause and effect, freedom and necessity, capacity and need, means and ends, subject and product, especially the issue of human ownership in religious life. However, the transformation of religion in the market economy is directed towards the search for and realization of a way to achieve the eternity of external species, which is the problem of maintaining the species and the existence of humanity.

4. Discussion

4.1. Belief in Humanity

Since the beginning of time, humans have considered nature their shared home and source of nourishment. Through labor, humans have had a profound impact on nature. Humans, as social creatures, constantly interact and influence each other. Regardless of differences in gender, race, culture, and personality, all people have equal rights and opportunities for development. This diversity not only enriches life but also promotes human evolution. Human relationships are the foundation of society, where people share, support, trust, and create a cohesive community. Reproduction and survival are two inseparable aspects of humanity. Reproduction not only ensures human survival but also promotes the evolution and development of society. The family, formed from the relationship between the sexes, is the primary cell of society, where love is nurtured, moral values are taught, and the next generation is created. Husband and wife, parents, and children are products of each other; caring for and helping each other is free, voluntary, and selfless. Faith and love for each other to survive and maintain the species is an inevitable requirement of life.

When faced with the uncertainties of life, from loneliness in society to loss in the family, people often turn to religion as a refuge. Religion has become a spiritual refuge for those suffering from social unrest and injustice. Religion promises a better life in the afterlife and gives people hope for the future. The period "father against son, son against father; mother against daughter, daughter against mother; mother against

daughter-in-law, daughter-in-law against mother against" (Matthew et al., 2012, p.240). However, greed and status have turned many religions into different vehicles, leading to war and profound injustice. Discrimination based on race, gender, and class has further fractured human relationships. Human history is a process of continuous movement, always creating significant changes.

Dynamic individuals have played an essential role in promoting progress. However, conservative instincts make many people resist change, leading to social conflicts. Social stratification and economic and cultural changes have profoundly affected the standard of living. In an increasingly complex society, the need for communication has also increased. The increasingly specialized division of labor has promoted the diversification of languages. Language is a means of communication and a product of abstract thinking, reflecting human creativity. The birth of writing marked a significant turning point, helping people preserve and spread knowledge and culture effectively. "Therefore, the script is referred to as a way that can represent not only the thoughts and feelings of the author but also contain values and policies. Through script, these values can exist, survive, and be passed on from generation to generation" (Ida et al., 2024, p.18).

Everything bears the mark of time, from the cyclical laws of nature to the constant movement of thought. Like a mirror reflecting the world, language is no exception. It is a means of communication for people to explore, create, and convey ideas that transcend the limits of the senses. If vision and hearing provide intuitive information about the outside world, language allows each person to build a rich inner world, abstract concepts, and deep emotions. Creativity is the driving force behind the evolution of language. From basic needs, people constantly enrich language with new concepts and profound theories, reflecting the constant development of thinking. The ability to abstract and generalize language has opened up new horizons for people. From satisfying material needs, each person seeks spiritual satisfaction through creativity, in which language creation plays a central role. Language is a means of communication for each person to express himself, build relationships, and create new values. Traditional religious ideas, which have accompanied humans for a long time, are also constantly expressed and supplemented in the light of new understandings of the universe and humans through language. Like a constantly flowing river, language always carries changes and creations within it, reflecting human thought's diversity and richness. "Traditional religious ideas are either reimagined or supplemented with a focus on the processes and phenomena of the cosmos" (Michael et al., 2024, p. 14). Faith in humanity became faith in knowledge expressed in many different languages.

Observing the cyclical phenomena in nature, people not only recorded but also sought answers about the origin of the universe and the meaning of life. The search for the meaning of the first cause and the value of the final result promoted the emergence of metaphysical thinking. At the same time, purely rational thinking also played an essential role in constructing religious theoretical systems. The division of labor, a necessary condition for the development of society, led to the polarization of rich and poor. The scarcity of free labor and deep inequality increased social tensions, leading to wars between nations, ethnic groups, and social classes. Building a just and equal society was an essential issue. It was a period of "nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom" (Matthew et al., 2012, p.269).

The rise in productivity has been accompanied by rising inequality, creating a growing gap between rich and poor and deepening social divisions. Social conflicts arising from injustice and inequality undermine social harmony and foster the development of critical thinking and social movements. Laws are designed to maintain order, protect the rights of citizens, and resolve social conflicts. However, the fair and effective enforcement of laws remains a significant challenge. Biblical criticism of scribes who claim to be guardians of the law but do not practice what they preach raises questions about the role and responsibility of those who make and enforce laws in building a just and humane society. Therefore, it is written: "Woe to you also, lawyers! For you load men with burdens they can hardly bear, and you yourselves do not touch them with one of your fingers" (Matthew et al., 2012, p. 235). Some people seek to change reality by creating new ideas and religions. However, these people are often criticized and poorly treated by society.

Some religious leaders have spoken out against social injustice with sharp words and concrete actions, calling for equality. Through their teachings and commandments, they not only bring hope to the poor but also restrain the greed of the rich. Although based on tradition, religious rules still play an essential role in reshaping society. Faith in knowledge becomes faith in the truth that religious leaders live by. The successors of religious leaders continue the mission of spreading faith and guiding believers. However, not everyone takes advantage of this position to do good deeds. Many people take advantage of believers' faith to serve their interests, turning religion into a means of profit and control over others, reducing the prestige of religion and making many people suspicious of clergy. The contrast between those who serve with dedication and those who exploit religion has created a multidimensional image of the clergy. It can be said that, although for different reasons, those who exploit religion have the same goal of satisfying personal ambitions. This behavior damages the image of religion.

4.2. The Persistence of Religion

The history of religion shows a strong connection between religious belief and the human experience. In times of hardship, when faced with loss, suffering, and life's big questions, people often turn to religion to find meaning, hope, and comfort. Religion has played an essential role in creating a community, providing a system of shared values and beliefs, and helping people overcome difficulties. However, using religion to explain every phenomenon and solve every problem in life also has potential risks. The idea that religion is just an abstract belief system with no basis in reality has been advocated by many. However, such a simplification of religion is unfair. Religion is a complex phenomenon, both personal and social. The concept of "dying to live" is a prime example of the diversity and complexity of religious beliefs. Although it is a core belief of many religions, how the concept is understood and applied varies greatly between religions and individuals. "Religion is the abstract creed of particular error, private taste, and arbitrariness" (Karl et al., 2002, p.359).

The search for eternal happiness in death has not been empirically verified. Religion is not only a belief system but also a social entity that seeks eternal life. Religion, a spiritual belief system, has gradually transformed into a complex social organization. The existence of religion is expressed in the living activities of clergy and followers, which is the division of functions and tasks in religious activities. However, different functions, tasks, and job positions become different living standards, statuses, and incomes. The differentiation in religious life is constantly occurring due to the chosen inheritance, the status of exclusive behavior, and different incomes. The monastic life of the clergy, the core of many religions, has become more diverse. While there are still true believers, some clergy take advantage of their status to achieve personal goals. The difference in duties between clergy and followers lies mainly in responsibility. However, as religion became a social institution, this relationship gradually changed. The fact that clergy members had a living and income from religion distorted the relationship between believers and missionaries. Initially, material exchanges were only to maintain life.

In this context, religious teachings are easily distorted to suit economic goals, confusing many believers and losing faith. The diversity of religions and the development of information technology have created new challenges when religious language is easily misunderstood or exploited to spread extremist ideas. Death, an inevitable law of life, has become a complex issue in modern society. In a society where material values and personal interests are placed above all, death is sometimes ignored or becomes a means to achieve personal goals. Religion, as a belief system, has played an essential role in helping people face the fear of death. However, these same beliefs can also become a cause of conflict and tragedy when they are used to justify extremist actions. The truth is that no one wants to die. Even those who firmly believe in life after death cannot avoid feeling afraid of death, which shows that death is a universal human experience that transcends cultural, religious, and social barriers. Greed, fear, and personal desires can drive people to act contrary to their beliefs "because they do not know what they do" (Matthew et al., 2012, p. 281).

Suicide and war are examples of people actively seeking death. Although religion often condemns these acts, in some cases, religion is used to justify them, showing that the concept of the meaning of human death is complex and varies according to different eras, cultures, and social circumstances. Glorifying suicide in

defense of religion is a controversial act. It not only rationalizes death but can also encourage other extreme behaviors. Death is a natural law, but meaningless death causes much suffering. However, many religions try to find meaning in these deaths, for example, by suggesting that a person's death can bring salvation. Belief in an afterlife is one of the foundations of many religions. However, focusing too much on the afterlife can cause people to lose sight of the value of their current life. A humane religion must respect life, minimize suffering, and encourage people to live meaningfully.

In some cases, religious influencers have exploited the belief in the death of believers for their own or their group's purposes. By rationalizing tragic deaths or creating false notions about death, they have turned a natural phenomenon into a means to control and manipulate others. Viewing death as a goal or a means to a specific end is a severe distortion of the meaning of life. Life and death are two opposing but inseparable concepts. Exaggerating the meaning of death or viewing it as a reward or punishment is a misconception that not only causes fear but also distorts the value of present life. When religions exploit death to motivate believers to do things they do not want or believe in, they go against the spirit of humanity and respect for life. A healthy society respects life and death, where each individual can choose his or her own beliefs and lifestyle.

Many acts of charity seem to be motivated by fear rather than compassion. When people do good deeds out of fear of consequences, the question arises as to whether they are truly sincere. The moral value of an action is significantly reduced if it is merely a means to an end. Humans differ from animals in that each person can think, reason, and choose. Each individual should not let his or her instincts dictate his or her actions but should rely on moral and humane values to guide his or her life. Lying and cheating are not only uncivilized acts but also a betrayal of oneself and the community. When religion focuses too much on metaphysical concepts, it risks becoming detached from reality and losing its practical value. Imposing overly strict regulations on sex, especially in a religious context, can cause various distortions of the clergy. The precepts of purity, when applied rigidly, can lead to a distorted view of sexuality, causing inner conflict and negatively affecting mental health. Sexuality is a natural human physiological need. Excessive suppression of this need can lead to many psychological and social problems. Imposing overly strict moral standards on physiologically healthy people is unreasonable and can have unforeseen consequences. In modern society, there needs to be an open and respectful dialogue on sexuality. Everyone must consider traditional values and personal freedom and find appropriate solutions to ensure health and happiness.

In some cases, strict adherence to religious purity rules can lead to misunderstandings and unintended consequences. Turning believers into mere religious servants can isolate them from social life, deny basic human needs, and cause spiritual harm. When religion becomes a means of material gain, followers can be tempted by ambition, leading to negative behaviors such as corruption, fraud, and abuse of sacred space. Religions need control mechanisms to protect the purity of their teachings. However, too much control can make religion rigid, dogmatic, and incompatible with modern life. A humane religion must respect human diversity, encourage personal growth, and create a healthy living environment. Religion must be a source of positive inspiration, helping people find meaning and live better lives. However, the loss of faith in the clergy becomes a loss of faith in religion.

4.3. Religion distorted by secularization

As material things have become increasingly important over time, religion has become a "commodity" for exchange, creating a profound gap between those in positions of authority in religion and believers. Religious teachings have also been distorted to serve the purpose of transactions; loyalty and obedience are always the oaths of the clergy when taking office. The mission of religion is to carry out the orders of the clergy in power. Noble teachings of love, compassion, and forgiveness are exploited to manipulate the psychology of believers, making them believe that donating property is the only way to achieve liberation. Religion is gradually eroding core values, turning morality into a commodity and pushing faith to the brink of degeneration. The language of religion has not kept up with the development of science; the economic conditions of goods make religion dictate the standard of doctrine. Faith, a quest for spiritual meaning, is now being turned into a means of justifying the existence of different forms of religion.

Religious activities are increasingly like marketing campaigns, competing for markets with elaborate rituals and attracting followers with promises of eternal happiness. The media has stripped religion of its sacredness, turning it into a consumer product. As economic interests increasingly penetrate religious life, the sacred nature of religion is gradually being secularized. Religious activities, which were supposed to be spiritual, are now becoming transactional. The fierce competition to attract followers and increase revenue has eroded the core values of religion, leading to division and distortion of doctrine. The relationship between clergy and followers has also become more complicated as status and wealth are concentrated in the hands of religious leaders. Social, cultural, and economic factors have profoundly influenced the formation and transformation of religion. Religion, an integral part of human life, has also become a means to consolidate the status and protect the interests of social groups. Throughout history, economic fluctuations have always been the driving force for changes in society and religion.

As societies developed, material needs became more diverse and complex, and religion had to adapt. Social stratification led to competition for status and resources, making religion a means to consolidate the position of dominant social groups. The ownership and distribution of property have been a central issue in societies from ancient times to the present. The widening gap between rich and poor has created deep social conflicts. In this context, religion has been used to justify inequality and protect the interests of the ruling class. Religious life's status and interests are always complicated, leading to hidden struggles. The rigid imposition of religious laws often leads to internal conflicts and distrust. Happiness and unhappiness in religious communities are sometimes the result of the struggle for status between clergy and groups of believers with different interests. Many believers have sacrificed a lot for their faith. However, exploiting the faith of believers for personal gain is reprehensible. Some clergy have exploited religious laws to consolidate their position and status, even turning religion into a means of social control. Death, a painful subject, has been used by some clergy to manipulate the psychology of their followers.

Religion has always played an essential role in human life. It brings faith, hope, and answers to big questions about life, death, and the meaning of existence. However, along with positive values, religion also has many complex issues. Many religious leaders have been considered "deviant" from the general concept of society. However, their thoughts have contributed to the formation of influential religions. However, admiring these leaders too much can lead to rigidity in their teachings and difficulty applying them to real life. People always fear death and yearn for eternal life. Therefore, many religions were born with the promise of a happy life in the afterlife. However, focusing too much on the afterlife can make each person ignore the values of the present life. Love, one of the most noble human values, can become a means of control and conflict when distorted by religious dogma. Religion, when used to discriminate and incite religious beliefs and blasphemy, is contrary to the spirit of compassion and peace. In the modern era, religion is also profoundly affected by the development of society. The secularization of religion has changed its nature, causing religion to lose its sacredness.

Religion, with its transparent organization and status, can become a means of social control if not managed transparently and democratically. Excessive internalization of religious teachings can lead to extremist views, causing individuals to lose their identity. Important decisions are often based on cultural and religious traditions in many societies. It is necessary to balance preserving traditional values with promoting gender equality and respect for cultural diversity. In religious life, "All decisions are based on customs and culture, empowering women and strengthening religious harmony" (Qurrata và cộng sự, 2024, tr.240). Despite their different origins, religions are about finding meaning in life and connecting people to something greater. The existence of religion is tied to the complex relationship between clergy and followers. As the transmitters of religious teachings, clergy often hold great power and influence. Followers look to clergy for guidance and comfort. However, the balance in this relationship is often fragile. Excessive control by clergy can make followers dependent and lose the ability to think independently. Each person must find a way to combine religious and human values to have a balanced and happy life. Religion should not be a burden but a source of inspiration for people to live better lives.

People of faith often believe in things beyond the ability of current science to explain. The relationship between clergy and followers is multidimensional, changing over time and in socio-cultural contexts. In

many societies, important decisions are still based on traditional customs, practices, and cultural values. However, in the modern age, the empowerment of women and the promotion of interfaith harmony are becoming increasingly urgent. Combining traditional values with progressive perspectives will help build a more just and humane society. It "accentuates their isolated characteristics, generating a mutual reinforcement of discredit in institutions, knowledge, and information, which do not cease to exist, but are masked with democratic and plural airs" (Moraes et al., 2023, p. 89). The role of clergy in a religious community depends mainly on the number and needs of the followers. When the number of clergy is small, their role becomes more critical. It can even lead to excessive concentration of status, suggesting that the balance between supply and demand for religious services directly affects the position of the clergy. Religion is not only a belief system but also a social institution. The abolition of religion not only affects the clergy but also removes an essential part of the spiritual and cultural life of the community. The relationship between clergy and followers is mutual: the clergy provide guidance, while the followers create a supportive community. However, over-reliance on the clergy can cause the followers to lose the ability to think for themselves. Religious rituals and teachings, although not biological needs, have become an indispensable part of the culture of many communities. They provide people with meaning in life and a system of values. However, blind adherence to religious rules can hinder personal growth.

4.4. Ethics in Religious Life

The emergence of ethics is a natural response to the complexity of human society. As social relationships become increasingly diverse and complex, ethics plays a role as a standard of conduct, helping people distinguish between right and wrong, good and evil, and together build a harmonious life. Ethics is a set of rigid rules and a system of values, beliefs, and orientations for human behavior. Respect for truth and honesty is a necessary foundation, helping to minimize conflicts and build trust in the community. Lies and fraud not only harm individuals but also weaken social relationships. Although ethics is a noble ideal, practicing ethics in daily life is a big challenge for everyone. Many factors, such as culture, society, and personal personality, affect how people understand and apply ethics. The relationship between ethics and religion is a complex issue. Although ethics and religion have much in common, they are not necessarily interdependent. Ethics can exist independently and develop based on human reason and experience. However, religion can play an essential role in providing a solid system of values and beliefs that shape the ethics of a community. "Independent morality offends the universal principles of religion, and the particular concepts of religion contradict morality. Morality only recognizes the universal religion and its reason. In contrast, religion only recognizes its positive morality" (Karl et al., 2002, p. 26). Many people try to live a moral life, whether as monks or believers, but they do not always succeed.

When truth is respected, society becomes more equitable. However, morality can also be exploited, leading to discrimination. Morality is not a means of classification but a compass to help people perfect themselves. The history of religion is closely linked to the history of the formation and development of morality and society. Different religions reflect the diversity of human culture. Religious activities only exist when they meet spiritual and social needs. Adaptability is the decisive factor in the existence of a religion. Morality is a system of values that guide behavior. Living true to oneself and circumstances is a manifestation of morality. The history of religion is also the history of the development of religious morality.

However, religious and secular morality differ in their goals and scope of application. Religious morality is often associated with belief in a supreme being, while secular morality focuses on human values and social relationships. Religious ethics and human ethics are different. Therefore, human rights are different from religious rights. Both secular ethics and religious ethics aim at building a better life. Secular ethics focus on practical values, while religious ethics aim at a higher goal. However, when religious ethics are too rigid, it can lead to extremism. The opposition between secular and religious ethics is unnecessary and can cause many negative consequences. Religion only recognizes the universal values of reading and respecting reason and science. Conversely, religion must also update and adapt to societal changes while protecting its positive moral values. "Social and ethical considerations played a major role in creating the principle and its emergence until it became a moral and religious value and rule in the cultures of previously civilized peoples and nations" (Amer et al., 2024, p.11).

The history of religion has witnessed many reforms to adapt to social changes. Religious reform must adapt to social changes and meet people's spiritual needs. However, any change can be controversial because, up to now, human rights and religious rights have yet to be clearly distinguished. The reform aims to make religion more suitable for modern life, eliminate outdated teachings, and promote human development. Religion is not only a belief system but also a social organization. Providing a means of livelihood for clergy is necessary to ensure the stability of religious activities. However, exploiting religion for personal gain is condemnable. Freedom of belief is a fundamental right, but the communication of religion can destroy core values. Religious reform must be carried out carefully, ensuring that religion's identity and core values are not lost. The noble goal of religion is to bring peace and meaning to life. However, religious ethics can sometimes become a burden when interpreted too rigidly. History has proven that religious values and moral codes are only genuinely sustainable when appropriate to the socio-cultural context and meet human needs. "Social and ethical considerations played a major role in creating the principle and its emergence until it became a moral and religious value and rule in the cultures of previously civilized peoples and nations" (Amer et al., 2024, p. 11). Religious ethics, when too strict, can alienate people from their communities and families, contrary to the spirit of love and sharing inherent in many religions. Turning religion into a means of personal gain not only destroys the pure nature of faith but also causes many social consequences, from exploiting people's trust to damaging the reputation of religion.

In the conditions of a commodity economy, communicating religion is a headache. Turning religion into a "product" for exchange not only violates ethics but also violates the law. Those who exploit religion to get rich not only deceive believers but also damage the reputation of religion and cause division in the community. Religions must be flexible enough to adapt to different cultural environments while maintaining their identity. In modern society, religious organizations face many challenges, including financial problems. Balancing spiritual values and material needs is a complex issue. The commercialization of religious activities brings both opportunities and challenges.

On the one hand, it helps religious organizations have a stable source of finance to maintain their activities and carry out social projects. On the other hand, it has the potential to turn religion into a means of making profits, losing its sacred nature and causing many social consequences. Believers also play an essential role in protecting and developing religion. They need to be responsible in choosing religious activities and not allowing themselves to be exploited. Throughout history, many cultures have developed such value systems and ethical codes, and each person can learn from the experiences of those cultures. "Therefore, the criticism of religion is the embryonic form of the criticism of the miserable life of which religion is the divine halo" (Karl et al., 2002, p.570).

Religious organizations must increase transparency in financial management and use revenue effectively and by operational goals. The state needs to improve the legal framework, ensure strict but flexible management of the activities of religious organizations, and create favorable conditions for religious activities to take place healthily and positively. Society needs to raise awareness of the social role of religion, encourage positive interactions between religions and other social components, and join hands to fight against acts of exploiting religion to cause division and instability. Bringing religion into politics is a dangerous act that can cause many negative consequences. The secular state needs to respect freedom of belief but also needs to take measures to prevent activities that exploit religion that go against the interests of the nation and people. "If you drag religion into politics, then any attempt by the secular government to dictate how religion should act in politics is a clear plot and a plot against religion" (Karl et al., 2002, p.25). In the current context, religion needs to find a balance between preserving cultural identity and adapting to social changes, requiring religious leaders to have a long-term vision, preserve the core values of religion, and meet the needs of believers in the new era.

5. Synopsis of the Main Research Outcomes

Through discussion, the following results were achieved:

First, human life and religious life are different. Religious life is distinguished between clergy, believers, and atheists. Human life does not discriminate, so there is mutual trust between people. When faith in people is lost, religious faith appears.

Second, religious life is mutual trust between clergy and believers. Communication between clergy and believers through language makes concepts, categories, judgments, reasoning, and creativity in religious life constantly produced. The metaphysical nature of religion becomes the dominant force of clergy and believers.

Third, the lives of clergy and believers performing different functions and tasks in religious life become the exchange of products and the buying and selling goods. Religious life is dominated by the commodity economy, which causes clergy and believers to believe in money. Money becomes the true belief of life, causing religion to be secularized. A life of material sufficiency becomes the driving force for the secularization of religion.

Fourth, money becomes the dominant force in the commodity economy, making the lives of monks and believers a life of money. The life of money distorts religious ethics; human ethics are secularized religious ethics. That is the process of criticizing and tolerating religion in globalization.

6. Conclusions

Through discussion and research results, we draw the following conclusions:

First, human and religious life are different, therefore, human rights and religious rights are also different. Human rights do not discriminate between people; all people are equal and have the right to pursue happiness for themselves. Religious rights discriminate between clergy and believers, between theists and atheists, therefore, religion discriminates between people; it is to discriminate between one species and another. Religious rights are to serve religion. Human rights are the mission of humanity.

Second, religion is a product of humans. Religion serves the needs of human life. Humans are products of religion, causing society to be divided into clergy, believers, and atheists. Living in a religious environment becomes a product of religion; people become slaves to that religion. People lose themselves and depend on religion's rituals, beliefs, and traditions.

Third, when believers are passionate about religion, the clergy become noble and have a better life than other professions. Believers believe in religion; they believe in the clergy. The religious love of believers depends on the lifestyle of the clergy; respect for the clergy is the religious love of believers. The existence of religion makes the status, position, money, and nobility of the clergy become a profession with income and a better standard of living than others.

Fourth, the religious love of believers is a product of the enthusiastic marketing of the clergy. The enthusiasm of the clergy is the mission of life, but it is also the food, clothing, and shelter of the clergy; therefore, religious exchanges can also be easily understood and sympathized with the clergy because they are also human beings, and some believers are also merchants in the commodity economy. The contradiction between human morality and religious morality appears in the context of current globalization, which is the unity of tolerance and criticism of religion.

7. Limitations, Implications, and Further Directions of Research

The content of this article is approached in a new direction, in which real people living in commodity economic conditions are taken as the subject and presented systematically; however, some limitations due to the author's point of view must be considered. This article aims to bring people back to the reality of life and free people from different religious prejudices to reclaim human rights. People are the place to rely on and trust most genuinely. The most genuine faith is that people respect each other's truth about lifestyle. Human rights are the basis for understanding and respecting each other among religions in a commodity economy. On that basis, the content that continues to be researched in the coming time is to focus on "tolerance or criticism of religious life in the context of globalization?"

References

- [1] Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. (2012). *New Testament Bible*, Religion Publishing House, Hanoi.
- [2] K.Marx and F.Engels. (2002). Complete Volume, Volume 1, National political publisher, Hanoi.
- [3] Nguyen Anh Quoc (2024). Human Philosophy – Human Division and Possession. Publishing house GlobeEdit, London. <https://www.morebooks.shop/shop-ui/shop/product/978-620-6-79651-0>
- [4] Nguyen Anh Quoc (2024). Social Philosophy – The Evolution of Humanity. Publishing house GlobeEdit, London. <https://www.morebooks.shop/shop-ui/shop/product/9786206800057>
- [5] Michael A. Peters (2024). New Earth Philosophy: Being Together in A Post-Apocalyptic Era. *Review of Contemporary Philosophy*, ISSN 1841-5261, eISSN 2471-089X, 23, 2024, pp. 01–22. <https://reviewofconphil.com/index.php/journal/article/view/3>
- [6] Ida Bagus Rai Putra, Ida Ayu Putu Aridawati, I Wayan Simpen (2024). Dissemination of Balinese Script Religiosity in Balinese Calligraphy: Semiotic Studies. *Linguistic and Philosophical Investigations*, ISSN: 1841-2394, e-ISSN: 2471-0881, Vol 23 (1), 2024, pp. 13–20. <https://philolinginvestigations.com/index.php/journal/article/view/26>
- [7] Andino Maselena, Miftachul Huda, Chotirat Ann Ratanamahatana (2024). Theory of Belief Functions to Cognitive Learning Styles Diagnostic, *Linguistic and Philosophical Investigations*, ISSN: 1841-2394, e-ISSN: 2471-0881, Vol 23 (1), 2024, pp. 124–144. <https://philolinginvestigations.com/index.php/journal/article/view/54>
- [8] Rana Farhan Tahir, Bahee Hadaegh (2024). The Effect of Technology on Human Identity in Neal Stephenson’s Snow Crash: A Philosophical Study of Posthumanism, *Linguistic and Philosophical Investigations*, ISSN: 1841-2394, e-ISSN: 2471-088, Vol 23 (1), 2024, pp. 281–290. <https://philolinginvestigations.com/index.php/journal/article/view/69>
- [9] Amer Abdulhussein Abbas, Ahmed Aubais Alfatlawi (2024). The Concept of Proportionality in the Context of International Humanitarian Law and Its Customary Basis. *Contemporary Readings in Law and Social Justice*, ISSN: 1948-9137, e-ISSN: 2162-2752, Vol 16 (1s), 2024, pp. 10–18. <https://crlsj.com/index.php/journal/article/view/62>
- [10] Moraes, M. V. de, & Hennig Leal, M. C. (2023). Formulation, implementation, and control of public policies in the "post" context: postmodernity, post-democracy and post-truth as paradigm shifts. *A&C - Journal of Administrative & Constitutional Law*, 23(93), 73- 100. <https://www.revistaaec.com/index.php/revistaec/article/view/1799>.
- [11] Qurrata Ayuni, Fitra Arsil, Satrio Alif Febriyanto (2024). Shifting Approach to Handling the Papua Conflict in Indonesia. *Contemporary Readings in Law and Social Justice*, ISSN: 1948-9137, e-ISSN: 2162-2752, Vol 16 (1), 2024, pp. 236–248. <https://crlsj.com/index.php/journal/article/view/89>