

Extract from Life after Death Assessment – Buddhism and Christianity

In comparison Theravada and Mahayan Buddhist both believe that there is Nirvana and it is possible to get to it by following the teachings of the Buddha. These teachings are called the Pali Canon, which both schools read but the Theravada Buddhists only pay attention to the older ones, as it is the oldest school and they don't believe the later ones because it was written by Mahayan Buddhist. For Mahayan Buddhist they read all the teachings and obviously the ones written by their own school, that is why they both have different beliefs on reaching nirvana.

I think the culture has also affected the beliefs of life after death for Buddhists because Mahayan Buddhism has spread far across the world which would have picked up beliefs and ideas that may not have anything to do with the Buddha. This might have happened in Tibet where the Buddhism is very different to elsewhere. We have learnt that some of the deities found in temples in Tibet are from the old religion of Tibet before Buddhism arrived and have been included into it. Also maybe the colourfulness of Tibetan Buddhism is more to do with the people than with the Buddhism. Also Theravada Buddhism has supposedly not changed, but it is the oldest school and I think that it is possibly the school that has changed the most because it is so old.