



Course Companion for GCSE OCR (Full Course)

Component 2: Religion, Philosophy and
Ethics in the Modern World from a Religious
Perspective (Christianity)

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Teacher's Introduction

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This resource has been designed to support the learning and teaching of *OCR GCSE Religious Studies Component Group 2: Religion, Philosophy and Ethics in the Modern World from a Religious Perspective (Christianity)*. All areas of the specification are covered, and questions and activities are included to test knowledge and ability, and to help students to engage with the topics.

The information is comprehensive, and images help to illustrate concepts. Answers to questions are included to help students to understand the material and to further their learning. A brief introduction to the course and answering exam questions is provided. Short-answer and exam questions feature throughout. Multiple-choice questions that cover questions under the heading **Quick Questions**. More complex exam essay style questions are included under the heading **Try This...** Answers and a full mark scheme are provided.

This course companion can be used in full as an alternative or complement to the course or for independent learning or revision. Alternatively, teachers might use it as a classroom activity or homework.

This topic involves studying a number of different arguments, ideas and perspectives. Christian and non-religious perspectives. This should both inform students and enable them to approach issues from different points of view.

We have sought a balance between explaining relevant concepts in sufficient detail without oversimplification, while not going beyond GCSE level and becoming too complex. We have tried to present all views in a neutral and informative way.

Some material in the section on The Existence of God is closely linked to the *Companion for Christianity (Beliefs, Teachings and Practices)*. It is worth studying the *Companion for Christianity* first, or potentially studying the corresponding sections in the *Companion for Christianity* and this resource. We have tried to avoid extreme overlap, and so it is worth referring to the *Companion for Christianity* for details.

Note: this companion covers several sensitive and potentially controversial issues including war and terrorism, and euthanasia and abortion. It is advised that teachers review this material with their classes, and warn students about any content which may distress them.

Hopefully, this resource will encourage students in their learning and help them to succeed in their exams. It should take the pressure away from teachers by providing the material they want to teach to their class.

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Introduction to the Course and How to Answer Questions

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This course aims to cover Christian beliefs, teachings and arguments regarding relationships and families, the existence of God, and religion, peace and conflict. It also covers Christian and non-religious beliefs, teachings and arguments regarding one's place in the world today. The resource aims to assess your understanding of religious and non-religious beliefs and attitudes. You need to be aware that Christianity is the dominant religion in Great Britain today, but that there are many, varied religious traditions in the world.

This course companion is designed to equip you with the information you need to answer questions. Not all the questions are in exam-style, but those which are should be answered in particular ways.

The exam board will ask you to give quick facts and statements, as well as asking you to describe and outline. They will also ask you to 'explain', 'discuss' and 'evaluate' beliefs, teachings, experiences, arguments and practices. When answering questions it is important to try to use technical terms where possible, and to write well, using both a style that is easy to read and correct spelling and grammar. More or less writing will be required depending on the number of marks. Try to spend as little time as possible on the shorter questions to allow yourself more time for the longer ones.

There will be four parts, one on each of the four themes, each including one 3-mark question, two 6-mark questions, and one 15-mark question. These questions could be on any material which you have learnt. Three extra marks are given for spelling, punctuation and grammar on the first and second 15-mark questions, totalling six SPaG marks for the paper.

Hopefully, this resource will be interesting, informative, and help you to achieve good results.

The **3-mark questions** have varied formats. You could be asked to describe something, state a term/belief/teaching/argument; to state or name three things; or to give three reasons for something, or why something is the case.

Do not let the different wording throw you off – essentially there are two formats. In one, you will be asked for one thing – therefore you need to go into some more detail – make three points or examples about the one thing to get three marks.

The **6-mark question** asks you to outline, describe or explain something – sometimes the importance of something. However, it could also ask you to explain an argument, give different views, give reasons for something, or why something is the case.

The different types of 6-mark questions can be a little confusing. In each theme the first 6-mark question will be 'explain/compare/how'. In the second 6-mark question you need to demonstrate knowledge (explain) 6-marker you need to show both knowledge and understanding and analysis and evaluation. In the third 6-mark question you also need to refer to sources of wisdom and some questions will refer to philosophers, theologians, other religious writings, or Christian/secular writings. In both types of 6-marker you may get a mark for making a point, developing it, giving an example. **Note: In this resource these different questions will be part b) and part c). Questions in this resource will be 'Quick Questions', part c) questions will be 'Now Try This...'**

The **15-mark question** is the longest. You will need to discuss a statement. This means giving arguments for and against a statement (so agreeing with it, and also suggesting an alternative point(s) of view). Make sure you have a conclusion, picking the most convincing side of the argument (and saying why you think this is the case. You should refer to sources of wisdom and authority in your answer where/if relevant. You also need to refer to similar and different views/practices with the importance of the views.

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Relationships and Family

Many Christians look to their religion to provide them with **moral** guidance. Teachings regarding family, **marriage** and sexual relationships in Christianity. **homosexuality**, **contraception** and **divorce** are controversial within the

Keywords:

- ♦ **morality** – ideas about what is right and wrong
- ♦ **marriage** – a legal joining of two people. In Christianity, this is normally a joining is seen as spiritual as well.
- ♦ **homosexuality** – a sexual orientation where people are attracted to people of the same sex
- ♦ **contraception** – methods which aim to stop someone becoming pregnant
- ♦ **sexually transmitted infections** – infections passed on through sexual contact
- ♦ **divorce** – the legal ending of a marriage

Christian Attitudes towards the Role and Purpose of the Family

Keywords:

- ♦ **procreation** – making/having children
- ♦ **faith** – belief and trust in something, here in Jesus and God
- ♦ **baptism** – a sacrament which involves being anointed with or immersed in water
- ♦ **sacrament** – a particularly important worship practice which has even higher status in some churches such as the Catholic and Orthodox churches

There are various beliefs about the role and purpose of families, and there are many different types of families.

Role of the Christian Family

Many Christians feel that the family makes up the basis for a stable society. The Catholic Church especially feels that heterosexual, nuclear families (see below) are the ideal model of a family, and help to build a framework for a good society – parents support children, children support parents, and families support each other.

Some Christians feel that the human family reflects the family of God; this is seen throughout the world. Therefore, they should work to have a harmonious family and practice the love of Jesus.

Role of Parents and Children

Parents and children have different roles in the family.

Parents look after their children, caring for them and teaching them. They protect them, discipline them, and educating them, sometimes including raising them. Having children is a responsibility. It can be argued that they have a duty to protect their children into the world it can be argued that they have a duty to protect their children from the world (children do not choose to be born).

Children obey their parents and learn from them. Christianity stresses this. Children may also look after their parents in their old age. The Greek phrase 'filial piety' means that children do have an obligation to their parents because their parents raise them.

'Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honour your father and mother," which is the first commandment with a promise: "so that it may be well with you and you may prosper."'
(Ephesians 6:1–3 NRSV)

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Different Types of Family

In the twenty-first century there are many different types of family. These are due to different cultures and family circumstances, and also because of changes in society.

Type of Family	Description	Possible Christian Views
Nuclear	A family unit where two parents (traditionally heterosexual) live with their biological children or adopted children. Some think of this as the traditional family.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most Christians see this as the traditional family. Some Christians believe in a couple having children.
Single parent	A family unit where just one parent looks after their children. This is a variation on the nuclear family (with one parent). This can be due to the death of one parent, the end of a relationship between parents, or (in recent times) where a woman has become pregnant with donated sperm or a single person has adopted a child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christians may see this as a family taking on all the responsibilities which would normally be shared by two parents. Some Christians believe in single parent families if they feel it is the best breakdown, or if they feel that two parents in a relationship are not the best people should be raising children.
Same-sex Parents	A family unit where both the parents are the same sex/gender. They could have adopted a child; one member of a lesbian relationship could have become pregnant with donated sperm; or one member of a male gay relationship could have fertilised a donor egg.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some Christians believe that couples wish to provide a loving environment for their children. Christians who may disapprove of raising children in a family that is not heterosexual may see examples of families where both genders are present.
Blended	A family unit where at least one member of the couple has children from a previous relationship. The children, therefore, live with one parent and one step-parent, and any children of the new couple live with their half-sibling(s). This is a variation on the nuclear family (as children live with two adults, but one is not their parent / not the parent of all children in the family).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christians may see this as a new family unit where children are brought together, because of their parents' divorce, for their child's benefit. Some Christians believe in leaving the parents to form new families.
Extended	A family unit where extra members of the family live with parents and their children; for example, grandparents or aunts, uncles and cousins.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christians may see this as a family living together. Christians may see this as a family where members are not the family's responsibility.

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Purpose of the Christian Family

Procreation

Many Christians feel that they should have a family because God told his children in Genesis. Therefore, the purpose of having a family is to fulfil God's plan and having a family is important because the family is part of God's plan.

'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth...' (Genesis 1:28)

Some Christians, such as Catholics, feel that **all** sexual acts should be open to procreation. Some Christians take this even further – Christian movement opposes any forms of **contraception** or family planning (including natural family planning method), as they believe **all** children are a blessing from God. They feel that to stand in the way of God creating new children, and often have very large families. Christians do believe in family planning, and being responsible about the size of their families.

Some Christians believe in **marriage** but do not feel that they need to, or that not all married Christians feel called to procreation. It is becoming increasingly common for a Christian and not have a family.

Additionally, some couples cannot have children even if they want to (due to infertility or conceive) in either or both members of the couple. They may accept reproductive fertility treatment, adoption or fostering. Those who adopt or foster a child, their purpose is to have children, just not through procreation. Note: while the Church teaches that all sexual acts *should* be open to the possibility of procreation, it also acknowledges that some couples are infertile through no fault of their own. It does not condemn such couples, as they are infertile, and encourages infertile married couples to have a sex life. Church teaching does not allow fertility treatment such as IVF, but encourages a sex life.

Stability and Protection of Children

Many Christians (and others) feel that one purpose of a family is to provide a stable environment for children, who can grow up in a loving and safe environment – parents should provide stability for their children. Many religious and some non-religious people feel that marriage is the basis for a stable family for children, as this shows the commitment of a couple to each other permanently, without disrupting their children's family unit. Others will disagree, and feel that a couple does not need to be married to provide stability for children – happy cohabiting parents may provide more stability than unhappy married ones. They may also feel that different types of families, e.g. single-parent families, or separated parents who share custody of their children, can still provide a stable and safe environment for their children.

Educating Children in a Faith

Christians may also feel that part of the purpose of a family unit is to raise children in the Christian **faith**; the Catholic Church makes the couples it **marries** promise to raise their children in the Catholic faith. The family is, therefore, important as a place for learning about God and Christianity. Most Christians also feel that it is their responsibility to educate their children in other respects and many non-religious people also see the family as important in the **moral** education and general education of children, but without the focus on religious education.

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Many Christian families get their children **baptised**, to show that they are raising them as a Christian and educating them in the **faith**. Baptism also symbolises an alternative, they may dedicate their child(ren) to God, holding a service in which the **sacrament** taking place, so the child(ren) can choose baptism themselves.

'And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the Lord.' (Ephesians 6:4 NRSV)

Other Purposes of Families

- ◆ People may feel that it is a personal choice to have children, and that the family is important in fulfilling the desire of parents to have children.
- ◆ Some people feel that the purpose of having a family is so that you have someone to look after you in your old age, and families are important for this reason. Others feel that this is a selfish reason to have a family, but they may agree that families are important because the different members often support each other.

Discuss with you what your purpose for views on religion.

Impact and Influence

An increasing acceptance of casual sex and the widespread acceptance of divorce has led to a divergence in the types of family which exist in twenty-first century Britain. There has also been wider acceptance of same-sex parents, and there are now many gay and lesbian children.

With people living longer, there has been increasing demand for children to be looked after by their parents. Some do this by taking them into their homes, or living close by. Others may pay for them to be looked after in a nursing home.

Quick Questions

1. State three types of family.
2. Describe Christian attitudes to the purposes of a family. Refer to social wisdom and authority.

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Christian Attitudes towards the Importance and Purpose of Marriage

The Bible contains teaching about **marriage**, and different church **denominations** have different views about marriage, which may be due to different interpretations of the Bible. Marriage is the union of two people, which is also seen as a spiritual union in Christianity. For most Christians, marriage is the union of two heterosexual people of opposite genders, as this is how it is seen in the Bible. For more liberal Christians, marriage can be seen as a commitment between two people.

Keywords:

- ♦ **monogamous** – only having one sexual partner, and being faithful to the partner.

Key Concept – Fidelity

Fidelity basically means faithfulness. Christians aim to be, and expect to be, faithful in their marriage. A sexual relationship generally implies that the relationship is a marriage, and the partners only have a sexual relationship with each other. However, not only do Christians aim to be faithful physically, but they aim not to have any other sexual desire, those other than their partners. Fidelity also involves supporting and loving your partner, remaining loyal to them (including in areas other than sex).

Fidelity as a concept is relevant to areas such as marriage, divorce, and remarriage.

Importance of Marriage

- ♦ For some Christians marriage is a **sacrament**, an important religious practice, which they believe conveys God's grace. This is taught by the Catholic Church, and some other branches of Christianity.
- ♦ All Christians believe that marriage is an important commitment, both to God and to another person about how someone will spend the rest of their life.
- ♦ Marriage within Christianity is **monogamous**; it is a commitment between two people to stay faithful to each other. **Fidelity** is very important within Christianity.
- ♦ Many Christians believe that marriage helps to maintain a stable society, by providing a stable environment for children to grow up in.
- ♦ Christians believe that marriage is a gift from God.

'You shall not commit adultery.' (Exodus 20:14, NRSV) [from the Ten Commandments]

'But from the beginning of creation, "God made them male and female." "For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."' (Genesis 2:1-4, NRSV) [from the Bible]

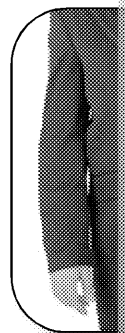
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Purposes of Marriage

- ♦ A purpose of marriage for Christians is **procreation** and raising a family. Many Christians see being married as being a good thing *if* you want to have a family, to provide a stable environment for children. Other Christians think that once married you *should* have a family and should actively try to have children. This is based on Bible verses such as 'Be fruitful and multiply' which tells humans to have children. This is taught by the Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church, and some more conservative Protestant churches.



- ♦ A purpose of marriage for Christians is to allow couples to express love and friendship; to care for and support each other through life. This makes marriage important because a married couple's love and friendship play a very large part in their lives.
- ♦ A purpose of marriage for many Christians is being able to have sex. Most Christians see sexual relationships as important, and not something to be entered into casually, because they see them as something which conveys love and commitment. Jesus' words in Mark 10 indicate that sex forms a bond between a couple, so sex is significant. Many Christians believe you should not have sex before marriage, or at least that love should lead to marriage, to make it official. This makes marriage important because it allows them to express their love for and commitment to their partner.
- ♦ Many Christians think a purpose of marriage is to symbolise the relationship between Christ (represented by the husband) and his church (represented by the wife). Because of this; this is indicated in Ephesians 5. So marriage represents a relationship of love and authority. Some feminist Christians may not like this because it makes the man seem superior to his female partner.



A groom

'For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church'

Significance of Beliefs and Teachings Reflected in a Christian Marriage

Aspects of Christian **marriage** ceremonies help to indicate and reinforce Christian beliefs and teachings. Christian marriage ceremonies also show the significance of Christian beliefs and teachings.

- ♦ The minister in the ceremony may mention that marriage is a **sacrament** that it reflects the relationship of Jesus and the church, and other aspects of marriage.
- ♦ Marriage vows make promises to God and one's spouse – to love and support each other.
- ♦ Giving one's spouse a ring shows the commitment which goes with marriage. The spouse intends to be faithful to the other, and to love them.
- ♦ Those present at the wedding may make promises to support the couple.

Christian weddings show the importance to Christians of God's initial creation of relationships such as marriage, so that humans may support each other.

And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman. They were joined together, and this at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this flesh will be taken out of yours, and this one will be joined to you, and they will become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.
(Genesis 2:22-25 NRSV)

Because Genesis indicates that marriage was created by God, this can mean that marriage is part of God's plan for humanity. This passage tells Christians that marriage is the correct place for sex, and the marriage ceremony allows spouses to have a sexual relationship.

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Some Christian marriages will emphasise different roles of husband and wife, with the husband as the head of the household and the wife as his helper. However, many will emphasise that husbands and wives should both support each other.

Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.' (Genesis 2:18 NRSV)

Christian marriage ceremonies note that marriage is a lifelong commitment, emphasising the significance of Christian teaching against divorce. The married couple are becoming one.

He answered, 'Have you not read that the one who made them at the beginning said, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh"? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.' (Matthew 19:4–6 NRSV)

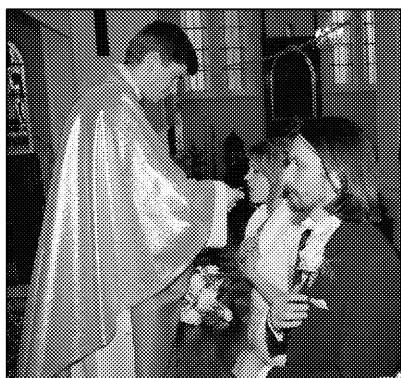
Christian marriage ceremonies will often reference the importance of procreation, and that couples should have children. The minister may say that marriage is given so that couples can have children.

God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth with your offspring.' (Genesis 1:28 NRSV)

Reasons for Differences in Practice

There are many differences in Christian marriage practice.

There are some major ones, including that most Christian denominations will not conduct same-sex marriages, but some denominations, such as the Quakers and United Reformed Church, do. These denominations believe that they should not discriminate, and that anybody should be able to get married. However, many



Roman Catholic couples receive the Eucharist at their wedding.

churches disagree with same-sex marriage (see section).

Another major difference in marriage practice between denominations is whether a church will perform remarriages. Some churches will do; however, the Catholic Church cannot be ended by divorce, and so would not be considered to be married to another. The Church of England allows a maximum of three marriages.

The Church of England is more open to interfaith marriages than the Catholic or Orthodox churches.

The Catholic Church will marry a Catholic to a Christian of a different denomination, or another religion, but not to a non-Christian. The Orthodox Church will marry Orthodox Christians to Christians of other denominations, but if Orthodox Christians choose to marry non-Christians, they must do so in a non-Orthodox church. These restrictions are due to belief that marriage is a sacred act, and because the Orthodox Church feels that marriage, as part of a religious act, so should involve two Christians. The Church of England allows anyone to marry, and wants couples of different beliefs to enjoy the joys of marriage.

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If someone cannot get married in a particular church, they may be able to in a civil ceremony (e.g. in a registry office) rather than in a church.

The ceremonies of different denominations will also differ according to C ceremonies will be more formal in more formal churches.

Impact and Influence

Many people in Britain get married: Christians, those of other religions, and non-religious people. However, not getting married to one's partner is becoming more socially

Quick Questions

3. Give three reasons why Christians may get married.

Now Think...

4. Explain how Christian teachings about marriage influence Christian ceremonies. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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Same-sex Marriage

Same-sex marriage is a controversial issue for Christians. Some Christians see no problem with it, and there is a whole spectrum of views in

Keywords:

- ♦ **celibacy** – refraining from sexual activity
- ♦ **civil partnership** – a legal union like a marriage, and giving equivalent legal rights
- ♦ **denomination** – a particular branch within a religion, e.g. Catholicism, Anglicanism
- ♦ **homosexuality** – a sexual orientation where people are attracted to people of the same sex
- ♦ **immorality** – acting wrongly
- ♦ **natural law** – rules about morality drawn from nature and reason
- ♦ **prayer** – communication with God
- ♦ **same-sex marriage** – a legal union joining of two people of the same sex
- ♦ **sexuality** – sexual feelings and the ability and desire to have sexual relationships
- ♦ **sexual orientation** – which sex/gender someone is attracted to
- ♦ **sin** – to act against God's will

Key Concept – Understandings of Sexuality

Sexuality refers to humans' sexual feelings and their ability and desire to have sexual relationships. Someone's sexuality is affected by their **sexual orientation**: whether they are attracted to people of the opposite sex/gender), **homosexual** (attracted to people of the same sex/gender), **bisexual** (attracted to people of both sexes/genders). Sexuality also involves people's sexual identity, such as if they identify as cisgender (the gender they were born as) or transgender (the opposite gender to which they were born).

In order to understand Christian beliefs about same-sex marriage, it is important to understand views on heterosexual relationships and marriage, and on homosexual relationships.

Heterosexual and Homosexual Relationships

Christians approve of **monogamous** heterosexual relationships: relationships between one man and one woman. This is because they believe such relationships were instituted by God and because Jesus emphasised the importance of heterosexual **marriage**.

'... the one who made them at the beginning "made them male and female", and he made them to be joined together. They shall leave their father and mother and be joined to their wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' (Matthew 19:4–6 NRSV)

Some Christians, such as Evangelical Christians, believe that homosexual people **pray** to God, he will help them to stop having homosexual feelings and become heterosexual.



'... shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.' (Leviticus 18:22)

'We must not indulge in sexual immorality...' (1 Corinthians 6:18)

Some other Christians believe that homosexual activity is a **sin**, but that it is not sinful if people control them and do not act on them, because their feelings are not sinful. They believe people should not have homosexual relationships, or possibly that they should have homosexual relationships.

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This is taught by the Catholic Church, and also believed by some conservative Orthodox and Protestant Christians. They believe homosexual activity is wrong because it is prohibited in the Old Testament – for example, in Leviticus – and homosexual **immorality** is prohibited in some New Testament letters, and some interpret these references to include homosexual sex.

The Catholic Church is also against homosexual sex because its position is that sexual activity should be open to the possibility of **procreation**, and this is not possible with homosexual sex. This is because the Catholic Church follows **natural law** (the belief that God has revealed what is right through nature and reason) and they believe that homosexual activity is not natural for human beings – the natural nature shows that sexual activity is for procreation. They may also feel that it undermines the role of the *traditional* (heterosexual) nuclear family as a foundation for society.

'... Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of perverted sexuality, contrary to nature, and consequently as intrinsically disordered.' (Catholic Catechism)

However, some Christians, such as more liberal Protestants, are not opposed to homosexual relationships. One reason for this is that they may feel that the commandments in the Old Testament do not need to be followed any more because Christians follow the New Testament and the Jewish law. For example, Christians do not keep many Jewish dietary laws which Jews maintain for purity or cleanliness, as Christians feel that they have been fulfilled in Jesus' death – they may see commandments against homosexuality as **immorality**, and so they would also be redundant in this way.

Some Christians also feel that love is more important than following rules, and that homosexual relationships harm no one, so should not be stopped.

Furthermore, there is no record of Jesus condemning homosexuality, and he did not judge others, and did not always condemn those who had committed sins. He forgave a woman in John 8. Some Christians may feel that homosexuality is sinful, but that God is merciful, so it is unfair to treat homosexuals badly when no one is perfect.

'Or how can you say to your neighbour, "Let me take the speck out of your eye, and you do not notice the plank in your eye?" (Matthew 7:4 NRSV) [Jesus on not judging others, when you are not perfect]

'Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone...' (John 8:7) [Jesus on not judging others, when you are not perfect]

Interpretation of Scripture

One reason for different views on **homosexuality** is different interpretation of Scripture. Leviticus 20:13 can be interpreted in different ways:

'If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; their blood is upon them.' (Leviticus 20:13 NRSV)

Many English translations include the word 'abomination', which makes it a **moral** atrocity, which should be rightly condemned, and even punished. Some interpret it in such a way.

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However, some scholars have suggested that the word should actually be in the sense of mixing two things which should not be mixed – they become confused. It may sound much better initially, but if this is a better translation, this adds weight to the claim that homosexuality was prohibited due to purity rather than morality, as Jews were concerned with keeping everything in its proper place, and not mixing things which should be kept separate. Therefore, if this is the case, the passage can be interpreted as forbidding mixing rather than morality and, therefore, Christians do not have to worry about Jewish purity laws.

1 Timothy 1:81–0 can also be interpreted in different ways:

'Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully. This means using it not for the innocent but for the lawless and disobedient, for the godless and sinful, for the profane, for those who kill their father or mother, for murderers, fornicators, sodomites, and perjurers. The law is not given to the righteous, but to the lawless, so that they may be silenced. For the law is not given to the righteous, but to the lawless, so that they may be silenced. For the law is not given to the righteous, but to the lawless, so that they may be silenced...' (1 Timothy 1:81–0)

On first inspection, it clearly condemns homosexuality – it claims that fornicators (people outside of marriage) and sodomites (someone who has anal sex) are **sinful**.

However, it can also be interpreted in other ways.

- ◆ It is possible the fornication was regarded as such a sin because it took place with prostitutes, and sex with prostitutes was seen as polluting. This is very different from sex within a loving relationship, especially one which leads to marriage. So some Christians do not see such 'fornication' within relationships as bad because it is in a different context to the fornication emphasised in biblical passages such as 1 Corinthians 6:18.
- ◆ If fornication (sex outside of marriage) is such a sin, then if homosexuals marry, as they now can in the UK and many other countries, they are not committing this sin.
- ◆ If sodomy is forbidden, this does not necessarily also forbid homosexual relationships which do not involve anal sex.
- ◆ There is also debate about how the word 'sodomite' is used in the Bible. It refers to someone from the place Sodom, which God condemned in the Old Testament for its wickedness with anal sex, as the male inhabitants of Sodom wanted to rape the angels. However, other places in the Bible claim that Sodom's sin was not anal sex, but refusal to help others. The violence and rape which the inhabitants committed, regardless of whether it was homosexual in nature. So some argue that the word 'sodomite' in the Bible, refers to these actions and not to homosexuality.

This was the guilt of your sin: that you and your daughters had pride, excess of food, and you did not aid the poor and needy. (Ezekiel 16:49 NIV)

If this passage is read taking these points into account, it may not be interpreted as condemning homosexual relationships.

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Reasons for Disapproving of Same-sex Marriage

Many Christians disagree with **same-sex (homosexual) marriage**, because they disagree with homosexuality / homosexual relationships – see above.

To reiterate, apart from a disagreement with homosexual relationships for other reasons, including teaching in the Bible, the Catholic Church disagrees with homosexual sex as it cannot produce children, and as the Catholic Church sees **procreation** as an important purpose of marriage. Some Christians also disagree with same-sex marriage for this reason.

Even Christians who accept homosexual relationships do not all accept same-sex marriage, because they feel that marriage is a special institution for heterosexual couples, and how it was created by God and not created by Jesus. They do not think he has the ability to change this.

'But from the beginning of creation, "God made them male and female." "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh..." (Mark 10:6–8 NRSV)

Some also feel that if Christian **denominations** accept homosexual marriage, those who do not agree with homosexual marriage will be forced to perform such marriages, which is a significant challenge.

Reasons for Accepting Same-sex Marriage

However, some liberal Christians do accept same-sex marriages, for the reasons given in the section above. They may feel that just because marriage is traditionally between a man and a woman, this does not mean that God intended for it to be so. Some Christian Reformed Church are Christian **denominations** who will practise same-sex marriage. Some Protestant churches offer same-sex couples a blessing if they have a civil partnership (discretion).

Civil Partnership

A civil partnership is an official, legal union which entitles the partners to the same rights as a marriage. While civil marriages are legal in many countries including the UK, a civil marriage – although it is very similar. In the UK, only same-sex couples can enter into civil partnerships (since 2004).

Many Christians who disagree with same-sex marriage disagree with same-sex civil partnerships for similar reasons. Christians who support same-sex marriage are likely to support same-sex civil partnerships. Some Christians who do *not* support same-sex marriage do support same-sex civil partnerships, as they feel that homosexuals should be entitled to the right to a legal union. They feel that marriage is a heterosexual union, given by God, and so should remain that way.

There has been opposition to the UK only allowing same-sex civil partnerships. Some couples wanting to enter a civil partnership rather than a marriage. This is seen as a civil marriage as an unequal institution, and many feel that even civil wedding has religious connotations – which those who are non-religious may not want. Some countries have civil partnerships, including the Isle of Man and Gibraltar. These partnerships are legal in the UK.

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UK. France also offers a Civil Partnership (PACS) to both same-sex and opposite-sex couples. While a PACS has some of the same legal benefits as a marriage, it does not have the same status. For example, it is much easier to dissolve.

Some Christians support the introduction of an opposite-sex civil partnership. They believe that all people should be entitled to choose which sort of union they enter. However, many Christians believe that relationships should be formalised through marriage, and that the state should not provide a legal alternative. Most Christians would want to enter a marriage, rather than a civil partnership. Marriage is promoted in the Bible, and many Christians also want a religious ceremony to emphasise the spiritual importance of their marriage.

Impact and Influence

For many years, **homosexuality** was illegal in the UK, and still is in some parts of the world due to religious views. However, more liberal religious and non-religious views have become more popular, and have been reflected in the law of many countries. Same-sex marriage is legal in many countries, and has been legal in the UK (except Northern Ireland) since 2014. There is now a much more open debate about sexuality, and it is more socially acceptable to be homosexual or transgender.

Quick Questions

5. Describe one Christian attitude towards same-sex marriage.

Now Try This...

6. Explain why Christians have different beliefs about same-sex marriage. Consider different sources of wisdom and authority.

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Sexual Relationships – Pre-marital sex, Cohabitation

Keywords:

- ♦ **adultery / extramarital sex** – sex where at least one of the participants is not the person they are having sex with
- ♦ **cohabitation** – living with a partner unmarried, often in a sexual relationship
- ♦ **open marriage** – a marriage where the partners agree they can have sex with other people
- ♦ **premarital sex** – sex before being married

Key Concept – Ethical Modes of Relationships

An ethical mode of relationship is a type of relationship which is **moral** (a similar meaning to 'model'). For example, Christianity promotes **heterosexual marriage** – this is seen as moral/ethical. There is controversy about same-sex marriage – not all Christians see new **homosexual** relationships as ethical modes of relationship. Different views on what is acceptable outside of marriage for heterosexuals include **premarital sex**, but **cohabitation** is becoming more common, and most Christians will oppose **adultery**.

Premarital Sex

Many Christians believe that sexual relationships should take place only after the teaching of the Catholic Church, and a more conservative Christian view of marriage is the time when men and women can be joined sexually, and this is seen as **immorality**, which some believe to include **premarital sex**.

'...the one who made them at the beginning "made them male and female", and the two shall be joined together and the two shall become one flesh.' (Matthew 19:46– NRSV)

'We must not indulge in sexual immorality...' (1 Corinthians 6:18)

'Fornication is carnal union between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman contrary to the dignity of persons and of human sexuality which is naturally ordered to the generation and education of children.' (Catholic Catechism)

However, some other Christians have a more relaxed view to premarital sex, especially if it is within a committed relationship. The Church of England accepts long-term, committed (heterosexual) couples having sexual relationships if this is a step towards marriage, because they see love as the most important thing; it is important for Christians to love and accept others, and it is important for there to be love in relationships.

'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' (Matthew 22:39 NRSV)

Some more liberal Protestants do not see a problem with more casual sexual relationships before marriage (as long as they are consensual), even if they are not in a relationship. Jesus did not teach about sexual relationships, other than marriage, and some liberal Christians feel that their sexual life is not of primary importance, and is not relevant to their spiritual life, as long as they are not hurting anyone.

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Reasons for Cohabitation

Most Christians approve of marriage, and want to get married if they meet the right person. A few may prefer the idea of **cohabitation** long-term when they do not intend to marry their partner, because they feel that love and commitment are the most important things in a relationship. Some view cohabitation as a step towards marriage. They may feel that it is safer to live together before making a lifelong commitment, or that cohabitation may be easier than marriage. They can't afford to get married immediately – marriages can be expensive, and cohabitation is cheaper for a while. Some think that cohabiting couples still help to form a stable society, and are good at raising a family.

Some feel that people can live together in just the same way without a legal commitment. Some are married, and some feel that cohabiting is more sensible (long and/or short-term) because many couples split up, and it's not going to go through a **divorce** is not help with stability for the children involved.

Some of the Protestants have no problem with cohabiting couples and it will accept cohabiting couples working towards marriage.

Reasons against Cohabitation

However, some Christians feel that there are valid religious and ethical objections to **cohabitation**:

- ◆ The Catholic Church and conservative Christians feel that sex should only take place within **marriage** because of biblical teaching, e.g. Jesus describing marriage as the time when a couple would be joined physically.
- ◆ Being comfortable with cohabitation may mean that couples move forward too quickly with a relationship which may then mean they get stuck in an unloving relationship or a more difficult break-up.
- ◆ Cohabitation and sex before marriage may be a bad idea if children are born from an unstable cohabitating relationship.
 - Cohabitation where the couple have children may provide less security for the children as the couple may be less committed to staying together (although they may be as committed to staying together as married ones).

Adultery

Most Christians disapprove of **adultery**, also called **extramarital sex**, when a married person has sex with someone who is not their spouse (husband or wife). The 7th Commandment – important because it is in the Old Testament which many Christians believe is still valid – is generally seen to be the basis of being loving. Most people would not want to do something they would not want their spouse to do (the Golden Rule). Jesus also spoke out against adultery, including that desire to commit adultery.

'You shall not commit adultery.' (Exodus 20:14 NRSV) [from the T

'In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law of love.'
7:12 NRSV) [The Golden Rule]

'You have heard that it was said, "You shall not commit adultery." But I say to a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.'

Many Christians will not see open marriages (where a couple is married, but each can have sex with other people) as acceptable because they believe that marriage is a sacred bond and married partners should only have sex with each other. Catholics believe marriage is a **sacrament**, which means that marriage vows are sacred and holy, and breaking them is a sin to break what is holy.

Celibacy

Some Christians believe that it is better to refrain from all relationships – including sex. St Paul, believed that it was better to be **celibate** and unmarried, to remain single. Many Christians have agreed with this, and remain unmarried to commit their lives to God. Some join religious orders and become monks or nuns. In the Catholic Church, priests are required to be unmarried and celibate, as they are seen to be committed completely to God.

... he who marries his fiancée does well; and he who refrains from marriage does well. (1 Corinthians 7:38 NRSV)

However, heterosexual marriage is seen as the model relationship for most Christians. Priests are expected to remain celibate for their whole lives (though some feel they should be allowed to marry in marriage). St Paul advised that if people desired a sexual relationship then they should marry. It is clear that for married couples, sex was normal and healthy, and Christians were encouraged to be celibate during marriage (though they might want to refrain from sex for God's sake and **prayer**).

But if they are not practising self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be consumed by passion. (1 Corinthians 7:9 NRSV)

Do not deprive one another except perhaps by agreement for a set time, to devote yourselves to prayer, then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. (1 Corinthians 7:5 NRSV)

Impact and Influence

Cohabitation is becoming increasingly popular and increasingly socially acceptable. Changing attitudes towards relationships. Long-term cohabitation now affords couples many of the same rights, though not as many as marriage does.

Christian views on sexual relationships before and outside of **marriage** do not play a part in the law of the UK. **Premarital sex** and **adultery** are both legal. However, there is disapproval of adultery within society, and there is still some social stigma around premarital sex in conservative communities. **Celibacy** is not a popular option in the modern world.

Quick Questions

- Describe what is meant by celibacy.
- Outline why keeping sex within marriage is important for many Christians. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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Contraception

Different Christians have different attitudes to **contraception** and family planning. There are also different types of contraception.

Keywords:

- ♦ **contraception** – methods which aim to stop someone becoming pregnant or prevent sexually transmitted infections
- ♦ **emergency contraception** – contraception used after sex which may prevent pregnancy
- ♦ **encyclical** – an open letter from the Pope to Catholics, instructing them
- ♦ **Humanae Vitae** – an encyclical about the importance of life and not using artificial contraception

Some Christians, such as some Catholics and evangelical or conservative Protestants, are opposed to artificial **contraception** because they believe that God created sex for procreation. God told humans to 'be fruitful and multiply' when he created them, according to the Bible. The Catholic Church believes that sexual acts should be open to the possibility of new life. Pope Paul VI's stance against artificial contraception in his **encyclical** *Humanae Vitae* in 1968.

'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth...' (Genesis 1:28)

"every action which, whether in anticipation of the conjugal act, or in its fulfilment, does not have as its direct end the procreation of children, but is directed towards other ends, whatever these may be, is intrinsically evil" (Catholic Catechism 2370, quoting Pope Paul VI)

The Catholic Church also disagrees with artificial contraception because of the belief in natural law. Natural law is that God has shown humans what is right through nature. Humans are given the ability to know how to act. Because sex naturally carries the possibility of producing children, the Church feels that artificial contraception goes against nature, and disobeys natural law.

However, many Christians from other **denominations**, such as many Protestant denominations, are not opposed to contraception and family planning in general, but may approve of some methods but not others. They allow artificial contraception because *there is nothing in the Bible which expressly forbids contraception*, and because they believe people should be able to plan the size of their families without having to stop having sex if they do not want more children.

Among other things, contraception:

- is likely to improve the health of women (especially in developing countries) because they can avoid the risk of constantly having children;
- improves women's social position because they can have other roles and careers to choose;
- improves the health of children, because parents will be able to provide better care for them;
- improves the quality of life for children and parents because people can have more children when they are able to look after them, provide for them, and when they are financially stable.

Further, in the modern world, many people believe that overpopulation is a problem. If too many people want to have fewer, or no, children, this means there is more to be done to control the population. Some forms of contraception such as condoms can also prevent the spread of sexually transmitted infections.

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One (natural) method of contraception which some Catholics accept is referred to as Natural Family Planning), which is where couples try to have sex when the woman is less fertile, lowering the likelihood that she will become pregnant. As a result, the possibility of procreation, it allows couples to plan their family better when they want to conceive at any time, if God wills. Most Christian couples who approve of natural family planning are much more likely to use artificial contraception instead, or in addition, as well.

One type of contraception which Christians who approve of artificial contraception are happy to use is **barrier method** contraception, such as condoms. This type of contraception is considered acceptable because it stops sperm from reaching an egg and prevents fertilisation. Even if it fails, it in no way risks harming an embryo if conception does take place.

Some Christians also approve of **sterilisation**, where someone has minor surgery to make them unable to conceive in the future. Christians may feel this is sensible if someone wants no more children and does not want to have to worry about contraception. Some object to sterilisation on the basis that Christians could feel called by God to have more children. However, some types of sterilisation can be reversed if necessary. The Catholic Church disapproves of sterilisation for the same reasons it disapproves of artificial contraception, though it does approve of sterilisation as a medical treatment for other reasons; for example, removing the uterus (hysterectomy).

Many Christians are happy to use **hormonal methods** of contraception such as the contraceptive pill; hormonal methods involve using chemicals to convince the female body not to conceive, such as by stopping it releasing an egg. Some Christians, however, will not use such methods, or some such methods, if there is the small chance that if conception takes place, the hormones will also likely cause an early abortion – some Christians feel that this is murder, and murder is forbidden in the Ten Commandments (see below).

Some Christians will not use the **withdrawal method** of contraception, where the man pulls out from the woman's vagina before ejaculating semen (containing sperm), because of the teaching against this in the Bible. In Genesis 38 a man called Onan uses the withdrawal method which displeased God, but that Onan did not want to fulfil his duty to his dead brother to have children with his dead brother's wife to raise children for his dead brother. However, some other Christians approve of the withdrawal method which displeased God, but that Onan did not want to fulfil his duty to his dead brother to have children with his dead brother's wife to raise children for his dead brother. Some Christians would probably not use this method as a main method of contraception as they believe it is sinful.

While many Christians agree with artificial contraception, most are opposed to **emergency contraception**. This method of contraception is used after sex, and is designed to delay or prevent ovulation, thus preventing conception. Some people argue that certain types of emergency contraception can cause the condition of the uterus, which might mean that any embryo that is implanted in the uterus would be destroyed. Many Christians believe that any embryo created when the sperm meets the egg and becomes an embryo. These people are opposed to emergency contraception in case it does destroy an embryo, which should be treated as a human life. The Bible teaches not to murder people in the Ten Commandments. Some also believe that human souls begin from the moment of conception.

'You shall not murder.' (Exodus 20:13 NRSV) [from the Ten Commandments]

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Some Christians will allow emergency contraception as being the most logical in certain circumstances; for example, if a woman was raped.

Christians who are against contraception might argue against those who claim there is no need for contraception to stop diseases or pregnancies in unstable sexual relationships with their lifelong **marriage** partner. However, this does not answer the question at all, even with their spouse, or those who want a reliable way of limiting the number of children they have, and of choosing when to have them.

Impact and Influence

Contraception is freely available in the UK, but people can choose which forms to use, or not use any, depending on their personal beliefs.

Quick Questions

9. Give three types of contraception.
10. Describe different Christian attitudes to contraception. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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Ethics of Divorce, Annulment and Remarriage

As well as teaching about **marriage**, the Bible also teaches about **divorce**. Different **denominations** teach different positions, while different Christians have

Keywords:

- ♦ **annulment** – the cancelling of a marriage, saying it never existed
- ♦ **compassion** – showing care for others
- ♦ **divorce** – the legal ending of a marriage
- ♦ **remarriage** – where people who have been married before marry other people (not the same person again)
- ♦ **sanctity** – holy, of spiritual importance
- ♦ **separated** – where a couple remain married legally, but do not live together

Against Divorce and Remarriage

Some Christians have very strict views when it comes to **divorce**. The Catholic Church does not allow divorce, and does not acknowledge legal divorce (if they would see a divorced person as still **married**, but **separated** from their spouse). This is because the Catholic Church sees marriage as a **sacrament** given by God, and Jesus taught that people should not separate what God had joined together – they feel that marriage vows have **sanctity**. However, the Church does allow **annulments** in some circumstances, which say that the marriage has never been valid by a Catholic marriage tribunal, and reasons for annulment include that the marriage was not consummated (the couple never had sex), one of the partners was not baptised, or one of the parties was tricked or coerced into marriage. For a Catholic to get remarried, they must first have obtained a legal divorce. However, divorce is not always enough (when one partner leaves the other and refuses to continue with the marriage).

The Catholic Church will not **remarry** people who are divorced because of the first marriage, so they view it as adultery: cheating on the person's first spouse. They have to get a Catholic annulment and a legal divorce in order to be remarried in the Catholic Church. (Catholics will, however, remarry those whose spouses have died.)

The Catholic Church interprets Matthew 19:49– (and the corresponding verses) as marriage is a bond created by God, humans cannot break this through divorce, even if someone thinks they are divorced in the eyes of God. It also interprets the passage to mean that it is wrong to divorce each other, and this is wrong. As an evangelist, Jesus has already explained that marriage is a bond created by God, and they do not interpret the end of the passage as him allowing divorce for any reason, but as strongly disallowing remarriage for divorced people, as well as disallowing divorce.

He answered and said, 'Have you not read that the one who made them at the beginning made them male and female, and for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.' They said to him, 'Why then did Moses command us to give a certificate of divorce?' He said to them, 'It was because you were so hard-hearted that Moses allowed you to do this, but at the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery.' (Matthew 19:48–50)

'The Lord Jesus insisted on the original intention of the Creator who willed that marriage be indissoluble, and he abrogates the accommodations that had slipped into the old Law.' (Catholic Catechism)

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They can refer to other passages, such as Mark 10:11–2 to claim that Jesus' person's previous spouse is alive) as adultery. (If a divorced Catholic with remarries, they must get married outside of the Catholic Church.)

He said to them, 'Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.' (Matthew 19:9)

The Catholic Church, and other **denominations**, allow married couples to live down to separate – to live apart and refrain from having sex. This can be done so that the couple will get back together, or on a permanent basis. As long as the couple enters into a new relationship, this is seen as acceptable – the marriage is still intact, but the couple do not have to live in an unhappy relationship.

Reasons for Divorce and Remarrying

While some non-Catholic Christians also hold strict views on **divorce**, many do allow divorce in some circumstances. For example, moderate Protestants allow divorce in circumstances, such as:

- ♦ if someone's spouse committed **adultery** against them;
- ♦ abused them; or
- ♦ deserted them.

In these cases, they may feel that the other person broke the **marriage** covenant and the relationship with them is dangerous or practically impossible. While many Christians disapprove of divorce, they feel that it implies that God does allow divorce in some circumstances. They also feel that it allows divorce and remarriage in the case of an unfaithful spouse. Jesus appeared to accept divorce in the case of unfaithfulness.

"It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce, so that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to become an adulteress; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.' (Matthew 19:7)

Moderate Protestants also believe that God forgives sins and mistakes, and so they will not only forgive divorce, but will allow **remarriage** in church for those who have had good reasons (such as those given above) for divorce. (While they feel that Matthew 19:6 shows that God is against divorce, they see it as something which God will forgive, rather than something which is not possible.) All churches will not remarry someone if their spouse has died.

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'... for this is the blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.' (Matthew 26:28 NRSV)

Remarriage is up to the individual vicar or minister, and some may not remarry someone who has been divorced; did not try sufficiently hard to save a marriage, or have had more than one divorce.

More liberal Christians, such as liberal Protestants, allow divorce for many reasons. They may decide that they are no longer in love. If the couple have children, it may be better for them to divorce so that the children do not have to live with unhappy parents. Divorce can have a negative effect on their welfare. Some such **denominations** are happy to allow someone to remarry if they have previously been divorced, if they believe they are genuinely making this decision.


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ced person desires to have a fulfilling relationship, they should marry their new partner in order for the relationship to be successful. This is because a new partner may provide security for the person.

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some to mean that separation is wrong, shows that some people will do it anyway, so it's still completely unacceptable. Others feel that, but not for those whose marriages do fall apart, either forever, or while they

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that people should break their marriage promises to God and their partner may still wish to get a divorce themselves if they feel that their marriage has failed.

Christians might also argue that divorce is not only a promise to God, but also a promise to one's spouse, and allowing divorce at all, or allowing divorce for any old reason, makes people take commitment seriously. However, while these may be reasons for taking marriage seriously, if people get a divorce once a relationship has broken down, those involved are likely to start a fresh start.

Both religious and non-religious people may feel that there are negative consequences to breaking promises to God and/or one's spouse. People who get divorced often find it hard to start a new relationship, and may find it hard to pay the costs on their own. Children of divorce often find it hard to break-up emotionally. However, some people may feel that unhappy marriages are better for children in the long run, as unhappy parents will also have negative effects on their children.

Many Christians allow divorce because they feel that it is the most loving thing to do. They should treat others as they would wish to be treated. They feel it is **compassionate** to allow people to have a second chance, because they believe that God is a loving God, who does not want them to suffer for their mistakes.

'In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the love of God'
(Matthew 7:12 NRSV) [The Golden Rule]

Impact and Influence

Divorce is becoming more socially acceptable, and most people can obtain a divorce. Divorce is also legal, and there is no legal limit on the number of times someone can get divorced.

Quick Questions

11. Describe what is meant by an annulment.
12. How do some Christians justify divorce and remarriage? Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

Now Try This...

13. Explain why some Christians believe that divorcing and then remarriage is acceptable. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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Summary for Relationships and Families

- ♦ Christians may feel that families provide a foundation for a stable society. They may feel that parents and children have different **roles**; parents may expect their children to be obedient and obeying their parents. There are many different types of families, such as nuclear families (where there are additional relatives) and extended families (where there are additional relatives). Many Christians feel that the purposes of families include **procreation**, caring for children, and educating children in the **faith**.
- ♦ **Marriage** is important within Christianity. It is seen to be an important sacrament in many denominations, a **sacrament**. It is viewed as a gift from God, and some see it as the foundation of a stable society. Christian marriage is monogamous; fidelity is important. Marriage is entered into for purposes such as **procreation**, expressing love with a partner, and because Christians believe that God intended humans to marry. The Church has different Christian beliefs about marriage. Not all Christian marriage ceremonies are the same; differences are often due to **denomination**.
- ♦ Human **sexuality** is not uniform; people experience different sexual desires, preferences, and genders. Heterosexuality is approved of by Christians, but not all Christians approve of **homosexual** relationships. Some object on biblical grounds, while others do not, and accept **homosexual** relationships. **Same-sex marriage** and civil partnerships are controversial in Christianity, for many of the same reasons that **homosexuality** is controversial in general.
- ♦ Different Christians have different attitudes to sexual relationships. Some believe that sexual relationships should take place within **marriage**, while others feel that sexual relationships outside marriage are acceptable. Some Christians disapprove of **cohabitation**, but others accept it, or have no problem with it. Most Christians disapprove of **adultery** / **extra-marital sex**. Some Christians promote **celibacy** before marriage, but promote Christians marrying within marriage. However, it sees celibacy as an alternative path to marriage.
- ♦ Different Christians have different attitudes to **contraception** and family planning. Some Christians use any artificial contraception, feeling that all sexual activity should be open to the possibility of **procreation** and allow the opportunity for **procreation** – the Catholic **encyclical Humanae Vitae** states that they might use the rhythm method as a way of limiting the likelihood of **procreation**, but they should not use barrier methods or sterilisation. Some will use hormonal methods, but others will not, because of the chance that they could cause a miscarriage.
- ♦ There are also different Christian positions on **divorce** and **remarriage**. The Catholic Church will not allow divorce, but will allow an **annulment** in some circumstances. The Church will not remarry those who are divorced, but may remarry those whose partner has died, or those who have had marriages annulled. Other Christians may allow divorce in limited circumstances, such as in the case of **adultery**, as Jesus appeared to allow divorce in this instance. Some Christians are much more lenient in allowing divorce for other reasons. Churches that allow divorce may choose to allow divorced people to remarry, or they may not. Some churches allow divorced people to fall in love and have a committed relationship, and want to promote this. Some Christians generally allow **separation**, even if they do not accept divorce.

Now Try This...

14. 'All sexual relationships outside of heterosexual marriage are wrong.' Discuss this statement.

Argue for **and** against this statement, referring to different Christian sources of wisdom and authority. Explain and evaluate the importance of this statement from a Christian perspective. Reach a conclusion which follows from your arguments.

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Men and Women

Roles of Men and Women in Christian Family Relations

Some Christians see different **roles** for men and women in the family, and

Keywords:

- ♦ **complementarity** – a state of a relationship where the different people help to improve the relationship, e.g. men and women complement each other
- ♦ **role** – a part or job carried out
- ♦ **equality** – not necessarily being the same, but being treated with the same level of authority

Key Concept – Equality for Men and Women

Equality is an interesting concept – it does not necessarily mean being the same way, but it does mean being treated with the same respect. Most Christians see men and women as equal – they do not think that either should be superior. It has not necessarily always been the case within Christianity, with some early Christians regarding women as inferior to men.

However, there is debate within Christianity about what is needed for equality. Some Christian **denominations** and individual Christians do not give women the same respect as men, and expect men and women to fulfil specific **roles**. Many other Christians treat men and women equally.

Many Christian attitudes to the **roles** of men and women in the family are based on the Bible. For example, in his letter to the Ephesians, St Paul writes that husbands are to love their wives in the same way that Jesus is the head of the Church. This indicates to some Christians that wives are subordinate to, or inferior, less important, than men, and are under their husbands' charge. The husband's role in the family is to lead, and protect his wife. Note: St Paul's teaching does not suggest that husbands can abuse their wives. They should love their wives as they love themselves.

“Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Saviour. Just as the church is cleansed by water with the word, so he cleanses himself by the word. The church submits to Christ, as the church submits to himself, so the church submits to him. Just as the church is cleansed by water with the word, so he cleanses himself by the word. The church submits to Christ, as the church submits to himself, so the church submits to him. Just as the church is cleansed by water with the word, so he cleanses himself by the word. The church submits to Christ, as the church submits to himself, so the church submits to him.” (Ephesians 5:22–25, 28, 30–32)

“Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. Husbands, love your wives as you love your bodies. (Colossians 3:18–19 NRSV)

Some Christians also justify different roles for men and women by using the Bible. As man was made before woman, this shows men to be more important. As man is the head of the church, wives should serve their husbands. The woman also ate the forbidden fruit, and some use this as an indicator that husbands should lead them. St Paul also echoes this teaching in 1 Timothy 2.

“Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper.’” (Genesis 2:18 NRSV)

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Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. I permit no woman to teach man; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was deceived and became a transgressor. (1 Timothy 2:11–14)

Important women in the Bible are often important as wives and mothers; Mary is important to Christians because of her role as Jesus' mother. This may lead some Christians to feel that it is important for women to be wives and mothers, and see this as their main responsibility.

Some **denominations**, such as the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, and some conservative Protestants, feel that men and women should be complementary in their roles in the family (as in the Bible). They believe that God created men and women as different so that there could be **complementarity** in their relationship – they would support each other, and have different strengths (with women's, for example, allowing them to be submissive and good mothers).

However, some other Christians have argued that men and women should be equal in the family. They may disregard the teaching of St Paul in Ephesians and Colossians, which is a letter to a small group of Christians; not intended to teach Christians generally. Equally, they may claim that St Paul was just a human and humans make mistakes. They may argue that men and women have not been what God wants for the family. Moreover, St Paul also taught that in Christianity there should be no distinction between man and woman (in the spiritual rather than physical sense). Indeed, there is no record in the Gospels that men and women should have different roles from men in the family. In Luke 10:38–42, Jesus called Mary, who chooses to listen to him teaching rather than helping him with the traditional female role of doing the housework.

'But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, "Lord, sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord said to her, "Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. ... the better part, which will not be taken away from her."' (Luke 10:40–42)

Furthermore, it can be argued that the word for 'helper' in Genesis 2 is also used on several occasions in the Old Testament to describe God, and, therefore, if a wife is her husband's helper, this in no way makes her less important than him; it would actually indicate that the role of helper is more important.

Ephesians
to the
Colossians

Christians who think that men and women should have different roles in the family, from wives, and fathers different from mothers – might try to argue that there are differences between men and women. They could argue that differences between men and women show that they have different strengths and weaknesses. However, those who disagree argue that science shows that there are many psychological differences between men and women, but that any differences between men and women can be explained environmentally. They argue that we should prepare them differently, expecting them to perform different roles.

Quick Questions

15. Describe what is meant by equality.
16. Outline different Christian attitudes to the role of men and women in the family. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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Roles of Men and Women in Christian Communities

Keywords:

- ♦ **apostles** – Jesus' disciples who saw him after his death, who spread Christianity
- ♦ **apostolic succession** – the belief that priests in certain denominations can trace their lineage back to Jesus and his disciples and that this is important
- ♦ **laity** – those Christians who have not been ordained (most Christians)
- ♦ **ordained** – the word used to describe someone who is a member of the clergy, someone who has had training and has authority to perform services and administer sacraments

Key Concept – Freedom of Choice and Restrictions on It

In the modern world it is generally accepted that people should have freedom of choice. There are some general, and generally accepted, restrictions on freedom of choice. People are not free to choose to hurt others, break the law, or act in ways which are socially unacceptable.

However, there are also other restrictions on freedom of choice. For example, in many religions, men and women are expected to do, or not do, certain things, they may be unable to choose. So a woman is not free to be both a Catholic and to be a priest. Some Christians are pressured into the role of motherhood. Women may accept these restrictions, for example by joining a **denomination** which does allow them to do so.

Other than having different roles in the family, some Christians feel that men and women have different roles in the church. In the other roles men can, and should not be **ordained** as priests, e.g. in the Anglican Church, the Orthodox Church, and the Catholic Church. Therefore, men have different roles in worship, and they cannot have the highest level of authority, as they do not hold ultimate human authority. This is partly due to the teaching of St Paul and also due to the fact that Jesus and his 12 disciples were male. The role of male priests is traditional – that Catholic priests can trace themselves back to the apostles (**apostolic succession**). The Orthodox Church does not have female priests, and the belief that Jesus would have instructed his disciples to have them, and the belief that Jesus would have instructed his disciples to have them, wanted this.

'I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man...' (1 Timothy 2:12)

... women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, as the law also says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. It is shameful for a woman to speak in church. (1 Corinthians 14:34-38)

However, other Christians feel that it is unfair not to ordain women; they should be able to fulfil all the same roles and have the same authority as men, including that St Paul's teaching in 1 Timothy 2:11–12, was aimed at a few centuries ago, and is no longer relevant – the society at the time was male-led and women were not educated. If women are educated today, then this should not apply. They may also argue that as Paul mentions women 'ask[ing] their husbands at home' when he is saying women should not speak in church, this passage refers to women not being disruptive during church, rather than speaking as part of the service.

Discuss with friends and family what roles in your life are filled by men and women. How about your parents, your teachers, your youth leaders, politicians, and so on? What roles in the modern world do you think this is changing?

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Christians in favour of female ordination can argue that Jesus' 12 disciples were part of the culture of the time, and Jesus clearly valued women becoming involved in the story of Mary and Martha (Luke 10:404–2). They may also argue that there were female apostles and leaders in the Early Church (see Romans 16, where Paul mentions Phoebe and so it is a break from the original tradition to disallow female ordination). There are many reasons to ordain women for reasons including these.

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae... Give her the help of all who are with me; they are prominent among the apostles, and I was with them. (Romans 16:1, 7 NRSV)

While this answers the question of whether women should be able to be ordained in Christian communities, there are other roles within women can fulfil. The Quakers allow women to fulfil most of the same roles as men within the church. The Orthodox Church allows women to be deacons. The early Orthodox Church was ordaining female deacons. This fell out of fashion, but has been revived in some churches. It is possible that the Orthodox Church will begin to ordain more female deacons in the future. Currently, some churches do not have female deacons, but they have not ruled out having them in the future.

Deacons have a similar role to that of a priest. They are ordained in some denominations, and are lay (**laity**) positions in others. (In the Catholic Church, only men are ordained, hence no female deacons. In the Orthodox Church, both men and women are referred to as being ordained, although they do not have the same authority as a priest, which usually goes with ordination as a priest. The ordination ceremony for female deacons is slightly different to that for male deacons, but many argue that they should be considered to have equal authority.) Some Christians become deacons before becoming priests/vicars, but Catholic deacons cannot become priests if married, and female Orthodox deacons cannot become priests. Deacons may have normal jobs as well as being a deacon. They do many of the same things as priests/vicars, including performing and/or assisting with certain **sacraments**; they cannot lead the Eucharist. Some deacons also preach. In some ways they are similar to lay preachers in other denominations.

Therefore, in the Orthodox Church, women may be said to be allowed to perform sacraments and preach. Women in the Catholic Church are also allowed to participate in worship, such as reading the Bible and helping to distribute the Eucharist, but they do not have authority as such.

While certain denominations and Christians feel that there are different roles for men and women in the family and in the holding of positions of authority / leading worship, many argue that women play a similar role in the Christian community – they will help with the life of the church within the community.

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Summary Table of the Roles of Men and Women within Different Churches

Evangelical Protestants	Do not allow women to be ordained or let women to perform roles which assist with worship. They often stress the authority of men over women.
Catholic Church	Does not allow women to be ordained or allowed to assist with worship leading, e.g. they do not have the same authority as men. This may be considered in the future.
Orthodox Church	Does not allow women to be ordained as priests. Women may help with worship but cannot perform the highest levels of authority. There is a call for women a greater level of authority in the future.
Church of England Anglican Church	Now allows women to have authority on an equal level with men. Ordination has been allowed since 1993, but women have not been allowed since 2014. There is a large group of traditional Anglicans not supporting women for church leadership and worship roles.
Many Protestant Churches	Now allow women to have authority on an equal level with men. Favour of gender equality increased during the 20th century.
Quakers	Have always allowed women to have authority on an equal level with men. (They were the first to do so elsewhere) on an equal level with men. (They were the first to do so elsewhere) (1600s.)

Quick Questions

17. State three roles which someone can fulfil in a Christian community.

Now Try This...

18. Explain why Christians have different beliefs about women performing authority in the Christian community. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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Roles of Men and Women in the Religious Upbringing

Key Concept – Duty to Family and Community

Christians feel that they have a duty to their families – parents should love and obey their parents according to Ephesians 6. Look back at *Attitudes towards the Role and Purpose of the Christian Family* to get a sense of how Christians feel they have to their family.

Christians also feel that they have a duty to their community. This includes the church and also the general community. Jesus taught Christians to help others (see the parable of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25). Christians value their faith, and also help when they have problems in their lives.

Some Christians believe that roles within family and community will vary from others.

Many Christians will feel that they should raise their children as Christians. Jesus came to him when he was teaching, and many Christians see this as a model. Their faith enhances their lives, and they want this for their children.

'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs...' (Mark 10:14 NRSV)

Both mothers and fathers are responsible for their children's upbringing. They teach them about God and the Bible at home, for example by reading them Bible stories. They will aim to set them a good example. They are likely to take them to attend Sunday school and family worship. They may also encourage them to go to Christian youth groups. Parents may **baptise** their children as infants, or encourage them to get baptised when older to show their commitment to raising them as Christians / allow the child to express their own Christian commitment. Parents may send their children to a church school to help with their religious education.

In some Christian families the mother will have a larger role in the upbringing of children, including their religious education, if that family is traditional. This reflects the importance of mothers in the Bible, such as Mary, and mothers spend more time with the children. This may also be seen to fulfil the 'man of the house' role in Genesis 2:18; the man may be seen as the breadwinner / primary earner for the children while he works to provide for the family.

However, more liberal Christians are very likely to try to share childcare between both parents, if they believe that men and women should have equal roles. Gender roles in society are shifting – women are not necessarily expected to be the primary carers of children – and this shift is increasingly reflected within many branches of Christianity.

Christians may feel that they should possess many of the characteristics of God. They also feel that Christianity should be a community – not only of Christians, but they care for others as well (see 1 Peter 2:1–7).

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Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice, and all guile, insincerity, envy, and all like things. Long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation – if the Lord is good. Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy temple for sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture: ‘See, I lay a cornerstone chosen and precious; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame. But for those who do not believe, ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner’... (1 Peter 2:1–7 NRSV)

Why Features of a Christian Upbringing May Lead to or Reinforce Belief in God	Features of a Christian Upbringing that May Lead to or Reinforce Belief in God
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May interest children in the Christian faith through stories and celebrations, bringing the religion to life and making it interesting. If children enjoy time spent in a Christian environment, they may make positive associations between this and a belief in God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading or being read to Celebrating Christmas and Easter Attending Church (e.g. as part of a Sunday School or Church of England Catechism class)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May believe what they are told and surrounded with, and accept it as normal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having Christmas and Easter Knowing other Christians Attending a Church service Attending Sunday School Being taught the Ten Commandments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children are likely to believe in God, if they believe that someone they trust has definitely experienced God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowing people who believe in God personally
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children may feel that they have experienced God personally, if they feel him talking to them, or answering their prayers, or feel connected to God through worship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being taught the Ten Commandments Attending Sunday School
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children may feel that God, God’s word, or people who teach about God, help them to lead their lives and give them useful guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being taught the Ten Commandments Reading or being read to Attending Sunday School
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If children think Christian figures are a good example, they may associate this with a belief in God in a positive way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeing Christian figures as a good example
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children may believe that they should believe in God, because they have been taught to follow the Ten Commandments, and their parents may have made promises about them growing up in the Christian faith. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being taught the Ten Commandments Being baptised

Quick Questions

- Give three features of a Christian upbringing.
- Outline different ways that a Christian upbringing may reinforce faith. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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Summary for Men and Women

- ◆ Some Christians believe that men and women should have different **roles** in the family; for example, due to passages in Ephesians and at the start of Genesis.
- ◆ Some Christians may also feel that men and women should have different roles in other respects, e.g. women should not be **ordained**. However, others feel that such biblical teaching is outdated, and that it is not loving to give men and women different roles. Men and women's roles within the Christian community often depend on their **circumstances**.
- ◆ Men and women both play a part in the religious upbringing of their children, but women may play a greater role in childcare.

Now Try This...

21. 'Men and women should have different roles.' Discuss this statement.

Argue for **and** against this statement, referring to different Christian sources of wisdom and authority. Explain and evaluate the importance of this from a Christian perspective. Reach a conclusion which follows from your arguments.

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Christian Understandings of

Christian Teachings and Beliefs about Equality

Key Concept – Justification of Equality

There are many justifications given for people being equal. Christians, and other religions, will argue for equality on the basis that God created humans and therefore there should be equality because it is just – there is no reason to treat people differently; this does not seem fair. The philosopher John Rawls justified equality by saying that if he knew who they would be in the world – rich or poor, black or white, male or female – he would want there to be equality so that they were not treated badly. He argued that people should treat others equally because if you were in their shoes, you would never want to be treated badly.

Bear in mind that it is also possible to use religion, culture and society to justify inequality.

Key Concept – Equality and Difference

There are different ways of looking at equality. One way is called being 'equal' – treating everyone the same, regardless of their differences. This may be seen, for example, in women who want to be treated the same as men. However, this is not always the best way; for example someone with learning difficulties may require extra help, and someone who is disabled may require treating them differently by giving help.

Another way of looking at equality is to be difference-blind in most respects, with exceptions, such as giving extra help to someone with learning difficulties. This also includes allowing a Muslim to wear a hijab or a Sikh to wear a turban, which is otherwise forbidden. Some Christians might argue that treating women differently (for example, in dress) is also acceptable, as God wants men and women to be treated differently but equally.

Christianity teaches that humans are **equal** before God. Various Bible passages talk about both men and women being created in the image of God – that all humans are spiritually equal as all are created in God's image.

So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27 NRSV)

Jesus also taught that people should show love for others and treat everyone equally. He should not treat only certain groups of people well, but treat everyone well.

'I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, that you also love one another.' (John 13:34 NRSV)

'In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the love that has its end in you.' (Matthew 7:12 NRSV) [The Golden Rule]

Jesus also taught that it was not only those who seem holy who are doing the Good Samaritan. Jesus teaches that a priest who avoids helping someone in need is not doing the right thing. In contrast, someone who would be looked down upon but who does help someone in need is doing the right thing.

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God's will. This shows Christians several things, including that they should be knowing them – people they do not expect to be good people may well be good. Christians that helping others and treating them well is very important to them.

'...Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the ditch?' Jesus said to him, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'

The New Testament continues the theme of practical equality, with Jesus teaching that Christians should not treat certain people better than others.

You do well if you really fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' But if you show partiality, you are in sin and are convicted by the law. (James 2:8-9 NRSV)

The New Testament also continues the biblical theme of spiritual equality, with Paul teaching that all people are created equal and are equal in his eyes.

Then Peter began to speak to them: 'I truly understand that God shows no partiality, and that anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.' (Acts 10:34-35)

'... From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he has determined the existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they might perhaps grope for him and find him – though indeed he is not far from each one of us.'

There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; you are one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28 NRSV)

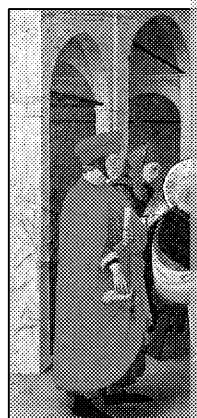
These teachings imply that Christians should believe all people are equal. However, in the case, depending on Church teaching and culture, but today many do not always treat people equally, a notable example being the slave trade. While equality have not resulted in Christians treating people equally, and also some people are overlooked and certain Christians have felt that they are superior to others.

One belief which can result in some Christians feeling superior to others is the belief that only Christians will receive salvation and go to heaven. This can result in Christians feeling they are better than non-Christians, or better than Christians who do not follow the same teachings.

Importance of Equality for Individuals, Communities and Societies

Christians believe that equality is very important. Christians feel that it is important to treat others equally because they are following Jesus' teachings, and because implementing equality in societies and communities allows everyone to contribute to society – those treated unequally may have a lot to offer society, as with the Good Samaritan.

Being treated unequally can damage how people feel about themselves. Inequality in communities and societies is also very damaging, as it creates a divide between those who are treated equally and those who are not.



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who feel they are being treated unfairly. Churches speak out against inequality and call for change to make things equal.

One example of inequality being harmful is the damage which apartheid in South Africa. Separation included racially segregated housing and facilities between people who were not deemed to be the same race. This took place throughout the twentieth century, but abolishing apartheid in law in the 1990s did not mean people automatically became friends and forgot what had happened.

The Christian Church, including members such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu, worked to reconcile white people and black people after apartheid in South Africa. He led the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* which held hearings to hear from people on both sides. The Commission wanted to discover the truth about everything which had happened during apartheid. Those who had done wrong could ask for forgiveness, and could also hear about the pain they had caused. The Commission wanted to heal the rifts between people so they could begin to treat each other as equals, rather than as inferiors or oppressors.

However, some Christians do not always feel that practical equality is important – for example if they believe that women should be treated differently.

Bible passages can be used to support arguments (preferably the second verse if possible) to see if they support other views.

Quick Questions

22. What was the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* in South Africa?

Now Try This...

23. Explain why equality is important to Christians. Refer to sources of authority.

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Influence of Culture on Attitudes and Views about Ethics

Key Concept – Relationship between Religion and Culture

The relationship between religion and culture goes two ways – culture influences religion and religion influences culture. It can be argued that many things become part of a culture in which the religion develops, and also due to the culture of place where it is practised (if the religion spreads further afield). For example, as Christianity developed in a patriarchal society (where Judaism and Greek and Roman culture were also present), it influenced its patriarchal hierarchies. Furthermore, many argue that Christmas, came to be celebrated at times already associated with pagan festivals, so Christianity to coexist well with the existing culture.

Culture has influenced Christianity throughout history. In its early history, the church leaders did not stop Christians from keeping slaves. Then due to the slave trade, Christians accepted slavery because it was the norm – something that was unacceptably. Culture has influenced Christianity more recently with respect to sexual relationships. As premarital and casual sexual relationships have become more common, they have also become more socially acceptable, many Christians and Church leaders have become more accepting of relationships which Christianity has traditionally not accepted.

Religion also has a large influence on culture. In countries with a major religion based on religious principles, and so people may act on religious principles whether religious or not – for example, seeing it as wrong to murder or to steal. Homosexuality has also had an impact on homosexuality being less culturally acceptable in some countries.

Christians have also rebelled against things which are seen as culturally unacceptable. Wilberforce campaigning against the slave trade, and Martin Luther King campaigning against racial inequality in America. They have helped to make slavery and racial inequality less acceptable.

There is extensive debate as to whether Christianity, or the culture it evolved in, is responsible for inequality, such as gender inequality or slavery. If culture is responsible, it is also debated whether Christianity should still hold onto its position on these, it is also debated whether Christianity should still hold onto its position supporting inequalities, even if it did not initially cause them.

Key Concept – Embedded Inequalities

Inequalities can be embedded – set in ways which are hard to overcome. It can be argued that some inequalities are embedded biologically – men are, on average, stronger than women. Only women are able to be pregnant, and breast feed.

Biological differences can also lead to inequalities becoming embedded in culture. For example, because men do the majority of childcare, women are expected to be the primary carers.

It is not just biological inequalities which are embedded in culture – racial inequalities are also embedded in culture, making it hard for people of certain ethnicities to get certain jobs, etc. Such inequalities may not just be embedded in culture but also in law – apartheid – meaning that it is illegal for certain groups of people to have certain rights.

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Inequality between the rich and poor is also often thought to be embedded. It is a lot harder for someone from a poorer background to achieve the same as someone from a more privileged background.

It may be possible to overcome embedded inequalities – many women share responsibilities with their male partners, and many people from poorer or disadvantaged ethnicities get a good standard of education, and have successful careers and lives. However, embedded inequalities are not always easily overcome. There are laws preventing complete equality.

As seen in the section above, culture can have a large impact on attitudes and views about equality – many white South Africans felt that it was acceptable to treat black people unequally, at a time when this would have been completely unacceptable in many countries in Europe (for example). The white South Africans were used to the culture of apartheid, and so many of them did not see anything wrong with it.

Culture also plays a strong part in attitudes and views about equality with regard to gender and sexuality. In countries where it is becoming more culturally acceptable for women to focus on education and work, and to share childcare responsibility with men, this may influence people's opinions and beliefs – they may see women as equal to men because there is greater practical equality. Homosexuality becoming more culturally acceptable influences people to see homosexual relationships as equal to heterosexual ones.

Of course 'culture' is an interesting concept – it is shaped by people and their beliefs and practices. So really, when some people in a society make something more commonplace, such as being open about having homosexual relationships or approving of them, this is shaping their culture, which in turn means that others consider their opinions, and may also adapt, changing a culture further.

Of course believing that someone *is* equal to someone else, and believing that they are *practically equal* / treated equally is another thing. Because experience shows that it is still more culturally acceptable for women to do a majority of childcare (at least for young children), and it is still more culturally acceptable to be heterosexual than homosexual, many people may feel that, culturally, there is not true equality, even if they believe there should be.

Homosexuality was not legal in many countries until the late twentieth century. It is now more socially acceptable. However, it is still not as culturally acceptable as heterosexual relationships. In some countries, it has only been legal for 50 years, and it has not become fully accepted.

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Quick Questions

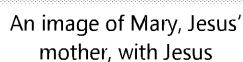
24. What is meant by an embedded inequality?
25. Describe ways in which culture and religion affect each other. Refer to the text and your own knowledge of wisdom and authority.

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Keywords:

- There are different opinions about **gender equality** within Christianity and

Those who *do not* support different **roles** for men and women in the faith **ordination** may feel that giving them roles based on gender does not support equality of genders. While equality does not necessarily mean being treated the same, the same respect, many feel that if women are seen as inferior to men, or men are not allowed to be priests, they are not being treated with the same respect.



A counterargument is that those who differ within Christianity claim the equal. Therefore, if men and women receive different treatment and different roles, they argue that God created male and female for different purposes, and if humans treat them differently, they cannot be treating women equally. For example, they feel that Mary, the mother of Jesus, is regarded, especially in the Catholic church, as being unequal to men though she is a woman.

However, Christians who feel that giving different roles makes them unequal, and who believe everyone should be treated equally, claim that giving different roles is not in the spirit of Christianity. The teachings of the Bible are about love

women equally, and that they have equal roles in the family and elsewhere. Jesus treated men and women equally, and if he saw them as no different (Galatians 3:28), he would not treat them differently either. In Genesis 1 there is no mention of man being created before women, of them both being created at the same time in the image of God. This is a difference, but that they are both equal. The Bible shows that Jesus spoke to women and treated them kindly, such as the Samaritan woman in John 4, and the woman in Mark 7, who other Jews would not have had contact with. Many Christians follow other biblical teachings, and believe that if he supported gender equality, Jesus would have acted on his actions, including in the passage about Mary and Martha (Luke 10:40).

*'So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them
them.'* (Genesis 1:27 NRSV)

'... there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus

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Christians have also argued that biblical teaching must be understood in context, and what may have been good teaching at the time, about wives speaking in church, etc. in a male-dominated society, is out of date in the twenty-first century and is no longer relevant.

Some Christians who think men and women should be equal in the family and have different roles, may still accept that men and women are likely to have different strengths and weaknesses. For example, men are likely to have different roles to women when it comes to small children. There are certain roles which different genders must perform, such as men are likely to breast-feed, and women can. However, they may see it as the couple's shared parenting responsibilities and an individual's choice about what they do. In the twenty-first century, parents are trying to take equal responsibility, the family no longer expect a father to look after his child, as well as the mother, even if men and women have different individual tasks can be performed.

Gender equality is in many ways a relatively modern concept, which has only emerged in the last hundred years. It was not until the twentieth century that women began to have the same rights as men, such as being able to vote – women such as those in the suffragette movement fought for this. The First and Second World Wars contributed to calls for female equality, as women played significant parts in contributing to the war effort and maintaining the country. Some Christian groups, such as the Quakers, were ahead of their time in promoting gender equality. Modern Christian groups have become more gender-equal in line with modern society.

Quick Questions

26. Give three reasons a Christian might support gender equality.
27. Outline different Christian attitudes to the meaning of gender equality and its relationship to sources of wisdom and authority.

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Gender Prejudice and Discrimination

Gender prejudice is where someone thinks that women or men cannot do certain things or are different in an inferior way because of their gender. **Gender discrimination** is where gender prejudice is put into practice, and someone treats someone differently by not allowing them to do certain things, or making them do certain things. The majority of people of all genders often see women as inferior to men, and gender discrimination is often against women; however, it can also disadvantage men. Gender discrimination is illegal in the UK. Despite this, there is still much gender discrimination, and women especially experience it for example in the workplace.

Keywords:

- ♦ **prejudice** – a biased belief about one or a group of people
- ♦ **discrimination** – treating someone differently or unfairly because of prejudice
- ♦ **gender prejudice** – prejudice against gender discrimination are **prejudice** and **discrimination**

Opposition to Gender Prejudice and Discrimination

As seen above, many Christians believe that Jesus treated women well, as well as men; he died to save everyone. Moreover, some early Christians did not view men and women differently, and many Christians believe this to be true. **Prejudice** and **discrimination** on the basis of **gender** are wrong.

'... there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus'

Examples of Christian opposition to **gender prejudice and discrimination** include the Christian **denomination** the Quakers, who aim to treat men and women equally. They have allowed women to speak at Quaker meetings from the beginnings of the movement (in the 1600s), giving them equal status during worship.

Several other denominations have also allowed women to become vicars and bishops in recent years, allowing women to perform the same **roles** as men on an equal footing – not believing they should not, or preventing them, because of their gender. In the Church of England, women have been able to become priests since 1993, and bishops since 2014.

Christians have also worked against gender prejudice and discrimination in other ways outside of the church. Many Christians have worked to help (female) victims of domestic abuse by supporting them. They have aimed to stop women being trafficked (moved) around the world as sex slaves, either by donating to existing charities or working with charities; some Christian charities work to end inequality against women. Some Christians have also worked on issues relating to discrimination against women. This is becoming more of an issue as that women have political rights. A contemporary issue which Christians work on is the Tampon Tax – whether women should have to pay taxes on necessary

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Examples of Gender Prejudice and Discrimination

However, it can also be argued that some Christians are **prejudiced** based on **gender**, and **discriminate** based on **gender**. It can be argued that this is done by Christians who think there should be, and implement, different gender **roles** in the family; and by Christian **denominations** who will not allow women to perform certain roles, such as becoming a priest in the Catholic Church (see the sections above on these issues).

Such Christians and denominations claim that the Bible provides reasons for different roles; for example, Jesus' closest 12 disciples were all men, and against women becoming priests, because this is a pattern set by God. For such treatment of women is not *prejudiced*, because prejudice implies the absence of reason; they believe this is justified by God.

Christians who do believe that there are valid reasons for discriminating are unlikely to be able to convince non-religious people of their points of view. What they believe God wants, and some of the ways they discriminate are based on biological differences which (may) exist between women and men.

There are still instances of gender discrimination in everyday British society. On average, women are paid less than men. Other examples of gender discrimination include women expected to wear certain clothes, or given different legal rights (including access to education) due to gender. While these *should* not occur in the UK, where they do, e.g. in some Islamic countries such as Iran, women must wear a headscarf.

Debate

Some non-religious people and Christians will argue that **gender prejudice** is wrong; however, there are some biological differences between men and women. It is prejudiced to believe, for example, that men are generally stronger than women. It is something heavy, for example, because of this.

Others (Christians and non-religious people) will note that while there are differences between women and men, people should try to avoid making generalisations or over-generalisations (for example, if you want something lifted, there may be a woman stronger than the men present), in order to promote an **equal** society.

Quick Questions

28. What is meant by gender prejudice?
29. Give two examples of gender discrimination.

Now Try This...

30. Explain why gender discrimination is an important issue for Christians. Consider sources of wisdom and authority.

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Summary for Christian Understandings of Equality

- ◆ There are many teachings about **equality** in the Bible – both expressing that all humans are equal before God, and teaching Christians to treat everyone favourably because of this. Equality is not just important to Christians because Jesus taught this, but because it can help to improve people's lives. One example of Christians working for people to view each other as equals was the Christians taking part in the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* in South Africa.
- ◆ Culture can have an influence on religion – something which is seen to be acceptable, such as the position of women and different ethnicities. Religion also influences the status of homosexuals.
- ◆ Christians who feel men and women should have different **roles** may believe they are **equal** before God. Other Christians believe that giving men and women different roles is unequal, but that the Bible teaches that men and women are different, so humans should not treat them differently.
- ◆ Different Christians have different positions on **gender prejudice** and **gender equality**. Some Christians believe these are wrong, and many **denominations** allow people to have different **roles**. Christians have also campaigned for and worked towards the end of prejudice and discrimination. However, other Christians do not do this in some ways, because they believe they should *not* carry out all the same roles.



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Now Try This...

31. 'Christians believe that everyone is equal.' Discuss this statement.

Argue for **and** against this statement, referring to different Christian beliefs, sources of wisdom and authority. Explain and evaluate the importance of a Christian perspective. Reach a conclusion which follows from your argument.

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The Existence of God

The Question of God

Christianity holds that God exists, but this alone is not very informative. It tells us nothing about God, and about how he can exist and allow suffering.

The Concept of God

There are many teachings and beliefs in Christianity about the concept of God, how he interacts with the universe and its inhabitants.

Keywords:

- ♦ **benevolent** – loving
- ♦ **immanent** – present and active in the world
- ♦ **immaterial** – unknowable
- ♦ **judge** – someone who evaluates actions, rewards good and punishes wrong. Christians believe that God will do this
- ♦ **miracles** – events which seem supernatural and unexplainable by natural laws. Christians believe that miracles to be performed by God or his agents
- ♦ **omnipotent** – all powerful
- ♦ **omniscient** – all knowing
- ♦ **personal** – knowable, someone who one can have a relationship with
- ♦ **transcendent** – outside of the world and time
- ♦ **Trinity** – the belief that God is three persons, Father, Son and Spirit

What God is like

Key Concept – The Nature of the Christian God

Christians believe many things about their God. They believe that he is **omnipotent**, **omniscient**, **benevolent**, **immanent** and **personal**. They believe that he will **judge** them. They believe that he is a **Trinity**. Some of these beliefs are covered below. There is also a lot of detail about the nature of the Christian God in the *Companion for Christianity (Beliefs, Teachings and Practices)*, with which you can find more here.

Benevolent

Christians believe that God is loving, or **benevolent**. They believe that this is shown by his commitment to the Jewish people in the Old Testament, and his sending of Jesus into the world for the benefit of humanity. Christians believe that Jesus' death and resurrection brought about a new relationship with God, and eternal life, and that God is truly loving to grant this. God's love is also shown by God being forgiving – Christians believe that God forgives them when they do wrong.

Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. (1 John 4:19)

Omniscient

Many Christians also feel that God knows everything, for example if they pray for silent prayers. Many Christians also believe that God knows what will happen in the future, which demonstrates God's knowledge – he knows that Adam and Eve have eaten the forbidden fruit and Jesus also demonstrates that he knows what people are thinking (e.g. in the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector).

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However, while this is the teaching of mainstream Christian churches, Unitarians do not believe in the Trinity. They believe in one God, and believe that Jesus was a messenger of God, not God himself. They feel that in general the Gospels support this, as (apart from John's Gospel) they do not say that Jesus is God, and Jesus often appears to separate himself from God.

Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone.'

God's Relationship with the World

God is believed to be the creator of the world. Some Christians believe that creation happened exactly as it is recorded in the book of Genesis, while others believe that the world came from the Big Bang. You can read more about different Christian views on creation in *Christianity (Beliefs, Teachings and Practices)*.

Immanent

Many Christians believe that God is **immanent**; active in the world, and that God has had a relationship with the Jewish people in the Old Testament and with Christians in the world through Jesus and **miracles**. Jesus taught that humans could have meaning if they believed in God, meaning he must be accessible. Christians believe that God is always present in the world through the Holy Spirit.

"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means, 'God with us.'" (Matthew 1:23 NRSV)

Transcendent

However, many Christians also believe that God is **transcendent**; outside the world. The Bible describes God as transcendent, and if God created the universe, he is not part of it. God is seen to be non-physical, and so cannot be contained within a physical world. To know what will happen in the future, he cannot exist within time.

'Who is like the LORD our God, who is seated on high, who looks far down on the earth.' (Psalm 113:5–6 NRSV)

Christians may believe that God can be both immanent and transcendent. Some believe that God can do anything. Equally, they might believe that God the Father is **transcendent**, while God the Spirit and Jesus are **immanent** – the Catholic Church teaches this, partly due to Thomas Aquinas (who suggested that God the Father was not within the world).

'Am I a God near by, says the LORD, or am I far off? Who can hide in secret from me? says the LORD. Do I fill heaven and earth? says the LORD.' (Jeremiah 23:23–24 NRSV)

'... The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in shrines made by human hands...' (Acts 17:24 NRSV)

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God's Relationship with Humanity

Christians believe that God created humanity, and that humanity is created in the image of God. Therefore, Christians believe that God has a special relationship with humanity, different from his relationship with other creatures. In the Old Testament, God has a special relationship with the chosen people of Israel, but in the New Testament, Jesus' sacrifice is seen to show God's love for the rest of humanity.

So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27 NRSV)

Personal

Most Christians believe that God is a **personal** God, who wants to have a personal relationship with them. They feel that they can relate to God through the person of Jesus, who could have a full relationship with them, and that God has always spoken to them throughout their lives.



"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you..." (Jeremiah 1:5)

'And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, full of grace and truth.' (John 1:14 NRSV)

While most Christians see God as personal, in the Catholic Church priests act as intermediaries between God and other humans. Catholics confess their sins to priests, and the priests then pray for them to God. However, in most Protestant Churches, Christians generally confess their sins directly to God (through prayer), and often do not feel that they need anyone between them and God to communicate with God, e.g. through prayer, having an active relationship.

Impersonal

Some Christians would not see God as **impersonal**, because they see him as a person they can have a relationship with.

However, some will see him as impersonal as well as seeing him as personal. They believe that seeing God as personal makes him seem too human and knowable, whereas God is transcendent and beyond human understanding, so he is impersonal as well – this is taught in the Bible, that God's ways are not like human ways (e.g. when he speaks to them) will, naturally, show him as impersonal.

'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9 NRSV)

Quick Questions

1. Give three beliefs about what God is like.
2. Outline different Christian attitudes to God's relationship with the world and humanity. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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Christian Beliefs and Views on God as Good

Keywords:

- ♦ **atheist** – someone who does not believe in God or gods
- ♦ **prophets** – people who speak to God and/or can predict the future
- ♦ **sin** – something that separates people from God, going against God's will

Christians believe that God is good. There is a philosophical debate on whether or not God is good. The philosopher Plato touched on this well in his Euthyphro dilemma.

Adapting this to Christianity, one can ask:

Is God good because he fulfils some standard of goodness (external to God), or is it because whatever God is, that is good?

If the first is the case, it is problematic for Christianity because God is supposed to be the standard of good which God conforms to, then God did not create good.

If the second is true, this could be problematic for Christianity, because God becomes the ultimate standard – but this does not imply that God is the standard of good. **Atheists** have also argued that God should not be classed as 'good' – if God is good, then God expects humans to worship him to earn goodness. Should God or others (in the Old Testament) or expects humans to worship him to earn goodness? Should God not be classed as good?

Most Christians try to combine the two points. God fulfils an ultimate, objective standard of good, but this is not something outside himself – he is the standard. What he is good. Therefore, things in the world may be considered good if they are good without reason – God's will really is good, even if humans do not understand it.

The heavens declare his righteousness, for God himself is judge. (Psalm 19:1)

Christian Understandings of the Meaning of Goodness in the World

Christians believe that creation shows God's goodness. That which God created could not create something bad. As well as being good in itself, it is also good practically – the creation of the world and the universe allows the possibility of human life – good for humanity! (If humans are seen to be bad, or a mix of bad and good, this may be seen to be because God gave humans the ability to choose, but as part of God's creation, they were created good in their created state.)

Orthodox Christians have a particularly strong belief that creation (matter, time, space, etc.) can be made good, because Jesus existed as part of the material world, and was God – therefore, material things can be holy and good, and Jesus' sacrifice redeems not only the spiritual, but also the material. This can be contrasted with a position (popular in the past) that the material world is associated with **sin**, and God is purely spiritual.

'God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.'

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God's action of creation can show God to be fundamentally good (every good), and also shows his goodness in the sense of **benevolence** – he cares and has a relationship with them.

Christians see God as good in the sense of being loving and compassionate. This is illustrated throughout the Bible, including in the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11–32. This tells the story of a son who wants his share of the inheritance, wastes it, and then returns to his father to beg forgiveness. The story, told by Jesus, illustrates that God (the Father) will forgive his children (humanity) for turning away from him. In the story, the brother of the prodigal son is angry that the father accepts him, but the father shows that both his sons are important to him – he wants to celebrate that they have both returned. This shows Christians that God is good to all and loves everybody, not just those who are perfect. God's goodness means that he will forgive all. This is demonstrated in the story of the prodigal son. For Christians God's ultimate act of goodness was sending his son to die for all humanity.

'... But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion. He ran to him, embraced him and kissed him. ... Then the father said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and everything I own is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was lost and has been found."' (Luke 15:20, 31–32 NIV)

The LORD is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made.

As well as seeing God's goodness as benevolence, Christians also see God as just. They believe that God is fair, and will reward those who do good and punish those who do bad. This means that he acts justly.

Truly God is good to the upright, to those who are pure in heart.

This is linked to God's actions in giving humans laws (through **prophets**) and also sending Jesus to teach humanity – Christians believe that God wants humans to know the right way to act – because he is good, and wants them to be good as well.

'If you love me, you will keep my commandments.' (John 14:15)

Quick Questions

- Why might God be said to be good?
- Outline Christian beliefs about God as good. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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Christian Beliefs, Teachings and Views on the Relationship between God and Human Suffering

Keywords:

- ♦ **evil** – often refers to moral badness and choosing to do the ‘wrong’ thing which cause suffering
- ♦ **free will** – the ability to choose what to do
- ♦ **moral evil** – something caused by a human being’s wilful action, such as
- ♦ **natural evil** – something caused by events in the world, like a tsunami, or
- ♦ **suffering** – experiencing pain

Key Concept – The Problem of the Existence of Evil and a World Devoid of Good

Evil and **suffering** pose a problem for Christians – if God is good, **beneficent**, then why does he allow evil? It would seem that either he is not loving, not omnipotent and cannot stop evil. If God is good, and his creation is good, then there should be no flaws in nature (disease, natural disasters), and why do humans do bad things? This is the *Problem of Evil* (discussed more in the *Course Companion for Christianity (Beliefs, Teachings and Practices)*).

There are various different solutions to the problem of evil and suffering discussed in detail in the *Course Companion for Christianity (Beliefs, Teachings and Practices)*. This section will deal with Christian beliefs about and views on the relationship between God and suffering. However, many of these points are explored in more detail in the other components of the course.

One view is that God causes human **suffering** (or allows it to happen) as punishment for human wrongdoing. The Old Testament suggests this, with God often portrayed as punishing the Jewish people for worshipping other gods or not following his commands. This view is less commonly held in modern times, and more likely to be held by more conservative Christians. Luther and Calvin both taught that evil was a consequence of humans choosing to sin, and so it would make sense for Lutherans and Calvinists to believe that suffering is a punishment for disobeying God.

And when your people say, ‘Why has the Lord our God done all these things to us? As you have forsaken me and I have worshipped other gods, so you shall be forsaken and your gods shall not be yours.’ (Jeremiah 5:19 NRSV)

Many modern Christians feel that this is not the case, partly because they believe God forgives them and that Jesus came so that humans did not need to be punished. It often seems that those who suffer are those who deserve it least.

Another view is that God causes (or allows) human suffering because it is necessary – it allows humans to have a better relationship with God because they are forced to turn to him. It allows them to develop their moral character – still being good people even though they are suffering. One of this is the theory of soul-making (discussed more in the next section) which states that humans need to suffer in order to complete themselves. Similarly, it could be argued that suffering is a necessary part of life.

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– it shows God who people really are. Christians believe that God allowed them to suffer to save them, and so some believe that their suffering is also necessary – but it may appear that he does. The Catholic Church believe that this is necessary and so, if God *is* able to stop suffering, but does not, then there must be a reason.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me in my distress, why so far from my groaning? (Psalm 22:1 NRSV)

Some Christians may believe that God does not cause, or choose to allow, human suffering, but is unable to stop it. For example, he may not have been able to create a world without suffering. Christians do not agree with there being things which God cannot do, but some do. To accept this – it suggests that God's power is the power of love, and that he is limited by time and cannot necessarily physically intervene or change the natural world.

Some Christians feel that God does not cause human suffering, but that human free **will**, and the way they use this to cause others suffering, then God effectively allows this. Many Christians believe that having free will is better than never suffering. However, this does not explain the relationship between God and **natural evil**, even if it explains the reason for **moral evil**.

Many Christians believe that they cannot truly know the full relationship between God and human suffering – God's ways are above theirs, and so they cannot claim to know the mind of God and what he does and why.

[God to Job] "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me... (Job 38:4 NRSV)

Christians believe that the person of Jesus was God, and as Jesus suffered, he knows what human suffering is like.

Quick Questions

- Outline one possible relationship between God and human suffering.

Now Try This...

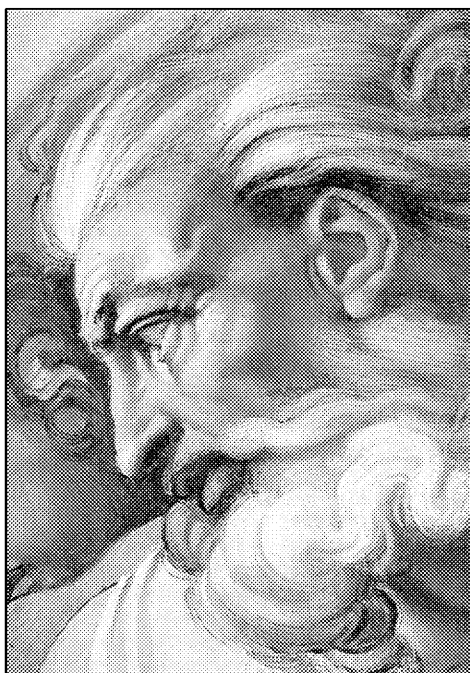
- Explain why some Christians believe that God allows human suffering. Consider different sources of wisdom and authority.

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Summary for the Question of God

- ◆ There are many different Christian beliefs about God – he is believed to be **omnipotent** among other things. Christians believe in one God, but some believe in three persons (the **Trinity**). Many Christians believe him to be both **transcendent** and **immanent**. Most believe him to be **personal**.
- ◆ Christians believe God to be good. Generally, this means they believe in a standard of goodness as he is God. Christians see God's goodness and they believe is good because he made it, and is also good for humans. God is good in the sense of being **benevolent**, and also in the sense of being **merciful**.
- ◆ Christians have various understandings of the relationship between God and humans. Some feel that God causes or allows human suffering as a punishment. Some feel God is unable to stop suffering, or has allowed it in order to test humans. Christians believe that humans cannot truly know the relationship between God and suffering.



Michelangelo's *God*, from
The Creation of Adam

Now Try This...

7. 'Christians all believe the same things about God.' Discuss this statement.

Argue for and against this statement, referring to different Christian sources of wisdom and authority. Explain and evaluate the importance of this from a Christian perspective. Reach a conclusion which follows from your arguments.

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The Nature of Reality

Key Concept – Arguments about the Existence of God

Christians have used philosophical or logical arguments, such as the **design argument** (and other **cosmological arguments**), the argument from the **moral argument** to try to prove the existence of God.

Christians also have views on the purpose of the world, such as **soul-making**.

Keywords:

- ♦ **anthropic principle** – the idea that the universe must be compatible with life
- ♦ **cosmological argument** – an argument for God's existence based on the existence of the universe rather than nothing
- ♦ **design argument** – a case for the existence of God, based on the idea that the universe is created for a purpose and appears organised
- ♦ **first cause argument** – a case for the existence of God, based on the idea that there is a first cause for everything, and this is God
- ♦ **moral argument** – a case for the existence of God, suggesting that humans have a moral compass and that humans' moral compass must have been given by God
- ♦ **soul-making** – the process by which humans complete their souls during their lives

Design/Teleological Argument

Some Christians, and people of other religions, have created arguments for the existence of God, though not all religious people believe that these arguments can **prove** the existence of God.

One of these arguments for the existence of God is called the **design argument**. It is based on the idea that the world appears to be created and designed, so this is taken as evidence of a creator and designer: God. It is also called the teleological argument – *telos* for 'purpose'. In other words, the world appears to have been designed for a purpose. Christians take the appearance of design in the world as a reason to believe in the existence of God.

Keywords:

- ♦ **analogy** – a comparison between things to note their similarity
- ♦ **evidence** – something which indicates that something is likely to be true
- ♦ **evolution** – a scientific theory which states that organisms have adapted over time
- ♦ **fine-tune** – where little things are altered to make the best outcome
- ♦ **proof** – something which shows something to definitely exist or be true

A Classic Design Argument for the Existence of God

The **design argument** could be phrased like this:

- ♦ The world resembles a designed object.
- ♦ Humans design many objects.
 - ↳ Therefore, the world is similar to objects designed by humans.
- ♦ Where there is a similar outcome, there is often a similar cause.
- ♦ Human designers are the cause of most designed objects.
- ♦ Because the world is similar to objects designed by humans (from the previous point),
 - ↳ ...the world has a similar designer... which is God.

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The first part of the argument leads to the conclusion that the world is designed. The second part of the argument suggests that if objects appear to be designed, then the designer is God. (Some versions of the argument suggest that because the world is so complex, the designer must be highly knowledgeable. Others suggest that because the world is so complex, the designer must be a 'god' rather than just a very clever human.)

Evidence for and Strengths of the Design Argument

- 1 The scientist Isaac Newton gave the example of a *thumbprint*, as evidence for the design argument. He said thumbprints indicated that the world had been designed, because if there would be no natural reason for humans to all have different thumbprints, then they must have been designed by God.
- 2 A philosopher called William Paley said that **evidence** for the **design argument** was that the world contained *organised objects*, e.g. there are weather cycles, and plants and animals. He also said that the world had a *function* or a purpose – it allowed life.

He claimed that these were features of things which had been designed.

For example, a watch has organised parts – cogs which rotate and make the hands turn – and it has the purpose of telling the time. Watches, we know to be designed by humans. On the other hand, a rock does not have organised parts, and has no purpose on its own. Rocks occur naturally. Paley used this comparison to argue that the world is designed. This is called an argument from **analogy**, because an analogy is a comparison, and Paley compared the world to a watch.

If the analogy between the world and designed objects is good, it does make sense for there to be a designer, as designed objects cannot exist without a designer, so the design argument could be thought to be strong in this sense.

- 3 A strength of the design argument is that there are many things which have to be 'just so' for life to exist on earth. It might be possible for life to exist by chance, but many things do seem to have been organised by a designer to support life. The elements oxygen and carbon are necessary for human life. If the sea level was slightly different, or the sea level was slightly higher, humans would not be able to survive. This is an example of a **fine-tuning** argument, because the world seems to be finely tuned; to have had lots of little things contribute to an overall purpose.
- 4 Another strength of the design argument is that it points to a purpose. Many humans like to feel that they have a purpose in life.

Evidence Against and Weaknesses of the Design Argument

Atheists and others have argued against the **design argument**, and not all of them provide **evidence** for God's existence.

- 1 One argument against the design argument is that the world does not seem to be designed. Earthquakes cause devastation, there is disease, and animals kill each other. If the world did not have natural disasters, or disease, or creatures which kill and are painful, it would be preferable to many. If there are flaws, which a God would not design, then the world was not designed. Many atheists believe a loving God would not allow such things.

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world was designed for a purpose, suffering would not be part of the argument. To argue there cannot be a designer God, because there is suffering.

- ② Another objection to the design argument attacks the **analogy** (comparison) between the world and designed objects, and, therefore, between humans and the supposed designer of the world. There are many differences between the world and a watch, and, therefore, there might be many differences between how the world came into being and human designers.

There could always be alternative explanations. For example, a puddle outside could have been caused by the natural process of rain, or by the ground. If you see rain falling, you may assume it was rain, or if you see a hose, you may assume not. In the same way, a world designed by a deity is another.

- ③ The widely accepted **theory of evolution** provides an alternative way humans could have come into being, and suggests that they were not designed. It can explain why animals can camouflage or why humans are intelligent. Traits that make species successful have been passed on to their offspring. In the theory of evolution, animals might not have been 'fine-tuned' by an external being to fit their environment. If plants, animals and humans were not designed, then this casts doubt on whether the universe, was designed.

! Some people also point out that even if the world was designed, this does not prove a Christian God. There could be many designer gods.

Counterarguments in Favour of the Design Argument

- ① It might not have been possible to design a better world. It is possible that a world without earthquakes or disease would have more flaws, or would not function.
 - ② Even if the **analogy** between the world and designed objects is weak, this does not disprove a designer.
 - ③ God could have designed the world through the process of **evolution**; many human designers do not design everything from scratch, but may use mechanical processes to help them.
- ! Multiple gods would not disprove the design argument, just certain religions – many things in the human world have multiple designers.

Quick Questions

8. Give three weaknesses of the design argument.
9. Give three strengths of the design argument.

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First Cause Argument

Another argument used by some Christians and people of other religions is that God is the **first cause argument**. This is a type of **cosmological argument**. One of the main points of cosmological arguments is that certain natural laws about the universe point to the existence of God. Cosmological arguments use God to explain why there is something rather than nothing. For example, the law of cause and effect seems to lead to the idea that the universe must have a beginning. Therefore, some argue that this is **proof** that there must be a creator God.

Keywords:

- ♦ **cause** – something which makes something else happen
- ♦ **Big Bang theory** – a theory which holds that a rapid expansion of matter and energy from a single point scientifically accounts for the beginning of the universe

First Cause Argument

Cosmological arguments are very old. One famous example of a cosmological argument is Aquinas' *Second Way*, a **first cause argument**. It is called this because it is an argument he posed for the existence of God.

Here is a paraphrased version of Aquinas' argument:

Everything has a **cause**;
Without a first cause there would be no other causes and no effects;
There are causes and effects at the moment;
Therefore there is a first cause which people call God.

Aquinas makes the point that nothing ever happens without a cause, and the world appears to be no different – it involves a series of causes and effects which can be traced backwards and seem to require a first cause. If you trace the chain of causes and effects back to the start of the universe, you will reach a first cause which started everything else, which does not require an explanation. This is God – the only first cause which makes sense. (Aquinas was not willing to accept an infinite chain of causes and effects.)

'In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters and there was light'; and there was light" (Genesis 1:1–3 NRSV)

Evidence for and Strengthening the First Cause Argument

- ❶ A piece of evidence for the **first cause argument** is that Aquinas is right. There is nothing in the world which does not have a cause. For example, the Big Bang theory provides an explanation for the beginning of the universe. If something caused the universe to come into being, then it could indicate some sort of non-material cause. This suggests an intention to cause things to happen, and this fits well with the idea of God.
- ❷ Moreover, a first cause, which is God, seems (to many) to be more plausible than going back forever without a start. In these senses, the first cause argument is strengthened. Things have causes, and it makes little sense for there not to have been a first cause.

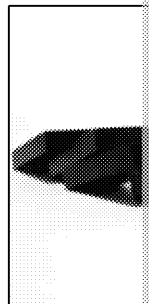
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Evidence against and Weaknesses of the First Cause Argument

Atheists and others have argued against the **first cause argument**, and that it **proves** God's existence.

- ❶ The **Big Bang theory**, a scientific theory which suggests that the universe was **caused** by a rapid expansion of matter, could be a possible alternative **first cause** for the universe. There is scientific **evidence** for this, and no scientific evidence for God, so this weakens the first cause argument.
- ❷ Also, even if everything has a cause now, we cannot **prove** that causes and effects do not go back forever without a first cause.
- ❸ Furthermore, even if the universe needs a first cause, fitting God into does not necessarily solve the problem. This just raises the issue of who caused God.
- ❹ It is also important to note that even if the first cause argument succeeds, it does not prove the existence of the Christian God – the first cause could have been another god/gods.



Dominoes in a line, illustrating the first domino falling and hitting the next one.

Counterarguments in Favour of the First Cause Argument

- ❶ The **Big Bang** still needs a **cause**; God could have caused the Big Bang and everything else.
- ❷ It is more likely that there is a God than that something does not have a cause of nature in this way.
- ❸ God is different to everything else, and is outside of the chains of causation. If everything in the physical world needs a cause, if God is outside of the physical world, the argument may apply to him.
- ❹ A non-Christian God or gods would not disprove the first cause argument.

Quick Questions

10. Give three ways in which science may support the first cause argument.
11. Outline the first cause argument for the existence of God. Refer to scientific evidence, wisdom and authority.

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The World Formed for Humanity and the Anthropic Principle

Key Concept – Ideas about the Purpose of the World

Different people feel that the world is here for different reasons. Non-religious people believe there is no reason for the world to exist – it just happened. Christians believe the world is here because God created it. Many believe that he created it for humanity, and that the purpose of the world is that God created humanity to care for the world and sustain it. All Christians agree that the purpose of the world is to allow humans to have a relationship with God.

Some see the world as something to be enjoyed by humanity. Some see the world as a preparation for life before heaven. Some combine these views – the world is to be enjoyed by humanity, and it is also a preparation for a person's existence, and preparation for the afterlife.

The Catholic Church contains views at both extremes, as well as the compromise. Some popes and priests lived lives of luxury, feeling that this was the purpose of the world. However, there have also been many monks and nuns who have lived lives of poverty, removing themselves from the outside world and concentrating on God.

Pentecostal Christianity has generally focused on spirituality, and not so much on the material world, whereas Charismatic Christianity has often accepted worldly wealth as a sign of God's blessing. Many Protestant Churches combine the views, not supporting excessive wealth, but also not withdrawing from the world either.

Genesis 1 and 2 teach that God created the world by speaking. Many Christians believe that the universe *ex nihilo* – out of nothing. Many Christians today believe that the Bible is not as accurate, but that God created the universe through the process of the Big Bang.

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was without form and void, and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. (Genesis 1:1–3 NRS)

The chapters at the start of Genesis do not specifically state that the world was created for humanity; they teach that God created the world and then created humanity. However, many Christians believe that the world was created for humanity, and many Christians believe that the world was created for humanity.

Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness, so that they may fill the earth, over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, over the cattle, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.' (Genesis 1:26–28 NRS)

Not only does the world provide the conditions in which humans can live, it is also beautiful. Many people believe it is beautiful.

Some Christians also feel awe and wonder when looking at the natural world; this awe is expressed throughout the Bible, including in the Psalms. They may feel that God's glory is expressed by the beauty of his creation, and that the extent of creation is amazing. The fact that many people feel awe and wonder when looking at the natural world is seen as evidence that God created the world, and created it for humans – as a world which would inspire such awe and wonder. This argument can be used to support the Anthropic Principle: if the world inspires such awe and wonder, it must have been designed for that purpose.

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Genesis does not just teach that the world was given to humans but that it, as stewards.

The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.

Anthropic Principle

The **anthropic principle** is the idea that the universe must be compatible with the existence of human life. Theories of the universe must take this into account. The anthropic principle creating the universe is associated with F R Tennant.

Weak Anthropic Principle

The weak anthropic principle is simply that the conditions in the universe that allow human life might not be able to exist. The complicated conditions of the universe are just what we need.

Strong Anthropic Principle

The strong anthropic principle is the religious argument that the world must have been created in order to support human life – because the fact that the universe supports human life is too unlikely without God to be a coincidence. This is similar to the **fine-tuning** argument.

The strong anthropic principle can be seen as a good argument because

- ◆ The universe does support human life.
- ◆ It fits with Genesis – God created a world which humans were able to live in. It is not that he created such a world for the purpose of human life – it was just the part to create a world with light, water, plants and animals.
- ◆ It does not deny **evolution** or science – it just says that the conditions for human life were created by God for that purpose.

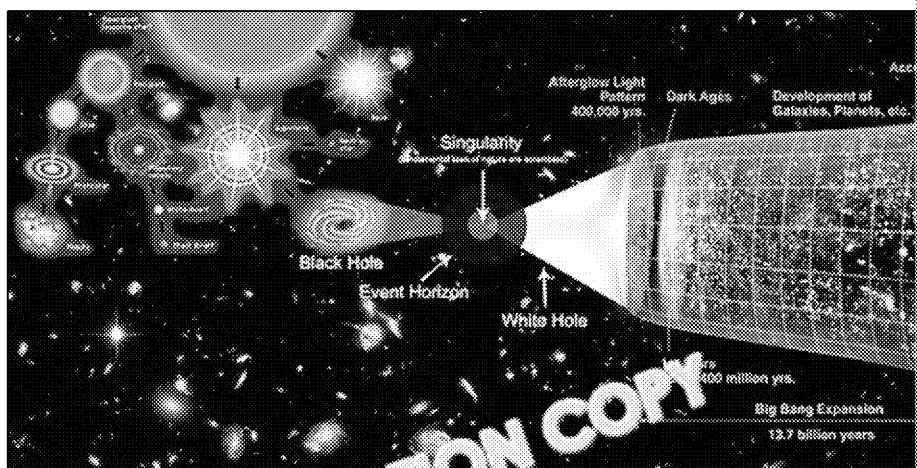
While **atheists** cannot deny the weak anthropic principle (there clearly is a chance of human life), they can argue against the strong anthropic principle. So

- ◆ Even if there is an incredibly small chance of the universe generating human life, there is clearly a chance – humans are here! For humans, the probability is just be incredibly lucky.
 - It could also be argued that within the universe with its current conditions, the chance of human life is not actually unlikely – there may even be other universes (very far away!) which have intelligent life.
- ◆ It is possible that the universe is disposed towards generating life. The universe is disposed to bring objects together.
- ◆ It is possible that humans exist in a multiverse. There are many universes. We are in the one which allows human life. There may be many universes where humans cannot exist. Or, it may be the case that there are many universes, which do not support human life. In either scenario, human life is not unlikely. In many cases where human life could not exist.

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A diagram showing how there could be a multiverse.

The problem with arguments on both sides is that Christians cannot prove to humans there is no way of knowing if there are, or have been, other universes support(ed) human life.

Quick Questions

12. State three things which Christians believe God created, which allow life.

Now Try This...

13. Explain how and why Christians believe that the world was created. List sources of wisdom and authority.

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The World and Moral Consequence, Soul-making and

Keywords:

- ◆ **conscience** – an inner moral sense which helps someone to tell right from wrong
- ◆ **theodicy** – a theory defending God in the face of evil

Key Concept – Ethical Living

Christianity promotes ethical living. Generally this is seen as following God's commands. Some set laws are seen to be important, such as the Ten Commandments. Christians also try to follow the law of love and love their neighbours as themselves. Issues in the modern world which Christians face, including those such as nuclear weapons of mass destruction and contemporary social justice. Christians address these issues in different ways, and often end up coming to different conclusions.

Though Christians do not always agree on what ethical living is, they all agree to live ethically, and all have ideas about how they will go about this.

Ideas Christians might apply for ethical living:

- Don't hurt others (the Bible teaches not to murder, and not to retaliate)
 - ↳ Christians may oppose abortion and/or war.
- Don't damage the environment (the Bible teaches Christians that the earth is God's creation and they should care for the world).
 - ↳ Christians may recycle and try to use renewable energy.
- Help others (the Bible teaches to love one's neighbour and care for the poor)
 - ↳ Christians may give to charity, provide people with food/medicine, care for the sick.

Moral Argument for God

Some Christians have argued that God must exist because humans often act morally.

A simplified version of the **moral argument** could be phrased like this:

- ◆ Humans often act morally.
- ◆ God is the best explanation for moral actions.
 - ↳ God must exist.

To explain this in more detail, it could be argued that there must be a reason that 'morality' exists – that there needs to be a reason why things really are right or wrong. God creating morality, or a solution to this. God can then also be seen to have influenced humanity (even if they also often act immorally). Moreover, it can also be argued that morality, without God there is no ultimate reason (above avoiding human suffering) – God must exist to judge humans on their actions.

An extension of this argument is the argument that humans have a moral sense. Many people use their **conscience** to decide what decisions to make, in other words, they do what they feel is right. Conscience is significant

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has instinctual feelings about right and wrong, and if conscience has been knowing his will in all situations.

This argument could be phrased like this:

- ◆ Humans have an inbuilt moral sense (or conscience).
- ◆ This inbuilt moral sense must have come from somewhere.
 - ↳ God must have given humans this moral sense.

John Henry Newman was a Catholic cardinal who argued that having a conscience and right and wrong do actually exist, and are not just opinions. He argued that this is because God provided a basis for an absolute right and wrong – if there was no God, one could really give a reason for right and wrong, being more than opinions. Sometimes people do the right thing when they do not want to, so right is not just a particular situation – God must have given humans consciences, or they would not want to.

However, there are arguments against God being needed for morality and conscience:

- ◆ There are justifications for what makes something right or wrong – things can be objectively measured as anything which causes pain, for example.
- ◆ It could be argued that either humans ought to act morally to be happy, or that there does not need to be a God to validate this; OR that humans can be happy acting morally – with no God there is no ultimate reason to do good or bad interests.
- ◆ Not everyone has feelings about right and wrong, e.g. babies do not have a moral sense. It can be argued that if God wanted people to be happy, he would have made sure that everyone had an accurate conscience.
- ◆ Not everyone has the same ideas of right and wrong – these vary between cultures unless some cultures and people are better at responding to their conscience. If there is no inbuilt sense of right and wrong from God, because people have different consciences, then there is no right and wrong.
- ◆ Atheists have argued that any moral sense humans possess has evolved to help them to hurt people, and right to help people (especially those close to them) to survive – groups of humans who cooperated with members of their own group, survived to pass on their genes.
- ◆ It is hard for someone to tell whether their conscience is genuine or just what they *want* to feel. Even some Christians would argue that conscience is just making personal and ethical decisions because it is hard to know whether someone is genuinely obeying their conscience. Even the Catholic Catechism teaches that it is important for people to pay careful attention to their conscience, because it is easy to be misled by the devil.

Christians can argue that conscience may well be something which God has allowed to evolve in humans, and that even if people get confused about what is their conscience, this does not mean that there is not a genuine conscience.

It is harder to explain why many people have such different ideas about right and wrong. One possible solution to this is that God designed conscience to work alongside the Bible and the Christian faith – without

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measure their conscience against, and so they may not know what their conscience is. Once they have an understanding of the values of Christianity, then they can use their conscience to help them evaluate actions in different scenarios.

Soul-making and Judgement

Christians believe that they will be judged on whether they act rightly or wrongly about Christian teaching on judgement in the *Course Companion for Christianity (Practices)*. However, Christians can still ask, why do humans need to act in a certain way? God is good and that he desires humans to be good as well. Furthermore, God does not want them harmed by others – doing good generally involves

However, there are more complicated theories about why humans should provide a reason for the existence of evil and **suffering**). St Irenaeus was the first to suggest that God had to allow evil for there to be evil in the world. He believed that humans developed morally, and that humans needed evil in order to grow. He believed that God created humans in the image of God, but needed to grow into the likeness of God. God created the best world which he could create (but that there could have been a better world) but that God really did create the best world – a world without evil would not have allowed development. Irenaeus believed strongly in free will, that humans choose to do evil, but that they could also choose to improve themselves and become more like God. Irenaeus believed that when God created the world and allowed the possibility for evil – here good and evil are not complete opposites, but that good is good) for having some evil in it. This type of theory has been referred to as 'soul-making' with reference to the moral improvement it involves – humans must make their souls part of themselves which contains their moral character (the phrase 'soul-making' was used by John Keats).

John Hick developed this idea that humans are created needing to complete their soul, and they can only do this through the trial of experiencing evil and suffering. It can be argued that someone is not good if they have not been tested by suffering, or have not had the opportunity to do evil. If God wanted to create 'good' creatures, then this would be a problem. Hick suggests that creation was not a one-off event, but that creation is ongoing – God tries to create moral beings by giving them the opportunity of evil and suffering. This way, they finish making their souls through overcoming evil. They can actually be said to be good. He also argued that for humans to have a good soul, they need to be able to choose this freely, and that if they could not choose, then it would not be the case and their faith would not be based on free will.

Quick Questions

14. Give three ways in which Christians could be ethical.
15. Outline the moral argument for God's existence. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

Now Try This...

16. Explain why soul-making may explain evil and the need for acting morally. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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Value and Importance of Arguments for the Existence of God

Keywords:

- ◆ **natural law** – rules about morality drawn from nature and reason

Arguments for the existence of God may be considered incredibly important, depending on a Christian's point of view. Some Christians feel that arguments for the existence of God (e.g. **design argument, first cause / cosmological argument, strong anthropological argument**) are unnecessary because they do not believe in God due to these arguments – they believe because they have faith in the Bible and feel that they have experienced God. Protestants, especially evangelical Christians, are more likely to hold this view, as they focus on the authority of the Bible, and want people to believe in God and Jesus. They do not want people to believe just because they feel that the world must have had a cause, etc., but because they have faith. They also feel that having a relationship with Jesus and following his example are important parts of Christianity – they want people to believe in God as well, but just believing in God is not enough to be a true Christian.



A Bible is an important part of Christianity.

Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, 'If you continue in my word, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.' (John 8:31-32)

Others feel that arguments for the existence of God are valuable. Traditionally, arguments for the existence of God have been valued more in the Catholic Church, as the church has valued being able to argue for God's existence which goes beyond the Bible. The Catholic Church also places a high value on **natural law**, so it is important that nature can be used to argue for God, and that the value of conscience for Catholics. Catholic theologians, such as St Thomas Aquinas, were responsible for versions of several of the arguments. The arguments are seen as showing that God fits into a reasonable and ordered world – the world which humans can understand. Aquinas wanted to show that belief in God was reasonable, and fitted with what we can observe about the world.

Christians who feel that the arguments are important largely feel that the arguments help to:

- ◆ They help to give them confidence in their faith.
- ◆ They help to justify their faith to others.
- ◆ They help to convince others of God's existence.

Some Christians feel that the arguments have value because anyone who doubts the existence of God in a world appearing designed, the world needing a cause, etc., is being unreasonable. They feel that this means there is not an excuse for not believing in God.

Fools say in their hearts, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt, they do abominable things, and they do not do good. (Psalm 14:1 NRSV)

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Impact and Influence

Arguments for the existence of God are often found more in the realm of philosophy than in everyday life. However, they have convinced some people of God's existence.

Atheism is growing and there are famous atheists, such as Richard Dawkins, who have written books arguing against the existence of God.

Quick Questions

17. Give three reasons why arguments for the existence of God may be convincing for Christians.
18. Outline different Christian attitudes to philosophical arguments for the existence of God, and to sources of wisdom and authority.

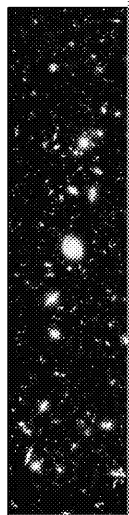
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Summary for the Nature of Reality

- ◆ One argument for the existence of God is the **design/teleological** argument. The world seems designed, so it is argued that there must be a designer. However, some argue that the world may not really seem well-designed, as there is **suffering** in the world. This is an explanation for why things seem designed.
- ◆ Another argument for the existence of God is the **first cause / cosmological** argument. It argues that the universe must have had a **cause** in order to come into existence. However, some argue that the universe is unlike other things and does not need a cause, or that even if it does, this does not prove what caused God.
- ◆ Many Christians believe that the world was created for humans. General theism is the view that the world which humans are able to inhabit. The **strong anthropic principle** states that the universe must have been designed for humans to inhabit, because there are many things that are necessary for life. It is argued that it is not a coincidence. Counter arguments are that humans are extremely lucky, or that we exist in a multiverse – the idea that there are many universes with different human life.
- ◆ Many humans, including Christians, believe that they should live ethically. The argument for God's existence argues that God must have created humans, because there is no explanation for them having a **conscience**. **Atheists** may argue that conscience is a sense, or that conscience has evolved. One Christian argument for why humans should be moral, is the **soul-making theodicy** – humans are made by doing good.
- ◆ For some Christians, these arguments for God's existence are not important as they feel that Christians should have faith and believe in God because of the Bible and personal experience. Others feel that these arguments are important – they help to strengthen faith, and provide a reason for non-believers to believe.



The universe

Now Try This...

19. 'The first cause argument gives evidence for the existence of God.'
State whether you agree or disagree with this statement.

Argue for **and** against this statement, referring to different Christian sources of wisdom and authority. Explain and evaluate the importance of these sources. Reach a conclusion which follows from your arguments.

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Experiencing God

Christians believe that God is **revealed** to humans in many ways, such as...
Forms of **religious experience** include **visions** and **conversion** experiences.

Keywords:

- ♦ **conversion** – in religion, changing from one religion to another, or from one belief system to another
- ♦ **divine** – God, gods, or other supernatural forces
- ♦ **miracles** – events which seem supernatural and unexplainable by natural laws, and are believed to be performed by God or his agents
- ♦ **religious experience** – feeling the presence of God
- ♦ **revelation** – experiencing God / the divine in a way in which he is seen or understood, or knowledge learnt
- ♦ **vision** – a type of experience where God, or a messenger/message of God, is seen

Different Ways Christians Believe God Might be Revealed

Keywords:

- ♦ **fundamentalist** – in Christianity, someone who holds that certain beliefs in the Bible are true, including literal belief in events such as Jesus' miracles
- ♦ **general revelation** – discovering knowledge of God / the divine through natural events, available to everyone
- ♦ **incarnation** – God as a human, in the flesh
- ♦ **inspiration** – an indirect communication from God to humans that they can understand
- ♦ **literal** – something exact and factual
- ♦ **metaphorical** – something which is symbolic
- ♦ **providence** – God guiding what happens
- ♦ **resurrection** – being raised from the dead
- ♦ **saints** – Christians who have died, especially those recognised by the Church as having been good people, living close to God and doing his work
- ♦ **special revelation** – discovering knowledge of God / the divine through specific events, by specific people
- ♦ **symbolic** – something which represents something else

Key Concept – Revelation by the Divine

Christians believe that God **reveals** himself to humans. This means that humans can interact with the world. Revelation by the divine is often split into two categories: general revelation and special revelation.

Special revelation involves discovering knowledge about God / the divine through specific events, by specific people. **General revelation** is discovering knowledge about God / the divine through natural events, which are available to everyone. All the types of revelation belong to one of these two categories. Some are debatable, and might be seen to fall into both categories. Some have supernaturally inspired the biblical writers to write what he wanted to say, which is accessible to all.

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Meeting Inspirational People

Inspirational people, such as charismatic preachers, might reveal God to that certain people reveal the love of God, or reveal other aspects of him strengthen a Christian's faith, as if they see God acting strongly in another on him in their own.

Scripture / the Word of God

Another way in which many Christians feel that God is **revealed** is through Christians feel that the Bible is the Word of God, and so God speaks to them feel that God helps them to interpret the Bible in a way that is relevant for

Most Christians feel that they can learn about God through scripture:

- ◆ They can learn about his personality through reading about his in the Old Testament.
- ◆ They can learn about other characteristics, such as his **omnipotence** (in the New Testament).
- ◆ They can learn about his will through reading his commands in the teachings of Jesus in the New Testament.
- ◆ They can learn about his plan for humanity, including his love for Gospels, which teach that God sent Jesus to save humanity from barrier between people and God so that they could have a relationship.

Atheists do not believe that scripture can be revelatory, or that experiences are true (although some believe that certain events in scripture have taken

Word of God: Differing Ways of Interpreting Biblical Writings – Inspiration

Some Christians believe that the entire Bible is the **literal word of God**, and some believe that parts are **metaphorical/symbolic**. Those who feel that the Bible is the literal word of God will be more likely to see it as authoritative, as they will feel that what it teaches comes directly and exactly from God, and so cannot be wrong – some believe that the Bible has been directly **revealed** to the authors of the Bible by God. Christians who believe that everything in the Bible is literally true are called **fundamentalists**. They will feel that it has full authority to guide and teach Christians.

Some Christians believe that the Bible was **inspired** by God; that God communicated with those who wrote and edited it, but not every word given directly by God. People who hold this view are likely to feel that the Bible teaches spiritual truths, and that all of it is **literally or symbolically** true.

This is supported by 2 Timothy 3:16 (part of the New Testament) which is inspired by God. Therefore, it is very important for guidance and teaching disagree may not believe that 2 Timothy 3:16 was inspired by God.

'All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, training in righteousness' (2 Timothy 3:16 NRSV)

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The Catholic Church also teaches that all scripture is inspired by God. It says that all scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit, and so is what God wanted written. It is written, however, in human words, and humans must work to understand the meaning of what is written in the Bible, as words inspired by God can be interpreted in many different ways.

Some Christians believe that the Bible was written by humans about God. This is the Protestant view. Some believe that parts were influenced by God, but the rest was written by humans. They will feel that this means the Bible is heavily influenced by the culture of the time and so parts influenced by such culture may not be relevant to modern society. This means that they will not see it as a form of revelation, or at least not as special revelation.

Jesus Christ

Many Christians believe that Jesus was God **incarnate** (God in the flesh), and so people who met Jesus directly experienced God. They experienced God's power through Jesus' **miracles**, including healings; and God's will through Jesus' teaching.

Why do Christians believe that Jesus' life is special? To see what Jesus taught and learn about God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory that was full of grace and truth. (John 1:14 NRSV)

'Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom the universe was created. (Hebrews 1:1-2 NRSV)

[A Christian's belief that God revealed himself to prophets and revealed his will through Jesus.]

Atheists, and people of other religions, will not believe that Jesus was God. They will see him as a good man, but not as an example of special revelation. (Though religions such as Islam believe that God revealed his will to prophets and received revelations of God himself.)

Figures from Christian History

In addition to people a Christian might actually meet, they might feel that certain figures have been sent to reveal God. St Paul is an important example; he was the early Christian missionary who wrote many of the letters in the New Testament, and, therefore, has a strong influence on Christians. Many Christians believe that his writings reveal the character and will of God. He is also important because Christians believe he experienced a vision of the risen Jesus – because Christians believe that Jesus gave him a mission to spread the good news, this gives him authority on religious matters. Many Christians believe he had a strong relationship with God and good communication with God.

Find out more about St Paul, a Christian missionary who is famous for his letters to Christians.

There are also famous theologians, such as St Augustine and St Thomas Aquinas, who may reveal aspects of God's character or his will.

Some Christians also feel that **saints** reveal God's character, especially his love and mercy. In the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, saints are particularly important. They are seen as a link between other humans and God – they may pray to saints. For many Christians, saints are seen as people who have been specially chosen by God.

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saints are not as important, because they believe that they can experience God directly, and do not need to experience him through other people.

Within the Catholic Church, the Pope is seen to be God's representative on Earth, and so should reveal God's will and also his grace. Depending on which pope you are referring to, the pope might be seen as a figure from Christian history, or an inspirational figure. For example, for those who have met Pope Francis, he may be an inspirational figure to them.

God Acting in the World

Acts such as **miracles** may be considered to be God acting in the world but God can also be considered to be acting in the world in ways which are not necessarily considered miraculous. For example, Christians may feel that God is acting through people. Perhaps they are wondering about a particular issue, and that helps them; they may feel that this has been influenced by God.

Some Christians also believe that God is active through **providence** – the events of the world, while acting within the laws of nature. So, for example, a storm under a school at the weekend when no one is there, rather than during the week, may be providence – God guiding events, without actually visibly meddling with the world.

Conscience

Some Christians believe that God can guide them through the conscience. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1993, 2476-2484, 2847-2855, 2865-2866, 2868-2869, 2870-2871, 2873-2874, 2876-2877, 2879-2880, 2882-2883, 2885-2886, 2888-2889, 2891-2892, 2894-2895, 2897-2898, 2899-2900, 2902-2903, 2905-2906, 2908-2909, 2911-2912, 2914-2915, 2917-2918, 2920-2921, 2923-2924, 2926-2927, 2929-2930, 2932-2933, 2935-2936, 2938-2939, 2941-2942, 2944-2945, 2947-2948, 2950-2951, 2953-2954, 2956-2957, 2959-2960, 2962-2963, 2965-2966, 2968-2969, 2971-2972, 2974-2975, 2977-2978, 2980-2981, 2983-2984, 2986-2987, 2989-2990, 2992-2993, 2995-2996, 2998-2999, 3001-3002, 3004-3005, 3007-3008, 3010-3011, 3013-3014, 3016-3017, 3019-3020, 3022-3023, 3025-3026, 3028-3029, 3031-3032, 3034-3035, 3037-3038, 3040-3041, 3043-3044, 3046-3047, 3049-3050, 3052-3053, 3055-3056, 3058-3059, 3061-3062, 3064-3065, 3067-3068, 3070-3071, 3073-3074, 3076-3077, 3079-3080, 3082-3083, 3085-3086, 3088-3089, 3091-3092, 3094-3095, 3097-3098, 3099-3100, 3102-3103, 3105-3106, 3108-3109, 3111-3112, 3114-3115, 3117-3118, 3120-3121, 3123-3124, 3126-3127, 3129-3130, 3132-3133, 3135-3136, 3138-3139, 3141-3142, 3144-3145, 3147-3148, 3150-3151, 3153-3154, 3156-3157, 3159-3160, 3162-3163, 3165-3166, 3168-3169, 3171-3172, 3174-3175, 3177-3178, 3180-3181, 3183-3184, 3186-3187, 3189-3190, 3192-3193, 3195-3196, 3198-3199, 3201-3202, 3204-3205, 3207-3208, 3210-3211, 3213-3214, 3216-3217, 3219-3220, 3222-3223, 3225-3226, 3228-3229, 3231-3232, 3234-3235, 3237-3238, 3240-3241, 3243-3244, 3246-3247, 3249-3250, 3252-3253, 3255-3256, 3258-3259, 3261-3262, 3264-3265, 3267-3268, 3270-3271, 3273-3274, 3276-3277, 3279-3280, 3282-3283, 3285-3286, 3288-3289, 3291-3292, 3294-3295, 3297-3298, 3299-3300, 3302-3303, 3305-3306, 3308-3309, 3311-3312, 3314-3315, 3317-3318, 3320-3321, 3323-3324, 3326-3327, 3329-3330, 3332-3333, 3335-3336, 3338-3339, 3341-3342, 3344-3345, 3347-3348, 3350-3351, 3353-3354, 3356-3357, 3359-3360, 3362-3363, 3365-3366, 3368-3369, 3371-3372, 3374-3375, 3377-3378, 3380-3381, 3383-3384, 3386-3387, 3389-3390, 3392-3393, 3395-3396, 3398-3399, 3401-3402, 3404-3405, 3407-3408, 3410-3411, 3413-3414, 3416-3417, 3419-3420, 3422-3423, 3425-3426, 3428-3429, 3431-3432, 3434-3435, 3437-3438, 3440-3441, 3443-3444, 3446-3447, 3449-3450, 3452-3453, 3455-3456, 3458-3459, 3461-3462, 3464-3465, 3467-3468, 3470-3471, 3473-3474, 3476-3477, 3479-3480, 3482-3483, 3485-3486, 3488-3489, 3491-3492, 3494-3495, 3497-3498, 3499-3500, 3502-3503, 3505-3506, 3508-3509, 3511-3512, 3514-3515, 3517-3518, 3520-3521, 3523-3524, 3526-3527, 3529-3530, 3532-3533, 3535-3536, 3538-3539, 3541-3542, 3544-3545, 3547-3548, 3550-3551, 3553-3554, 3556-3557, 3559-3560, 3562-3563, 3565-3566, 3568-3569, 3571-3572, 3574-3575, 3577-3578, 3580-3581, 3583-3584, 3586-3587, 3589-3590, 3592-3593, 3595-3596, 3598-3599, 3601-3602, 3604-3605, 3607-3608, 3610-3611, 3613-3614, 3616-3617, 3619-3620, 3622-3623, 3625-3626, 3628-3629, 3631-3632, 3634-3635, 3637-3638, 3640-3641, 3643-3644, 3646-3647, 3649-3650, 3652-3653, 3655-3656, 3658-3659, 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5562-5563, 5565-5566, 5568-5569, 5571-5572, 5574-5575, 5577-5578, 5580-5581, 5583-5584, 5586-5587, 5589-5590, 5592-5593, 5595-5596, 5598-5599, 5601-5602, 5604-5605, 5607-5608, 5610-5611, 5613-5614, 5616-5617, 5619-5620, 5622-5623, 5625-5626, 5628-5629, 5631-5632, 5634-5635, 5637-5638, 5640-5641, 5643-5644, 5646-5647, 5649-5650, 5652-5653, 5655-5656, 5658-5659, 5661-5662, 5664-5665, 5667-5668, 5670-5671, 5673-5674, 5676-5677, 5679-5680, 5682-5683, 5685-5686, 5688-5689, 5691-5692, 5694-5695, 5697-5698, 5699-5700, 5702-5703, 5705-5706, 5708-5709, 5711-5712, 5714-5715, 5717-5718, 5720-5721, 5723-5724, 5726-5727, 5729-5730, 5732-5733, 5735-5736, 5738-5739, 5741-5742, 5744-5745, 5747-5748, 5750-5751, 5753-5754, 5756-5757, 5759-5760, 5762-5763, 5765-5766, 5768-5769, 5771-5772, 5774-5775, 5777-5778, 5780-5781, 5783-5784, 5786-5787, 5789-5790, 5792-5793, 5795-5796, 5798-5799, 5801-5802, 5804-5805, 5807-5808, 5810-5811, 5813-5814, 5816-5817, 5819-5820, 5822-5823, 5825-5826, 5828-5829, 5831-5832, 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Important to note...

Some Jews will write 'G-d' instead of 'God' out of respect – they may feel it disrespectful to use the full name of God. Some only apply this to Hebrew names of God, rather than English/vernacular titles.

Some Examples of Miracles

People of many religions believe in miracles. There are many miracles recorded in the Old Testament. For example, God helped the Jewish people. For example, for the Jewish people to escape slavery, God protected people who were thrown into the sea for harm (Daniel 3).

In the New Testament, Jesus is reported to have performed miracles, including controlling the weather.

Christians also believe that Jesus was **resurrected** – he rose from the dead to allow people to rise from the dead, so if this happened, it was a miracle. Jesus is **incarnate** (God in the flesh), which means, if Christians believe, then God becoming human would be classed as a miracle.

The feeding of the 5000 is a miracle (of Jesus feeding 5000 people with 5 loaves of bread). This means that Jesus has the power to create food out of nothing.

Many people today also claim to have experienced miracles, including being healed or saved from death, as well as other extraordinary events. The pilgrimage site Lourdes is famous for miraculous healings – the Catholic Church has recognised about 70 miraculous healings at Lourdes.

In the Gospels, Jesus acknowledged the importance of miracles to faith. He also emphasised that people should not rely on miracles for faith in God. He witnessed miracles. Jesus wanted Christians to act morally and build a future without needing miracles. Today, **fundamentalist** Christians are more likely to expect miracles similar to the miracles recorded in the Bible. Liberal Christians still (generally) believe in miracles but are not as expectant of them occurring, and are less likely to interpret a recovery from cancer, as a miracle which has broken the laws of nature.

'Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe."

Quick Questions

20. Describe one Christian attitude to scripture as revelation.
21. How do Christians believe that they can experience God? Refer to scripture, wisdom and authority.

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Different Forms of Religious Experience

Revelation of God in any form, such as **visions** or auditory experiences (e.g. voices heard, or things seen), or **miracles** can be termed **religious experiences**.

Other types of religious experience not mentioned above include:

- ◆ **Conversion experiences** – these could be due to another type of miracle, but involve someone coming to belief in God, or in a different religion.
- ◆ **Mystical experiences** – in a mystical experience, the person experiences a sense of union with God.
- ◆ **Numinous experiences** – in a numinous experience, someone feels a sense of something distinct from themselves, unlike a mystical experience), and a feeling of awe.
- ◆ **Charismatic experiences** – where people feel influenced by God.
- ◆ **Ecstatic experiences** – where someone feels extreme joy and happiness.
- ◆ Experiences connected with **prayer**.
- ◆ Experiences connected with **worship** and the **sacraments**.

Keywords:

- ◆ **baptism** – a sacrament which involves being anointed with, or immersed in water, in Jesus' name.
- ◆ **Eucharist** – sacrament which involves sharing bread and wine in remembrance of Jesus.
- ◆ **Evangelical** – a type of Protestant, often concerned with being spiritually pure.
- ◆ **gentile** – a non-Jew.
- ◆ **glossolalia** – speaking in tongues.
- ◆ **hallucination** – seeing or hearing something which is not really there.
- ◆ **persecution** – targeting people and treating them badly because of their religion.
- ◆ **prayer** – communication with God.
- ◆ **sacrament** – a particularly important worship practice which has even higher status in some religions, such as the Catholic and Orthodox Churches.
- ◆ **worship** – devotion to God.

Nature of Religious Experiences

Some people would regard anything to do with talking to God, or feeling his hand at work in the world, as a **religious experience**, but others would suggest that one must feel some connection to God which differs from normal experience – so just saying a **prayer** to God might not count, for example.

Various people have classified religious experiences in different ways. For example, the philosopher and psychologist William James thought that religious experiences had four features:

- ◆ They are **ineffable**; they cannot be fully described.
- ◆ They are **transient**; they cannot last for long.
- ◆ They are **intuitive**; they are often quick, and people experiencing religious experiences return from religious experience to normal experience again.
- ◆ They are **transformative**; they can change a person's life.

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- ♦ Religious experiences are not controllable – someone might be moved by God when they are worshipping or praying, but they cannot choose to experience God.

There are other theories about religious experience, and many hold that religious experiences will be positive; people experiencing them will feel extremely happy or angry.

As dealt with below, not all religious experiences confirm what people already believe. In some situations, religious experiences **convert** people who do not believe in God. God can convert them to a different religion.

Conversion Experiences

One important New Testament **vision** occurred to **St Paul**, known as Saul of Tarsus in Acts 9. Saul was a Jewish Jew, and was **persecuting** Christians because he was following the Law correctly. On a journey to Damascus, to arrest Christians in the city, he went to heaven, and heard a voice asking:

“Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” (Acts 9:4)

He asked who the voice was, and was told that it was Jesus. The voice instructed him to stand and wait for instructions. Saul was blinded from the vision. After this, his sight was restored by a Christian called Ananias.

This vision was important because Saul became a Christian – this vision was a **conversion** experience for him – and an important messenger of Christianity. This vision can be seen as significant by Christians, because God chose to **reveal** himself to someone who was opposing his plan, showing that God cares for, and will use even those who seem to be working against him.

Mystical Experiences

Mystical experiences are where someone feels united with God. Christian mystical experiences are Julian of Norwich and St Teresa of Avila. Julian (a woman) had a vision in which she felt that she came to have a great understanding of God's love, and that everything was held continually in God's love. Julian also experienced God's love in her experiences in *Revelations of Divine Love*, which is the oldest surviving mystical text by a woman. Teresa was a nun who focused her devotion to God in an effort to achieve union with God. She felt that she achieved union with God during **worship** and devotion, and she wrote practices for others. She also wrote for a vision in which an angel pierced her heart with a sword, allowing her to experience powerful feelings of God's love. Sometimes the definition of mystical experiences is broadened and they include experiences which are not unitive with God, e.g. **numinous experiences**.

Numinous Experiences

Numinous experiences are where someone feels awe in the presence of God. People often feel numinous experiences when surrounded by nature – feeling the power of the natural world. The philosopher and theologian Blaise Pascal had a famous experience which was not known about until after his death – after his death, found sewn into his coat was a piece of paper on which he described 'fire' and experiencing God.

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Charismatic and Ecstatic Experiences

Charismatic experiences involve feeling God's power – often this may involve believing that God's power is acting through them. Some evangelical Christians especially believe that they practise gifts of the Spirit – they

Why do
mystical

prophecy, or talk in tongues (a spiritual language, which some can interpret). Some Christians claim to work **miracles** through the Spirit. Some claim to heal others (of mental and/or physical ailments) through the Spirit – they lay their hands upon the person who desires healing (often on their head or shoulders).

While such 'gifts of the Spirit' are practised in other Christian denominations, they are particularly prominent in evangelical communities. Belief that Christians can be healed (quickly) of physical ailments through the laying on of hands is especially associated with evangelicals.

Now there are various kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit... To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the interpretation of tongues, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. (1 Cor 12:4-10)

Pentecostals and Charismatic Christians (who may also be evangelical) attach great importance on speaking in tongues than some other Christians because of its highest authority. Speaking in tongues shows that someone is experiencing the Holy Spirit. Many believe that speaking in tongues is the sign of having been baptised by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit...' (John 3:5 NRSV)

An alternative explanation of tongues (other than it being a heavenly language) is that it is speaking in other human languages (which the practitioner has never learned) to spread the gospel. Some Christians believe that certain instances of tongues are 'angelic' while others are earthly languages. Beliefs about tongues range from using it to build up faith in others, or are a message from God to others.

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. And they began to speak to one another in the Holy Spirit and began to sing psalms and hymns, and they sang and sang to the Lord. (Acts 2:1-4)

Some Christians believe that the gift of speaking in tongues no longer exists. They argue that those who claim to be speaking in tongues are not really doing so (even if they believe they are). Some might even argue that those who claim to be speaking in tongues are not being inspired by God in any sense.

Ecstatic experiences often occur during worship, especially during song. These are positive experiences – people feel extreme happiness, and feel closer to God, particularly spiritual. Christians may experience feelings of joy and elation, a sense of reassurance – that God loves them, that 'everything will be alright' and that they are following his teachings.

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Visions

Visions are a type of **religious experience** where someone sees, and often hears, something which can be taken as **proof** of the existence of God, often an apparition of a saint, angel, Jesus or God. People who see visions are called visionaries. Some visions take place while the visionary is awake, and others occur within dreams. Many Christians believe that if God, or messengers from God, is/are experienced by humans, then this proves the existence of God, and shows that he is active in the world. Within Christianity, there are many examples of **visions**.

"In the last days it will," God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all daughters shall see visions, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams."
(Acts 2:17 NRSV)

Old Testament

There are various visions recorded in the Old Testament, which occurred. The first vision in the Old Testament is recorded near the start of the book of Exodus, to Moses, a member of the Jewish (or Hebrew, or Israelite) people, but who was raised in Egypt, leaving the kingdom of Egypt. The angel of God appeared to Moses in a vision (it appeared to be on fire, yet the flames did not destroy it). God called to him:

"Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground. He said further, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.'"
(Exodus 3:5–6 NRSV)

God told Moses that he wanted him to go and free the Jewish people, who were slaves in Egypt. God gave Moses signs to show to the people, if they did not believe that God was with him. One of these signs was that God turned his staff into a snake. This vision was important because it led to Moses leading the people out of Egypt (even though he was reluctant), and showed that God had not abandoned them.

God also appeared to other prophets in visions, and sent them messages. Old Testament visions show that God had a commitment to his people, to free them from slavery and to send them guides to show them how to follow his will.

New Testament

Another important vision in the New Testament was Peter's vision in Acts 10. Peter was looking down from his rooftop with many animals which would have been deemed unclean. A voice

'Get up, Peter; kill and eat.' (Acts 10:13 NRSV)

Peter says he will not, because the animals are unclean, but the voice responds:

'What God has made clean, you must not call profane.' (Acts 10:15 NRSV)

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The vision is repeated twice over. After the vision, Peter receives a visit from a **gentile** (non-Jew) called Cornelius, who wants to hear the good news from Peter.

This vision was important, because Peter took it to mean that gentiles, who had been thought unclean, were now entitled to the word of God and salvation through Jesus, and he preached the good news to gentiles. Christians came to believe that gentiles did not need to become Jews before becoming Christians.

St Peter is important for many Christians because he was a close disciple of Jesus and an important member of the early Church. Christians believe that he was the first Pope.

After the Time of the Bible

There have also been many visions after the time of the Bible. In 1858 in Lourdes, France, a young girl called Bernadette had the vision, Mary claimed that she was the Virgin Mary. The Immaculate Conception is the idea that Mary was free from original sin, though every other human is born with original sin when they are created. After the vision, the belief became a doctrine, or important belief, in the Catholic Church. This vision led to new Church beliefs, and establishing a pilgrimage site in Lourdes, which is still visited by millions of people.

Many other people have claimed to have visions of God, angels or saints. Modern-day visions are important because they reinforce faith, and Christians believe God uses them to guide people and fulfil his plan.

Use this space to write another example of a vision that might have been seen.

Contrasting Beliefs about Visions

Christian Positions

- Many Christians may believe that **visions** provide **evidence** for God, because they seem explainable only by the supernatural.
- One stronger case for visions is that they do not always confirm what you expect. For example, St Paul was a persecuted Christian, and yet he had a vision which **converted** him to Christianity. This shows that if a vision conflicts with what you believe, it must have been caused by something other than your own thoughts.

Atheist Positions

However, not everyone believes that visions provide evidence for God. Atheists believe that God/gods or visions exist.

- There may be physical explanations for why someone might see a vision. For example, in the New Testament, it says that St Peter had a vision, but it says that Peter was **hallucinating** due to lack of food. There are also many people who have symptoms caused by medical conditions which are not known about hundreds of years ago. For example, types of epilepsy which could be thought to be visions, so visionaries may have been people with epilepsy.
- Even though some visions do convert people to different religions, such as St Paul, Mary, Muhammad, Krishna (a Hindu god), and many others. It is strange that they appear to confirm different religions.

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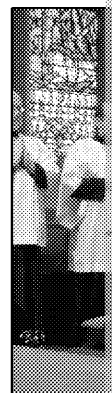
Prayer

Prayer is communication with God. Many Christians talk to God for a variety of reasons, to express their faith, to seek a relationship with him. If Christians feel God responding to prayer, this is a **religious experience**, but not all Christians will feel that their prayers have been answered. This **experience** allows all Christians to have **special revelations** from God.

Atheists will feel that humans are not really communicating with the divine. They may feel a sense of awe in feeling that they are talking to someone and receiving responses.

Worship and the Sacraments

Many Christians feel that they experience God during **worship** and through the **sacraments**. See the *Course Companion for Christianity (Beliefs, Teachings and Practices)* for more information on worship and sacraments. Experiencing God through worship may include various types of religious experiences, such as **charismatic or ecstatic experiences**, or **prayer**. Orthodox Christians may feel that they experience God through the use of icons in worship.



Christians may feel that they experience Jesus' death for them when celebrating the **Eucharist**, and that they receive the Holy Spirit when **baptised**. Sacraments are often contained within specific religious practices, such as the Mass, and these provide an atmosphere which is designed to help Christians experience God.

Catholics and Orthodox Christians celebrate more sacraments than most other Christian denominations. These are often seen as more activities in which they feel especially connected to God.

Key Concept – Perceptions of the Divine

As seen above, the divine can be perceived through many different ways. Some Christians feel that they experience God directly, for example through the person of Jesus. Others might feel that they perceive God very personally, possibly through a religious experience. Most Christians generally perceive him through other things, such as scripture.

Importance of perceptions of the Divine

- **Proof** of God's existence, and as such help to strengthen faith.
- They show that God wants to have a relationship with humanity.
- They often teach God's will and influence people to carry it out.
- They teach about God's nature.

What perceptions of the divine show about the nature of God

- He has power and authority.
- He is loving, compassionate and cares about humanity.
- He is faithful and keeps his word.
- He is patient with humanity and sends them signs to strengthen their faith.
- He cares about people having faith in him.
- He has a plan and guides humanity to follow it.
 - Some **religious experiences** may be taken to indicate that God's nature. For example, Peter's dream is taken to indicate that God's message is for all people. However, previously, God had treated the Jews as distinct from the Gentiles.

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Christian Attitudes towards Religious Experiences

Christians believe that **religious experiences** occur, and most desire to have religious experiences **prove** God, and most feel that they provide **evidence** of God's existence.

Christians may use religious experience as a philosophical argument for theism. A philosophical argument could be given like this:

- ◆ People have religious experiences of God.
- ◆ If people experience God then he must exist.
- ☞ Therefore, God must exist.

Of course it can be debated whether people do have religious experiences or feel that they have had religious experiences often, and that there can be no explanation of their experience, and that the best explanation for the unique characteristics

Christians might want to check their religious experiences, if they feel that they are not genuine. They might check if their religious experience comes from the Bible, or ask another Christian they know about it. This might help to find out if the experience is genuine or not.

Why Religious Experience May be Regarded as Revelation

Religious experiences can be very important to Christians. Christians read the Bible and learn about God's nature, e.g. be reassured of his compassion and love.

Christians may also feel that God guides them, and helps them to follow religious experiences, such as communicating with them through **prayer**.

Religious experience can be viewed as **revelation** because:

- ◆ God / a message from God is sometimes revealed visually.

'There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush, blazing, yet it was not consumed.' (Exodus 3:2 NK)

- ◆ God communicates about himself through religious experiences

'He said further, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.' (Exodus 3:6-6)

- ◆ God reveals his nature through religious experiences, e.g. his com

"Then the Lord said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt account of their taskmasters. I can see their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver the Egyptians, and to bring you up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey..." (Exodus 3:8-9 NRSV)

- ◆ God reveals his will and his plan through religious experiences.

'So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of

- ◆ God reveals knowledge of the future through religious experience

'I know, however, that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a great hand.'
(Exodus 3:19 NRSV)

Religious Experiences and Belief in God – Arguments For and Against Religious Experiences

Not all people believe **religious experiences** provide **proof** of God's existence. Some people (including **atheists**) do not believe that religious experiences are genuine or that people are really communicating with a god.

- ✖ **Lack of evidence:** some people, including the famous philosopher David Hume, argue that there is not enough **evidence** to support religious experiences. No one today could go back to biblical times, and all biblical accounts of religious experiences could be false. Even if religious experiences today, as experiences are temporary, they cannot be trusted. There are witnesses, Hume argued that it is always more probable that people are lying, than that something supernatural had taken place. This is because people can be deceived – maybe perceive something in a way that they do not know about. If God exists and that people experience him, then why do people not know about God? Christians can argue that just because other explanations for religious experiences exist, e.g. a confused or lying witness, this does not mean that religious experiences are false and provide evidence of God. Religious experiences are genuine and people experience them.

- ✖ **Use of drugs:** some drugs have been shown to produce experiences which resemble religious experiences. These can include **hallucinations**, where people see and hear things which are not there, which might seem positive or disturbing. Some people who report religious experiences have been on drugs, which may be the true cause of their experiences. It is possible to argue that if drugs can produce such effects, then it is physically possible for someone to have a 'religious' experience without the involvement of a god, and so religious experiences do not prove God.
 - ↳ Christians can respond that a) even if some religious experiences may be caused by drugs physically, this does not mean God cannot communicate with people in an intoxicated state and/or b) some 'religious experiences' may not be genuine, but many people report religious experiences when they were not intoxicated.

- ✖ **Hallucinations:** as mentioned previously, there may be various reasons for **hallucinations**, for example for medical reasons, and hallucinations can be explained as a hallucination. Anyone could hallucinate, and therefore any religious experience could be explained as a hallucination.
 - ↳ As seen above – Christians can respond that visions are not hallucinations. It has been proven that all visions are not hallucinations (even if some might be). Some people have a capacity for receiving visions – which is not a hallucination. It has been shown that some people have a capacity for receiving visions – which is not a hallucination. This does not mean that religious experiences are hallucinations or an epileptic episode. This does not mean that religious experiences are hallucinations or an epileptic episode.

- ✖ **Wish fulfilment:** some people believe that people have religious experiences – it is a wish fulfilment. If someone is really longing to hear from God, they may have a religious experience – it is a wish fulfilment. If someone is really longing to hear from God, they may have a religious experience – it is a wish fulfilment. If someone is really longing to hear from God, they may have a religious experience – it is a wish fulfilment.
 - ↳ Christians can respond that not all religious experiences are desire-driven. Some people have religious experiences when they are not always stressed when they receive them. It is probable that some people have had religious experiences when they have had other religious experiences.

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✕ Further, there are some 'religious experiences' which most people do not believe in. Serial killers have claimed to hear God telling them to kill people, and it is the case (and that they are either lying or ill). If people do not believe in religious experiences are experiences of God, then it becomes hard to know if an experience is real or not. It is always a choice, and if one experience is being true (e.g. a vision of Jesus is more likely to occur if someone believes Jesus was God's son, because people saw him **resurrected**), then it becomes hard to justify the choice to believe.

✎ Christians can respond that just because not all religious experiences are genuine does not mean they are false. People frequently lie, but humans still trust in humanity's ability to tell the truth, and most people assume people are telling the truth unless they have reason to doubt.



Quick Questions

22. Give three examples of visions.

Now Try This...

23. Explain why religious experiences may be challenging. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.



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Summary for Experiencing God

- ♦ Christians believe that there are many different ways in which God can be **revealed**. These include meeting inspirational people, scripture, Jesus Christ, figures from Christian history, God acting in the world, **conscience** and **miracles**.
- ♦ There are various forms of **religious experience**, including **conversion experiences**, **mystical experiences**, **charismatic and ecstatic experiences**, **visions** and **worship** and the **sacraments**.



Now Try This...

24. Christians can discover reliable knowledge about God from religious experiences. Discuss this statement.

Argue for **and** against this statement, referring to different Christian sources of wisdom and authority. Explain and evaluate the importance from a Christian perspective. Reach a conclusion which follows from



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Religion, Peace and Conflict

Violence and Conflict

Violence is an important issue in the modern world. War and **terrorism** are often influenced by religion. Some believe that violence and wars can be **just**, while others believe that violence is motivated by reasons which are not just, or justified. Some may feel that some forms of violence, such as conventional warfare, can be acceptable, while others feel that some forms of violence, such as nuclear warfare, are not.

Keywords:

- ♦ **holy** – sacred, to do with God or religion
- ♦ **just** – fair and right
- ♦ **terrorism** – unauthorised (non-state) violence for political reasons
- ♦ **violence** – action that is destructive, or potentially destructive

Violence

Keywords:

- ♦ **forgiveness** – letting go of bad feelings towards or grudges against someone, mentally or physically
- ♦ **peace** – an absence of violence, a state of calm
- ♦ **prophecy** – to speak God's word and/or predict the future
- ♦ **sin** – a thought or action against God

Key Concept – Forms of Violence

Violence involves destruction, or acting in a potentially destructive way, which can be sometimes mentally. Violence can cause disruption, pain, injury and death to individuals, homes and communities, during protests, at war and as acts of terrorism. It can be directed at just one person, or many, with just a person's body, or with weapons; it can be physical or mental.

Application and Understanding of Religious Teachings about Violence

Most religions promote peace; however, religions can be interpreted in different ways, leading to different extents in violence. Violence may be seen as a lesser evil in some religions.

Many Christians oppose **violence**, because of Jesus' teachings about peace. Jesus desires peace, and so causing violence goes against this. Further, violence involves anger and hate, and Christians believe that they should not act on such feelings. They believe Jesus taught to not harm enemies, but to treat them well. Because of this, in which violence was justified, he did not talk about types of war or violence that were acceptable towards others. Therefore, it could be argued that because Jesus did not allow violence towards men more than violence towards women and children, it is not acceptable. This is a different approach from other religions which often see war as a legitimate target of violence.

'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.' (Matthew 5:9)

'You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy." But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.' (Matthew 5:43-48)

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Jesus also (generally) modelled non-violence – he did not raise up an arm and did not fight back against Jewish authorities when he was arrested.

There are also teachings in the Old Testament which suggest that ultimately Micah 4:3 **prophecies** about how in the future God (or potentially Jesus) will be an end to war. This suggests that God desires a state of peace and that

... they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more... (Micah 4:3)

Many Christians interpret such Old and New Testament teachings to mean that God does not want violence. Many go on to apply this in their lives by not being violent personally, and many also oppose war for the same reason. The Quakers in particular oppose all violence, seeing Christianity as a religion of peace.

However, many Christians do not interpret the Bible to forbid all violence, and may interpret it as promoting it in certain cases. Micah 4:3 can be interpreted to mean that weapons are necessary in the current age – it will be at the end of the world when weapons will be unnecessary and there will be no more war.

For example, Psalm 18 talks about God giving strength to fight, implying that fighting enemies is acceptable, and approved of by God.

I pursued my enemies and overtook them; and did not turn back until they were brought down, so that they were not able to rise; they fell under my feet. For you girded me with strength, and you made my assailants sink under me. (Psalm 18:37–39)

Therefore, some Christians believe that God will support them in certain instances where they believe it is **just** to punish some criminals violently (e.g. through the death penalty in the Old Testament). Others may believe it is just to be violent towards those who are seen as evil, such as those who work in abortion clinics. Occasionally this has meant that abortion clinics have been the victims of extreme violence, such as bombings. They may also see war as justified, especially if they believe it is working to bring about peace or fighting against **terrorism**. Many **denominations**, such as the Catholic and Anglican Churches, accept certain instances of war, and so do not completely forbid or condemn violence.

Even Jesus gave some teachings which seem to allow, or even promote, the use of violence, such as Matthew 10:34 which suggests that Jesus has come to bring violence. In context, this can be understood to mean that Christianity will be divisive, and that it will cause conflict between believers and non-believers. Looking at history, this has been the case. Some Christians understand this to mean that violence against non-Christians, or those who they feel are not acting in a Christian manner, is acceptable.

'Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. (Matthew 10:34 NRSV)

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Indeed, Jesus was not always non-violent himself – all four Gospels record where he overturns tables, and drives out traders. In John's Gospel, he mentions that Christians, this example gives them reason to act violently against those

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts, he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money-changers seated at their tables. Making them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, 'Take these things out of here! My Father's house is a place of prayer, not a market-place!' (John 2:13–16 NIV)

Role and Understanding of Religious Teachings about Violence

These different understandings of religious teachings about **violence** both have an impact in society. For those who believe that Christianity teaches against violence (following the teachings of Jesus), they may support campaigns which take a stand against violence, e.g. laws cracked down on those who commit domestic violence, and protesting against wars, such as the 2003 Iraq War. CCND – the Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament – opposes nuclear weapons.

On the other hand, Christians who accept violence in certain situations (Old Testament allowing and commanding violence) also impact society. Many of them vote in favour of wars, and military interventions such as that this is compatible with their religious beliefs.

Key Concept – War

War is armed conflict, generally between different nations (civil war is technically, in the modern world, not all military action is actually war. For example, the UK has carried out many military interventions in Syria without actually being at war with Syria because they are not specifically fighting the government, but are (or claim to be) fighting for civilians, and global safety. If they were at war with Syria, this would also mean that the UK is (in the eyes of the world) attacking the Syrian people, which would be seen as an attack on the UK, but this is not the case with military interventions. For many ordinary citizens, including religious people such as Christians, the violence in other countries is seen as comparable to war – the violence is viewed as acceptable, and unethical if it is not.

In theory, in the UK, war must be declared by the monarch. However, in practice, it is the government that decide whether the country should go to war or not.

Not all violence takes place during war and **terrorism**. Larger-scale violence may be seen in protests. Some protests, where people meet in public to express their views, can also turn violent. For example, when the UK government proposed raising tuition fees, many students protested against this, campaigning in public so that they could express their disagreement with their proposal. Most of these protesters were peaceful.

Some religious people have taken part in violent protest, believing that they are challenging something they believe to be wrong. However, many religious people believe that violent protest is wrong, and that people should protest about issues they disagree with and try to negotiate verbally. Some may believe that protesting violently

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bad as, or worse than, the people they are protesting against. Mainstream society generally oppose violence in society, such as violent protest.

Some religious people who feel that violence is wrong specifically protest. For example, Martin Luther King (an American Baptist (Christian) pastor) ended the segregation peacefully in areas where only white people were allowed to sit, to protest. He disapproved of violence, and showed that he could protest meaningfully.

Impact and Influence

Whether or not people agree with **violence** will influence how many people violently conflict with others, in wars, terrorism and protest. Higher levels of violence may also contribute to higher levels of fear and distrust, because people fear further violence, while lower levels of violence may lead to higher social well-being as people are not scared for their safety.



Quick Questions

1. Why might the Old Testament be interpreted as allowing violence?
2. Outline different Christian teachings about violence. Refer to source, wisdom and authority.



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Justifications of Violence

Key Concept – Justifications of Violence

There are many reasons people give to try to justify **violence**. Some can be seen as acceptable and **retaliation**. Ones which many people find less acceptable are greed and power.

Keywords:

- ♦ **elitism** – a belief that some people are better than others (this can be based on about different groupings of people)
- ♦ **colonisation** – taking control of additional land
- ♦ **controversial** – widely debated and disagreed about
- ♦ **pre-emptive strike** – attacking someone before they attack you, when you expect they will attack you, to stop them from attacking
- ♦ **retaliation** – taking revenge against someone for something they have done to you, to stop the harm they inflicted
- ♦ **self-defence** – protecting yourself against violence or attack
- ♦ **United Nations** – an organisation where many governments and countries work together

Self-defence

One reason for **violence** such as war is **self-defence**. People may fight against those who have attacked them, or may perform a **pre-emptive strike** – where someone declares war against a country which has not yet threatened them directly, but which they believe will threaten them.

Many people have justified fighting wars in self-defence, claiming that, otherwise, innocent people could be killed, enslaved, or repressed by anyone who wanted to invade them.

The UK's part in the Second World War is often justified as being due to the need to defend other countries, because the UK government felt it was a matter of public safety.

Some people have argued that the 2003 invasion of Iraq was also a pre-emptive strike, as the government believed Iraq had weapons of mass destruction which could be used in the future.

Christians have mixed opinions on violence and wars fought in self-defence. Some believe it is acceptable to use violence against people to stop them from hurting you, but to accept suffering which comes from it, to make them better people, not being **violent** to anyone. Jesus not only taught this – he stopped his disciples defending him from arrest with violence, though he knew that he would die. This is an important example for Christians in showing that violence should not be extended.

'... if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also...' (Matthew 5:39)

This can be seen to be an important difference between Christianity and Islam. For example, Muhammad led Muslim soldiers into battle to defend people, which is seen as an acceptable course of action. However, Jesus did not justify violence in any circumstances.



An image of a soldier in a dark environment.

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On the other hand, other Christians have felt that wars fought in self-defence they do not want aggressors to hurt others with no consequences, and do not want to be hurt. Many Christians would accept someone protecting themselves if they were attacked, though the extent of violence they may see as acceptable. Some Christians own guns for protection, but many other Christians would feel that owning oneself from home invasion is too extreme.

Retaliation

Some wars are fought in **retaliation**; in revenge for a previous attack, and this also goes for other types of **violence**. This is sometimes seen as revenge and is also considered to show countries/people that they cannot attack a country for a bad reason, without suffering consequences. This is also partly to discourage future attacks.

Some people feel this is acceptable, because it creates a culture in which war or attack others, because they will know they will receive retaliation. This can lead to a large amount of violence if each side of a conflict wishes to attack the other. For instance, in the conflict between Israel and Palestine, people have attacked the other, and this has led to a long conflict.

Some people believe a motivation for the conflict in Iraq was retaliation for the 9/11 attacks on the Trade Centre; that some American officials believed that the Iraqi government was protecting al-Qaeda (the terrorist group which claimed responsibility for the 9/11 attacks) and was not an official reason for the war.

Many Christians believe that retaliation is wrong, because Jesus taught that

'You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." But I say to you, do not resist the evildoer.' (Matthew 5:38–39 NRSV)

However, others may feel that it is acceptable if it will teach others not to do the same in the future, preventing loss of life. Christians generally oppose personal violence.

Greed

Many wars may be caused by greed. Centuries ago, many different countries fought for power, to gain more land, fighting against people who lived in areas with less land and causing many wars. This was apparently motivated by greed for more land, which would result in more resources and more power.

Some people might try to justify this greed, or claim that it was not true. Some might argue that the leaders of Muslim empires did not expand their empires for greed, but for Allah's will to introduce the religion of Islam to as many people as possible.

Some people have argued that when Britain **colonised** other countries, it sought to 'civilise' them; to teach the people appropriate ways of life, to introduce them to modern inventions and to Christianity. However, this is now highly **elitist** to claim that your culture and religion is better than someone else's.

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Some people believe that some modern wars have been fought due to greed, when the US and the UK went to war in Iraq in 2003, this was because they were greedy for oil; in other words, they were greedy for resources. Others have argued that the war was for other reasons, such as freeing the Iraqi people from dictatorship.

Many Christians may believe that going to war, or committing any other wrongdoing, because Jesus taught against greed, teaching his followers to give and to strive for treasures in heaven, rather than on Earth, because if someone is not focused on God.

'And [Jesus] said to them, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in the abundance of possessions."' (Luke 12:15)

'Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.' (Matthew 6:19–21 NRSV)

Hate/Disagreement

Much **violence** on a personal level is due to hate or dislike. Someone may hurt someone who they hate for a personal reason, e.g. hurting their friend, or because they are perhaps due to racial prejudice.

Countries or groups may fight each other because they hate the other side. Wars of war, as the hate is likely to continue as people lose friends and relatives. Wars may be due to disagreement about political policies. People of different views may cause conflict, which can result in civil war, such as the English Civil War.

People may approve or disapprove of wars started for this reason, depending on whether they feel that the benefit caused by a change in political policy will outweigh the costs associated with war, for example loss of life.

However, Jesus taught against hurting people one hates, and so many Christians feel that differences in opinion should be negotiated, rather than fought.

'But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.'

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Impact and Influence

Depending on which reasons people feel are acceptable for **violence**, different instances of violence may occur. For example, there are fewer wars which aim to conquer other land than in previous centuries, because the **United Nations** does not support this, and it is viewed in a negative light. The UN may intervene in wars which it believes are unjust (e.g. Kosovo), meaning that, effectively, the world can condemn conflicts which it believes are wrong.

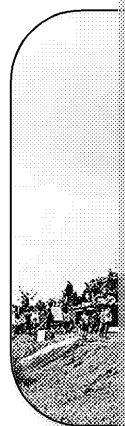
Also, depending on whether other people agree that a country had a legitimate reason to go to war, there may be consequences after a war. For example, the UN may try the leaders of countries which have gone to war for crimes.

Quick Questions

3. State three justifications for violence.

Now Try This...

4. Explain why Christians have different beliefs about justifications for violence. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.



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Role of Christians in Violent Conflict

Many Christians are involved in violent conflict. Many Christian individuals have started wars – British prime ministers and American Presidents, along with the leaders of many religions have traditionally been Christian, and have started a lot of violent conflicts. Many Christians have started and engaged in violent wars, sometimes with each other.

Christian communities have been guilty of violence on a local level – Protestant and Catholic communities in Ireland were violent towards each other during the Irish Troubles.

Religion as a Cause of Violence

Some people see religion and belief as a cause of war and **violence** in the contemporary world.

Examples of contemporary violence associated with religion include:

- ◆ **Terrorist** organisations with religious connections
- ◆ Conflicts between countries of different religions
- ◆ Different religious groups in many places clashing and fighting with each other

Religion and violence have often been linked together.

In one respect it is true that many conflicts have religious motivations. Without religion there would be no desire for religious government; no desire for 'holy' land; and no reason for people to fight over religious beliefs – to try to convert others or to try to wipe out, or remove power from, those who believe different things.

It is also possible that religion fuels conflict because if people believe they are fighting for a religious cause, they may be more prepared to fight and die than if they do not believe this, and are fighting for a secular cause.

However, it is also true that many conflicts are not motivated by religion. There are often more non-religious conflicts than in religious ones.

Many people also argue that while without religion it is possible that some conflicts would never have happened, many conflicts which have a religious element also have other motivations, and if you removed religion from the mix, many conflicts might still occur (or others in their place) for other reasons.

For example, religion may be one reason to desire a certain piece of land, but people may also desire land out of greed. People may fight against governments and aim to establish new ones because they disagree with political policies, and desire new political policies to do with religion. People also appear capable of disliking people for other reasons, such as they differ in race, class, beliefs (other than religious or spiritual beliefs), and will fight with groups they dislike and disagree with, this would be possible without religion.

So many people do see religion and belief as a cause of war and violence. However, there are often motives other than religion within so-called 'religious' conflicts. If there was no religion, there might well be a similar level of conflict due to other reasons.

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Further, while religion may give people reason to fight, belief in non-violence may give them the principles and the courage not to be violent and cause a certain extent, to assess which conflicts have been motivated by religion, assess how many conflicts have *not* occurred, or have been shorter than others, of the influence of religious teaching against conflict. If this could be argued, a greater influence against war and violence than it is a cause for it – it is

To conclude: religion is a factor in some instances of violence, but it is not the sole cause of violence without looking at other factors, and many religious people do actively work against it.

Quick Questions

5. Why might some people feel that religion causes violence?
6. Outline an argument that religion might not be a significant cause of violence.

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Terrorism

Terrorism, generally seen as unauthorised, non-state violence, for a political change), has become an important issue in contemporary societies. It is carried out with the intention of causing chaos and fear.

Keywords:

- ◆ **civilian** – someone who is not a soldier / actively involved in conflict
- ◆ **legitimate** – permissible because of logic and/or law (human law or God's law)
- ◆ **radicalisation** – a process of becoming more extreme in one's views, such as religious or political

Terrorism Today

Notable instances of **terrorism** include the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the bombings of London transport on 7th July 2007, though there are many more, and more are likely to come in the future.

Much terrorism in the contemporary world has been associated with Islam. Suicide bombers who say they are Muslim. These suicide bombers may not feel that they are killing innocent people but may feel that they are serving Islam in some way through their actions. Many people condemn terrorist violence. It can be argued strongly that the link between terrorism and Islam is sensationalised and portrayed inaccurately by the media. Further, there is no direct association with Islam; for example:

- ◆ Anders Breivik, the Norwegian terrorist who killed many people in 2011. He strongly opposed Islam and wanted Muslims to be deported from Norway.
- ◆ The Irish Republican Army (IRA), whose members identify as Roman Catholics, fought against Irish Protestants. Also, other Irish terrorist groups were associated with Catholicism or Protestantism and were involved in the Irish troubles.
- ◆ There has been terrorism associated with the Hindu nationalist movement in India (the belief that India should be / is Hindu). Not all Hindu nationalists are violent, and Muslims, which they justify as defence of Hinduism.
- ◆ There are examples of terrorism associated with other religions, such as Buddhism.

Pause for thought:

Try to think how you would feel if your country was attacked or you felt your religion was threatened. Do you think those labelled terrorists are always worse than governments who declare war?



Terrorism is an interesting concept. Some acts of terrorism may not feel like terrorism to those who carry them out, but they may feel that their acts are **legitimate**. The 9/11 attacks were not deemed by the UK government to be terrorism, but the war in Iraq, and other military actions, have been deemed by others to be terrorism. It is not always clear what not to believe that the UK has legitimate military actions which its military has carried out.

One way in which people may try to separate acts of terrorism from 'legitimate' acts of war is by arguing that terrorism targets innocent people (who are often considered to include civilians). It is argued that in most wars, there are many innocent casualties. Also, people who are described as terrorists have sometimes argued that those they target are responsible for the casualties of the attacks against the World Trade Centre (even though they were civilians) because they were happy for their government's actions in the Middle East, and were responsible for their government's actions because of the course not all the people killed may have supported George Bush and his policies.

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The governments and media sources of countries often focus on terrorist attacks in their own country, or countries close to them in distance or culture, which may contribute to a perception that people of one's own religion or culture, are under high levels of threat. In reality, it may be the case that many other countries and peoples are exposed to terrorism.

The perception of 'terrorists' may change over time; for example, Nelson Mandela was once seen as a terrorist due to his role in violent action against apartheid (racist segregation). However, today he is widely regarded as a hero, and received the Nobel Peace Prize for his role with the peaceful transition to a democratic South Africa.

Causes of Terrorism

There are many causes of **terrorism**, including:

- ◆ Anger and **retaliation**
- ◆ Hatred of a certain group of people (e.g. a race, religion, or ethnicity)
- ◆ Belief that this is what God wants
- ◆ The desire to make political aims known and change policies
- ◆ Mental instability

Many terrorist acts have multiple causes – terrorists may retaliate against harm done by a country or group while believing revenge is justified (e.g. Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda); or retaliate, while also promoting certain political aims (for example, the Taliban).

Relationship between Religion, Politics and Terrorism in the twenty-first century

In the twenty-first century, religion, politics and **terrorism** have seemed to become more closely linked. The religion of terrorists, such as those who attacked the World Trade Centre in 2001, is often Islam. In this instance, the motivation for terrorism was largely political – to retaliate against the West, and to bring about a change in the Middle East, but it has often been seen as a conflict between Islamic and Western values.

If 'Christian' countries are seen to be damaging 'Muslim' countries, such as Iraq, it is possible that this political conflict can become a religious conflict, with Muslims attacking 'Christian' countries. There is often talk of **radicalisation** – people being turned so that they hold extreme views and want to become terrorists.

Some groups deemed as terrorist groups by some see themselves as legitimate. The Islamic State have attempted to set up a region which they control, where the right for Muslims to be governed by a religious authority – a Caliphate. They have persecuted Christians (as well as killing many more Muslims), and so religion and politics are heavily linked.

Religious groups may feel that society and politics are becoming more secular, and they may protest this with terrorist attacks. Similarly, people who feel that society and politics are becoming more religious may also protest this with terrorist attacks (e.g. the 9/11 attacks).

As seen above, terrorists come from many different religions, or no religion at all. Religion can contribute to political motivations, and political motivation can be veiled as religious. So religion, politics and terrorism remain very closely linked in people's minds and in practice.

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Important to note...

As terrorism has political motivations, it is important to recognise that

- ♦ religious motivations are not always easily separated from political
- ♦ terrorism associated with religion may not be committed for solely religious reasons
- ♦ from different perspectives, there may seem to be different motivations

Different Christian Attitudes to Terrorism and Causes of Terrorism

A small number of individuals who are religious commit acts deemed by many as terrorism, such as bombing or shooting people to achieve their goals, such as laws which rule by a government of their religion.

However, most religious people disapprove of terrorism – for example, the Islamic principle of loving one's neighbour and the Christian principle, that people of military action against them, for peace attacks are forbidden. Many religions and Buddhists will disapprove of terrorism because of its **violent** nature.



'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' (Matthew 22:39)

Many religions other than Christianity teach similar principles about treating others to be treated. This is often known as the Golden Rule.

Many Christians will feel that there are no reasons which are good enough to justify terrorism. Jesus advocated peace, e.g. in the Sermon on the Mount. Terrorism starkly contrasts with this. However, some Christians will understand some terrorists who feel that violence is their best option, and want to protect their religion.

Many mainstream religious people have spoken out against religious extremism. For example, in 2015, Pope Francis took part in a memorial service for the September 11 leaders from other religions. He has spoken against religious extremism and to work with others in opposition to it.

However, some Christians will support actions which may be deemed as terrorism against corrupt or unjust political institutions, if they feel this is the only available way to achieve their goals. Those who attempted to assassinate Hitler. Most Christians feel that the actions of the KKK (which associates as Protestant) feels that it is justified in order to fight against non-Protestants and make America a Protestant society. Some terrorism have been carried out by Christians against abortion clinics and gay rights, showing that some Christians do feel that some terrorist activity is justified.

Impact and Influence

Instances of **terrorist** attacks may influence countries to fight back against those responsible for terrorism. It may also mean the introduction of stricter security measures.

However, many people, including religious believers, see terrorism as an obstacle to friendships between different groups of people and to work for **peace**. Terrorism can result in an endless circle of **violence**.

Quick Questions

7. Describe what is meant by terrorism.
8. Outline Christian attitudes to terrorism. Refer to sources of wisdom.

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Just War Theory

Key Concept – Just War Theory

Just War Theory is a philosophical discussion which has happened over time between many people about *when and why it is acceptable to go to war and what to do within war*. Generally speaking, there are a set of criteria which make some may feel that these criteria are not successful in justifying war, and the ways of evaluating **just war**.

Criteria for a Just War (Just War Tradition)

Traditionally there are a number of criteria for a **just war**. These include: to make it just to go to war **jus ad bellum** – Latin for justice *towards* war, and to be met to claim that a war is being fought justly when it has started (**jus in bello**). Note: within this sense refers to each side in a war – generally at least one side, otherwise it would not be just to fight against them.

Keywords:

- ♦ **combatant** – someone who helps to fight a war
- ♦ **jus ad bellum** – conditions which must be fulfilled to go to war justly
- ♦ **jus in bello** – conditions which must be fulfilled to fight justly in war
- ♦ **just war** – a war believed to be right/permissible/justified
- ♦ **negotiate** – discuss a way to find a solution to problems
- ♦ **pacifism** – a belief that violence is wrong and a principle of opposition to war
- ♦ **proportional** – in this sense, the level of response to an attack/threat must be proportional to the attack/threat
- ♦ **utilitarian** – someone who believes that something is good if it causes pleasure

Conditions needed to **start** a just war:

- ♦ The right person/group must start it
 - For example, the government of a country, and not just any group of individuals
- ♦ There must be a good reason
 - For example, **self-defence** is usually accepted as reason, but conquering additional land which others already occupy is not
- ♦ People must want the right thing
 - For example, it may be ok to go to war to free a people from an oppressive government, but not if you want to steal their resources
- ! **Note:** there might be a good reason to go to war against a country (such as if they have an oppressive government) but mean countries can justify going to war with them if they are just not acting to help that country's people
- ♦ There must be more reason to go to war than not to go to war
 - For example, if a country executes 10 citizens at random every year, it is not just to justify a war, as many more people are likely to die, causing more suffering

Introduction

Just War Theory was developed by Christians, including Thomas Aquinas, and has influenced the world view. Therefore, different religions would have different views on whether they may not feel that it is just war because of these things about just war. Christians agree that these conditions are necessary for a just war.

Note: Aquinas' version of the first three of the conditions given here (author's note)

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- ◆ There must be a good chance of winning / achieving your purpose
 - For example, there is no point going to war against an unjust government if you are likely to die without achieving anything
- ◆ Other options must be tried first
 - For example, it is not OK to declare war on a country without trying other options first

Conditions needed to **fight** a just war:

- ◆ Fighting must be **proportional**
 - For example, you cannot bomb thousands of people for the sake of stopping several corrupt officials who are not killing thousands – *you must do more good than harm, and cause as little harm as possible to achieve your goal*
 - ◆ People can fight against soldiers but not against those not involved / civilians
 - For example, you cannot just start killing innocent people to make the other side surrender (to surrender is to give up fighting and let the other side win)
- ! Some other people think that any war is **just** if it does more good than bad overall. For example, if a war results in more pleasure than pain, it is **just**. **utilitarians** would believe it is just.
- A simplified example of this would be if a war resulted in a thousand lives saved and only a thousand lives lost.

Discussion of Just War

Some people do not think any wars are justified, because killing others is wrong, no matter what the reasons or consequences. This will be discussed further in the section on **Just War Tradition**.

Some people have other ideas about what makes a **just war** than the criteria of **Just War Tradition**. Some **utilitarians**, as shown above.

Of the people who broadly agree with *Just War Tradition*, there are points of disagreement.

Going to war

- ◆ Not everyone agrees who can choose to start a war. Some countries have a system where the people have had no say in their leaders. If these leaders start a war, is it just because they are the leaders? Also, in countries which are run by a group of leaders (e.g. monarchies or dictatorships), is a group of people declare war any less right to authority than the leaders?
- ◆ While many people agree on which reasons are acceptable for going to war, there is disagreement on which reasons are acceptable for going to war.
- ◆ It is hard to measure an intention. It is hard to know why people go to war. Anyone who gives a good reason to go to war may be able to do so with a bad motive.
- ◆ It is impossible to know in advance if a war will do more good than bad. We only know with wars after they have happened and they know how many people have died.
- ◆ It can also be hard to know how likely you are to win. For instance, if you start a war, people will fight against you before you begin fighting. A large army might keep producing more soldiers.
- ◆ It is very hard to say that all other methods have been tried before starting a war.

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Fighting in war

- ♦ It is hard to know exactly what level of destruction to the other side is **proportional**. Soldiers especially may not know exactly what the enemy has done, or will do in the future, when they have to make quick decisions.
- ♦ Many people have debated who is a **legitimate** target in war. Do people who make weapons count as **combatants** (do farmers count, because supplying the army with food may be as important as supplying them with weapons? Is it fair that government officials, who may have no direct involvement in war, are counted as **civilians** and should not be targeted?)

Are the criteria for just war just any problems, meaning war will be justified?

Of the Christians who are not pacifists, pacifists are those who disapprove of wars to fulfil *Just War* criteria. However, they might raise problems, showing that it is hard to truly know if a war is just or not.

Religious Attitudes to Behaviours during War

Christians expect soldiers to behave appropriately during war. **Proportionality** and **combatants** are components of this, but there are other components.

Christians might expect soldiers to:

- ♦ Respect civilians, as well as not harming them – they should not be targeted.
- ♦ Not kill those who surrender, or prisoners of war.
- ♦ Not torture prisoners (at least without very good reason).

However, within Christianity there are varied views on this. Some conservative Christians who place particular emphasis on Old Testament teachings compared with the New Testament may see torture in war, for example, as justified, if they feel that this will help to protect their country and/or soldiers (they are more likely to see this as justified if they would consider 'guilty', e.g. enemy soldiers rather than civilians). Liberal Christians, more concerned with the teachings of Jesus compared to Old Testament teachings, may feel that this is not justifiable, because it is not loving to torture someone, and is completely against the example of Jesus.

Conservative Christians are also more likely to support greater uses of force to minimise their own casualties, whereas liberal Christians are less likely to support the use of greater harm to civilians – they are more likely to support non-violent solutions which minimise loss overall, regardless of the sides of the conflict.

Impact and Influence

Which criteria people and governments accept for going to war may affect the outcome of the war. It also affects how others who go to war are judged. The Catholic Church teaches that there can be just wars.

Quick Questions

- State three criteria for *going* to war justly.
- Describe different Christian attitudes to just war. Refer to sources of authority.

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Holy War

Holy war is an interesting concept. Wars are not considered holy just by soldiers, but a war has to be fought in the name of religion to count as a holy war.

Keywords:

- ♦ **Crusades** – a series of Christian holy wars between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries to reclaim the Holy Land for Christians
- ♦ **Holy Land** – Jerusalem and some of the surrounding area; important with some extent, within Islam
- ♦ **holy war** – a war fought in the name of religion

Holy wars are commanded by a religious authority: God, or a religious leader such as the Pope. They aim to achieve something for religion, and those taking part are often promised by God or a religious leader, a reward for taking part.

- ♦ In the Old Testament of the Bible (and the Jewish scriptures containing the same material) God sends the Jewish people to war on several occasions, by communicating with prophets. Several popes encouraged the **Crusades**, probably the most famous examples of Christian holy wars in the last centuries.
- ♦ Some holy war aims to spread the faith of the fighters; it may hope to win new converts. Holy war may also aim to win land, so that countries are ruled by a particular religion. This is true in the case of the Crusades, where the Pope wished to have the **Holy Land** (Jerusalem and the surrounding area) under Christian control. This also links to the idea that holy war can be used to acquire areas (such as the Holy Land), buildings or possessions which are deemed important to a religion. Holy wars might also aim to protect or rescue members of a faith, or to kill people of another (or no) religion, if it is believed that they have angered God in some way.
- ♦ During the Crusades the Pope promised that those who fought would have all their **sins** forgiven.

Christian Teaching and Responses to Holy War

Christians who accept the concept of **holy war** are likely to feel that a war is holy (at least to some extent). Some will feel that only wars which God has commanded are holy wars, while others will be happy to class a war declared by a religious leader (or a command from God) as a holy war. Catholics may be more likely to accept a religious leader in general, as they believe the Pope to be God's representative on earth. Many Protestants place the authority of the Bible or the Holy Spirit above a religious leader's command against these. In the Old Testament of the Bible, God tells the Jewish people to go to war for him, and the Bible talks about God commanding holy warriors, so holy war does have a basis within Christian tradition.

Important
Wars may be considered holy because of the religious cause, or that there were or that they were fought for a religious cause. Different motivations for religious wars from different religious groups or leaders might exist, but convince them of the religious cause.

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The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Avenge the Israelites on the Midianites; avenge me on your people.' So Moses said to the people, 'Arm some of your number for war against Midian, to execute the LORD's vengeance on Midian.' (Exodus 18:11-12)

Then the LORD said to Joshua, 'Do not fear or be dismayed; take all the fighting men with you and go up to Ai. See, I have handed over to you the king of Ai with his people, his chariot, and his horse.' (Joshua 8:1 NRSV)

Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare war, stir up the warriors. Let all the warriors come up. Beat your ploughshares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears. Come quickly, all you nations all around, gather yourselves there for battle against me, the LORD. (Joel 3:9-11 NRSV)

There will be a variety of Christian views on what counts as an acceptable war. For example, it might seem more acceptable to a modern Christian to fight to liberate a land to colonise it with Christianity there. However, some Christians believe that war is never justified and that all places are ruled in line with God's will.

It is controversial whether a religious figure can promise forgiveness in return for war, however the Bible does show God rewarding those who fight for him, so the concept of reward.

And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, 'The LORD has given you the city. The city and all that is in it shall be devoted to the LORD. The people charged straight ahead into the city and captured it.' (Joshua 10:12-13)

However, nowadays, many Christians believe that Jesus' teaching goes against war completely, and so God would not command or desire a war – and that war is not earned by fighting.

In the Old Testament, war and **peace** are very closely linked to God. Many biblical battles are commanded by God, and God tells the Jewish people that if they follow him he will grant them victory in battle, but if they do not (or if they go to war when God has told them not to), then they will lose. The Old Testament God punishes the Jewish people by having other nations wage war on them and enslave them. Equally, in the New Testament, war is to be a reward from God.

The LORD said, 'Judah shall go up. I hereby give the land into his hand.'... Then Judah went up, and gave the Canaanites and the Perizzites into his hand; and they defeated them. (Judges 1:2, 4 NRSV)

'Do not go up, for the LORD is not with you; do not let yourselves be struck down by the enemy. Go up to the heights of the hill country, even though the ark of the covenant of the LORD has not left the camp. Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who live in the hill country shall be brought down and defeated them, pursuing them as far as Hormah.' (Numbers 14:43-45)

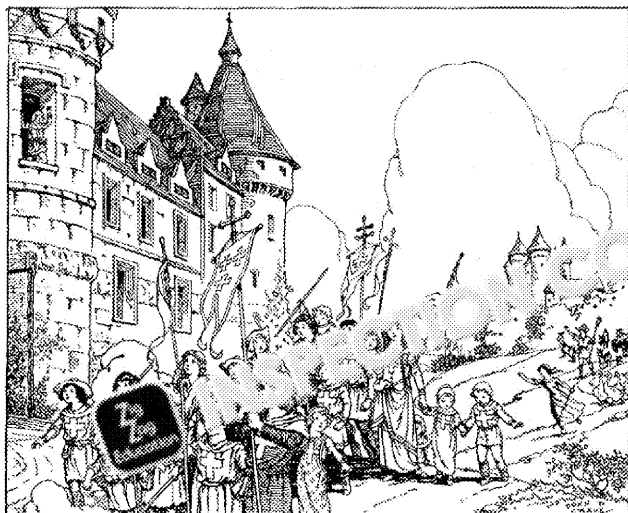
If you follow my statutes and keep my commandments and observe them faithfully, you shall dwell in the land, and you shall lie down, and no one shall make you afraid; I will remove the sword from the land, and no sword shall go through your land. (Leviticus 26:3-4)

In the New Testament, God does not send anyone to war, and teaching is about peace. There are various explanations about the difference in teaching between the Old and New Testaments.

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from a Christian perspective. Some Christians feel that times changed – and God had revealed his plan through Jesus. Others feel that the Jewish nature – he was never a God who wanted violence, but the Jewish people bring them victory.



Portrayal of Crusaders marked with, and carrying, the sign of the cross – are they 'taking up their cross'?

However, Jesus also says that those who are killed for him will be saved. This can be seen as a paradox (being put to death for a cause that can be used by those who are not). This can be used by those who believe that fighting for Jesus is a way to gain eternal life.

Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it. (Matthew 10:39)

Jesus says that those who take up the cross and follow him are not worthy of this world. This is not this as meaning that they are not doing anything necessary to save the world (life on the cross). However, those who are marked themselves with the cross are going into battle.

'... and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me.'

Impact and Influence

Many Christians reject the idea of **holy war**, believing that God does not want people killed. Many other religious people will also believe that God prefers peace. However, some people will disagree with holy wars, believing that killing in the name of religion does not exist is completely unnecessary, and brings much unnecessary suffering. In the modern world, secular, and religion has less influence on politics (in countries such as the UK). Therefore, holy wars are much less likely to be declared in the modern world, certainly. Therefore, holy wars in modern times are much less common than they were in the past.

However, some religious people believe that God desires certain conflict. They believe that God wants political power for a religion – so that more places are ruled in line with their religion. This may support conflict which they believe is **holy war**.

Quick Questions

11. Describe what is meant by holy war.

Now Try This...

12. Explain why Christians may have different beliefs about holy war. Refer to your sources of wisdom and authority.

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Christian Attitudes to Different Types of Warfare

Keywords:

- ♦ **deterrence** – something used to stop someone from doing something else to deter people from committing crime.
- ♦ **sanctity of life** – a belief that life is sacred and/or special, implying that it

Conventional Warfare

Conventional warfare refers to armies fighting each other. In the modern era, it involves the use of modern weapons and other weaponry operated by soldiers in a combat zone. It may involve the targeting of military targets.

Christians who object to violence and war in general will object to this, but the type which is likely to be accepted by many **denominations** – it allows for the defence of the weak, and also to surrender; it is seen as fairer and more proportionate. It is also the basis of **just war theory** (see below). It also targets soldiers rather than **civilians**. Churches are not completely opposed to conventional warfare, if it is justified (see *Theory* above).

A potential issue with modern conventional warfare is that it can be unfair. A more developed nation, with superior tactics and weapons, may be able to win, and of minimising their casualties. This may make going to war less serious, because they do not expect high loss of life. Some Christians object on this basis, if conventional war is no longer as hard a decision for

Technological Warfare

Technological warfare includes the use of drones (unoccupied planes) and other technology. It is only a military target with the aim of no civilian casualties.

Technological warfare divides Christians. The bonuses of such warfare are that it is more accurate, and that it may minimise casualties to the **combatants** using it. Some Christians object for not putting combatants in real danger (those flying drones remotely). Others see it as unfair to kill someone who has no opportunity to fight back, and as more of an execution than warfare.

Furthermore, as technological warfare is relatively new, it still faces many issues. It is not yet completely accurate. Many civilians have become casualties where strike targets. This happens especially where military targets are next to schools or hospitals. The middle of highly populated areas.

Unlike conventional warfare, which is mentioned in the Bible, and appears in the Testaments, there is nothing in the Bible about technological warfare, and many Christian **denominations**.

Apocalyptic Warfare

Apocalyptic warfare is warfare which can wipe out many people and potentially the planet. Generally, this would be due to **weapons of mass destruction** which have power to kill and harm large numbers of people indiscriminately (e.g. soldiers and **civilians**).

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They include:

- ◆ nuclear weapons such as nuclear bombs (These use the power of to achieve destructive results. For example, they may split atoms into smaller parts, or collide atoms at a fast speed to release great amounts of energy which can damage larger areas than conventional weapons. They also release radioactive components which may pollute the environment, raise the risk of cancer for people in affected areas and cause deformities in unborn humans and animals.);
- ◆ chemical weapons such as nerve gas (which can kill people by affecting how their nerves function); and
- ◆ biological weapons such as anthrax (which is potentially lethal).

Weapons of mass destruction are an interesting topic for many Christians. They were founded before such weapons existed – for example, there could be no teaching about weapons of mass destruction.

It is, therefore, important to be able to apply Christian teaching from other areas to weapons of mass destruction; teachings which promote **pacifism** will oppose weapons of mass destruction, while teachings which allow **violence** for certain reasons *might* be able to support the use of weapons of mass destruction.

Here are some reasons that Christians (and others) oppose WMD, because of the problems they cause:

- ◆ They can kill many people.
- ◆ They (may) harm the environment, and future people who are not born yet.
- ◆ They may not allow people a chance to defend themselves or to escape.
- ◆ Some may kill people very slowly, so they die in prolonged pain.
- ◆ Accidents with WMD use and WMD tests can be very damaging.
- ◆ Countries who have WMD can threaten or manipulate countries who do not. Rich countries rich and poorer countries poor.
- ◆ Using WMD cannot fulfil **Just War** criteria for just fighting within a war.
 - WMD are highly unlikely to be proportional to the reason for using them (retaliation against other WMD).
 - WMD will kill and harm anyone (and anything) in the areas targeted. They will certainly harm innocent people / civilians.

When you draw near to a town to fight against it, offer it terms of peace. If it agrees and surrenders to you, then all the people in it shall serve you in forced labour. (Deuteronomy 20:10-11)

Many Christians believe that such a destruction of life is wrong, and cannot be justified in any circumstances. Because it violates the concept of **sanctity of life** (the belief that life is sacred and should not be destroyed). They may also reject certain WMD because they are too inhumane for the world, and they feel that the world belongs to God, so these WMD are disrespectful. Christians believe that God called them to be stewards of the world – to look after it. So many would say that many WMD go against this duty of care.

Several popes have spoken out against weapons of mass destruction because of the harm to the environment, and because the money spent developing and maintaining them could be better spent on helping society, including the poor. This reflects the teaching that we should love our neighbour as ourselves.

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care not only about the potential damage which weapons of mass destruction could be used, but also the harm they do by just existing.

'One of the most serious [challenges] is increased military spending and the developing nuclear arsenals. Enormous resources are being consumed for these purposes, which are spent on the development of peoples, especially those who are poorest.'

However, some Christians do believe that there are some benefits to WMD:

- ◆ they can be useful in an extreme emergency
- ◆ they can be used to **retaliate** against another use of WMD
- ◆ they may sometimes save more lives overall (governments may believe that they will save soldier casualties on their side)
- ◆ they can be used as a deterrent (see below)

The last reason is the reason why atom bombs were dropped on Japan. Some people felt that, while these would cause great destruction and loss of life, they would also bring fighting (of the Second World War) to an end, saving more lives. (The only wartime use of nuclear bombs was the use of two atom bombs dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of the Second World War. The results were so destructive, that use of nuclear weapons has been condemned by many, and nuclear bombs have not been used since.)

Christians might see using WMD as the lesser of two evils in such situations, or might believe that using WMD is not acceptable, however extreme the situation. Many also disagree with any form of violent retaliation, so disapprove of WMD for this reason.

Interestingly, some people appear to believe that possessing weapons of mass destruction can be better or worse, depending on who has them. The US and the UK felt it acceptable to go to war with Iraq in 2003 over claims of mass destruction (though these claims were never confirmed and Iraq may not have had any). However, the US and the UK both possessed weapons of mass destruction at the time.

Furthermore, one use for nuclear weapons is to keep them, (hopefully) to prevent other people from attacking (with nuclear weapons). Several countries, including the UK, keep nuclear weapons today for this purpose. The idea is that if one country attacks another, they will receive a nuclear strike in return – this is the idea of **deterrence**. Keeping nuclear weapons to stop others using nuclear weapons against you is seen as a form of self-defence. In practice, this has worked well, but it is not always clear why.

Some Christians still disapprove of keeping nuclear weapons as deterrence. They would disapprove of any WMD (see above), and also because it is very expensive, which are not being used, and the money could be spent elsewhere.

Another consideration is that people may fear that if many countries have nuclear weapons, this makes it more likely that people who will actually use weapons of mass destruction will acquire them.

What if we have weapons of mass destruction or as deterrence?

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Many people (including Christians) who feel that there should be no nuclear weapons. They want all countries to disarm and get rid of their nuclear weapons (nuclear disarmament). Some countries, like the UK, have a nuclear deterrent. One British organisation which works for nuclear disarmament is the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Whether to keep/have a nuclear deterrent is a controversial issue in the UK.

However, some Christians feel that having WMD, such as nuclear weapons, is necessary because it stops other countries from taking advantage, and this is better than having no weapons. Weapons save lives.

Notable countries which possess such weapons include the UK and the USA. Many Christians are in favour of Christianity, and there are many Christian government members who have nuclear weapons. They believe that if they possess weapons of mass destruction, they are making the world a safer place.

Quick Questions

13. State three types of warfare.
14. Describe one Christian attitude to conventional warfare.
15. Outline the argument for and against having nuclear weapons. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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Summary for Violence and Conflict

- ◆ There are different Christian positions on **violence**. The Old Testament God does not desire violence, but it also contains many **Wars**. Jesus did not promote war. However, he also spoke about bringing conflict and support wars.
- ◆ **Violence** can be justified for reasons such as **self-defence, retaliation**. Christians feel that self-defence is a justifiable reason for violence, but these reasons for violence – stopping his disciples using violence to
- ◆ Religion can be seen as a cause of violence – many modern wars have and differences in belief can fuel conflict. However, it can also be and multiple causes, and are generally caused by more than just religion. Religion promotes **peace** and encourages to reduce conflict.
- ◆ **Terrorism** is an important issue in the modern world. Many people religion – with radicalised believers committing terrorist acts. However, people oppose terrorism.
- ◆ **Just War Theory** deals with conditions which may make a war just to war just and those which make fighting in war just. It has been largely including by St Thomas Aquinas. However, many people do not agree that just war criteria can be met.
- ◆ **Holy war** is religiously motivated war – started by a religious figure often with promise of a spiritual reward. Most Christians today do not them to fight for religious reasons, but the Bible records many holy
- ◆ Christians have different opinions on different types of warfare – combat the most accepted. Many feel that **nuclear weapons** and other **weapons** unacceptable; however, many 'Christian' countries have nuclear weapons



A soldier with symbol on his hand. War and peace are inextricably linked.

Now Try This...

16. 'Countries should not keep weapons of mass destruction.' Discuss this statement.

Argue for **and** against this statement, referring to different Christian teachings, including sources of wisdom and authority. Explain and evaluate the importance of different points of view from a Christian perspective. Reach a conclusion which follows from your argument.

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Peace and Peace Making

Many Christians want to achieve **peace**; some are completely against violence, work for peace, and carry out non-violent action.

Pacifism

Key Concept – Pacifism

Pacifism is the belief that all **violence** is wrong, and the opposition to

Pacifism is an interesting concept; many people are pacifists and oppose violence. Some people are mentally and physically hurt by violence and that this is not good. Some people believe that violence does not achieve anything or that what it achieves is not worth the cost. Some people believe that violence creates a circle of violence; those who have experienced violence are more likely to use violence against others. Some people are pacifists partly because of a belief in **sanctity of life** – because life has been given by God, and so should not be destroyed.

There are two types of pacifism:

- ♦ **Absolute pacifism** is the belief that violence is always wrong, no matter the circumstances. No acts should ever be carried out, including in self-defence, or to help others.
- ♦ **Conditional pacifism** is the belief that violence is wrong in principle, but that there are some circumstances in which it is acceptable, for example, as a lesser evil to bring peace or to protect the innocent.

Note: there is a fine line between conditional pacifists who believe that violence is sometimes necessary, and those who sometimes see it as *less* bad than a terrible alternative and those who see it as *not* bad when they see it as the best course of action.

Keywords:

- ♦ **ahimsa** – not injuring, compassion, also non-violence (the term is used in Indian religions)

Pacifists feel that it is better to reject violence. Absolute pacifists make a distinction between *active* and *passive* violence. They believe it is always worse to *actively* do something bad, than to be *passive* (accept other things happening without acting), where this has bad consequences.

However, others may not be convinced of this. Some people believe that **pacifists** are cowardly; they are not prepared to get hurt fighting for what is right. They might also argue that pacifism can be more damaging than some violence – for example, if a weaker people might be hurt if a country, made up of people, defends itself violently, than if they do not defend themselves, and are all killed.



Many see non-violence as a weakness.

Conditional pacifism may be able to rescue itself from this criticism, as it can be applied in extreme circumstances.

? See what you think – would you rather kill one bad person, or allow five good people to die? Some people will say it is better to save the five good people. Others will say that it is worse to become a murderer than to allow

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Pacifism is more accepted today than at some points in the past. Many of themselves respect pacifists for their beliefs about not harming others.

However, during the Second World War, when there was conscription (people over 16 years of age were legally required to fight), some pacifists who refused to fight were disobeying the law.

Some people are not total pacifists, but associate with pacifist opposition to wars are **unjust** because it would be acceptable to kill enemy soldiers, but peace and war almost always results in innocent deaths.

Some groups of Christians such as the Quakers, and other individual Christians teach absolute pacifism. In their declaration to King Charles II in 1660, they claimed that Jesus taught against violence, and that they desired the King to achieve with peace through.

Our principle is, and our Practices have always been, to seek peace and ensure peace, we... do utterly deny, with all outward wars and strife and fightings with outward weapons, by any means, in any way, and under any pretence whatsoever. And this is our testimony to the world.
(Quaker Declaration 1660)

Due to Christian teachings (covered above) about promoting **peace**, and not **retaliating** with **violence**, Quakers and many other Christians believe that violence and war are wrong, and do not serve God. Jesus stopping his disciples defending him with violence provides particular biblical evidence that God opposes violence, even for religious goals or defence.

'... but Jesus said to him, "Judas, is it with a kiss that you are betraying the Son of man? You were around him saw what was coming, they asked, "Lord, should we strike him with the sword?" But Jesus said to them, "If I will, I could call on my Father and he would send me more than twelve legions of angels. But how could I deliver up the Son of man to those who would kill the body but cannot kill the soul?"' (Luke 22:48-51 NKJ)

'... all who take the sword will perish by the sword...' (Matthew 26:52)

Other Christians are not pacifists. They believe that violence and war can be justified as to defend and protect people. They may feel that the Golden Rule sometimes would wish to be defended (with violence) for violence, then it is acceptable. They may point to Jesus commanding his disciples to be armed as a justification for being acceptable. See reasons why Christians may accept violence (above) and why they would not be pacifists.

'In everything do to others as you would have them do to you...' (Matthew 22:39)
He said to them, 'When I sent you out without a purse, bag, or sandals, did you lack anything?' 'No, not a thing.' He said to them, 'But now, the one who has a purse must take it, and similarly the one who has a sword. One who does not have a sword must sell his cloak and buy one...' (Luke 22:35-38)

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² Quote from Quaker declaration 1660 from <http://www.quaker.org/minnfm/peace/A%20Declaration>

Impact and Influence

Pacifism has had an interesting impact on the world. Some disputes which could have been very **violent**, have been concluded **peacefully**, due to the pacifistic beliefs of some of those who participated. Some conflicts have had fewer fighters because pacifists have refused to fight. Pacifists have also influenced those who agree with violence in certain circumstances to question when, and whether, it is necessary.

On the other hand, there are many violent conflicts in the world, which show that pacifism, at least absolute pacifism.

As the Catholic and Anglican Churches accept the existence of just war, they are not pacifists. Therefore, Catholics and Anglicans are less likely to be pacifists. However, they are conditional pacifists, believing that violence is wrong in most circumstances, but accepting that using violence as a last resort is sometimes necessary.

Quick Questions

17. Describe what is meant by absolute pacifism.

Now Try This...

18. Explain why there are different Christian attitudes to pacifism. Refer to the teachings of wisdom and authority.

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Different Ways Individuals, Communities and Societies

Keywords:

- ♦ **ahimsa** – non-violence, a concept in many Eastern religions
- ♦ **mercy** – forgiving someone punishment which they deserve
- ♦ **passive resistance** – disobeying authority without taking violent action
- ♦ **reconciliation** – being reunited in a positive sense with someone one was previously in conflict with

Working for Peace and Justice

Many Christians and others work for **peace** and **justice** in the world. Individuals live their everyday lives with respect, and stand up for what is right. Communities work with other communities so that they can co-exist peacefully. Societies can work to create a more just and peaceful world.

Martin Luther King Jr. was one individual who worked for peace and justice. He protested peacefully for people of all ethnicities to have equal rights. He wanted what was right, but without being violent – by using non-violent sit-ins, protests and marches. In the end, a large proportion of American society were behind the civil rights movement. Creating cohesion between people of different ethnicities should, in practice, help to create peace, and it should remove anger and tension.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu also helped to bring peace and justice to South Africa through the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. Here, facilitating discussion, and bringing people together, to overcome past boundaries. (You can recap information on *Church and Society / Relationships and Families / Christian Understandings of Equality*.)

Some Christian communities want to work in specific ways for peace, such as the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament – which is a specifically Christian secular movement. They meet, protest nuclear weapons, and try to persuade people to give up nuclear weapons.

One Christian group working for peace today is CHIPS (Christian International Peace Service) by having groups of Christians live in areas of conflict, attempting to improve relations using spiritual and practical methods. The groups are made up of those from different sides of the conflict so that conflicting parties can coexist. They hear perspectives from the different sides and encourage conflicting people in the area to work together. They aim to de-escalate conflict.

CHIPS has been acting since the mid to late twentieth century, and has worked in areas such as the Philippines, Cyprus and Ireland. It is currently working in Africa where they have worked to build peaceful relationships between different groups. They have also supported healthcare initiatives, training and food production to make communities more stable. In London, CHIPS has worked to promote integration and wellbeing, and is currently working to prevent gang violence.

CHIPS works with people from many different backgrounds and faiths, but is primarily Christian. Members of CHIPS believe that God desires peace in society and spiritual wellbeing for all. They believe God by helping others to achieve the peace they believe Jesus has given them. They believe **reconciled** humans with God, and want to help humans reconcile with each other. CHIPS works in the way that it does.

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Christians, such as those who work for CHIPS, are given strong motivation to work for peace in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (including the verses Matthew 5:1–16). Jesus teaches that those who work for God, for example peacemakers, are blessed by God. He teaches that people should show **mercy** and do what is right – and working for reconciliation in conflict does this.

'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy... Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.' (Matthew 5:6–7, 9 NRSV)

He also teaches that those who face difficulties doing God's work are blessed. Many people working for peace will face such difficulty.

'Blessed are you who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' (Matthew 5:10 NRSV)

He teaches that those with gifts should not hide them, and faith should not be hidden. People should show others how their faith makes a difference to their lives, and should work to help others know God's love. CHIPS aims to do this, with members both living out their faith and helping others practically, so that God's love will make an impact in others' lives.

'No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, so that they may see the light. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.' (Matthew 5:15–16 NRSV)

Application and Understanding of Religious Teachings about Peace

Christian teachings about **peace** can be understood in different ways. In Matthew 5, Jesus appeared to teach very clearly that peace should not be compulsory. If someone attacked you, you should not attack them back – you should give to your enemies, love them and **pray** for them.

'You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." But I say to you, do not resist the evil doer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone takes your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. Everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you. You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, for those who persecute you will bless you. (Matthew 5: 38–44 NRSV)

Some Christians take this very literally – they will not defend themselves and they will pray for those they disagree with, rather than taking up arms. They interpret this as meaning people to be **pacifists**.

On the other hand, some Christians do not interpret such passages in quite this way. They see the actions (e.g. loving one's enemy) as a religious ideal, deliberately hard to carry out. They see the actions (e.g. not hating others) as examples of loving one's enemy – people should not seek to hate others – without necessarily having to do these specific things. Some may feel that the teachings are applied to personal situations – if someone does hit you or steal a person's property, the teachings do not apply to larger-scale situations such as war.

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Therefore, many Christians do aim not to have personal enemies, to help in conflict, but many see violence in **self-defence** as justified, and many accept war, if there is a good reason.

Non-violent Action

Key Concept – Non-violence as Force

Non-violent action generally refers to action which is used to challenge authority peacefully. Sometimes this involves **passive resistance**. Many people, including Christians, believe that non-violence can be a force – it can change policies, **reconcile** conflicts, and **bring about** change. Many feel that it can be more effective than violence, as it does not create further conflict and **retaliation**. It has the benefits of respecting fellow humans and staying true to Jesus' teachings against **violence**.

Many Christians believe that non-violent action is a good way to demonstrate their opposition to an authority, or to bring about change, but without being violent. So if an authority is teaching something that Christians do not agree with, they can disobey and keep their conscience clear. Non-violent action is also often safer than violent resistance. One example was the Jews during the Holocaust. It may have been unsafe to oppose Hitler openly, but they could do their part by secretly protecting others.

John 14:22–31 shows support for non-violent action – Jesus tells his disciples that those who love him will do as he has taught. This both includes being non-violent, as he has taught against retaliation and hurting others, and keeping other commands. As there is the possibility/probability that Christians will sometimes be required or expected by society to do things which go against Jesus' teachings, this suggests that Christians should resist this non-violently.

'... Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and I will love them, and we will come to our home with them.' (John 14:23 NRSV)

Jesus follows this by saying that he gives his disciples peace, and tells them that this peace should be interpreted to mean that with the peace of Jesus, Christians should have the strength to resist.

'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives, but my peace I give to you. Do not be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.' (John 14:27 NRSV)

However, not all Christians agree with non-violent action against authority. Some believe that breaking the law (unless it conflicts directly with Christianity). They feel that they should obey authority because God wants them to follow earthly leaders.

Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority without God. The authorities that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists them is resisting what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgement. (Romans 13:1–2 NRSV)

Other Christians disagree with non-violent action in certain instances – if an authority is acting evilly, they should be stopped with force, to save innocent lives – if necessary, even if resisters are imprisoned or killed.

Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked. (Psalm 140:1 NRSV)

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Many Christians believe that if they have a disagreement with the law they disagree with **peacefully**, and try to negotiate verbally.

Some Christians who feel that violence is wrong have specifically protested. For example Martin Luther King. Martin Luther King Jr (1929–1968) was an African American who campaigned for equal rights for black and white people in America until his death. His campaign included encouraging civil disobedience and organising marches. He encouraged black people to sit peacefully in areas where only white people were allowed, for example in restaurants and on buses, to protest against racial discrimination. This was disobeying the authorities, but it was not hurting anyone. It is arguable that King was taken more seriously for protesting in this way, and it made the protesters more likable. Eventually black people were granted equal rights with white people in America, partly in response to such protests. This shows that sometimes non-violent action may not only be deemed the right thing to do, but it can lead to change and reforming that which is unjust.



Gandhi leading a march

Many Hindus believe in **pacifism** and are absolute or conditional pacifists because they take a strong interpretation of the Hindu concept of non-violence (**ahimsa**). A notable Hindu absolute pacifist was Gandhi (1869–1948), who protested in public (non-violently), fasted / went on hunger strike, and marched, among other non-violent methods to make his points heard. Among other things, he opposed British rule and Indians fighting due to different religious beliefs. The quote below shows that he believed that violence and retaliation cause problems rather than solve issues, result in more violence, and cause great damage.

'An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind' (Gandhi)

Gandhi's family appealed to have his killer spared execution, because of Gandhi's belief in non-violence. However, this was not granted. This is a greatly respected Gandhi, but his ideas were not respected enough to offer punishment in those who were responsible for sending his killer.

Quick Questions

19. Describe one way in which a Christian charity may work for peace.

Now Try This...

20. Explain how and why non-violent action can be important to religious groups working for peace and justice. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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Value of Peace

Keywords:

- ♦ **evangelism** – spreading the news about Jesus and trying to convert people

Key Concept – Value of Peace

Clearly to some Christians, **peace** has a very high value. It has been commonly believed that God desires it. As well as having religious importance, it is also a means for the world – peace generally means harmony for people, it means the absence of conflict, and it can also mean environmental benefits, as war and conflict can damage the environment.

However, for other Christians peace is not the most valuable thing – there are certain circumstances where war is better than peace – in those circumstances.

Different Christian Attitudes to the Use of Violence to Achieve Peace

Some Christians feel that it is acceptable to use **violence** to achieve **peace**. The 2003 Iraq War (which included the 'Christian' countries of the USA and the UK) had aims included recovering any weapons of mass destruction (to bring peace to the world) and taking down Saddam Hussein to bring peace to the people of Iraq. Whether the latter aim is a higher level of peace is debatable. It can also be debated whether the loss of life is a goal of peace – people cannot benefit from peace if they have been killed in the conflict, as many Iraqi **civilians** were.

The 2003 Iraq War is a highly criticised use of violence to bring peace, but there are other conflicts which may attract less criticism. While many Christians oppose certain tactics and actions in the Second World War (such as the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki), many Christians agree that it was right to stop Hitler using violence – as Hitler could have killed many more people if the Allies had not intervened. Some Christians place blame on the theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer was aware of and possibly involved in one of the arguments that violent resistance to Hitler should have begun earlier, as this would have prevented the Holocaust.

It can be argued that because there is mixed success with using violence to achieve peace, it is wrong. Or it can be argued that because the stakes are so high (if the world is in a state of tyrannical dictatorship), violence is often necessary to achieve peace, as we are often thinking about.

Christian **pacifists** are absolute **pacifists** will always see violence as wrong, but many others will feel that there are some extreme circumstances in which violence is justified.

Should Working for Peace be the Most Important Activity for Christians?

Peace has an important place for Christians, with Jesus declaring:

'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.'

violence
peace
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This comes from the Sermon on the Mount, in a section called the Beatitudes, which lists various people who will be blessed. Jesus' other teaching and action for peace is his emphasis on non-violence as a priority for Christians who feel that they should follow Jesus' example.

Working for peace also takes other Christian teaching into account – love. Loving others as you would want to be treated can be seen to involve peace – peace with others, and it is often hard to help people in other ways if they are in the middle of a conflict.

However, it can be argued that there are more important activities for Christians. The most important thing to do is to love and serve God. This involves a relationship with God, and a relationship with him. It implies time spent worshipping him. Working for peace may be part of expressing love for God, but it is not the only way.

'Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?' He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'" This is the first and greatest commandment... (Matthew 22:36–38 NRSV)



Is giving aid more important than creating peace?

Also, Christians might feel that 'loving others' covers more than working for peace. The ways of helping others are said by Jesus in the parable of the Good Samaritan. The entry to heaven (in the parable of the talents) is not mentioned. Without peace, there will always be conflict. Working for peace stops some causes of conflict. There are sick and poor people in many parts of the world.

'... And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." On these two hang all the law and the prophets.' (Matthew 22:39–40 NRSV)

'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you in heaven; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was in prison and you visited me.' (Matthew 25: 34–36 NRSV)

Another activity which is important for many Christians is **evangelism** – spreading the Christian faith. Jesus commanded his followers to make more disciples, and some Christians believe that this is more important than working for peace. They may feel that evangelism is more important than working for peace because the world and this world are temporary, but Christianity guarantees eternal life. Evangelism focuses on evangelism, giving religious belief a high priority because of Jesus' emphasis on evangelism in the *Christianity Course Companion*.

And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:15–16 NRSV)

'Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever disobeys the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.' (John 3:36 NRSV)

Quick Questions

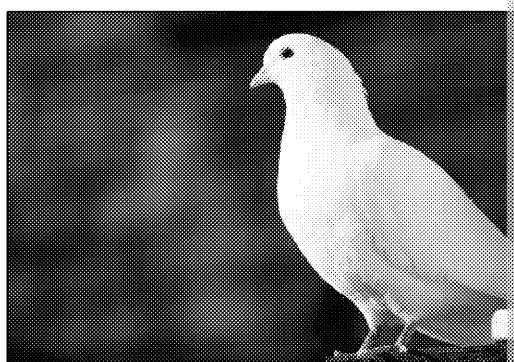
21. Describe one Christian attitude to using violence to achieve peace.
22. How do Christians value peace compared to Jesus' other commands/teachings? Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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Summary for Peace and Peace Making

- Many people completely disapprove of **violence**, and are **pacifists**. **Violence** is never acceptable. **Conditional pacifists** believe that violence is acceptable in some circumstances where violence may be the best option. Quakers are **pacifists**.
- Many people believe that **peace** is very important. For example, Christians value peace because Jesus said that peacemakers were blessed, and encouraged not to retaliate against attackers. The *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* was set up for peace, and charities such as CHIPS also work for peace. Figures such as Martin Luther King are famous for peacefully protesting **injustice** and using **non-violent** action.
- Some Christians feel that it is acceptable to use **violence** to achieve peace. Peace is an important value for Christians, but some may value other values such as love or **evangelism** more.



Within Christianity, the dove is a symbol of peace.

Now Try This...

23. 'There is no good reason for violence.' Discuss this statement.

Argue for **and** against this statement, referring to different Christian sources of wisdom and authority. Explain and evaluate the importance of peace from a Christian perspective. Reach a conclusion which follows from your arguments.



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Forgiveness and Reconciliation

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Justice, Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Term	Meaning	Significance
Justice	Fairness, getting what is deserved – morally or legally right	Christians, and many others, believe that people should act justly, and if they do wrong then it is just that they will be punished.
		However, Christians also believe that it can be better to be merciful to someone than to give them a just punishment. A judge may also believe that it is for God to judge and decide what is just as no human can know for certain.
Forgiveness	Letting go of bad feelings towards someone who has caused one pain	Christians believe that they should forgive people who do bad things to them; whether that means forgiving people and not going to war, or forgiving those who have fought against them.
		Not all Christians put forgiveness into practice, holding grudges and fighting wars.
Reconciliation	Being reunited in a positive sense with someone one was separated from	Some people, including some Christians, believe it is good for people who have been fighting to make up; they believe many people should forgive each other and be friendly.
		Some people do not think reconciliation is possible in the case of some conflicts, or even desirable.

Keywords:

- ♦ **prosecute** – bring legal action against someone

Key Concept – Justice, Fairness and Injustice

Justice is the concept of what is fair and right. Justice is sometimes seen as something to be fair, it must be balanced. However, there are different views on what is pleasing to God, or whatever is right for society? Is it equality for all? Is it because different people desire different things? Is it hurting someone? Is it helping someone put right wrongs? (**Note:** people may not always want the same version of justice – they may think that justice and helping someone put right wrongs done.) For Christians, the will of God is what is right. Injustice is the opposite of justice – unfairness.

Key Concept – Forgiveness

Forgiveness involves someone, who has been physically or mentally hurt, letting go of bad feelings towards, or grudges against, the person or people who have caused the hurt. Different religions have different teachings on this, and while many people believe in forgiveness, many find it a difficult concept to apply.

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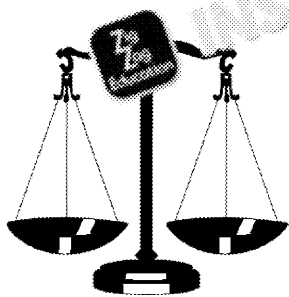


Key Concept – Reconciliation

Reconciliation can take many forms – reuniting people who have been separated. Reconciliation can take place between people who were previously separated in any physical sense, perhaps from different nations at war. It can also take place between people who were separated in any physical sense, but have had a disagreement. Reconciliation can take place between friends and family members. It can be much harder for people who have been oppressed, or fought against them, but this does happen.

Different Christian Teachings, Beliefs and Attitudes about Justice

The Bible teaches that people should act **justly**, as God is just and fair. Jesus shows that God does not always punish sinners, which would be just, and humans should be merciful to others. It is also important that humans act justly, as it is important not to take revenge on someone, thinking that it is just.



Scales of justice. People may also weigh up whether it is more important to achieve justice, or to forgive and reconcile.

'Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue, so that you may prosper, and land that the Lord your God is giving you.' (Deuteronomy 16:18)

For the LORD is righteous; he loves righteous deeds; he despises the blood of the wicked. His face is not turned away from the righteous; he hears their cry and helps them. (Psalm 11:7 NRS)

'Go and learn what this means, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice," and then you will know that I am God, and that you shall prosper, and the land shall be fruitful. I call not the righteous but sinners.' (Matthew 23:23)

Some Christians often emphasise justice over mercy. They believe that people should be punished for doing wrong. Some Christians believe in punishments such as the death penalty. However, others believe that justice is better left to God, and that while some punishment is necessary, mercy should be shown where possible.

fighting and hurting others should be avoided, and mercy shown – where possible.

The Bible emphasises that people actually need to act justly, rather than pretending to be just, making sacrifices to God, throwing parties and praising him, but hurting the poor and acting dishonestly.

Restorative Justice

One type of justice is restorative justice – helping victims of the wrong doers to move on with their lives. For example, criminals may practically make up for their crime and may meet with a victim / victim's family and apologise. The idea behind restorative justice is to help these individuals, rather than punishing them. Restorative justice is a process that aims to help the victim, the offender, and the community. It is a process that aims to help the victim, the offender, and the community. It is a process that aims to help the victim, the offender, and the community.

Restorative justice is a process that aims to help both victims and criminals to move on with their lives. It is a process that aims to help both victims and criminals to move on with their lives. It is a process that aims to help both victims and criminals to move on with their lives. It is a process that aims to help both victims and criminals to move on with their lives. It is a process that aims to help both victims and criminals to move on with their lives.

When someone steals an ox or a sheep, and slaughters it or sells it, the thief shall pay back four sheep for a sheep. The thief shall make restitution... (Exodus 22:1)

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Many Christian organisations work to use restorative justice. This includes church denominations, and groups which work specifically for restorative justice. For example, the Centre for Justice and Reconciliation is a Christian organisation whose aim is to promote restorative justice.

The Centre for Justice and Reconciliation works to educate people about restorative justice, and to change the legal system so that restorative justice also works with prisoners through the *Sycamore Tree* Prison Fellowship. Offenders meet with victims of crime (although not victims who they have offended against). Victims can express their feelings about how crime has affected them, which helps them forgive and move on. Offenders can see how crime affects others, which makes them think about the consequences of their actions, and aims to encourage them not to offend in the future. The project appears to have had success in many countries (but is not currently used in the UK).

Jesus also taught about restorative justice in Matthew 5:21–26. He teaches that all actions which hurt someone are punishable, even insults. However, he encourages people to **reconcile** with each other – to make up – in order to be right with others, and to be right with God. He shows that restorative justice is important for criminals, by explaining that people need to be right with those who they have hurt in order to be right with God. Jesus also suggests that by making amends to someone you have hurt, you are less likely to be punished because they will forgive you. While in most Western countries someone is prosecuted for criminal offences, those who take part in restorative justice may be able to have their punishment lessened, e.g. have their prison sentence reduced.

Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court to avoid handing you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be released from prison.
(Matthew 5:25 NRSV)

Different Christian Teachings, Beliefs and Attitudes about Forgiveness

Many Christians believe that Christians need to **forgive** others who have hurt them. The New Testament shows that Jesus emphasised forgiveness, teaching Christians to forgive others.

Then Peter came and said to him, 'Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven.'
(Matthew 18:21–22 NRSV)

Some Christians interpret this to mean that there is a set number of times that someone should forgive someone else (seventy-seven). They feel that they must forgive people, but that if they keep being hurt by them, eventually they do not need to forgive any more. However, most Christians feel that Jesus is really saying that they should keep on forgiving, and never stop – there should be no limit on love and **mercy**.

Some Christians
seventy-seven
times.

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Most Christians will apply this teaching to anyone, and feel that it does not matter how close the person is to them. However, most translations imply that Peter is talking about someone in the community when he questions Jesus (or some translations give 'brother' to someone personally close). Therefore, some Christians have felt that this quote does not apply to non-Christians – so it may be acceptable for a Christian not to forgive someone who is not close to them.

However, Christians believe that Jesus died for the forgiveness of their sins. If they do not forgive others, they have no right not to forgive others – so most believe that this is the reason. In Christianity, God is believed to be extremely forgiving. Jesus said that he forgave an adulterous woman who the Jewish authorities would have stoned.

... Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin any more.' (John 8:11 NRSV)

Christians believe that God forgives them when they are truly sorry, but if they do not forgive others, God will not forgive them, and will punish them. This is because as they do not want to be **judged** harshly by God. (As this is quite a harsh statement, it stresses the importance of *trying* to forgive others, even if they find this very difficult.)

'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors... For if you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.' (Matthew 6:12, 14–15 NRSV)

'So my heavenly Father will also [punish] every one of you, if you do not forgive those who sin against your heart.' (Matthew 18:35 NRSV)

Taking it further...

Read the parable of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18:23–35 to get a better understanding of Jesus' teaching on forgiveness.



This can be taken to imply that Christians should not seek revenge, because this would seem to contradict the teaching of forgiveness. Christians might argue that they forgive those who harm them.

However, other Christians see forgiveness as a system. They may feel that strict punishment is necessary.

They, personally, must let go of negative feelings towards criminals. Consequently, they are likely to feel this way, and want strict punishments such as the death penalty for serious acts such as bombing abortion clinics).

Within Christianity there is hardly anything which is considered unforgivable. 'blasphemy against the [Holy] Spirit' will not be forgiven' (Matthew 12:31 NRSV), though there are different interpretations of this. Some Christians feel that it is unforgivable to deny God, Jesus and the Spirit and then choose to reject them. Others feel that it is unforgivable to claim that God's goodness is evil, or say that works of God are works of the Devil.

Con
to these
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Different Christian Teachings, Beliefs and Attitudes about Revenge

The New Testament teaches that Christians have been **reconciled** to God. Christians should reconcile with others who are in conflict with them. Jesus reconciled everyone to God by associating with people normally shunned.

collectors – he wanted everyone to follow him and be right with God. More than just want them to have a good relationship with him, but also to be right with God and if Christians are in conflict with others, then this will damage their relationship with God. He desires them to **forgive**.

'For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life.' (Romans 5:10)

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth. He said to him, 'Follow me.' And he got up and followed him. (Matthew 9:9-10)

'So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother is in need against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother and then come and offer your gift.' (Matthew 5:23-24 NRS)

So many Christians believe that they should try to reconcile with everyone, even those who are wrong. However, others feel that they should not reconcile with those who are wrong – they would see this as accepting/supporting wrongdoing. If people reconcile with them, but if they feel that they are acting against God, then they should not.

'If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault to them in private. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, go with one or two others, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three. If they refuse to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen to the church, let them be to you as a Gentile and a tax-collector.' (Matthew 18:15-17)

Important to note...

Some Christians will not see fighting which aims to punish as just because they believe that it is up to God to punish in such cases, and it is not for humans to decide such courses of action. However, others feel that it is important that humans punish those who deserve to be punished, because this is right.

Impact and Influence

Some believe that if everyone followed the teachings of Jesus, there would be a lot less conflict in the world. On the other hand, those who enter into conflict often claim that they are right in the long run. Alternatively, they may argue that **justice** is more important, and that the people they are fighting deserve to be punished, or that the people they are fighting for deserve to be liberated.

Religious organisations often work towards worldwide **forgiveness** and **reconciliation**, as do many non-religious people. However, if people believe that those who oppose them with violence do not deserve forgiveness, this may result in more hard feelings, and it will be more likely that conflict will reoccur.

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Quick Questions

24. Give three reasons why Christians might want to forgive others.
25. Describe Christian beliefs about justice and reconciliation. Refer to scriptural wisdom and authority.

Whether Forgiveness is Possible or Desirable

Case Study 1 – Offenders in a Community

There are various ways in which offenders can be **forgiven** by the community. The community must actually let go of grudges personally. The community can do this practically by inviting a past-offender to events and things going on with the community, making an effort to talk to them, and support them. Strong signs of forgiveness may be shown by giving a job, or another role in the community which shows them trust.

It may be very hard for a community to forgive offenders, especially if they have committed a severe offence. Christians may pray to God for the forgiveness of offenders. Members of the community may talk through their anger or sadness again with the offender themselves, in order to let go of bad feelings which stand in the way of helping back an offender. People who are attracted by an offender's actions may attempt to help them, which may help them to be forgiven. People will often find it easier to forgive for what they have done.

There are many reasons why forgiveness of offenders by the community is important. Members of the community may find it easier to forgive for themselves – so that they can move on from feelings of anger or sadness. Forgiveness also helps offenders who are seeking a new start. It can help them to make a new start, knowing that people have let go of their anger from the past. Forgiveness can benefit both offenders and the community in preventing further crimes. Offenders who feel forgiven are likely to feel better able to integrate, and less likely to commit crimes again. They may also work to stop others from offending.

Here is one example of an offender being forgiven by the community:
In 2006 an Amish community worked to forgive a shooter who walked into a school and killed some of the children, killing five (the Amish are a group of Christians who do not use many modern inventions). The Amish encouraged each other to forgive the shooter at his funeral and they also tried to help the shooter's family financially (the shooter was the son of the community). In this case, forgiveness was particularly important for the offender to deal with guilt and pain which they felt. The Amish strongly believe that they should not hold grudges, and that God is responsible for **justice** (so they do not seek revenge). They try to follow Jesus' example – according to the Gospel of Luke, Jesus forgave even to those responsible for his death.

Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.'

Case Study 2 – Extreme Wrongs / Deep Personal Pain

It might seem reasonable to forgive offenders who have shoplifted or committed minor crimes. Some groups of people (such as the Amish) who have the strength to forgive even the most extreme wrongs? What about when terrible things happen to ordinary people?

Many Jews have not been able to, or not wanted to, forgive the Nazis for the Holocaust (referred to by Jews as the Shoah – catastrophe); however, some have. One example is Eva Kor, who survived being experimented on at Auschwitz. She suffered the loss of many relatives, including her parents. She has given evidence at the trial of a Nazi officer who was convicted of crimes against humanity. She forgives him, and has even been hugged by him. She wants to forgive to

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without anger and hate, and has implied that she forgives all Nazis. **Note:** the Holocaust is one notable event which many people feel should not be forgiven because it was so terrible.

Many people have forgiven the killers of their relatives and friends, whether these have been mass murders; those who have been negligent such as drink-drivers; and those who have caused death through unfortunate accident. Many people who have been injured by others have also forgiven them. Sometimes this has been due to religious beliefs, and sometimes this has been due to other personal feelings. Many people feel that it is beneficial to try to let go of pain which has been caused them, and to let go of negative feelings against others. **Note:** this does not mean or necessarily that they no longer feel hurt, but that they want to move on.

In contrast, not everyone can bring themselves to forgive terrible things which have happened to them. Julie Nicholson was a vicar when her daughter Jenny was killed in the 7/7 terrorist bombings in 2005. She struggled with her grief and ended up resigning her job. She could not go on preaching the Christian faith when she was still so angry with her daughter's killer.

Many Christians feel that they need God's help to forgive truly terrible things, but that they should try to forgive because this is what God wants.

Quick Questions

26. Give three reasons why forgiveness may be desirable.

Now Try This...

27. Explain why Christian teachings on forgiveness can be challenging. Give sources of wisdom and authority.

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Social Justice and Injustice

Social justice is the idea that everyone deserves equal rights and opportunities. It means those of different genders and races should all be equally protected and have the same opportunities through a fair distribution of wealth and opportunity. Social injustice is the opposite.

Keywords:

- ♦ **welfare** – practical or financial support to make sure all people have a basic standard of living

Many Christians have campaigned for social justice because they believe that Jesus loves all people and views them equally. Jesus also criticised the Pharisees for putting law above helping people – he taught that people were more important than rules and should always be helped. The Old Testament also supports Christians in that people should be treated equally, as it teaches that all are created in the image of God. Also, as Christians believe that God is just, they believe that they too should seek to create a just society. This has inspired Christians to work for equality, such as the abolition of slavery.

Jesus was the first to teach that all people were created in the image of God.

[The Pharisees] watched him to see whether he would cure him on the sabbath. And he said to the man who had the withered hand, 'Come forward.' Then he said to them, 'Is it good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to kill?' But they were silent.

So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27 NRSV)

As well as treating people well, Jesus also promoted helping the poor. Bartimaeus the blind man begged for help from Jesus. Zacchaeus promised to pay back those he had cheated. Many Bible verses encourage Christians to help the poor. Many Christians believe that they should pay people fair wages, and give to charities.

'... if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light will shine in darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.' (Isaiah 58:10)

Ways in which Christians Work for Social Justice

Historically, Christians have helped to end the slave trade, bring better education to South Africa. (See previous sections on Martin Luther King and Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission – aiming to bring different groups together and promote peace and equal. You could also refer back to the topic on *Relationships and Fairness* and equality.)

However, Christians still work for **social justice** today – many campaign for higher taxes for the rich for a fairer distribution of wealth, so those in poverty have greater opportunities. Many campaign against gender and racial discrimination and many Christian MPs voted in favour of legalising homosexual marriage in the UK (though many also opposed). Many give to charities whose work includes promoting social justice, and help provide other services such as youth clubs and care for the elderly, providing many different sections of the community with help and opportunities.



More about...

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Ways in which Christians View Social Justice

Many Christians view social justice positively, following Jesus' teachings.

However, not all Christians promote **social justice**, and Christianity has not always been about social justice. In previous centuries the Catholic Church spent much money on the salaries of priests, bishops and Pope, when this money could have been spent on the poor. The Church also supported the slave trade, as the Bible does not forbid slavery.

Some Christians also feel that certain groups such as women or homosexuals are treated differently and not given the same opportunities, and that this is justifiable. Some Christians believe that men and women, heterosexuals and homosexuals are equal and should be given equal treatment and would argue strongly that this is not justifiable – see the section on *Families*.)

In modern times many Christians have felt that *God helps those that help themselves*. Some Christians often felt that the rich deserve the reward of wealth, which is why they thought the poor should be given minimal **welfare**, as they believe they have earned it. These may feel that higher taxes for the rich is not in fact social justice, it is just taking more money from those who earn more.

Relationship between Peace and a Just Society

Peace and a **just** society are linked in different ways.

Firstly, a just society may exist because there is peace – a peaceful society is more likely to be a just one because war almost certainly results in the deaths of innocent people, and destroys communities and societies.

Secondly, there may be peace where there are just societies – if there is no cause for war or conflict – often injustice leads to conflict, where those who are wronged are angry and retaliate against those who have hurt them.

It could be considered that Christians work for justice when they are working for peace. The Church works for peace in a number of ways:

- ◆ Some Church leaders speak out about peace, urging countries and religious groups to reconcile.
- ◆ Some Christians help organise negotiations so that people involved with conflict can talk through their issues and peacefully solve some of their problems.
- ◆ Some Christians donate money to charities which help those who have been victims of war, so that they can rebuild their lives and know a peaceful life without fighting.
- ◆ Some Christians protest against war.



Victims of war, refugees

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Pope Francis is a religious figure who has worked for peace. He helped to negotiate between the US and Cuba, who have been involved in conflict, and has spoken publicly promoting peace in many areas of the world, and condemning conflict, e.g. in Syria and Yemen. He is influenced by Christian teachings; for example, Jesus' focus on peace and opposition to conflict.

Quick Questions

28. Describe what is meant by social justice.
29. Describe Christian attitudes to social justice. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

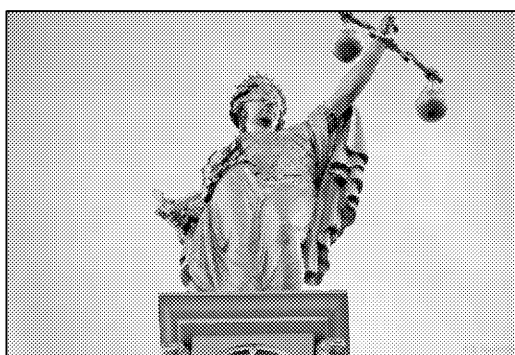


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Summary for Forgiveness and Reconciliation

- ◆ The concepts of **justice**, **forgiveness** and **reconciliation** are very important in Christianity. Christianity teaches that God is just, and desires humans to be just. Justice and mercy – different Christians emphasise justice and mercy to different degrees. God forgives them, and that they also need to continually forgive. They are reconciled with God, and should reconcile with others.
- ◆ There are some people who seem able to forgive others for terrible crimes. For example, a community who forgave a shooter, and some Jews who have forgiven the Holocaust. Many people feel that forgiving others helps them to move on. However, not everyone can forgive those who have harmed them.
- ◆ Social justice is where people in society are given the same opportunities and treated fairly. Jesus promoted this by treating people well and promoting peace. Christians have worked for this, for example by helping to abolish slavery and for equality. However, some Christians have not supported social justice. Some Christians do not support redistributing wealth. Peace can be linked to justice, allowing justice, and justice allowing peace.



Justice depicted blind, with a sword and weighing scales

Now Try This...

30. 'Christians should always forgive.' Discuss this statement.

Argue for **and** against this statement, referring to different Christian sources of wisdom and authority. Explain and evaluate the importance of forgiveness from a Christian perspective. Reach a conclusion which follows from your arguments.

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Dialogue between Religious and Non-Religious Views and Attitudes

Challenges for Religion

In the modern world, there are many challenges to religion from **secular** society is changing. Far fewer people identify as Christian. Many people in Britain of non-Christian religions and no religion that Christianity has too strong an influence in public life, such as in law and in education. Opinions on what religion should have in society vary greatly.

Keywords:

- ◆ **atheist** – someone who does not believe in God or gods
- ◆ **census** – a survey or counting a population and collecting statistics about it
- ◆ **denomination** – a particular branch within a religion, e.g. Catholicism, Anglicanism
- ◆ **faith** – belief and trust in something, here in Jesus and God
- ◆ **humanist** – someone who tries to live a good life without religion

Note the differences between the terms below:

- ◆ **secular** – not religious
- ◆ **secularism** – separating religion and the state (policy becoming more secular)
- ◆ **secularisation** – society (people) becoming less religious and more secular

Importance of Christian Religious Traditions in Britain

Christianity has had a great influence on Britain. For many people, especially Christians, this has great importance. For example, many UK laws, festivals and traditions have a Christian basis. Christians may find it important that laws have a Christian basis, as this gives the laws justification. Many Christians also enjoy celebrating traditions, lives, and festivals and traditions which are linked into British culture help to create a sense of identity. Festivals, such as Christmas, which many non-Christians celebrate, this can encourage Christians to work to share the positive aspects of their faith, such as sharing love and goodwill.

Many laws, such as laws against theft and murder, have a basis in the Bible (and Jewish) religion and values.

You shall not murder... You shall not steal. (Exodus 20:13-15)

Many people respect these laws and see them as universal – principles that apply to many non-Christians, Muslims, and non-religious world views.

However, there are many UK laws which have a basis in Christian tradition that some Christians disagree with. For example, until relatively recently (1967) homosexual marriage has only been legal in the UK (apart from Northern Ireland). Those who supported homosexuality or homosexual marriage being illegal, including Christians, views against homosexuality. Christianity has also been used in the past, and inferior rights for women – though many Christians will claim that these are interpretations of Christianity, and that Christianity promotes fairness. Life and euthanasia have also been influenced by Christian views that life is precious and should not be destroyed.

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However, many laws which are based on Christian teaching (e.g. banning of animal slaughter, which has since been changed, and Britain's laws are becoming less influenced by religion as the country becomes less religious. Some secular people will argue that it is wrong for Christianity to have such influence, and it is important to remove religious influence from laws on which we base our society.

In the UK, Christian festivals are often celebrated (to some extent) by many people, and sometimes by people of other religions.

Christmas and Easter are the two largest Christian celebrations, and many people celebrate these whether they are Christian or not. At Christmas, people decorate their homes, and there are special events and occasions for socialising. People give presents, spend time with family and friends. Many people have an Advent Calendar – or a Christmas tree – and give chocolate eggs, and many people 'give something up' for Lent.

Many festivals and traditions within British culture which are not as obviously connected to Christianity do have a basis in or link to it. 'Pancake Day', for example, is a tradition in Britain – many people will observe the day by eating pancakes, in some form, at some point during the day. This does not seem particularly Christian, but it is a Christian tradition. Shrove Tuesday, as it is otherwise known, is the day before the start of Lent (which falls on a Tuesday in February or March) when Christians traditionally used up foods such as eggs and butter (for example, by making pancakes) before beginning their fast (not eating certain luxury foods) in Lent. Such traditions are an important part of British cultural life for many people.

Many other festivals have links to Christianity. Valentine's Day started out as a day to remember this saint on 14th February. Mother's Day started out as a day when most churches celebrate Mothering Sunday as a celebration of mothers (Mother's Day). However, the original meaning of Mothering Sunday was that people would visit their mother churches – if they had moved away they would return to work in the church they grew up. Even Guy Fawkes Day / Bonfire Night / Firework Night, which is effectively a celebration that a Catholic did not manage to blow up the Protestant monarchy! Even Halloween has Christian links – it is the day before All Saints' Day. So many festivals and traditions which do not have a Christian, or Christian-influenced, basis.

However, as followers of other religions increase in Britain, festivals and traditions from other religions have become increasingly evident. Many people are aware of Muslims fasting during the Islamic month of Ramadan, and some schools with high numbers of Muslim pupils will close for the Muslim festivals of Eid.

It is not only religious festivals which have influenced British tradition. For example, the tradition of not working on Fridays stems from the Catholic tradition to not eat meat on Fridays. Many businesses do not open on Sundays, and British shops traditionally close on Sundays, reflecting that it is the Christian holy day – when Christians believe Jesus was resurrected (UK law actually places restrictions on Sunday trading). Christianity also influences many schools as Christian schools and promote Christian worship during assemblies and church services. Many people disagree with the amount of influence Christianity has on British culture (see detail later).

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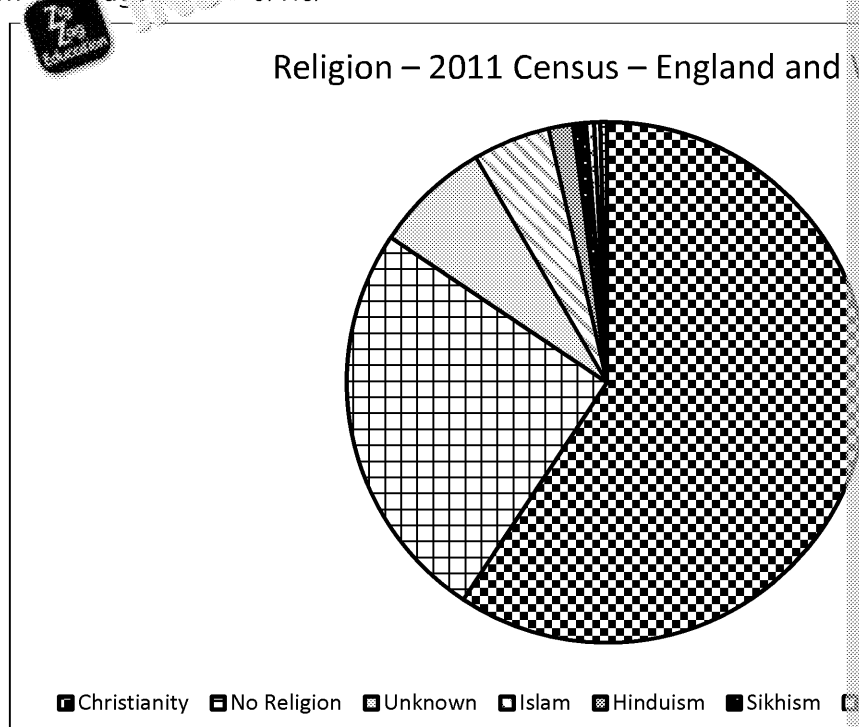
Christianity as the Established Religion in a Country of Diverse Religions

Britain is traditionally a Christian country. The state religion is the Church of England. Christianity – and approximately one million people attend Church of England services each week. Britain does not only contain Christians, but people of many other religions. Christianity has spread to Britain through migration and immigration (the arrival of Christianity), and through the movement of ideas over various centuries. British people are also free to convert to different religions (or none).

In 2011 there was a **census** taken of the population in England and Wales, which gave people the option of telling the government their religion.

Here are the results of the data on religion from the 2011 census:

Christianity – 59.3%, No religion – 25.1%, Unknown (the question on religion was not asked of some people) – 4.8%, Hinduism – 1.5%, Sikhism – 0.8%, Judaism – 0.5%, Buddhism – 0.4%, Jainism and Paganism – 0.4%.⁴



So, in 2011, basically about 60% of the population was Christian, 25% were non-religious, and there was a very small percentage of other religions (though this is of course, some people (about 7%) did not answer, so it's worth bearing in mind the numbers of people in all of these groups).

An interesting point to note was that the census did not find religion even though up about 5% of the population, several areas had over 20% Muslim population. The census found that many religious groups had concentrated in certain areas of Britain, other religious traditions are very important in other areas.

It is worth noting that while the census classed non-religious people together, people have the same beliefs. Those who do not believe in God or gods are called atheists, many, but not all, are **humanists** – they believe in promoting the best interests of humans, but base their philosophy on reason, and not religion.

³ Data from <https://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/facts-stats.aspx>

⁴ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/articles/religion>

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Key points:

- ! While numbers of Christians in Britain are decreasing, in 2011 over half of the population still identified as Christian, so it is still the majority religion and has many followers.
- ! Britain is becoming more diverse, with higher numbers of other religions, and no religion. (London is the most diverse)

Task
Find out how many people in the UK have no religion. [zigzagged.co.uk](http://www.zigzagged.co.uk)

The Monarch as the Supreme Governor of the Church of England

Christianity (including all **denominations**) is the majority religion of the United Kingdom. The Church of England is the largest Christian church in the country, with the Queen (the head of state) also the head of the Church of England.

Because the Queen is both in charge of the country and the Church of England, the two are closely linked. Part of the Queen's title is 'Defender of the Faith'. However, the Queen cannot become a member of the Church of England, or wants to state her own beliefs – she protects the Church's interests, making sure that it can carry out its beliefs in England and Wales. The Queen has spoken about how she wants the UK to be a country where all religions can practise their faiths – part of her Christian faith involves tolerance for all of everyone.

Links between the church and the Queen include:

- ◆ The Queen was crowned in church.
- ◆ Church of England vicars pledge allegiance to the Queen.
- ◆ The Queen officially appoints certain senior positions in the Church of England, including the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Quick Questions

1. Give three Christian traditions important in British society.
2. How do Christians influence Britain with Christianity? Refer to sources of Christian wisdom and authority.

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The Role of Religion in Public Life

Whether or not you approve, religion plays a large part in public life – of the UK this is mainly the Christian religion.

Keywords:

- ♦ **Sabbath** – the Jewish holy day

Key Concept – Equality in Society

Equality generally means people being treated with the same respect and the same opportunities. Often factors which affect equality of opportunity are outside someone's control, for example, the gender, sexuality or ethnicity.

There are many issues about how best to apply equality. Most people agree that some people should not be given equal opportunities; for example, someone with no medical training should be employed as a doctor over someone without. However, not everyone takes the same approach to education. Many people argue that children at school should be given extra help, and maybe even have extra money (they should be given a shot at equal opportunities in life by being treated with more help).

Religion raises interesting questions for equality in society – if one religion is prominent in public life, is this fair to other religions and those of no religion? Some argue that so long as non-Christians are given the same rights as Christians, the dominance of Christianity is not a problem. Others feel that it is unfair, and either Christianity should not have a part in public life, or other religions and humanism should be able to participate equally.

Religion can also clash with the equality of individuals in society. Think about how women and homosexuals, for instance, may be treated/viewed. There can be a clash between respecting religions and treating individuals differently.

Bishops in the House of Lords

The Houses of Parliament in the UK are made up of the House of Commons (elected Members of Parliament – MPs) and the unelected House of Lords. In general, laws must be approved by both houses, though the Lords have less influence than the Commons. The House of Lords has been seen as controversial in recent years, because it means that laws can be not just being passed or blocked by those who have been democratically elected, but also by others. Several political parties are in favour of reforming the House of Lords, so that it contains at least a higher proportion of representatives.



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There are currently around 800 members of the House of Lords. Currently, 27 are bishops (additional bishops or vicars may also be made Lords), known as the Lords Spiritual.

Some people feel that it is good to have bishops in the House of Lords. They can be more objective as they are not tied to political parties, and that they are disadvantaged in society, following Jesus' teaching to love and care for all.

The bishops in the House of Lords received some positive press in 2012 for having enough support for an amendment to a bill (law) meaning that the law could be reviewed but needed review by the House of Commons. Their amendment meant to include child benefit in a cap on benefits, meaning that families on benefit could claim money above the benefits cap to support their children. Rt Rev. John Lowery of Leeds argued that everyone should get child benefit, and that this should mean to give a family with children the same benefits as a family without children. He wanted money for their offspring.

However, many people feel that it is wrong to have bishops in the House of Lords. They have been elected, giving Christianity more influence over the law than other religions (there is no quota in the House of Lords as the bishops do), and also automatically give religious views a voice.

Some people, including many Christians, are in favour of keeping Church of England bishops in the House of Lords but also making sure that other branches of Christianity and other religions are represented. They feel that a religious voice in politics is beneficial, and that religious leaders can represent the interests of the public.

However, many people feel that there should be no bishops, or other religious figures specifically appointed to the House of Lords. They feel that it is wrong for religion to have such an influence on politics, in an age where many people are not religious, or do not follow the particular religion of the Church of England. Humanists UK are campaigning against there being bishops in the House of Lords because they feel that it is wrong that they are unelected and promote a particular religion, which many British people do not hold, in politics. The National Secular Society also campaigns against this, believing there should be no official religious representatives in the House of Lords because religion should not be privileged. They also argue that there should be no prayers or religious oaths in the House of Lords to fully separate religion and law.

Humanists UK
Humanists UK
for humanism
their views
influence
promote

The National
complete
campaign
as Humanists
viewpoint

There were recent proposals to reduce the number of bishops in the House of Lords to go ahead.

Christian Services to Mark Key Events

Church services are very common in Britain as part of key events. Obviously at celebrations such as Christmas and Easter, but they occur at other times too.

There are services for Remembrance Day in November, and the UK's national Cenotaph (an important war memorial) is religious, containing prayer and hymns.

State weddings and funerals, such as the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, and the funeral of former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, are held as religious ceremonies.

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Many schools hold church services to mark the start and end of term.

On a more informal level, local council meetings may hold prayers, and religious services, is regularly broadcast, for example *Songs of Praise*. The programme is controversial for not including non-religious speakers. The and beliefs in such places has been criticised, including by the National

Christian services are often used to mark many personal events as well. For practising Christians, and even those who are completely non-religious, a rite of passage, as christening is the traditional way of officially naming a child, married in church, or have a funeral which is held in a church. Being married a non-Christian funeral is becoming more common, but these rites of passage associations are still very much part of British life.

Public Holidays and Christian Celebrations

Of the eight bank holidays in the UK, four are connected to Christian festivals: Good Friday, Christmas Day and Boxing Day. However, while Good Friday an observance for Christians, Easter Monday and Boxing Day are not necessarily a celebration – though 26th December is also St Stephen's Day, and Boxing Day is a time of charitable giving of 'boxes' of gifts and/or leftovers at Christmas time.

People of other religions are also free to celebrate their festivals, and the day off from work, many employers will respect holiday requests for those days.

The Equality Act 2010 protects those who want to take holiday, or other time off, for religious reasons. Employers are not forced to give time off for religious holidays, but if they refuse, this potentially grounds for them to be prosecuted for legal discrimination. For religious days, religious people may want to take time off regularly, for example a Muslim might take a long lunch break on a Friday to go to the Mosque, and a Jew might take time off for the **Sabbath**. (Christians may also want to observe certain times, such as Lent.) If an employer can accommodate this, employees could sue for discrimination if they cannot.

Church Schools

Many schools in the UK are church schools – 1 in 4 primary schools and 1 in 16 secondary schools are Church of England schools, with about one million students educated in these.⁵ There are also other primary and secondary schools linked to different Christian **denominations**. There are many Catholic schools, for instance.

These schools vary in their emphasis on religion, and their emphasis on students belonging to Christianity, but there are always links to the faith. For some schools, you must prove that you attend church in order to get a place at the school. This is controversial, as often desirable schools happen to be church schools and some parents may attend church with their children while many non-religious parents will feel it unfair if their child may end up at a church school. This is controversial, as often desirable schools happen to be church schools and some parents may attend church with their children while many non-religious parents will feel it unfair if their child may end up at a church school.

⁵ Data from: <https://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/facts-stats.aspx>

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Most church schools will hold religious assemblies, and may hold church and/or end of term (including services for Christmas and Easter). More religious services more often – for example they may hold regular Eucharist services at the start of Lent. Sometimes these are optional and students only attend them if they wish. Church schools may provide additional religious activities outside of assemblies or services on other days. Chaplains are also likely to be accessible regularly to students.

There may be more lessons allocated to religious studies than at other schools, and some may be required to sit a full RS GCSE. Many church schools provide a full and balanced curriculum in RS classes, though there may be a heavier focus on Christianity. Faith and morals are part of the curriculum – they could, for example, choose not to include lessons on human evolution. Some religious subjects for assemblies or RS classes, e.g. evolution will be covered from a religious perspective. Creationism will not – however some schools will have a stronger religious focus in general and may promote religious views more broadly, including teaching creationism as science.

Note: All schools receiving funding from the state are not allowed to teach creationism as science, but this does not mean that it does not happen. If schools are privately funded then they have more leeway. Sex and relationships education is compulsory in the UK schooling system, but some religious schools may have exemptions. For example, Catholic schools are likely to promote abstinence before marriage and limit contraception use, where non-church schools are less likely to be subject to such restrictions.

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Quick Questions

3. Give three ways religion may affect a church school.

Now Try This...

4. Compare Christian and secular views on the place of religion in law, for example in the House of Lords. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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Concept of Secularisation

Secularisation is where society becomes less religious over time – more **agnostics**, and those that are religious attend services less regularly, for

Keywords:

- ♦ **agnostic** – someone who believes nothing can be known about whether whether God/gods exist

Key Concept – Secularism as a Mode of Thought* and Being

Many people in the modern world are secularists. This means that they do not want to be involved in public life, the state and politics. It does not mean that they are not allowed to be religious or practise their religion, but that this should be for their own lives. They may feel that the monarch should not also be head of the church or should not be involved in law making (e.g. bishops in the House of Lords) or should not be church schools. Secularists think that keeping religion and state separate is more democratic, and believe that this would create a better society. Many secularists may feel that religion and the state should be separate because of the influence for public life to have. However, some secularists are religious and want religion to be separate from public life.

Key Concept – Tolerance

Tolerance applies to religious people and non-religious people, including allowing or enduring something or someone, regardless of difference. Many religious people are not tolerant of those who do not have the same beliefs as they actively oppose something such as same-sex marriage. However, many secularists are not tolerant of religion in public. They might argue that a child educated in a church school, then this is their choice. **Note:** Those who are tolerant also accept it, for example someone may be perfectly happy to both to accept the existence of different religions, seeing the diversity as positive. However, to tolerate something *without* truly accepting it, for example tolerating the presence of religion in one's country while still disagreeing with it in principle.

The Place of Religion in a Secular Society

For **secularists**, the place of religion in a secular society is completely to do with what they believe what they like, and practise what they like in their own home, and that they associate with religious people, for laws and education, etc. should not be influenced by religion.

However, even though many societies are becoming increasingly secular, religion is still completely relevant. Religion may have less say in law making, and in public life, but it may be quite present in many ways – where religious people are in the public sphere.

One example of a secular society, where religion is kept out of public life is France. One way in which religion is absent from public life in a way in which it is not in other countries is symbols (including religious dress) in state schools. These schools would not have a chapel or worship facility. French state schools would not hold nativity plays.

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the public sector, e.g. the police, are also forbidden from wearing religious symbols or discussing their religion when working. The lines are more blurred in the private sector. Politicians tend to keep religious talk out of political talk. However, many Christian festivals are still celebrated and are public holidays.



Nativity scene in schools. W

The Effects of Secularisation on Religion

Secularisation can have diverse effects on religion.

Religion may suffer in some ways, for example if fewer people attend church, then churches may have less money and end up closing. On the other hand, religion is becoming more acceptable. Many people from religious families are becoming more secular, and numbers of religious people may drop. On the other hand, there are benefits for religion – those who commit to a religion may be more generous. People may also want to live in a secular society that religion is good.

Secularisation may cause a religious backlash from the religious if they feel their values are being eroded. People may dislike modern **secular** values. Religious extremists might protest if they dislike liberal attitudes, for example to abortion.

Secularisation can also help to liberalise the religious. For example, people who believe that homosexuality is wrong for religious reasons may change their views if surrounded by many secular people who hold different views – they may be influenced and potentially change them. This sort of change can also happen in the Church of England accepts cohabiting couples, not because they suddenly start having sex outside of marriage, but because they want to be **tolerant**. These effects can be seen as positive or negative, depending on your view.

Secularisation might also help to reinforce the beliefs of already-liberal Christians. It supports a climate of investigation into the Bible, and reading it critically to develop more fully.

An interesting effect of secularisation, which in a way impacts on religion, is that many people want to have benefits of religious organisations without the religion. The Sunday Assembly started in 2013 as a secular alternative to church. They offer music, food, and more, with the aim of building a community and helping people feel good, but without religious influence, or set ideas about what is right or wrong. They simply celebrate life and help others.

The Rise of Humanism

Humanism is becoming increasingly popular. It is hard to back this up with statistics, but it is now more socially acceptable to be non-religious, and previously many people were **atheists** and humanists without making a big deal about it, or even admitting it. However, the percentage of non-religious people in Britain rose from 14.6% in 2001 to 25.1% in 2011,⁶ as recorded in the **censuses**. Many of these people are humanists – they want to live good lives and help others, and

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⁶ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/articles/religion>

values without religion. Humanists UK currently has more than 60,000 members. Humanist Day, which humanists may celebrate on 21st June.

Humanists UK works for issues that it feels are important, for example it campaigns for legalisation of homosexual marriage. It states that there are four main areas which it campaigns on: marriage, schools and education (campaigning about monitoring/limiting the place of religion in the education system); human rights and equality; secularism (aiming to reduce religious influence in public life); public ethical issues (such as supporting euthanasia).

Many religious people view humanism positively – they believe in supporting a good life and help others. However, others may view humanism negatively as trying to remove religious values from society and impose values which are not religious.

Quick Questions

5. Describe what is meant by humanism.
6. Outline ways in which secularisation may affect religion. Refer to social, moral, wisdom and authority.

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Potential Clashes between Religious and Secular Values

Secular Ethics and Values in Schools, Including in Faith Schools

Within schools, there may be clashes between the religious status of a school or teachers' individual religious beliefs and secular ethics and values.

For example, a school may promote a particular religion, through services, within religious studies lessons, and within the values of the school, but this may marginalise the beliefs of students (or teachers) of different religions or no religion.

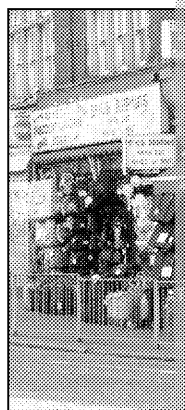
The Education Reform Act of 1988 meant that schools needed to have Christian acts of worship, such as assemblies, and needed to teach Religion 16 (in state schools). While other religions had to be taught, there was a religious bias. This clashes with secular values of giving students religious freedom, whether or not to worship, or follow a particular religion – even if schools follow a particular religion, it could be seen as unfair influence on young people.

Faith schools may promote the life of one particular religion. Students may attend religious services, and, for example, to sing hymns regardless of whether they are promoted (e.g. Christianity) or not. One argument which faith schools often use is that if people choose a faith school, they should accept the religious ethos, including singing. However, it can be argued that people may choose a faith school for other reasons, and should not have to undergo forced religious activity to attend. Faith schools are often decided upon by students' parents, and a parent may not want their children still have freedom of religion and belief (and practice) and do not want to impose their beliefs on their children.

Schools may promote religious attitudes about relationships, sex and consent. In the UK, consensual sex is legal at 16, and secular ethics generally promotes allowing people to have sex with and when, as long as it is consensual. Secular ethics also promotes the use of contraception to avoid sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancies. Some schools may not be fully LGBT friendly, if the leaders believe that gay relationships should be heterosexual. For example, some schools will not allow gay teachers. Catholic schools may also promote an anti-contraception stance.

Other issues, such as abortion and euthanasia, may be covered mainly from religious perspectives in some schools, and in some faith schools there may be discrimination on the basis of religion or gender among staff or students.

The National Secular Society believes that ultimately there should be no faith schools, and no unfair emphasis on religion in teaching – teaching about religion should be broad and objective as with many other subjects.



Halal meat – school market

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Some schools (including non-Muslim schools) have started to provide halal meat. The National Secular Society campaign against meat being sold in the UK without a religious exemption, and also campaign for all meat to be labelled to say whether it has been ritually slaughtered, and also campaign for all meat to be labelled to say whether it has received a Muslim certification. Humanists UK want meat labelled to say whether it has received a Muslim certification. Both religious and non-religious people are opposed to serving meat which has not been ritually slaughtered in schools – partly in case this meat does not meet standards which they consider to be in line with animal welfare, and partly because they feel that pupils should not be forced/eaten meat which has been ritually slaughtered, or given fewer alternatives if meals containing meat.

Faith schools in particular may provide food in line with particular religious beliefs. Humanist values do include freedom of religious belief, and so provide a good example, kosher or halal standards, for students who have particular beliefs. This may be viewed as tolerant and correct by humanists (but not necessarily by religious groups).

Kosher (Jewish) meat is not allowed to be stunned. Some methods of stunning meat, and a majority of halal meat in Britain has been stunned before death. Halal meat must be stunned, but Jews and Muslims are allowed exemptions.

Muslims and Jews argue that their methods of slaughter are not inhumane, and that animals will be killed quickly and painlessly. Research on whether kosher and halal methods of slaughter are better than western practice are inconclusive – some conclude that they are and others conclude that they are not.

There is controversy about halal meat being labelled as such – so that people can avoid it if they are not Muslim. Humanists have argued that meat is being produced by halal methods but then is sold on the open market and eaten by non-Muslims, and so this could be seen as illegal, as this is not halal meat being sold to non-Jews and non-Muslims.

This is complicated further by the fact that some supermarkets buy meat which is halal (and so has been prayed over), but then do not handle it in line with halal practice. This means that they do not label it halal. This semi-halal meat is not being labelled as such.

Quick Questions

7. Give three issues which may cause clashes between the religious and secular in education.

Now Try This...

8. How might secular and religious values clash in schools? Refer to some of the issues discussed in the text and your own wisdom and authority.

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Potential Clashes between Religion, Tradition and Society

Key Concepts – Freedom of Belief, Expression and Practice

In the UK people have many legally protected freedoms. These include the freedom to choose – to hold any religion or none, and form their own opinions on what they believe and also to criticise what they do not agree with (as long as it is not hatred against others). People are also free to practise their religion, for example by wearing religious clothing.

In modern society, many people feel that these freedoms are very important. However, some people feel that these freedoms need limits, for example if they interrupt the freedom of others. Muslims be allowed to take work or school holidays at the times they believe is important for their religion? They clash with equality (should Christians be able to wear cross necklaces in school? Should there be a policy?). There can also be a very fine line between acceptable freedom of expression which is legal, but may be deemed offensive/unacceptable; and illegal expression.

This line is closely to tolerance – people may feel that these freedoms should be tolerated. Where certain freedoms are not tolerated or that it is just not to tolerate a certain practice because it clashes with their beliefs.

Key Concept – Self-determination

Self-determination is the freedom to make one's own choices. **Secularism** often supports this. Religious people generally support this to a certain extent, as they want people to live free and happy lives. However, they may also not support people making choices that conflict with their religious tradition. For example, religious people may not support people making certain choices about marriage. They might also feel that issues such as abortion, as examples, are not for humans to choose.

Religious Teachings and Attitudes about Marriage

Many religions teach that people should wait until marriage to have sex. In Britain it is still completely acceptable to form relationships with who one wants to get married if one wants. Some denominations are more strict about who one can marry (see above in the theme on *Relationships and Families*). However, some Christians accept same-sex relationships or marriage. The Catholic Church does not. Many other Christian denominations disapprove of it, as it is seen as destroying a union. Some people disagree with adultery.

'But from the beginning of creating, God made them male and female.' "For the Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone, I will make him a helper fit for him.' So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.'

You shall not commit adultery. (Exodus 20:14 NRSV)

In some religions, there are also strict rules about relationships before marriage. Some religions keep males and females (outside of family) groups quite separate, and some religions have many non-family relationships with the opposite sex/gender before marriage. Some religions interact with members of the opposite sex, but are forbidden from touching (outside of family). Some only observe this for 'affectionate' touch, such as hugging, while others observe any touch.

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In Britain, Christian views on marriage are quite traditional. Waiting until marriage for sex is not unusual, though it may be becoming more unusual. Same-sex marriage was not legal until 2014 in England, Scotland and Wales (and is still not legal in Northern Ireland). Divorce has been legal for hundreds of years, although it has become much easier to get a divorce in the last century, including greater divorce rights for women.

However, it is perfectly legal to have premarital sex, homosexual marriage is now legal in Great Britain, and it is relatively easy to get a divorce. Equally, men and women are not religiously segregated in society, and are expected to mix (though there are still some single-gender schools). This shows a clash between religion

One, perhaps surprising way in which religion still influences secular law take place between a man and a woman – someone cannot divorce someone of the same sex under adultery (they would have to cite unreasonable behaviour). This also still influence social attitudes – many homosexual people have married though many are starting to be open about this. Many people may also be religious even if they are not religious.

Responses to Forced, Arranged and Child Marriages

Forced Marriage

Forced marriage is where someone is coerced into being married, with physical or emotional pressure. Forcing someone to marry someone else has only been officially criminalised since 2014 in Britain. From 2007 there have been legal protections from forced marriage, but those forcing the marriage could not be prosecuted on those grounds. Forced marriage is strongly condemned by many in both the religious and non-religious world. Christianity does not support forced marriage; neither does Islam nor any other religions.

However, there are still hundreds of people who are forced into marriage (or into marriages) every year. Often media reports associate this with Islam. Muhammad forbid it:

... Ye are forbidden to inherit what women against their will... (Qur'an)

Arranged Marriages

However, arranged marriages are not illegal. Arranged marriages are where a parent finds a partner for the person (their child) to marry. It may be that they find several partners to be chosen from. Arranged marriages are different from forced marriages as they must be consented to. For some, arranged marriages are acceptable as a way of finding a partner – some feel that parents know their children best and will find a well-matched with. Others may feel that arranged marriage is really forced marriage as children may be pressured not to reject their parents' choice.

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Arranged marriages used to be common in the UK in the Christian community, especially among the upper classes. Consider, for example, *Pride and Prejudice*, published in 1813, set in the time period, where Lady Catherine de Bourgh wants to arrange a marriage for her daughter, Elizabeth, with Mr. Darcy. Royal marriages are often arranged – it is only becoming common among the working class partners now. However, arranged marriages are now rare among the wealthy.

Arranged marriages are still common among some Muslim communities, such as Orthodox Judaism and some branches of Sikhism. In some cases, marriages are expected, and with others, parents may arrange a marriage if their child does not find a suitable partner on their own. If someone feels forced into having an arranged marriage, it can become a forced marriage and would clash with secular law.

In the modern age, many people believe that arranged marriages will not work, but sometimes the case (as may be the case with any marriage), many couples in arranged marriages report to be happy, and some studies show similar levels of happiness as people in their partners.

Child Marriage

Child marriage is generally defined as marriage before the age of 18. Cohabitation before the age of 18 would also be counted (in terms of something campaigners against child marriage want to protect children from). Therefore, child marriage by this definition is technically not illegal in Great Britain. 16 and 17-year-olds can marry in Scotland, England and Wales, though they need parental consent in England and Wales (the general age for marriage is 18 in England and Wales). However, child marriage – as marriage below the age of 16 – is illegal. Though the UK does not permit marriage under the age of 16, some reports have shown that illegal child marriage is occurring in the UK.



Picture of a child marriage in Burgundy to

Marriage at a younger age was traditionally permitted in society, and in some religions now condemn child marriage, or certainly marriage below puberty. The Church still allows marriage at 14 for a girl and 16 for a boy, though they must follow the legal requirements for marriage in the country they live in. Some countries allow marriage to children below 10. However, marriage below 16–18 is illegal in many Catholics or Muslims.

Even though marriage at 16 (or 16/17) is allowed in Great Britain, it is generally rare. People will get married later than this. Society may find it strange when a child is married, but they may feel that they are being pressured, either directly, or indirectly, to be married in order to have sex, and they want to have sex.

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Religious Attitudes to Equality

Equality usually refers to being equal and/or being treated equally. To treating them all with the same respect and dignity, and giving them the of their personal situation or characteristics. In the UK, the Human Right to equality; for example, everyone has the right to be free and not a slave vote (there are some exceptions; children cannot vote). Equal rights everyone has an equal right to education, and an equal right to protection for men and women, heterosexuals and homosexuals, for example.

Many religious and non-religious people feel that equality is a good thing. The person who was enslaved or not allowed to vote, to most people was not equal; if not because they want to be free, because they would not want to be in inequality themselves.

However, as covered in a section on *Relationships and Families* some religions put equality into practice with regards to certain groups, such as women. Until not so long ago, the Church also supported the slave trade, and did not support equality. (Indeed, not all non-religious people treat everyone equally either.)

Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. I permit no woman to teach a man; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was the head of the church, as his body, of which he is the saviour, who saved the church by himself. (1 Timothy 2:11-12)

'You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.' (Leviticus 18:22)

Any religious attitudes which suggest that certain groups of people are not equal to secular law which protects their equality (though not necessarily with traditional Christian views, e.g. the man as the head of the household).

However, religious teachings can also be used to back up equality for all under secular law.

So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27 NRSV)

There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female, you are one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28 NRSV)

Potential Clashes with Equality

There can be disagreement about how to apply equality laws. For example, does being treated equally mean being treated the same as everyone else? Or do people need to be treated differently to be treated equally? For example, in France, a secular country, religious symbols are banned in schools, including Muslim headscarves and Sikh turbans. Some French people believe that it is important that everyone is treated in the same way. However, in the UK, Muslim headscarves and Sikh turbans are generally allowed in schools, because the UK government recognises that if someone feels that they should dress in a certain way because of their religion, it is treating them with equality to allow them to do so.

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There are disagreements about what equality must allow one to do – do all of their human rights are fulfilled, or are they still being treated unequal in social or political life? In France, many religious people would claim they cannot apply for public sector jobs if they want to wear religious symbols.

However, in some cases freedom of religion may conflict with equality laws. For example, a company may be allowed to only employ male priests, when normally companies could not discriminate on the basis of sex. Religious people may also not be allowed to fully act on their religious beliefs if they conflict with equality laws.

Quick Questions

9. Describe one way in which Christianity might clash with equality laws.
10. Outline different Christian teachings about marriage and how they relate to equality laws. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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Potential Clashes between Religious Teachings and in Medical Ethics

Keywords:

- ♦ **abortion** – terminating a pregnancy and ending the life of a foetus
- ♦ **euthanasia** – sometimes called mercy killing. Generally helping someone the life of someone who is unable to make such a decision for themselves where it is believed they would wish this
- ♦ **genetic manipulation** – changing an organism's genetic make-up
- ♦ **person** – in philosophy, a being with certain qualities not always the same
- ♦ **quality of life** – how good one's life is; some argue that if life is 'not worth living' it is not preserving it
- ♦ **sanctity of life** – a belief that life is sacred and/or special, implying that it

Key Concept – The Value of Human Life

The value of human life is often judged either in terms of sanctity or quality.

Some people believe in the **sanctity of life** – that life is sacred, or very precious, and the belief that life should be protected. It is often specifically applied to human life, which implies that humans should never cause the deaths of other humans. This is often associated with religious perspectives, but non-religious people may use the term if they believe life is very important.

An argument for the sanctity of human life (based on Christian belief) is:

- ♦ God created life and gave it to humans
- ♦ Humans are created in the image of God
 - ↳ Human life is sacred because it is given by God and created in His image
- ♦ It is wrong to destroy what is sacred
 - ↳ Humans should not destroy human life (for any reason) – seen as equivalent to murder in the Ten Commandments

Note: people who believe in the sanctity of life can still have a range of views. For example some will feel that it is wrong to kill in all circumstances, whereas others will see killing for reasons such as compassion or defence – they will still feel that human life is sacred, but sometimes a/some life should be destroyed for a greater good.

The **quality of life** refers to how good it is to live a particular life – for example, how healthy, happy and free a person is. Many people in the more developed world have a good quality of life, but some people live in less good lives:

- ♦ Poverty or other circumstances may deprive them of necessities, making life very difficult.
- ♦ Illness or injury may reduce their quality of life.

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Statements from the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches

Both the Catholic Church and the Anglican Church have spoken about religious teaching and scientific development in medical ethics.

For example, ex-Archbishop Rowan Williams has said that just because possible, this does not make it right. This can be applied to all the issue because the creation of life may be possible, this does not mean that it Church wants to make sure that medical actions are evaluated on whether and not just done because they can be.

Pope Francis has spoken out against embryo research because of his belief. Catholic Church strongly condemns **euthanasia** and **abortion**.

Euthanasia and Right to Die

Euthanasia is also known as mercy killing, is helping someone to die, or ending someone's life because they wish this to be the case, or because it is believed that they would wish this.

Some people believe that there are some situations in which allowing someone to die is the most compassionate thing to do. This may be because they are in great pain, or because they lack the ability to do anything for themselves; for instance, if they are paralysed, or for other reasons.

The issue of euthanasia arises when someone is unable to end their own life, therefore, needs help in order to die. Normally, killing someone is classed as murder. However, many people believe that euthanasia is different because it is in the best interests of the person.

Killing anyone for any reason, including euthanasia, is currently illegal in the UK. However, some countries such as Switzerland allow it in some circumstances. Some people from the UK have travelled there for this purpose.

Types of Euthanasia and Associated Concepts (When they may be carried out)

Assisted suicide

This is where someone wants to die but is unable to do so on their own. They might get a friend or family member to help so that they can take an overdose.

voluntary euthanasia.

Voluntary euthanasia

This is where someone asks to die, but is unable to do so themselves, possibly because they are in a coma. Someone might ask a friend or medical professional to help.

Non-voluntary euthanasia

This is where someone is unable to express their wishes, are in a coma, but it is felt that they would wish to die. Friends and family might decide to prolong this person's life, and ask for help to end their life.



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Involuntary euthanasia

This is where people are killed against their will. The doctor believes it would be better if they were dead than suffering from the Nazis. Most people view this as unacceptable.

(How they may be carried out)

Active euthanasia

This is where someone actually kills the patient, possibly by administering a poison or a lethal injection. This is illegal in many countries.

Passive euthanasia

This is where life support is removed from a patient, allowing them to die. This is legal in some countries, but not in the UK. However, breathing apparatus may be removed, medication may be withheld. This is legal in the UK, though there may be legal grey areas. It is generally acceptable to withhold food and treatment.

Double effect

This is sometimes associated with passive euthanasia. It is for a doctor to prescribe a high dose of painkillers to a patient. These may relieve the pain, but they may also have the *additional effect* of killing the patient. So medicines which are used to relieve pain are responsible for killing them.

Do Not Resuscitate orders (DNR)

This is where someone who is seriously ill asks doctors not to save their life if they have a heart attack or stroke.

Arguments for and against Euthanasia

Arguments sometimes given in favour of **euthanasia**:

(Not all are relevant to both **voluntary and non-voluntary**)

- ◆ People deserve *dignity*; if their life is not dignified, they should be allowed to end it on their behalf.
- ◆ People deserve **quality of life**; if they do not believe that their life is worth living, they should be allowed to end it.
- ◆ People have a *right to die*; people should be able to make their own choices about when to end their life.
- ◆ Keeping euthanasia illegal is *discriminatory* in the UK – not necessary for people who are able to commit suicide are legally able to do so. However, people with mental health problems have the most pain, and the people with physical disabilities have the most reason to end their lives.

Arguments sometimes given in opposition to euthanasia:

- ◆ **Sacredness of life** – all life is sacred and humans do not have a right to take the life of another for any reason.
- ◆ Euthanasia is *murder* – it is wrong to kill someone.
- ◆ There is a problem with *conscience* – it is wrong to expect someone to kill another, especially medical professionals who have sworn to protect life.
- ◆ It is a *slippery slope* – if euthanasia becomes legal this will make it easier for people to kill their ill relatives murdered and it will make disabled and old people feel that they are a burden.

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- ◆ Some people might *recover* – it is possible that someone might recover from an illness which doctors thought was terminal, or that a treatment or cure might be found soon which could help the person who wants to die.

Christian Views

Many Christians oppose **euthanasia**, because they believe in **sanctity of life** – the belief that human life is sacred and should not be destroyed. Some also believe that humans, including those who suffer physically and those who suffer mentally, are made in the image of God. Some believe that they are called by God to protect those who are suffering. Some believe that hospices – places where terminally ill people get care and pain relief, instead of dying at home – are where Christians should be. Some passages teach that Christians should protect, rather than harm, those in need. In particular, is opposed to euthanasia. **Note:** many of these objections to euthanasia. Some is of **passive euthanasia** – such as where the life of a person who has been declared brain-dead is switched off – or **DNRs** may be viewed as allowing nature to take its course.

'So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them.' (Genesis 1:27 NRSV)

'You shall not murder.' (Exodus 20:13 NRSV)

'... if you hold back from rescuing those taken away to death, those who go stage in the blood of the innocent. And will he not repay all this?' (Proverbs 24:11–12 NRSV)

However, some other Christians believe that euthanasia should be allowed because it is cruel to let people suffer unnecessarily. They believe that Jesus taught that we should love our neighbour as ourselves and that in some situations, the most loving thing to do is to allow someone to die. Some Quakers.

'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' (Matthew 22:39)

Non-religious Views and Disagreements

Surveys have shown that over 80% of the British public may support legalising euthanasia in certain cases (such as the terminally ill). Medicine has advanced so that people can live longer by taking certain medicines/drugs. However, the law against euthanasia is still in place. Arguments against killing people (such as the reluctance of many doctors to perform procedures).

Euthanasia is much more of an issue in the modern western world where people can live longer. It is not of severely ill people can be kept alive. Years ago, people would have died without the medicines available today. People in vegetative states cannot eat naturally would have died because there was no technology. Now, science is able to keep many people alive, society is questioning who it is that they want to die. Humanists UK are among those calling for changes to the law. They believe that the choice to die should be someone's own, and the government should not be someone that they cannot end their life.

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Abortion involves ending a pregnancy and the life of a foetus. There are different reasons for getting an abortion and different attitudes to abortion.

There are different reasons why someone might want to have an abortion. These are reasons why an abortion may be allowed in the UK:

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The UK Abortion Act 1967 allows for abortions in such circumstances if the conditions are met and the abortion is carried in an approved medical facility. If there is a physical danger to the woman (or her children), it is evaluated whether continuing with having an abortion would be better or worse for the woman's (or her children's) health.

Normally abortions are *not* allowed after 24 weeks into pregnancy, though in extreme circumstances (great risk to woman or great chance of severe disability to child).

Some countries do not allow abortion for any reason. In the Republic of Ireland, it is a risk to the mother's life. Other countries allow abortion for different reasons.

Other reasons some people may want an abortion include:

- ◆ They do not want children or already want children now.
 - ↳ Some people view abortion as an acceptable method of birth control, while others see it as selfish and think such pregnancies should continue and the child should be born.
- ◆ Some people wish to get abortions because they desire a baby of a particular gender.
 - ↳ Many people feel that this is a bad reason to have an abortion as they are not able to choose to have children on the basis of their gender, or
 - Gender-motivated abortion may happen in any country, but it is more likely where there are laws limiting the number of children people can have, which is the case in many years. It is also more likely to happen in areas where there are strong reasons to have male children. Some people are motivated by cultural or financial reasons (e.g. some people feel it is more important to have male children or may see having male children as necessary if they need the help to earn the family income), which has caused problems in the past.

Abortion is not permitted for either of these reasons under UK law.

Sanctity of Life

Many people (generally religious) who believe in **sanctity of life** also believe that human life is sacred. This is because if human life is sacred and no humans should destroy human life, then it is wrong to destroy embryos and foetuses, because these are still believed to be created in the image of life by God. Such arguments are also likely to oppose forms of emergency contraception and extremely early termination of pregnancy, e.g. the morning after pill.

However, the sanctity of life could also be used to argue for abortion in certain circumstances, e.g. if the woman is at risk; because the woman's life is sacred and should be protected. This argument is strong in the case that allowing a pregnancy to continue would likely result in the death of the woman and the foetus, because in this case, abortion would be preserving more life than not aborting.

Quality of Life

Many people have used the concept of **quality of life** to argue for abortion. Some people might use quality of life to argue for abortion in different scenarios.

- ◆ If a foetus is severely disabled and will not have a good quality of life, some people might argue that it is better to abort than to let it suffer.
 - ↳ People might also argue that caring for a severely disabled child would reduce the quality of life of the family of the child, reducing their quality of life.

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- ◆ A pregnancy due to rape, or one which places extreme mental strain on a woman's quality of life, that abortion is kinder for her.
- ◆ If a woman does not have sufficient financial and other resources to care for another child, bringing another child into the world might severely diminish the quality of life for the whole family (parents, existing children and new child).
 - ✦ Some people also argue that a woman has a choice about what to do with her life and if having a child at that moment is not part of her plan then this will damage her quality of life. They argue that a woman should have a choice about what to do with her life, rather than from arguments about quality of life.

Other Arguments Related to Abortion

Some people have argued that **abortion** is acceptable because a foetus is not a person. They do not see being a person as the same as being a human. They may believe that a foetus becomes a person at the moment of birth, for example.

Some may believe that you need to have other characteristics in order to qualify as a person with a right to life and a right not to be killed. For example: being self-aware; having language skills; having a sense of past and future. Foetuses, especially at early stages of development, do not have such characteristics. Philosophically, however, this argument could lead to a position that most people would not support: newborn babies do not have many of these 'personhood' qualities either, and most people who wish to argue for abortion to be allowed do not wish to argue that it is acceptable to kill newborn babies. So where we draw the line regarding 'who is a person?' is important.

Pause for thought:

What makes a person? A set of characteristics? Having human DNA? Having a soul? Is someone a person from the moment of birth? Or from when they could survive on their own outside the womb?



Some people, religious and others, believe that there is a special part of someone which is classed as the 'person' within them. Some people believe only humans have souls, others believe humans and animals have souls. Some believe souls come from birth, or from some time after birth, or from some time before birth. Those who believe that foetuses have souls may be

Some people argue against abortion on the grounds that there are still many countries; there may be larger numbers of people in less economically developed countries and abortion could endanger the life of a woman. Furthermore, some people regret having abortions, and may experience mental pain and stress. Such cases suggest that abortion may not seem a sensible decision for a woman's health.

However, it can be argued that physical risks from abortion in countries where it is illegal are high. Many disagree that evidence proves that abortion damages women's mental health.

Christian Views

Christians usually disapprove of **abortion**, for reasons including belief in the sanctity of life. The Bible tells Christians not to murder, and many consider abortion to be murder. Some believe a soul is present in a foetus from the moment of conception, which would

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spiritually equivalent to killing an adult. The Bible teaches that God created people before birth (and even before conception), strengthening the belief that they should be treated like other humans and not killed. The Catholic Church does not support an abortion procedure is carried out, rather than where an abortion occurs (treatment) in any circumstances.

'You shall not murder.' (Exodus 20:13 NRSV)

For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb.
(Psalm 139:13 NRSV)

'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I was appointed for you.'
(Jeremiah 1:5 NRSV)

However, some Christians, including more liberal Protestants, will accept certain circumstances, such as if the mother's life is in danger or the pregnancy is a result of rape. They believe the unborn woman should also be protected and treated with love and respect.

In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the love of God.
(Matthew 7:12 NRSV) The Golden Rule

The Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC) was founded by a group of people of all faiths and none and is not a specifically religious organisation. It believes that life starts at conception, and so abortion is like any other form of **euthanasia** and any other destruction of human life, such as embryo research. It claims that many people have abortions because they feel unable to financially support a child, or want more support for parents. They also raise awareness of the potential for women who go through with abortions, and their partners, may suffer.

Non-religious Views and Disagreements

Many religious people are opposed to abortion, or opposed to abortion in certain circumstances. However, abortion is possible, and in the western world it is generally seen as a personal choice.

Secularists believe there should be more information about abortion in schools so that young people are fully informed about their options. They do not want abortion education in religious schools/teachers who disapprove of abortion. Many non-religious people believe the choice to have an abortion belongs to the woman considering it (and people who oppose it believe that embryos should have the same rights as babies or adults. It is also argued by those who argue that women have a right over their bodies, including at the point of conception. This is a large issue that abortion legislation has been heavily influenced by male politicians (who have a higher proportion of male representatives), and this is seen as unfair discrimination.

In the abortion debate, it is important to note that arguments are often made from different positions. Those who value a foetus as a human being are opposed to it being killed, but those who do not see a foetus as a full human being do not mind terminating it. It is also important to bear in mind that 'pro-life' and 'pro-choice' are not always used when discussing abortion, are not always helpful – there are people who are pro-abortion, and they are not all fully in support, or fully against.

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Issues of Genetic Manipulation

Genetic manipulation, also called genetic engineering, means changing an organism's genetic make-up / DNA. This can be used to do various things – to breed larger animals, create more resilient plants, to clone animals, to alter a human's genes... The list is long.

Some uses of genetic modification are fairly easy to understand. Creating bigger plants or animals means more food, for example.

More complex uses include making vaccines, or developing animals which are closer to humans in genetic make-up so that they could potentially be used for organ transfer.

Genetic manipulation is being used for curing diseases – if a faulty gene can be replaced, this may cure, for example, Parkinson's disease. It is also used to edit genes in embryos. This raises questions about which genes to change – and it is possible to change anything from whether a child will inherit a certain colour.

Christian Views

Christians are very divided on genetic manipulation. Some approve of forms of genetic manipulation which do not involve humans, e.g. modifying plants, but not modification of humans. Some approve of manipulations which will help humans, e.g. curing Parkinson's, but not those which do not directly benefit people.

Areas which Christians tend to be concerned with include experimenting on embryos – if they are seen as life which should be protected, and not experimented on – and any manipulation which could be used to produce 'designer' humans. Christians may approve of removing genes from an embryo which could cause a painful disease, but most do not feel that it would be appropriate to alter other aspects – they believe that life is given by God – people are divinely designed, not adapted by other humans. This issue is one which is raised – if it becomes acceptable to alter humans in some ways, to help

Conservative Christians tend to be more opposed to genetic manipulation (creation/destruction/alteration) than more liberal Christians. This may include Protestants and Catholics. Liberal Christians, such as many modern Protestants, may support genetic manipulation if they believe it is for the greater good.

Non-religious Views and Disagreements

Many non-religious people would argue that genetic manipulation is improving the world, and there is no reason not to try to improve it further.

They may also argue that while it is possible that there should be limits on its use, using it to cure diseases is not a slippery slope to 'designer' humans. Regulations are in place.

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They are also likely to feel that it is more ethical to experiment on embryos than on adult humans, and that religious people should not be able to stop this work.

The Creation of Life

Scientists can now modify DNA and have cloned animals. Some people believe that scientists will be able to create artificial life – they have already begun to do so.

This could be used for many purposes. Scientists might be able to recreate extinct animals, like those in Jurassic Park, but with more recently extinct animals – dinosaur DNA is still being recovered. They might also be able to create synthetic human life, which could be used for many purposes, with the aim of improving medicine and medical techniques.

Some atheists use this to suggest that God is not necessary to create life. If scientists can create life there can be no supernatural claim; as humans would not create something from nothing.

Separately to this, scientific methods can also be used to help in the creation of new life through in vitro fertilisation (IVF) where egg and sperm are joined outside the body and then implanted.

Christian Views

Christians and other religious people may have various responses to scientists creating life. Some may feel that even if scientists can create life, this does not negate God – God had to create life so that this life (humans) could create more life. They are, therefore, not necessarily worried by the prospect that scientists may be able to replicate life. However, many also feel that scientists will not be able to create complicated life from scratch.



Some welcome the ideas of artificial 'life' – they may feel that it is acceptable to experiment on an artificial embryo – they would have the same rights.

Others feel that creating life is playing God, and is wrong. They may feel that human life – natural or artificial – is unethical, and being able to create life is a dangerous power.

Christians have very diverse views on IVF. Some feel that IVF shows Christians are not able to have children naturally, and the joy of having a child. The Church of England and some Protestant denominations oppose IVF and neither do many Catholic denominations. The Bible describes people who were unable to have a child, for example, Samuel's mother Hannah in 1 Samuel 1. This was a way to show that God was punishing her for not being faithful to him.

However, many Christians also oppose IVF, the Catholic Church especially. It opposes any form of contraception taking place outside of a sexual act, and is concerned about the IVF process. Generally speaking, of any embryos implanted, most will be destroyed (one is implanted to increase the likelihood of a pregnancy). Also, normal embryos are created. These will then either be destroyed, or experimented on and used for research. The Church believes that these embryos are human life which should be protected and that any treatment is wrong.

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Non-religious Views and Disagreements

The issues here are similar to those with genetic manipulation. Christians see artificial life, because they believe all life should be protected, and because of the potential for misuse, as a threat to the sanctity of life created with natural processes. Others may argue that this will benefit humanity, and that there is no need to worry about playing God.

The issues with IVF are similar to those of **abortion** – the scientific community sees it as a way for people to have children, but some Christians argue that protecting all human life is more important.

Quick Questions

11. Outline one Christian view of the scientific creation of life.
12. Describe Christian attitudes to euthanasia. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.
13. Describe Christian attitudes to abortion. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

Now Try This...

14. Explain why different ideas about sanctity of life cause clashes between religious and secular. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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Summary for Challenges for Religion

- ♦ Christianity has a very important place in British society. It influences Christmas, and traditions (such as not shopping on Sunday). While the majority of the population is Christian, there are many non-religious people, and also people of other religions, making Britain a diverse society. The monarch – the Queen – firmly represents the state, as she is head of both.
- ♦ Christianity is very present in public life. Bishops sit in the House of Lords. At national events, such as Remembrance, many public holidays are linked to Christianity, and many schools are Church schools, which incorporate aspects of Christianity, holding worship, having Christian values, and teaching a lot about Christianity. Groups such as Humanists UK and the National Secular Society are also present, showing the influence of religion on public life.
- ♦ As Britain becomes more secularised, this raises questions about religion. Should religion remain completely out of public life, or should there just be more of a balance between the religious and the non-religious? Is it possible to completely remove religion from public life when there are religious people in public life? **Secularisation** can damage religion, as more people become non-religious, but it can also strengthen the faith of some. As fewer people associate as religious, many associate as **humanists** – they want to live a good life, but without religion.
- ♦ There are many clashes between religious and **secular** values in education. Religious people may want worship incorporated into the curriculum, while secular people may not. Religious schools may teach religious and relationships education, while secular schools may not. Religious schools may cater to particular religious dietary needs, some will feel that this line of thinking potentially poses issues for animal welfare.
- ♦ There are also clashes between religion, tradition and secular law.
 - Many religions promote certain values surrounding marriage, such as monogamy, and not getting divorced, but these are both legal in Britain.
 - Most people oppose forced marriage and child marriages, but some support them. Arranged marriages are legal, and some people accept them, but many feel they are still unfair.
 - Religious people may have different ideas about **equality** – some believe in equality for women or homosexuals. However, legally, women are equal to men, and homosexuals are equal to heterosexuals. This can mean clashes between religion and equality laws, such as the right to marry homosexual couples.
- ♦ Religious teaching and science/medicine is also an area of difference. Some people approve of **euthanasia**, **abortion**, **genetic manipulation** or creating artificial life, while others do not. Other people raise arguments about choice, dignity, and argue that sometimes things are important for the good of the individual.

Now Try This...

15. 'There are some situations where euthanasia is the best thing to do.' Discuss this statement.

Argue for **and** against this statement, referring to different Christian sources of wisdom and authority. Explain and evaluate the importance of the statement from a Christian perspective. Reach a conclusion which follows from your arguments.

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Dialogue within and between Religions

There are many different attitudes of religious people towards others. Some see their own religious group as completely wrong, but many attempt to learn from them.

Christian Attitudes towards Each Other and towards Non-Christians

Christians have a variety of attitudes towards each other and towards non-Christians.

Keywords:

- ♦ **ecumenism** – cooperation between different churches and different denominations
- ♦ **evangelism** – spreading the news about Jesus and trying to convert people
- ♦ **exclusivism** – the belief that there is only one correct religion and way to God
- ♦ **inclusivism** – the belief that one religion contains the most truth, but that other religions also have some truth
- ♦ **interfaith** – between different faiths
- ♦ **intra-faith** – within one faith
- ♦ **pluralism** – the belief that many religions are ways to God, and may contain some truth

Key Concepts – Consensus, Diversity and Uniformity

Consensus is a general agreement. Within Christianity there are consensus and also many disagreements. The same goes between Christianity and other religions. People reach a consensus in order to work together.

Diversity means that there is a range of difference. For example, there is diversity within Christianity. Many people value diversity.

Uniformity means being the same. Christians are not uniform; however, there should be more uniformity.

Bear these terms in mind when reading the sections below, and think about how they apply to the different religions.

Exclusivism

Exclusivism is the view that only one religion is right and others are wrong. Exclusivists believe that only Christianity is right, and that it is the only way to God. Exclusivist Christians believe that only Christians will go to heaven.

Christianity lends itself to being an exclusivist religion because of the belief in the 'only incarnation of God on Earth, whose death brought humanity salvation'. This makes Jesus unique, and this unique relationship between God and Jesus is supported by the New Testament. For a religion, this is a fairly large claim. For those who believe it, no other prophets or teachers compare to Jesus.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was made flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only Son.
(John 1:1, 14 NRSV)

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Jesus also taught his disciples to **evangelise**, and emphasised this in the sending out of his disciples before his ascension to heaven. In Mark's version Jesus says that those who do not believe (in his disciples' message; in his teaching) that people need to follow Christianity in order to be saved, and that no

'The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned.' (Mark 16:16 NRSV)

This is also reinforced in John 14:6 which says that Jesus is the only way to God. Some interpret this to mean that Christianity is the only way to God, and, therefore, that a relationship with God and be saved.

Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.' (John 14:6 NRSV)

The exclusive view is often held by evangelical Protestants, who often teach that only those who believe that those who do not believe in Jesus will not be saved. They believe that non-Christians so that they can know God and be saved.

Inclusivism

Inclusivist Christians on the other hand believe that Christianity is the correct path to God (or son), but that those who follow other religions can also know God – although not through Jesus. They believe that they should follow Christianity because the New Testament teaches that they believe that they will have eternal life through believing in him.

'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.' (John 3:16 NRSV)

However, they do not feel that this rules out people coming to God, and that there are other ways (though they believe that all salvation is still due to Jesus' sacrifice). John 14:6 means that people can only know God as Father through Jesus, but not by knowing God without believing in Jesus.

Inclusivist belief is backed up by Jesus' teachings that God is love, and that God loves everyone. Inclusivist Christians feel that God would not punish someone for following a different religion if they are aiming to serve him and lead a good life. Therefore, they believe that all who follow God are saved because of God's grace (and because they lived a good life – see the parable of the goats in Matthew 25 – different inclusivists will have different beliefs about how many Christians are saved).

Whoever loves God and loves those who love God, for God is love. (1 John 4:19)

Many inclusive Christians also feel that as God originally spoke to humankind through the Jewish religion, Jews who follow God's commands will still be saved. Inclusive Christians believe that Christianity does share many beliefs with religions such as Judaism, it was the only true religion, and other religions have no claim to truth, or no knowledge of God.

Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. (Deuteronomy 6:4)

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Exclusivist Christians might argue that although God originally revealed himself in the Jewish religion, Jews should now convert to Christianity. They can argue that although God loves everyone, he still wants them to follow him, and will punish them unless they turn to him. This can be backed up by God's apparent hatred of worshippers of other gods throughout the Old Testament, and God sending prophets so that people would follow him correctly. (They could also argue that Christianity is the correct continuation of the Jewish religion of the Old Testament, as modern-day Judaism is quite a different religion anyway, since the destruction of the temple in the first century CE.)



An artist's impression of the Temple in Jerusalem.

You shall annihilate the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Hivites – just as the LORD your God has commanded (Deuteronomy 20:17)

Inclusivist Christians could argue that God's dislike of other religions in the Bible was because these involved idol worship, and often horrible practices such as child sacrifice. They could also argue that many of the world's religions are similar, and that Christians should worship the same God.

Christians from many denominations are inclusivist. This tends to be the case with the Anglican Churches, who believe that those of different faiths are still on the path to God. Christianity is the correct faith (although the Catholic Church was traditionally exclusivist). Catholic theologian Karl Rahner coined the phrase 'anonymous Christians' – he felt they were following Jesus, but without knowing it. Some Christians are more liberal in their description and is liberal in not excluding non-Christians from salvation. However, this label is patronising as it could be taken as devaluing other faiths in the process.

Pluralism

Pluralism is the view that there are many paths to God, and that different religions may contain equal religious truth, or at least that one is not much more right than others. This is not a particularly common Christian position, but is held by some liberal Christians.

If you hold a pluralist view of religion, you believe that all religions are equally valid.

One Bible quote which can be used to support this is John 14:2, in which Jesus is talking about heaven. Whether it is interpreted that he is saying that there are many houses or rooms, some people have interpreted this to mean that there are many different religions. It could also be interpreted that there are different versions of heaven. This quote can also be used to support an **inclusivist** view.

'In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places...' (John 14:2)

Exclusivist Christians could easily argue that this is a lot to interpret from Jesus talking to his disciples at the time, it could also be interpreted to mean that there are many people – this may not refer to people of different religions.

Exclusivists and inclusivists can also argue that many religions appear to be true. For example, Islam teaches that Muhammad was the final prophet, and that

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hand, (most) Christians feel that Jesus ended the line of official prophets and was God. There is a strong argument that Christians and Muslims cannot both be right in their beliefs about these issues, even if they agree on many other things. Therefore, exclusivists and inclusivists would argue that one religion must be more right.

Pluralists attempt to see past these differences, and may argue that much religion is human interpretation of God, rather than experiencing God directly. Differences in religion arise from humans' limited capability to understand the divine. Disagreements between different religions, who have interpreted the divine differently, believe that religious experience, and the way it is reported, is shaped by culture. Therefore, religions should compare areas of similarity, and these are more important than differences. There may be different misinterpretations of God, but there may be different misinterpretations of the same God. This view also makes sense of why there are many religions. Otherwise, it is easier to come to the conclusion that other religions are completely wrong. People have received incorrect information about himself. While some exclusivists believe that other religions other than their own are made up, many inclusivists would find this view more acceptable. They would not want to be this rude about other religions. However, it can be argued that all religions are valid in some ways but imperfect when you are arguing that your religion is the only one to some people.

Note: Religious pluralism is also used to describe societies where there are many different beliefs.

Ecumenism and Intra-faith Communication

While it may seem that whatever Christians believe about other religions they will have a better relationship within Christianity, this is often not the case. There are vast areas of difference within Christianity. For starters, the Catholic Church emphasises the authority of the Pope and priests; Protestants reject this, and many believe that the Bible is the ultimate authority on God (e.g. Methodists). Some Protestants, such as Pentecostals and Quakers, feel that the Holy Spirit is the ultimate authority. There are also many other different beliefs and practices within different denominations. Christians, as everyone is different and has different beliefs about their relationship with God – you will have studied some of these differences elsewhere.

Therefore, because there are differences between denominations, it is important to have communication so that Christians maintain good relationships with each other and work together for things which are important to all of them.

As covered in *Course Companion for Christianity (Beliefs, Teachings and Practices)*, part in ecumenism can involve intra-faith dialogue in different forms. Joint activities promotes dialogue between Christians of different denominations and that they build healthy relationships. Some activities will promote more ecumenical house groups or Bible studies allow Christians of different denominations to share ideas and beliefs and see what others think. This can make them more open to help them to consider views they had not previously thought about, and to change their minds. Discussing religious matters with Christians of other denominations can lead to cohesion, and make Christians feel part of one religion, rather than only a particular group within it.

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Intra-faith dialogue also takes place on more official levels, with senior representatives of different denominations meeting to discuss important issues, with the aim of working towards common Christian goals, such as peace and helping the poor. For example, the World Council of Churches is an ecumenical organisation made up of many of the main Christian denominations. Its members work together and feel united within their religion.

The Catholic Church is not a member of the World Council of Churches, though it does interact with it. Unlike many (though not all) other Christian denominations, the Catholic Church has traditionally presented the view that it is the correct branch of Christianity, and that other forms of Christianity, though not invalid, are not the best paths to God.

However, the Catholic Church has been working more closely with other denominations in recent years. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, and Pope Francis have met on several occasions to talk and build the relationship between the Catholic and Anglican Churches. The two want to work on areas of similarity so that the different denominations can be as united as possible. The Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission has existed since the mid-1960s, to promote theological dialogue between the two churches. The International Anglican–Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission and works on cooperation between the Churches.

Also, in 1965, the Catholic and Orthodox Churches nullified the excommunications of each other which had occurred in 1054 CE. Although this does not mean they have fully joined, it does show that the Catholic Church wants to show a willingness to work with other Churches and work with them.

Inter-faith Dialogue

Inter-faith dialogue is also being taken seriously in the modern world. Many Christians want to have a good relationship with those of other religions, recognising that many have similar goals and beliefs. With increasing **secularisation**, there may also be more motivation for inter-faith dialogue, as Christians may look for support from other faith communities when campaigning about religious issues. Many Christians are also looking to learn from other religions, from their values, their methods of understanding scripture, and their ways of life.

Inter-religious dialogue has often been most apparent in the media at times of crisis. For example, in 2015, after the Paris attacks, many Muslims attended a Catholic Mass in France in July 2016 when two people were killed. The attacks were carried out by a group called Islamic State, a radical Islamic group. The Muslim community worked with the Catholic community and condemned terrorist actions. Equally, in 2017, the Muslim community in London joined to condemn the London terror attacks in June 2017, and the Catholic community joined to show solidarity.

The Catholic Church showed its stance on inter-faith dialogue in the 1993 encyclical *Centesimus Annus* – the Mission of the Redeemer. It stated that although the Catholic Church is the correct religion, God can be found in other religions, and the Church should engage in dialogue with other religions. The Church is the true religion while also engaging in dialogue with other religions. The Church believes that all humans are created in the image of God, and so should be respected. Dialogue is important.

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The Church of England also promotes a positive stance on inter-faith dialogue in its document *Sharing the Gospel of Salvation*. The Church of England holds that all humans are made in God's image and should be treated with respect. It has benefited from ideas from other religions and philosophies and that in Britain, live in a multi-faith society, and so need to interact with those of other faiths. It recognises that all (theistic) religious believers have the aim of having a good relationship with God and there should be dialogue which respects common aims.

The Churches Together movement works for inter-faith dialogue, encourages understanding of other faiths and pray for them.

Inter-faith dialogue is particularly important for Christianity, as Christians (the Church of England) are still trying to evangelise, including evangelising people of other religions – engaging in inter-faith dialogue at the same time helps to build relationships with other religions. While not all may be best pleased with Christians trying to evangelise, it is not as disastrous as it seems. Both **intra-faith** and inter-faith dialogue are examples of Christians practicing and loving their neighbour, aiming for understanding and respect.

He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it, you shall love your neighbour as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.
(Matthew 22:37–40 NRSV)

Importance of Inter-faith Dialogue in Twenty-first Century Britain

Inter-faith dialogue is important in twenty-first-century Britain for many reasons. Some of the issues dealt with above, but they include:

- ◆ Different religions often share goals and beliefs and can work together.
- ◆ Different religions can learn from each other.
- ◆ Most religions believe that all humans have worth. Dialogue between different religions can help to build a more tolerant society.
- ◆ People of different religions often have to interact with each other in the workplace and in society. They need to work together.

A point of particular importance in twenty-first-century Britain is that racial and ethnic tensions are a problem. This can be due to a number of factors, including that some people are from many foreign people in the country taking jobs and services, and that some people are linked to certain religions and beliefs.

Those of non-Christian religions are often perceived as foreign, even if they are British. Certain religious beliefs may be associated with terrorism.

It is important for religions to work together to prevent intolerance, as they can show that they can learn from each other and that acts of terrorism are not representative of their faith. They may help society to become more **tolerant** of difference, and be more understanding of other faiths.

Quick Questions

16. Why might a Christian be an exclusivist?

Now Try This...

17. Explain the importance of Christian beliefs about whether other religions are valid. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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The Relationship between Religion and Wider Society

Religion has an impact within society regardless of whether it has a place in public life.

Keywords:

- ♦ **proselytisation** – the act of converting someone to one's religion

Key Concepts – Freedom of Choice and Freedom of Expression

Freedom of choice is quite self-explanatory – people have a right to choose what to believe, and choosing how to live, as long as this is within the law. One might argue that if there is true freedom of choice then religion should not be linked to national identity, as this may make people feel that if you are a certain nation you are linked to the associated religion. Some people will argue that **proselytising** is a right to choose what they believe and not have other religions forced on them.

Freedom of expression has been covered earlier. Freedom of expression is a different direction to freedom of choice. People might argue that people should be free to express their religious beliefs, and also free to link this to their national identity. Some people argue that people should be free to proselytise, as they are free to say what they want. Some people choose whether to convert or not.

Religion and National Identity

For many, religion is linked to national identity. It is not uncommon to hear phrases like 'Christian country'. Some people will use such phrases to justify the place of religion in public life – that Britain is traditionally Christian, and is majority Christian.

Sometimes Christianity being associated with British national identity can lead to things which are not Christian. People can get very angry about tax money being spent on **humanists** wanting to appear on *Thought for the Day*. They might argue that the state does not have to put money into other religions or publicly represent non-religious people. Some are people who would appreciate these. This is highly controversial.

Religion being linked to national identity may also lead to misrepresentation of religious observance. Because the Church of England is the state religion, many people may associate themselves as belonging to the Church of England (for example, they may have been christened, and may baptise their children), but in practice they may not think much differently from non-religious people. They may not have an active relationship with God.

Religion and national identity can affect sport. For example, *Jerusalem* is a particularly popular song sung by English sports fans. Many of these people are non-religious, and sing *Jerusalem* as a national song. However, it is a Christian hymn, and its use as an anthem shows that links between religion and national identity can be subtle, and not always deliberate.



Football

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Proselytisation

Proselytisation (or proselytism) refers to the act of converting someone to a religion (or to a different religion). Someone who converts is known as a proselyte. As mentioned above, **evangelise**, or proselytise, people, so that they can have a relationship with God. Proselytising to people of other religions is more common among **exclusive** religions than among **pluralists**, as there is less motivation to convert people if you believe that everyone has access to God.

There is a good chance you will have experienced people trying to proselytise in town centres and busy areas, and you may have had someone try to convert you.

There are different attitudes to proselytisation within Christianity. Some Christians feel that it is a priority to actively proselytise. Some Christians feel that it is right to share their faith with people, but that it is disrespectful to actively try to convert followers of other religions.

And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember that I am with you always, to the end of the age.' (Matthew 28:18–20 NRSV) [The Great Commission]

Some Christians feel that the best way to proselytise is to live a good life and help others, and that if people feel there is something missing in their lives, they will be inspired by good Christians. They feel they should talk to people who are interested about Christianity, but that they should not press their views on others without invitation. They see this as inconsiderate and unloving. Many Christians also feel that street preaching and trying to proselytise strangers is ineffective, as it annoys and alienates people, so it puts them off Christianity.

Quick Question

18. Give three ways in which religion is linked to wider society.
19. What is proselytisation?

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Summary for Dialogue within and between Religions

- ◆ There are different views within Christianity about the truth of other religions. **Inclusivists** believe that Christianity is the only way to God. **Pluralists** believe that other religions also provide ways to God. **Monists** believe that there are many ways to God, and there is not necessarily one which is more true. Many Christians believe that **faith** dialogue and **ecumenism** are important, so all Christians can learn from and support each other.
- ◆ Religion impacts on society in various ways. It can be linked to the national identity, for example, Britain with Christianity. Religious people can influence society. Some believe their religion confirms this, while others feel it is ineffective.



Leaders from different religions at the World Economic Forum 2009

Now Try This...

20. 'Christians should not accept the validity of other religions.' Discuss this statement.

Argue for **and** against this statement, referring to different Christian sources of wisdom and authority. Explain and evaluate the importance of this statement from a Christian perspective. Reach a conclusion which follows from your arguments.

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Dialogue between Religious and Non-

There is a range of shared values between many religious and non-religious people. Dialogue can often be positive. However, there are also disagreements, so dialogue between religious and non-religious is not always smooth.

Different Christian Views and Attitudes towards Non-Religious People

Key Concepts – Beliefs, Religious Values and Secular Values

Beliefs are opinions which someone holds to be true. People hold many beliefs, and some are as important as others. However, beliefs about what is right and wrong, and whether there is a God can matter a great deal to people.

Religious values can often be divided into values about God and worship, and values about how to live. For example, Christians value loving God, and loving their neighbour. Religious values also include valuing life and valuing truth – common to many religions. Christians may also value **tolerance** and compassion. Some religious values may be seen as strict, such as following laws, and disapproving of homosexuality.

Secular values include no values about God, but many religious and secular values overlap. For example, secular people may also value life and truth, equality and compassion. However, there may be differences, often resulting from human experience. For example, secular people may value choice over life (e.g. in the case of abortion) and may place more emphasis on valuing freedom of choice.

For some, secular values also include **secularism**.

Some conservative Christians may automatically dismiss non-religious world views because they are **atheistic**. However, others feel that many non-religious world views may also help Christians to fully evaluate their own views.

Many Christians share common scientific world views, accepting the Big Bang theory and phenomena such as climate change. Science is not specifically religious, and many areas not necessarily covered by religion. Christians may find science useful where religion does not.

There are many non-religious people who are moral, and many liberal Christians who hold moral principles which contain many of the same moral principles as religion, but without religious beliefs. They feel that moral actions have equal value, regardless of whether they are religious people.

There are many political world views which certain Christians share and others do not. For example, some will support capitalism and free markets, while others will desire more regulation.

While many general morals are shared by religious and non-religious people, consider values which may not be shared. Ideas about marriage and sex, gender and sexuality vary greatly between religious and non-religious world views. Christians may disagree with non-religious world views which do not match their own.

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Christian Agreement and Disagreement with Atheism, Agnosticism and Secularism

Christianity may share some values and ideals with some of these groups, but there are also potential, and definite, areas of disagreement.

Atheism

Christianity does not specifically share any values with **atheism**. This is not to say that Christians and atheists do not share any of the same values, but Christians believe in a God, and atheists do not, so they differ in this respect.

Agnosticism

In the same way, Christianity does not necessarily share any values with **agnosticism**. An agnostic is someone who is not sure if they believe in God or not. However, if an agnostic is taken as someone who does not know if there is a God or not, or to know about God, some Christians may disagree. They fully know God in this life, as he is much beyond humanity. They may also believe they can prove God, and that that is why they have faith.

Humanism

Christianity can share many values with **humanism**. Humanists value things such as humanist values, and also treating others well. Most Christians and humanists agree on these values. Most Christians would feel that these values are reflected in Christianity. If someone does not love God, they are trying to love their neighbour.

He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.
(Matthew 22:37–40 NRSV)

Some Christians may feel that they do not value understanding others, if it is not from Christianity, but this is not a majority view.

Christians also tend to value the use of reason, another humanist value. Some Christians feel that God gave humans reason so that they could understand his will. They would only use hard evidence to form their views, and they would not include religious experience within this. So while Christians value reason and evidence like humanists, they also include religious evidence which humanists would not include, and compare it with their reason. They differ in that belief in God affects how they view the world and form their views.

Some Christians will feel that some humanists have enough in common with Christianity to save them for living good lives. For example, Jesus teaches in the parable of the Good Samaritan in Matthew 25 that those who feed the hungry and help people in need will be rewarded. He does not mention religious belief being necessary. Some Christians may disagree that there are places in heaven for good non-religious people.

'In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places...' (John 14:2)

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Secularism

Christians may completely reject **secularist** values to separate religion from public life, but they should not be separated. They may feel that it is important to include religion in education, and for religion to influence law, etc... They may feel that the expression of religion within public life. They may also feel that there should be religious people in public, e.g. providing halal school dinners so Muslims can eat.

However, other Christians may share certain values with secularists, and

- ◆ They may feel that religion is important to them, but believe that the separation of belief and practice, and so they should not impose their beliefs through bishops influencing the law in the House of Lords.
- ◆ They may feel that people should have freedom of choice, and so students attending a school of worship, or teach a particular religion as part of the curriculum should have a balanced education which allows them to choose their own religion, and how they wish to conduct themselves (e.g. relationships).
- ◆ Christians may also not feel that it is fair that religious people may be exempt from equality laws, such as Catholics not employing female priests. If then should religious people be given a loophole?

Some Christians feel that religion and public life should be kept separate. Religious people should follow religion appropriately and also follow the state appropriately. This means they should not force religious belief into public life – they are secular.

...‘Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s’
(Matthew 22:21 NRSV)

However, even Christians who hold some secularist values are still unlike secularists such as the National Secular Society, who do not just want to remove religion from education, but also want to limit it in other public places such as on television. They think that this is taking things too far, as if religious people want to watch religious programmes they will feel that this is fair, in the same way that television caters to many different tastes. They may also be less extreme about secularism in general – for example they might support religious worship in schools, but that this should be optional.

Significance of Shared Values and Ideals between Religious and Non-Religious Groups

Shared values and ideals between religious and non-religious groups can be important for several reasons, including:

- ◆ This means that there can be tolerance and cohesion between religious and non-religious groups.
- ◆ This means that religious and non-religious groups can work together for the common good.

Where there are shared values and ideals between people with different beliefs, common ground is important. If religious and non-religious people can agree on key beliefs, then this means they are more likely to get on with each other, and support each other. Intolerance and disharmony in society may be more likely when groups feel isolated from other groups and feel that their values and beliefs are not shared.

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If religious and non-religious people share the same values then they can work together. If they both want to stop laws promoting welfare cuts, or they both want a public library centre open, then shared values will help them to work together.

Significance of Areas of Disagreement and Difference for Individuals and Societies

However, disagreement is also significant.

Individuals who hold different beliefs due to their stance on religion may not get on with each other. There is also the potential for people to see others as purely different and not judge them on their individual personality and beliefs.

Communities can face disharmony and intolerance, for example high levels of discrimination against members of a particular religion, or marginalisation of religious groups.

Both of the above (not getting on with people and having community in conflict) are negative outcomes and other negative outlets, such as the formation of gangs. Intolerance can be a bad head, but often has physical negative results in the world.

Taking society as a whole, disagreement and difference produce conflict. Should religion get a say in law making? Should religion play a part in education? Should it influence medicine? This is significant for people whichever position they take. If laws and policies result from debate, these have the potential to affect many people. People think about the impact of religion in their everyday lives.

Quick Questions

21. Why might disagreement between religious and non-religious people be significant?
22. Describe ways in which Christianity may be similar to humanism and secularism. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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Should Secular Values Take Precedence over Christian

Many Christians will argue that **secular** values should not take precedence (or be more important) over Christian values in society. A key argument which many Christians make is that many secular values are already included within Christian values – Christian **tolerance**, so secular values are not needed for people to be valued and

Christians can also argue that, of secular values which are not shared with Christians, it could be dangerous for religious freedom. For example, if **secularism** took precedence over Christian values, then Christians might not be able to educate their children in their religion or freedom of choice/practice, e.g. if the Catholic Church had to employ fee

People of non-Christian religions may have mixed views on whether it would be better to have secular values and fewer Christian ones in society. They might feel that there should be equal consideration with Christian beliefs, if there was equality for all and they might also feel that secular values could be damaging, and that Christians should have equal consideration for all religions. For example, secular values might mean no

However, many secular people (and potentially some Christians) will argue that secular values should take precedence over Christian (and other religious) views. They could counter the Christian argument by claiming that if many religious and secular values are similar, there is no problem for Christians if secular values are prioritised. Secularists could argue that non-religious applications of equality and tolerance will actually be fairer for all, as Christian equality and tolerance may be seen as unfair. For example, many Christian law makers are still opposed to LGBTQ rights.

They might also argue that secular values will not violate any Christian or religious rights, as Christians are entitled to educate their children in religion at home, and campaign against laws which they feel are unfair. They could claim that any religious exceptions to laws, such as allowing religious slaughters is not fair because if restrictions are for animal welfare reasons then these should be upheld no matter what. They feel that minimising religion in public life is in everyone's interests, as then everyone will be comfortable in society and can choose how to live in private.

Organisations such as the Tony Blair Foundation argue that religion is a positive force for humanity. However, many atheists argue that whatever Christians think of non-religious values, some religious

Quick Question

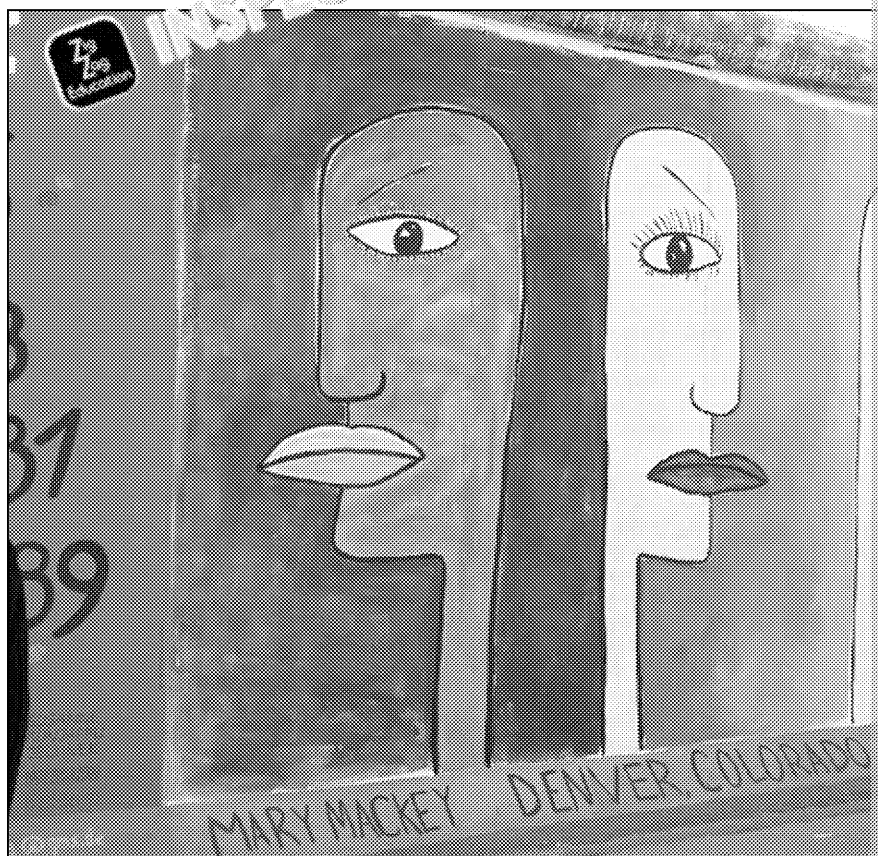
23. Describe what is meant by secularism.
24. Describe one Christian attitude to whether secularism should take precedence over Christian religious values.

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Summary for Dialogue between Religious and Non-religious

- ◆ There are various levels of agreement and disagreement between different religious views. Some Christians reject any non-religious world views. **Atheists** and **agnostics** have completely differing views to Christians. Christians share many moral values with **humanists**. Christians may agree with the separation of religion and state, or feel that religion is a positive influence. Different groups may contribute to cohesion and **tolerance** and allow for diversity. However, disagreements and difference can do the opposite.
- ◆ Christians may argue that Christian religious values should take precedence. Christians promote **equality** and **tolerance**, and having religion influence society, especially for those who are religious. However, **secularists** will disagree, arguing for greater equality if secular values take precedence, and feeling that society should be based on shared values.



Painting promoting tolerance

Now Try This...

25. 'Christians and non-religious people have more similar beliefs than different ones.' Discuss this statement.

Argue for **and** against this statement, referring to different Christian sources of wisdom and authority. Explain and evaluate the importance of these sources from a Christian perspective. Reach a conclusion which follows from your arguments.

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Answers

Remember!

Always check the exam board website for new information, including changes to assessment material.

This mark scheme can be used with all the exam style questions in this resource.

- Exam style questions that cover questions (A) and (B) are included under the 'Exam style questions' section.
- More complex exam essay style questions (C) and (D) are covered under the 'Exam essay questions' section.

Mark Schemes

Question Type	Marking Criteria
(A)	Accept any correct/relevant point, 1 mark per point (maximum 3)
(B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low level of knowledge and understanding of religion, such as different perspectives and influence, lacking detail and connection to question. Some mistakes. • Adequate but underdeveloped level of knowledge and understanding including some reference to different Christian perspectives and including some understanding of issues, linked to question. Some reference to sources of wisdom and authority. • Good knowledge and understanding of religion, such as different Christian perspectives and influence, with relevant detail, developed understanding of issues. Good reference to appropriate sources of wisdom and authority, linked to question. • Accept any correct/relevant point
(C)	<p>AO1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic knowledge and understanding. Little explanation of relevant sources of wisdom and authority. • Good knowledge and understanding. Appropriate explanation of relevant sources of wisdom and authority. • Accept any correct/relevant point <p>AO2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only one perspective lacking good justification, no evaluation of ideas. <p>(For the bands below, some, or all, of the components are needed.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several perspectives lacking good justification. Some analysis of importance of issue on Christians. Basic evaluation of ideas. • Several perspectives which are discussed. Some relevant analysis of influence of issue on Christians. Evaluation of ideas and a conclusion. • Range of perspectives which are explored appropriately. Good relevant analysis of importance and influence of issue on different Christians. Evaluation of ideas and a conclusion.
(D)	<p>AO1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low level of knowledge and understanding of religion, such as different perspectives and influence, lacking detail and connection to question. Some mistakes. • Adequate but underdeveloped level of knowledge and understanding including some reference to different Christian perspectives and including some understanding of issues, linked to question. Some reference to sources of wisdom and authority. • Good knowledge and understanding of religion, such as different Christian perspectives and influence, with relevant detail, developed understanding of issues. Good reference to appropriate sources of wisdom and authority, linked to question. • Accept any correct/relevant point

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Question Type	Marking Criteria
<p>D (cont.)</p>	<p>A02 (For the bands below, some, or all, of the components are needed.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only one perspective lacking good justification, or several perspectives lacking good justification. Little evaluation of ideas. There may be some mistakes. Little structure. Several perspectives lacking good justification. Some analysis of importance of issue on Christians. Little evaluation of ideas. There may be some relevant reasoning with some structure. Several perspectives which are discussed. Some relevant analysis of influence of issue on Christians. Comparison of different arguments and a conclusion. Mostly relevant reasoning with some structure. Range of perspectives which are explained appropriately. Good relevance to importance and influence of issue on different Christians. Critical comparison of arguments from different Christians. Evaluation of ideas and a good conclusion. Relevant reasoning which is well structured.

Relationships and Families

Question No. & Type	Indicative Content
1 A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nuclear Family Extended Family Blended Family Single-parent Family
2 B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many Christians believe they should procreate, and so the purpose of family is to fulfil God's command. <i>'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth...'</i> (Genesis 1:28 NRSV) Some do not feel that procreation is necessary, but that God has also commanded people to have families. Christians believe that one purpose of a family unit is to care for and create a stable environment for them. Many Christians believe that a purpose of a religious family is to raise children in the faith. e.g. Christian parents may baptise their children and bring them up as Christians. Christians believe that different members of the family have different roles, but children should obey parents, and parents discipline children. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <i>'Honour your father and mother, this is the first commandment with a promise: 'so that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.' And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, in the Lord. Bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.</i> (Ephesians 6:1–4 NRSV)
3 A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To have sex. To have children. To express their love for their partner. Because marriage is commanded by God.
4 C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Because marriage is believed to be a lifelong commitment, partners are expected to stay together for their whole lives. <i>'But from the beginning of creation, "God made them male and female." "The man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.'</i> (Mark 10:6–9 NRSV) This verse is also relevant to the Christian belief that marriage is for life between a husband and wife. This may be referenced in the ceremony. Partners also exchange rings, to show their lifelong commitment, and they intend to be monogamous, as fidelity is important to Christians (adultery is forbidden). <i>'You shall not commit adultery.'</i> (Exodus 20:14 NRSV)

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Question No. & Type	Indicative Content
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As many Christians believe that marriage is for having children, this is reflected in the Bible: <i>'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth...' (Genesis 1:28 NRSV)</i> Some Christians believe that the husband should be in charge of the marriage and be referenced. Others do not believe this, and so will stress that both should help each other and be equal. <i>'For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church' (Ephesians 5:26 NRSV)</i> Then the LORD God said, <i>'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.'</i> (Genesis 2:18 NRSV) Christians believe that they should support each other in marriage, and so do so during the ceremony. Christians believe that marriage is a commitment to both God and each other, and so marriage vows are taken. Many Christian denominations believe that the Bible teaches that marriage is for heterosexual couples, and so they carry out heterosexual marriages. Others feel that love is the most important thing, and will also marry homosexual couples.
5 (A)	<p>Some Christians believe that same-sex marriage is acceptable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They believe that Bible teachings against same-sex marriage are out of date. They feel that Jesus taught that love is the most important thing, and so they will be able to get married, including same-sex couples.
6 (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some Christians, such as evangelical Protestants, believe that same-sex marriage is wrong because the Bible teaches that marriage should be between a man and a woman. <i>'... the one who made them at the beginning "made them male and female" for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.' (Genesis 2:24 NRSV)</i> They may also believe it is wrong because the Bible teaches against homosexuality. <i>'You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.' (Leviticus 18:22 NRSV)</i> Catholics additionally disagree with same-sex marriage because they believe that having children and homosexual couples cannot have children naturally. <i>'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth...' (Genesis 1:28 NRSV)</i> Other Christians, such as some liberal Protestants, accept same-sex marriage because they believe that Bible teachings in the Bible against homosexuality, and supporting only heterosexual marriage are out of date. They feel that Jesus taught to love others and not to judge them, and so they believe that marriage should be allowed. <i>'Or how can you say to your neighbour, "Let me take the speck out of your eye" when you have a log in your own eye?' (Matthew 7:4 NRSV)</i> Also, they may not feel that all married couples need to have the ability to have children together, and so homosexual couples are not excluded from marriage.
7 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celibacy is refraining from having sex. This may be a permanent state, or a temporary state until someone starts having a relationship. This may be at the discretion of the individual. Some Christians believe that celibacy is beneficial in helping someone to focus on their faith.
8 (B)	<p>Adultery is forbidden in the Ten Commandments, so Christians should not commit adultery with anyone who is married to someone else. <i>'You shall not commit adultery.' (Exodus 20:14 NRSV)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Even without being forbidden in the Ten Commandments, adultery is considered wrong because it is being cheated on. Many Christians believe that marriage is the correct place to have sex, and so they will not have sex before this. They may believe that a sexual union is very important to someone, and so should not be entered into casually. <i>'... the one who made them at the beginning "made them male and female" for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.' (Genesis 2:24 NRSV)</i>

Question No. & Type	Indicative Content
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bible teaches against sexual immorality, and this may be taken to mean sex outside of marriage. <i>We must not indulge in sexual immorality...</i> (1 Corinthians 10:8 NRSV) If people have sex outside of marriage, people may end up having a child out of wedlock.
9 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rhythm method Barrier method contraception, e.g. condoms Hormonal contraception, e.g. the pill Emergency contraception
10 (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Catholic Church teaches against using artificial contraception because all sexual acts should be open to the possibility of new life. <i>"every action which, by its nature or in the development of its natural consequences, proposes, whether as an end or as a means, to procreation impossible" is intrinsically evil</i> (Catholic Church, Humanae Vitae) They believe this because they feel they should follow God's command to have children. <i>'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth...</i> (Genesis 1:28 NRSV) They also disagree with artificial contraception because they feel it goes against natural law. However, the Catholic Church does allow natural contraception, as this does not prevent conception from taking place. Many other Christians, including most Protestants, agree with using artificial contraception as there is nothing in the Bible which forbids it. They feel it is better for parents health wise (for mothers) and financially to limit the number of children they have. However, not all agree with hormonal or emergency methods of contraception because the destruction of an embryo, if they feel that they should not create life. <i>'You shall not murder.'</i> (Exodus 20:13 NRSV)
11 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An annulment is a way of cancelling a marriage and saying that it was never valid. Someone cannot get an annulment without a legal divorce. It is the only way to end a Catholic marriage (other than death) as divorce is seen as the end of a marriage.
12 (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus appeared to allow divorce in the case of adultery. <i>'It was also said, "Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce, so that she may marry another man. Whoever marries her, commits adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery."</i> (Matthew 5:31–32 NRSV) Many Christians believe that divorce is the most loving thing in many cases, especially if someone is being abused. <i>'In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the love of the prophets.'</i> (Matthew 22:39 NRSV) [The Golden Rule] Christians believe that even if God disapproves of divorce, he will forgive people who divorce and Christians should forgive divorcees too. <i>Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against you, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I tell you, seventy-seven times."</i> (Matthew 18:21–22 NRSV) <i>'... for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'</i> (Matthew 26:28 NRSV) Many Christians believe that as well as allowing people to divorce, people should be allowed to remarry as this is loving – people may fall in love again. Also, allowing people to remarry helps to provide stability for their children.

Question No. & Type	Indicative Content
13 ©	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some Christians believe that divorce is always wrong because of Jesus' teaching on marriage. This includes the Catholic Church. <i>'He answered, "Have you not read that the one who made them at the beginning made them male and female"; and said, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh"? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.' And he said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery."'</i> (Matthew 19:4–6 NRSV) The Catholic Church teaches that marriage is a sacrament, and as such, it is indissoluble. If the Church were to believe that it would be wrong to divorce and remarry, because it sees divorce as valid, this would mean that the new marriage would be invalid. <i>He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."</i> (Matthew 10:11–12 NRSV) As St Paul also teaches strongly against separation, this boosts teaching on marriage. <i>To the married I give this command—not I but the Lord—that the wife must love her husband (but if she does separate, let her remain unmarried rather than marry another), and that the husband should not divorce his wife.</i> (1 Corinthians 7:10–11 NRSV)
14 ©	<p>Points and Justification for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> God instituted marriage for heterosexual couples to have sex within. <i>And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken." Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.</i> (Genesis 2:22–25 NRSV) Jesus implied that sex should take place within heterosexual marriage. <i>'... the one who made them at the beginning "made them male and female"; and said, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."'</i> (Matthew 19:4–6 NRSV) The Catholic Church believes that all sex should be open to the possibility of procreation and homosexual sex is not; and it may not be a good idea to have children outside of marriage, as this is a less stable environment for them. <i>'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth...'</i> (Genesis 1:28 NRSV) The Bible teaches against sexual immorality, and sexual relationships outside of heterosexual marriage may be believed to be sexually immoral. <i>'We must not indulge in sexual immorality...'</i> (1 Corinthians 10:8 NRSV) <p>Points and Justification for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you do not believe in marriage, there is no reason to believe in marriage outside of marriage, and homosexual sex is not a sin. Jesus never taught against homosexual sex or premarital sex. Teaching against marriage in the Bible is not a sin. Jesus taught that marriage would like to be with others, and sexual relationships outside of marriage treating others as objects. <i>'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'</i> (Matthew 22:39 NRSV) Jesus taught that marriage is wrong to have sex with someone who is not your spouse. <i>'Or how can a man leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two become one flesh?'</i> (Matthew 19:4–6 NRSV) If couples have sex without being married, this is not a sin, but it is wrong to have sex with someone who is not your spouse, and it is wrong to have sex with someone who is not your spouse.

Question No. & Type	Indicative Content
15 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If something or someone is equal to another it means they are worth the same. For equality to be practised, people must treat others with the same respect. There are many different types of equality, including gender equality.
16 (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some Christians believe that men and women should have different roles. For example that the husband should be in charge of his wife. <i>'Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord...' (Ephesians 5:22-24)</i> <i>Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, just as the church loves itself, so that it can present itself without a stain or wrinkle or anything of the kind, but is holy and blameless, as if it had been washed with water by the word.</i> (Colossians 3:18-19 NRSV) Some Christians believe that the wife's role is to help her husband, based on Genesis 2, and that she should not lead him. <i>'Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner."' (Genesis 2:18 NRSV)</i> <i>Let a woman leave her father and mother and be united to her husband, and they will become one flesh. The secret of this union is Christ and the church, who presents herself to be purified by the word, so that she may present herself to him as a holy church without stain or wrinkle or anything of the kind, but is holy and blameless, as if it had been washed with water by the word.</i> (Ephesians 5:31-32 NRSV) <i>For Adam was formed first, then Eve, and Adam was the head of the church, as his body, of which he is the saviour, who cleanses the church with the word, so that he may present the church to himself in glory, without stain or wrinkle or anything of the kind, but is holy and blameless, as if it had been washed with water by the word.</i> (Ephesians 5:30-32 NRSV) Some Christians feel that women should focus on motherhood and family roles, because many women in the Bible are emphasised as mothers of their role as mothers, e.g. Jesus' mother Mary. However, many other Christians feel that men and women should not have different roles in the family. They feel that biblical teachings about different gender roles are outdated. They believe this because the Bible teaches that both genders are equal. Jesus treated women well, going against the social norm of his time. He supported women in their roles, rather than doing housework. <i>'But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and said, "Lord, do not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."' (Luke 10:40-42 NRSV)</i>
17 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minister (priest/vicar/pastor) Deacon Parent (mother/father)
18 (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some Christians believe that women should not perform roles of authority in the community, because they believe that woman was created to be a helper. Many of the New Testament letters teach against women having authority. <i>'Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner."' (Genesis 2:18 NRSV)</i> <i>'I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man...' (1 Timothy 2:12)</i> Such Christians may also feel that women should not be deacons or hold positions of authority in churches should be reserved for men. The New Testament contains teaching that women should not speak in church. <i>... women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, as the Lord also says. If there is anything they desire to say, let them ask the Lord's servants at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.' (1 Corinthians 14:34-35 NRSV)</i> Churches such as the Catholic Church believe this because they believe in the role of Jesus during the Eucharist, and follows on from Jesus' apostles were men (apostolic succession). However, others believe that women should be able to perform roles of authority in the Christian community because teachings against them doing so are outdated. Additionally, they may feel that women did fill such roles in the early church, so that they cannot do so today does not follow. <i>I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae. Andronicus and Junia, my relatives who were in prison with me; they were with the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was. (Romans 16:1, 7 NRSV)</i>

Question No. & Type	Indicative Content	
19 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baptism • Instructing children in prayer • Reading the Bible • Sunday school • Christian youth group 	
20 (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A religious upbringing may reinforce faith in God by getting children involved. For example, celebrating religious festivals often creates positive associations with God. • It may reinforce faith in God because children learn morality through religion that it is good to act in particular ways. They may admire religious people and be moral and aspire to be like them. <i>'Rid yourselves, therefore, of all filthiness, all malice, and all guile, insincerity, envy and all such rubbish; and possess your hearts, which are full of wrath, of anger, of rage, of hatred, of envy, of malice and all such things, and put them aside; do not worship them, nor give place to them. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not let anything of these things become visible in your life. Love one another as you love yourselves, for the love that covers all sins.'</i> (Colossians 3:8-14 NRSV) • It may reinforce faith in God through acts which dedicate a child to God. Children may feel grateful to God for saving them. • It may reinforce faith in God if children feel that they have experienced God through prayer. • It may reinforce faith in God because they believe that they are welcomed and cared for by God. <i>'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs...'</i> (Mark 10:14 NRSV) 	
21 (D)	<p>Points and Justification for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bible teaches that wives should obey their husbands. <i>'Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord...'</i> (Ephesians 5:22 NRSV) • The Bible teaches that woman was a helper for man. <i>'Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner."' (Genesis 2:18 NRSV)</i> • The Bible emphasises the role of women as mothers, e.g. Mary the mother of Jesus. • The Bible teaches that women should not have authority over men, or speak in church, so they should not be ministers. <i>'I permit no woman to teach or have authority over a man, as the Lord has commanded the church, his body, of which he is the head, himself saving the church, cleansing it by the word of water with the word, to present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind, but that it be holy and blameless, as you are to be holy, without blemish.'</i> (Ephesians 5:29-33 NRSV) • The Catholic Church teaches that priests must be men because of apostolic succession – the tradition of male disciples, apostles and priests. 	<p>Points and Justification against:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biblical teaching suggests that men should be in charge of their wives. • When woman is talked about as a helper, it does not necessarily mean a subordinate – God is also described as a helper. • Women can be important in the church, having significantly different roles to men who are also important. • Biblical teaching about women in the church may refer to women in the home. <i>... women should be silent in the Lord, as the Lord is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the head, himself saving the church, cleansing it by the word of water with the word, to present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind, but that it be holy and blameless, as you are to be holy, without blemish, as the Lord has commanded the church, his body, of which he is the head, himself saving the church, cleansing it by the word of water with the word, to present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind, but that it be holy and blameless, as you are to be holy, without blemish.'</i> (Ephesians 5:29-33 NRSV) • The Bible appears to have no mention of female apostles, so women should not lead in church today. <i>I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchreae, my relative and my dear friend. She has been very helpful to me; they are prominent in the church, and they were in Christ first.</i> (Romans 16:1, 7 NRSV)
22 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was hearings which aimed to uncover the truth about apartheid and reconcile people on both sides of the divide. • It heard from both those who had worked for apartheid, and those who had opposed it. • Some of its leaders were those such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who played a key role in ensuring healing in South Africa. 	

Question No. & Type	Indicative Content
23 ©	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bible teaches that humans are equal before God, and so equality is a principle within Christianity. <i>So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them, male he created them and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27 NRSV)</i> There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28 NRSV) The Bible teaches that Christians should not treat others unequally, and equality is also important to Christians. <i>You do well if you really fulfil the royal law according to the scripture: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are guilty of the law as transgressors. (James 2:8–9 NRSV)</i> Jesus showed that equality is not only important because it is what God wants because it helps reflect God's Father, people should be treated well, because you, and it is wrong to treat someone badly when they could save you. <i>... did not these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who robbed them? He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.' (Luke 10:36–37 NRSV)</i>
24 A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An embedded inequality is one which is set into something, such that it is difficult to change. Embedded inequalities can be biological, such as men and women having different features. Embedded inequalities can also be social or legal, such as black people being universally different from white people, and being barred from doing certain things.
25 B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Culture can influence religion heavily, for example patriarchal cultures influenced religions, such as Christianity, which became male-led like the Jewish societies it interacted with. Culture can also affect religious festivals, such as Christmas being celebrated at the same time as a pagan festival. Religion can influence cultures drastically by influencing laws, so many things are acceptable or wrong. <i>'You shall not murder.' (Exodus 20:13 NRSV)</i> Religion can also influence cultural acceptability of things, even if they are not as acceptable as homosexuality. <i>'You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.' (Leviticus 18:22 NRSV)</i> Religious figures may also help to reform culture, because of their beliefs. For example, William Wilberforce opposing the slave trade.
26 A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christians may believe in gender equality because they believe men and women were created in the image of God. They may believe in gender equality because Galatians 3 teaches that there is no gender. They may believe in gender equality because they believe that Jesus was equal with men.
27 B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most Christians feel that men and women are spiritually equal, and so they believe in gender equality. <i>So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them, male he created them and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27 NRSV)</i> <i>... there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28 NRSV)</i> Many Christians also believe that men and women should be practised in the same way. <i>You do well if you really fulfil the royal law according to the scripture: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are guilty of the law as transgressors. (James 2:8–9 NRSV)</i> They feel that giving men and women different roles is not treating them equally, and this is not gender equality.

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Question No. & Type	Indicative Content	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bible teaches to treat everyone with love. <i>'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'</i> (Matthew 22:39 NRSV) Many Christian denominations allow everyone, men and women, people of all ethnicities, to fulfil all roles, and do not discriminate against them, e.g. the Quakers. Jesus treated women well and had many female followers. Christians such as William W. Webb and Martin Luther King Jr. stood up for equality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus was male, and male – if men and women should have had a say. Christians have often been unequal, such as during slavery and apartheid.

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The Existence of God

Question No. & Type	Indicative Content
1 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Omnipotent – all-powerful Omniscient – all-knowing Benevolent – loving A Trinity – three persons in one being Jealous
2 (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some Christians believe that God is immanent – active in the world – supported by belief that God has performed miracles, recorded in the Bible. The Bible also supports this, describing God as far above the Earth. <i>“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means, ‘God is with us.’” (Matthew 1:23 NRSV)</i> Many Christians also believe that God is transcendent – above the world. The Bible also supports this, describing God as far above the Earth. <i>“Who is like the Lord our God, who is seated on high, who looks far above the heavens and the earth?” (Psalm 113:5–6 NRSV)</i> Some Christians believe that God is both immanent and transcendent – doing anything, including acting within time as well as being outside of it. <i>‘Am I a God near by, says the Lord, and not a God far off? Who can I not see them? says the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth?’ (Jeremiah 23:23–24 NRSV)</i> Some Christians, such as the Catholic Church believe that God the Father is transcendent but God the Son and Spirit are immanent; this is because they believe that Jesus is on Earth and the Spirit is also active in the world, but that God the Father is outside the human world. <i>‘...The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of all, does not live in shrines made by human hands...’ (Acts 17:24 NRSV)</i> Most Christians believe that God is personal – he knows humans and answers their prayer. <i>‘Before I formed you in the womb I knew you...’ (Jeremiah 1:5 NRSV)</i> However, some believe that he is also impersonal, because they believe that God is more than humans can imagine – one cannot have a relationship with him as one can with another human. <i>‘For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways; for the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.’ (Isaiah 55:8–9 NRSV)</i>
3 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Because he is God and he is necessarily good. Because he conforms to some greater standard of good. Because he has created a good creation. Because he is loving and compassionate. Because he is just.
4 (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some Christians believe that God is good automatically – he is perfect and his goodness is the Bible sets him out as the ultimate standard. <i>‘The heavens declare his righteousness, for God himself is judge.’ (Psalm 145:3 NRSV)</i> Many Christians also believe that God is good in the sense of being just – he does what is right according to what is good. Many Christians believe that God being good is a reason why creation exists. <i>‘God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.’ (Genesis 1:31 NRSV)</i> Christians believe that God is good in the sense of being loving and merciful. They also believe that this is demonstrated through his love shown towards humanity. <i>‘The Lord is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made.’ (Psalm 145:9 NRSV)</i>

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Question No. & Type	Indicative Content	
5 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God allows suffering because it is good for humans. • Suffering allows humans to develop their relationship with God when they think about it. • Suffering allows humans to develop their moral character by doing good, suffering, and meaning that there are always people to help. • Humans may need to suffer in order to complete their souls. 	
6 (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God allows human suffering as punishment for wrongdoing. • This is just because humans have caused human suffering through the actions of Luther and Calvin. • The Bible teaches that God does punish those who do wrong. <i>And when your people say, 'Why has the Lord our God done all these things to us?', they shall say to them, 'As you have forsaken me and served foreign gods, so shall you serve strangers, and that is not yours.'</i> (Jeremiah 5:19 NRSV) • However, many Christians feel that this is not true, because Jesus died for them and was forgiven, so they no longer need to be punished. Also, it is not fair that some people suffer. • God allows suffering because it is good for humans. • Suffering allows humans to develop their relationship with God when they think about it. • Suffering allows humans to develop their moral character by doing good, suffering, and meaning that there are always people to help. • Humans may need to suffer in order to complete their souls. • God allows suffering because it is the result of human free will – it was given to humans free will, but if they choose to do evil then this will cause suffering. • Many Christians believe this, but not all feel that this explains why God allows suffering. • Some Christians believe that God cannot stop suffering because he is not all-powerful, but most do not believe this. • Many Christians believe humans cannot know why God allows human suffering. <i>[God to Job] 'Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?' (Job 38:4 NRSV)</i> 	
7 (D)	<p>Points and Justification for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Christians believe that God is loving. They believe that he sent Jesus to save them. <i>Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. (1 John 4:8 NRSV)</i> • Christians should believe whatever the Bible says about God. • Mainstream Christianity teaches that God is a Trinity. • Most Christians believe that God is immanent and transcendent. <i>Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means, "God is with us."</i> (Matthew 1:23 NRSV) <i>'Who is like the Lord our God, who is seated on high, who looks far down on the heavens and the earth?' (Psalm 113:5–6 NRSV)</i> 	<p>Points and Justification against:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all Christians believe that God is loving – some believe that he could allow evil and suffering. • Christians do believe that God is loving, but Jesus looked at them and said, "It is impossible, but for God, all things are possible." <i>(Matthew 19:26 NRSV)</i> • Some Christians believe that God is immanent, but others believe that God is transcendent. The Old Testament misrepresents God. <i>(for you shall worship no other Lord, whose name is Jealous.) (Exodus 34:14 NRSV)</i> • Unitarian churches do not believe that they follow Jesus' teaching that he was God. <i>Jesus said to him, 'Why do you say that one is good but God alone is good?'</i> • Christians have different beliefs about God. Catholics believe the Father, the Son and Spirit are immaterial. Some believe that all of God can be seen because he is all-powerful.

Question No. & Type	Indicative Content	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most Christians believe that God is personal. <i>'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you...'</i> (Jeremiah 1:5 NRSV) Christians often have the same general beliefs about God and him sending Jesus – if they did not share these beliefs they would not belong to the same religion. It is important to remember this, even when Christians have differences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some Christians believe that God is impersonal, because he is not like us. You can have an ordinary person who says: <i>'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord. The heavens are higher than the earth, just as your ways are higher than your thoughts.'</i> (Isaiah 55:9) There are many branches of Christianity. Christians agreed about God, but there are divisions in the church.
8 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The world may not seem to be designed – there is suffering, disease, etc. Evolution explains the appearance of design in the world. The analogy between the world and designed objects is weak, as we are on a smaller scale to the world. 	
9 (A)	<p>There seems to be no reason for some of the design in the world, such as the complexity of the human eye – there must be a designer, as evolution would not do this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The world does appear to contain organised plants and have a function – to allow life – there is an analogy with designed objects. So many things need to be the case to allow life, that it seems that the world was designed for this purpose. 	
10 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Big Bang may need a cause. Science supports everything needing a cause. Science cannot explain many things about how the world came to be, such as the origin of life. 	
11 (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everything has a cause, and a first cause is necessary to cause other things. If there are causes and effects, there must be a first cause: God. St Thomas Aquinas argued that there is no reason to think that something can exist without a cause, and if you trace the chain of causes back, then you reach the first cause – there must be an immaterial cause to cause the physical world. The Bible supports the idea that God was the first cause. <i>'In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God hovered over the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.'</i> (Genesis 1:1–3 NRSV) The first cause argument still allows that God may have caused the universe to begin with the Big Bang, but this seems unlikely because everything else does have a cause. It is possible to argue that the universe is unique in not needing a cause (unlike the Big Bang), but this seems unlikely because everything else does have a cause. 	
12 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Light Water Plants 	
13 (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christians may believe that God created the world by speaking. <i>'In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God hovered over the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.'</i> (Genesis 1:1–3 NRSV) Many Christians do not believe that the Genesis account is factually correct. They believe that God created the world using the Big Bang. Because the world allows human life, and God created humans, many Christians believe that God created the world for humanity. <i>'Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; they will have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping animal that creeps upon the earth."'</i> (Genesis 1:26 NRSV) 	

Question No. & Type	Indicative Content
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some Christians believe that the world must have been created for the sake of God, and this inspires such awe and wonder. However, Christians also believe that the world has not been given to humans as they like with it – humans have been given the world and must be satisfied with it. <p><i>The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till and keep it (Genesis 2:15 NRSV)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> F R Tennant's strong anthropic principle argument is that the world must have been designed for humanity, because there are so many things necessary for life and our universe has them all. This does not disagree with the Big Bang theory of evolution, but suggests a purposeful motion.
14 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refrain from hunting and killing animals. Help protect the environment and use resources which are environmentally friendly.
15 (B)	<p>If humans act morally, God is an explanation for why there are moral absolutes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If humans appear to have an inbuilt moral sense, then God must be the source of conscience. John Henry Newman argued that having a conscience proves that God must exist. For right and wrong to objectively exist, it makes sense for there to be a God to support the absolutes – otherwise, who could say what is definitely right and wrong? Newman argued that right and wrong is not just what humans want, because humans often do what is right even when they want to do something else. Therefore, there must be a God who has given them the conscience to make the right choice in their interest. Christians can argue that conscience may not be fool proof because it can be wrong. To use the Bible and pray in order to know right from wrong. However, this is the basis for right and wrong for everybody, not just Christians.
16 (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soul-making explains why there is evil, because if humans need to develop their character, there need to be struggles to allow them to do this. Soul-making explains why humans need to act morally, because if they do not, they will not be able to complete their souls well. St Irenaeus suggested humans were created in the image of God, but not in the likeness of God. He believed that this world is the best possible world. A world without evil would not allow adequate development into the likeness of God. He argued that humans needed free will in order to authentically complete their souls. This would not be real if they did not have a choice. Therefore, evil is necessary for free will. John Hick suggested that creation is ongoing – humans can only be made in the likeness of God by facing with evil and suffering, and remaining good in the face of this. Soul-making explains that humans need to act morally in order to be able to complete their souls with God – they need to be free to choose to work towards God's perfect world.
17 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christians find philosophical arguments for God's existence important because they strengthen their faith. They may find them important as they may be used to convert other people. They may find them important because they show that faith is reasonable.
18 (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some Christians believe that philosophical arguments for the existence of God are important – actually following Jesus is the important part of Christianity. They believe in a designer / first cause God. They believe that it is important to have faith in Jesus and his teaching about God because of philosophical arguments. <p><i>Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, 'If you continue to love me, you must keep my commandments. If you do not keep my commandments, you will not love me. And you who do not love me do not keep my commandments. And you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.' (John 8:31-32 NRSV)</i></p>

Question No. & Type	Indicative Content	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • However, other Christians think that philosophical arguments for the important – traditionally many Catholic theologians, such as St Thomas Aquinas, worked on such arguments. • The Catholic Church believes that natural law is important, so it is important that it can be used to support God's existence. • Philosophical arguments give some Christians confidence in their faith. • Philosophical arguments are important to some Christians if they use them to convince non-believers. • Some Christians feel that philosophical arguments for God's existence are not an excuse for not believing in God because 'his existence is obvious'. <i>Fools say in their hearts, 'There is no God'. They are corrupt, they do not understand; there is no one who does sound mind.' Psalm 14:1 NRSV</i> 	
19 D	<p>Points and Justification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It seems reasonable to think that there is a God because something needed to cause the universe to come into being – there needed to be a first cause. • Everything else has a cause and it would be very unlikely that the laws of nature were broken and causes and effects continue back forever with no first cause. • If God is spiritual and not material, this explains why God does not need a physical first cause too – St Thomas Aquinas argued that God explained how causes and effects did not continue back forever. <p><i>'In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.'</i> (Genesis 1:1–3 NRSV)</p>	<p>Points and Justification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is more likely that the universe was caused by the Big Bang than developed through a series of events. The Big Bang is the most widely accepted theory. • It is possible that the universe could go back for ever and never have a first cause. This would prove otherwise. • Just needing a first cause does not provide evidence for God's existence. It does not explain why there is something rather than nothing. • The first cause argument does not prove one God or many gods. • Some Christians argue that philosophical arguments such as the first cause argument are not evidence towards God's existence. Evidence towards God, as is having a personal relationship with God.
20 A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some Christians believe that God inspired the Bible. • This means that it was not exactly revealed word for word, but that it was the thoughts of those who wrote it. • Therefore, it is important as revelation because God revealed spiritual truths that were recorded. • However, as the words were not necessarily directly revealed by God, different Christians may have different interpretations. 	
21 B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christians believe that they can experience God through Jesus, and through the Bible. <i>And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only Son, full of grace and truth.</i> (John 1:14 NRSV) • They believe that they can experience God through scripture – they can learn what God wants and what he wants. <p><i>'All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproving, for training in righteousness'</i> (2 Timothy 3:16 NRSV)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They may believe that they can experience God through inspiration and through Christian history. For example, Catholics may feel a link to God through the Virgin Mary. • Many Christians feel that they experience God through providence – God guiding their life and events within it. • Christians may also feel that they experience God through miracles. There are many miracles in the Bible, and many Christians believe they have received miraculous experiences in their lives, such as at Lourdes. 	

Question No. & Type	Indicative Content
22 ①	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saul's vision on the road to Damascus where he was blinded and he Peter's vision where unclean animals came down from heaven. Bernadette's vision of the Virgin Mary at Lourdes.
23 ②	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Religious experiences may be challenging if they go against what someone believed – for example, Saul's vision converted him to Christianity, though he was persecuting. <i>'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' (Acts 9:4 NRSV)</i> Many religious people argue that actually this should mean that religious experiences should be taken seriously – they should not be too challenging, because if something you previously disagreed with, then they must be right. Religious experiences may be challenging for someone, as they are often brief, and so one cannot relate to someone else, and may feel isolated from them fully. Some religious experiences may be challenging if they are physically painful – for example, religious experience of being stabbed by an angel's spear. Religious experiences can be challenging if people are not sure if they are real – for example, for those who believe that speaking in tongues (glossolalia) is other human languages, then if someone speaks in tongues and it is not a human language, they may believe it is not real. (Some may believe religious experiences to be drug induced, or hallucinations.) <i>When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. Suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and the house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. (Acts 2:1–4)</i> Religious experiences may be challenging if they suggest doing something that someone does not want to do – for example, Peter as a devout Jew did not want to eat unclean food. <i>'What God has made clean, you must not call profane.'</i> (Acts 10:15 NRSV)
24 ③	<div>Points and Justification for:</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Religious experience must give reliable knowledge about God because sometimes it is not what people expect – for example, Saul did not expect Jesus to stop him from persecuting Christians, and Peter did not expect God to tell him to eat unclean food (or that God wanted Peter to go to the gentiles). Therefore, they cannot have made up this knowledge, because they did not agree with it. <i>'Get up, Peter; kill and eat.'</i> (Acts 10:13 NRSV) Many Christians have religious experiences which confirm things which they already believe, such as God being loving (Julian and Teresa). Therefore, they can be seen to provide reliable knowledge about God as the knowledge confirms what from other sources. For Pentecostal Christians believe that Christians should be baptised with Holy Spirit. As they believe that this can be shown through gifts of the Spirit, if they experience someone exhibiting such a gift – such as speaking in tongues (glossolalia) – then they will see this to be reliable knowledge that God has baptised this person from above. <i>Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit...' (John 3:5 NRSV)</i> <div>Points and Justification for:</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If Christians rely on religious experiences to know about God which confirms their knowledge of God (e.g. that he does not want unclean food), then Christians know that religious experiences are reliable. People have religious experiences which seem to be different from other religions, so they can be sure that their previous knowledge about God is correct. Religious experiences can be seen to be reliable before his vision of the crucifixion, which was wish fulfilment. Therefore, religious experiences are reliable knowledge. Some people have religious experiences which are awful things – such as being persecuted – to accept that religious experiences are reliable knowledge of God. Hume would say that religious experiences are not reliable knowledge of God.

Question No. & Type	Indicative Content	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christians may believe that religious experiences provide reliable knowledge about God if they are backed up – because many believe they have experienced healing at Lourdes, they are more likely to believe that Bernadette's vision provided reliable knowledge about God and Mary. 	<p>knowledge about religious experiences. If we do, it is always the experiencer is such religious experiences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People may not have religious experiences of different interpretations. If miracles, the likelihood cannot be a reliable exact truth about Christians may not accept religious experiences accepting them.



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Religion, Peace and Conflict

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Question No. & Type	Indicative Content
1 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are lots of wars commanded by God in the Old Testament. The Old Testament talks about God giving people strength to fight. The death penalty is allowed in the Old Testament.
2 (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus taught that it was good to make peace, and not to be violent. <i>'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.'</i> Jesus taught people to love their enemies and forgive, discouraging violence. <i>'You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy." I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.'</i> (Matthew 5:43-48 NRSV) The Psalms talk about God giving people strength to fight, supporting violence for some reasons. <i>'For he has armed me with strength for the battle; you made my assailants my footstool.'</i> (Psalm 18:39 NRSV) There are also many battles commanded by God in the Old Testament, so sometimes violence is right. Jesus also taught that his coming would cause violence, in which case violence is justified. <i>'Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.'</i> (Matthew 10:34 NRSV)
3 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-defence Retaliation Greed Hate
4 (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some Christians feel that violence in self-defence is acceptable because it allows people to harm and kill innocents. This could be seen as justified. Catholic and Anglican Churches accept violence in some circumstances. However, others feel that Jesus taught against this, teaching people to turn the other cheek. <i>'... if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also...'</i> (Matthew 23:8 NRSV) Jesus also told his disciples not to defend him with violence when he was arrested. Some Christians feel that violence in retaliation is acceptable, as this is necessary to stop people from being violent in the first place. However, many disagree because Jesus taught against retaliation. <i>'You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer.'</i> (Matthew 5:38-39 NRSV) Most Christians will oppose violence for reasons of greed, as Jesus taught. <i>'And [Jesus] said to them, "Take care not to lay your hand on the plough, looking back, lest you become lame, and the ploughman will plough on, and you will be left behind."'</i> (Luke 9:62 NRSV) Most Christians will oppose violence for reasons of greed, as Jesus taught. <i>'And [Jesus] said to them, "Take care not to lay your hand on the plough, looking back, lest you become lame, and the ploughman will plough on, and you will be left behind."'</i> (Luke 9:62 NRSV)
5 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many terrorist organisations have religious connections. Countries with different religions often fight each other. Groups with different religions within countries often fight each other.
6 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many religious people are involved in conflicts, but this does not necessarily mean that conflicts are caused by religion. Conflicts may be caused by greed, or dislike of difference in general. Religion generally teaches peace and works to solve conflict. More people died in World War II than have died in all religious conflicts combined.
7 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Violence which is meant to cause terror. Often violence which is aimed at political change. Often targets civilians. It is not officially authorised.

Question No. & Type	Indicative Content
8 ③	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christians generally oppose terrorism, as it is not seen as loving, and others. <i>'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'</i> (Matthew 22:39 NRSV) Many important Christian figures, such as Pope Francis, have spoken especially opposing religious extremism, as they feel that religion should not justify violence. Christians are likely to oppose terrorism for targeting civilians and for actions which Jesus taught they should make. <i>'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.'</i> (Matthew 5:9 NRSV) Some Christians try to pray for terrorists, not agreeing with their actions but that they may be going through something difficult and in pain. Some Christians have taken part in terrorist activity, for example men in the US feel that this is necessary in order to make America a Protestant society. Some Christians have also carried out terrorist acts such as bombing. They believe these people are sinning against God, and that God will punish them. They may feel that Jesus justified this. <i>'Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace but a sword.'</i> (Matthew 10:34 NRSV) Some Christians feel that certain terrorist acts are necessary to oppose
9 ①	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The right person/group must start it There must be a good reason People must want the right things There must be more reason to go to war than not to go to war There must be a good chance of winning / achieving your purpose Other options must be tried first
10 ③	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many Christians support just war. For example, St Augustine and St Thomas Aquinas contributed to Just War Theory, and the Catholic and Anglican Churches have taught that just war must be an option because the Old Testament teaches that God helps people in battle, and Christians believe God is just. <i>For you girded me with strength for the battle; you made my assailants fall.</i> (Psalm 18:39 NRSV) Many Christians feel that just war is important because it regulates war and we can't fight, and having a concept of just war may help to prevent unjust wars. Many Christians feel that there are problems with just war, as it is very difficult to meet all of the conditions. This means that all war runs the risk of being unjust, and so unloving, and going against Jesus' teaching. <i>'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'</i> (Matthew 22:39 NRSV) Many Christians, such as Quakers, are pacifists and disagree with all wars, believing that any wars are truly just, and that Jesus taught to make peace, not war. <i>'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.'</i> (Matthew 5:9 NRSV)
11 ①	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A holy war is a conflict declared by a religious authority. It is started for religious reasons, such as regaining holy land. Holy wars may be fought for spiritual reward.
12 ③	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many Christians disagree with holy war because they believe that God desires peace. The Old Testament can be interpreted to mean that God desires peace. <i>... they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into harrows. No nation shall lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.</i> (Isaiah 2:4 NRSV) Some Christians feel that the Old Testament does not teach that God desires peace but rather that holy war may be necessary now, and there will be peace in the future. Many Christians also feel that Jesus taught against holy war – encourage people to turn the other cheek and love their enemies. <i>'... if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also...'</i> (Matthew 5:39 NRSV)

Question No. & Type	Indicative Content
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some Christians may feel that God sometimes desires holy war, but it is not common in the modern era, because he commanded wars in the Old Testament. Some Christians feel that if God commands holy war, then this is right evidence of him doing this in the Old Testament. <i>The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Avenge the Israelites on the Midianites. They shall be gathered to your people.' So Moses said to the people, 'Arm yourselves for the war, so that they may go against Midian, to execute the Lord's command on Midian.'</i> (Exodus 31:1–3 NRSV) They may also believe that Jesus gave some support to holy war, suggesting that they should lose their life for him. (Although other Christians may feel this without fighting.) <i>Those who find their life will lose it and those who lose their life for me will save it.</i> (Matthew 10:39 NRSV)
13 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conventional warfare Religious warfare Apocalyptic warfare
14 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conventional warfare is the most acceptable type of warfare – it was supported by God's people in the Old Testament. This warfare is acceptable because it does not target civilians. This warfare is acceptable because it allows people a chance to surrender.
15 (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having nuclear weapons may be necessary to act as a deterrent against other countries' own weapons of mass destruction. Nuclear weapons may bring conflicts to a conclusion with fewer deaths. Nuclear weapons may be necessary for use in an extreme emergency. Many Christians feel that having nuclear weapons is wrong because it kills many people, including civilians, and harm the environment. Many feel that the money could be better spent helping people. <i>'One of the most serious [challenges] is increased military spending on maintaining and developing nuclear arsenals. Enormous resources are spent on these purposes, when they could be spent on the development of people who are poorest.'</i> (Pope Benedict XVI) Many feel that it is wrong that they do not allow for a chance to surrender. <i>When you draw near to a town to fight against it, offer it terms of peace. If it surrenders to you, then all the people in it shall serve you. If it does not surrender to you, then you shall fight against it. When you draw near to a town to fight against it, offer it terms of peace. If it surrenders to you, then all the people in it shall serve you in forced labour.</i> (Deuteronomy 20:10–11 NRSV)
16 (B)	<div>Points and Justification for:</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If they use them, this violence goes against pacifism / religious teachings against violence (violence is not loving...) <i>'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.'</i> (Matthew 5:9 NRSV) <i>'You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy."</i> But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.' (Matthew 5:43–44 NRSV) WMD kill and damage the environment WMD do not allow people a chance to surrender and make peace <i>When you draw near to a town to fight against it, offer it terms of peace. If it accepts your terms of peace and surrenders to you, then all the people in it shall serve you in forced labour.</i> (Deuteronomy 20:10–11 NRSV) <div>Points and Justification for:</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WMD are good It may be the only way to stop the use of these weapons and save civilian lives in the process. <i>'You shall love yourself.'</i> (Matthew 22:39 NRSV) WMD save the lives of many people who do not have to fight. Most likely to be accepted by Christians point of view because it is in the Bible for protection for the weak.

Question No. & Type	Indicative Content
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money spent on these could be better spent elsewhere – popes have spoken about this <i>'One of the most serious [challenges] is increased military spending and the cost of maintaining and developing nuclear arsenals. Enormous resources are being consumed for these purposes, when they could be spent on the development of peoples, especially those who are poorest.'</i> (Pope Benedict XVI) • If countries keep these weapons, the 'wrong' people could get their hands on them • More likely to be a liberal Christian point of view, as they may feel that having such powerful weapons can never be justified when there is a strong message against violence and desired peace
17 Ⓐ	<p>Pacifism is a belief that violence is wrong and should not be carried out.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absolute pacifism keeps to this belief 100% holding that there are no circumstances in which violence is acceptable, and that it is always better to refrain from violence. • Absolute pacifism is different from conditional pacifism because conditional pacifism allows violence in some circumstances.
18 Ⓒ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some Christians feel that they should be pacifists because Jesus taught peace, and he taught not to respond to others with violence. <i>'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. ... if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also...'</i> (Matthew 5:9-40) • They also feel that he demonstrated this strongly by not letting his disciples respond with violence. <i>'... but Jesus said to him, "Judas, is it with a kiss that you are betraying me? When those who were around him saw what was coming, they asked him, "Strike him with the sword?" Then one of them struck the slave of the high priest on the right ear. But Jesus said, "No more of this!" And he touched his ear and healed him.'</i> (Luke 22:48-51 NRSV) • The Quakers are strong pacifists and follow these teachings, also believe in not being fighting for the Kingdom of God, but that this is a spiritual struggle and do not require any physical fighting. <i>Our principle is, and our Practices have always been, to seek peace and to be true to the bloody principles and practices, we... do utterly deny, with all outward wars and armed conflict, fightings with outward weapons, for any end or under any pretence, and to maintain our testimony to the whole world. (Quaker Declaration 1660)</i> • Other Christians feel that pacifism is not necessarily right / a good idea. Sometimes just conflict may be required to protect innocent people, and refusing to fight could mean more people being killed. For example, the British fighting in WWII to protect Jews and others. <i>'In everything, love others as you would have them do to you...'</i> (Matthew 22:39-40) • They may feel that the Bible does allow violence and that Jesus implied that sometimes violence may be necessary. <i>He said to them, 'When I sent you out without a purse, bag, or sandals, did you lack anything?' They said, 'No, not a thing.' He said to them, 'But now, the kingdom of God is near. You must take it, and likewise a bag. And the one who has no sword must take one...'</i> (Luke 22:35-36 NRSV) • As the Catholic and Anglican Churches accept the existence of just wars, they do not expect people to be pacifists.

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19 ①	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Christian charity may work for peace by facilitating people on different backgrounds to live together (CHIPS does this). The people can then attempt to improve the situation by practical measures and facilities which benefit everyone. They can also work to reconcile their differences and show everyone that they can live together. They can pray together for healing.
20 ③	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-violent action can be important as it can be highly effective in achieving justice, e.g. bus boycotts and sit-ins helped people to achieve racial equality in the USA. It can also be important as it demonstrates faith – it shows that people are following God's commands to love others, and not retaliate – to practice <i>'... if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also...'</i> (Matthew 5:39 NRSV). Non-violent action is important because it is often safer than violent action (e.g. hiding Jews from the Nazis). Non-violent action is important to many Christians because they believe in God's commands – both to help others and work for justice and peace – peaceful and non-violent. <i>'... Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.'</i> (John 14:23 NRSV) <i>Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the oppressor.</i> (Psalm 135:10 NRSV)
21 ①	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some Christians feel that it is acceptable to use violence to bring peace, as it is possible that without violence peace may not be achieved. Many Christians also feel that the Bible justifies some violence. They may feel that using violence to protect others may save more lives than violence.
22 ②	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some Christians feel that peace is one of the most important of Jesus' teachings and should be valued highly. <i>'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.'</i> (Matthew 5:9 NRSV) However, others feel that serving God is the most important of Jesus' teachings and sometimes serving God will involve using violence, e.g. to save innocent lives. <i>'Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?' He said to him, 'The first and greatest is, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. The second is like it: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." All the law and the prophets hang on these two commandments.'</i> (Matthew 22:36–38 NRSV) Some may feel that loving others should be valued more than peace, as this was the second most important commandment, and sometimes loving others involve violence, if this is for the greater good. <i>'... And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." All the commandments hang on these two commandments.'</i> (Matthew 22:39–40 NRSV) Christians may also believe that evangelism should also be valued more than peace, as that Christians should do this, and also some Christians could argue that Christianity brings eternal life and that this is more important than peace. <i>And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; but whoever does not believe will be condemned."</i> (Mark 16:15–16 NRSV) <i>'Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever disobeys the Son will not see life, but must endure God's wrath.'</i> (John 3:36 NRSV)
23 ③	<div>Points and Justification for:</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Violence does not solve any problems. Violence is against the principle of non-violence / pacifism, Quakers feel there is no good reason for violence as they should be struggling for the spiritual, not for things within the world. <i>'... if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also...'</i> (Matthew 5:39 NRSV) <div>Points and Justification for:</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It may be necessary to defend your country, the Anglican Church has a tradition of defending the innocent.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus taught to love others, and violence is not loving. <i>'...And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.'</i> (Matthew 22:39–40 NRSV) Jesus taught against the causes of war: against retaliation, greed and hate, and even against violence in self-defence – he stopped his disciples defending him from arrest with violence. <i>'You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer.'</i> (Matthew 5:38–39 NRSV) <i>'Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.'</i> (Matthew 6:19–21 NRSV) <i>'But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you...'</i> (Luke 6:27 NRSV) God may demand support the cause of the oppressed. <i>Then the Lord will be against the fighting men now to Ai. See you the king of his city, and his people.'</i> (NRSV) The alternative is to support someone else's people with violence.
24 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They believe that God has forgiven them, so others also deserve forgiveness. Jesus taught to forgive others many times. Christians may believe that if they do not forgive others, then God will not forgive them.
25 (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christians believe that God is just. <i>For the Lord is righteous; he loves righteous deeds; the upright shall dwell with him.</i> (11:7 NRSV) Christians believe that God wants them to act justly. <i>'Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue, so that you may live and the Lord your God is giving you.'</i> (Deuteronomy 16:20 NRSV) Christians believe that God is also merciful, and sometimes it is better to be merciful than just. <i>'Go and learn what this means, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." For I have not come to call the righteous but sinners.'</i> (Matthew 9:13 NRSV) Christians believe that God reconciled himself with humanity through Jesus. <i>'For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life.'</i> (Romans 5:10 NRSV) Christians believe that they should reconcile with others, because God does not want them to be angry with others. <i>So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.'</i> (Matthew 5:23–24 NRSV)
26 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Christianity, Christians believe that God desires them to forgive. Forgiving someone can help the person forgiving move on. Being forgiven can help the person who has done something wrong move on.

Question No. & Type	Indicative Content	
27 ©	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus' teaching can be interpreted as teaching people to continually open to forgiveness, but may not want to forgive someone who keeps sinning. <i>Then Peter came and said to him, 'Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.'</i> (Matthew 18:21–22 NRSV) Jesus taught to forgive everyone, even asking God to forgive the people who crucified him. Some people may feel that it is too hard to forgive such extreme sinners. <i>Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.'</i> (Luke 23:34 NRSV) Jesus taught that Christians need to forgive others in order to be forgiven. Some people may feel that this is unfair if they try to forgive and are not forgiven. <i>And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors... For if you forgive the trespasses of others, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.'</i> (Matthew 6:12, 14–15 NRSV) Some people may feel that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit was unforgivable. Some may feel that this is harsh, if someone repents – others might not. Some people do not repent of, and so this makes sense. 	
28 A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social justice involves everyone being treated fairly and equally in society. This involves supporting people who might be treated unfairly or not having equal opportunities. It also involves a fair distribution of wealth. 	
29 B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most Christians support social justice. They feel that everyone should have equal opportunities because all are created equal in the image of God. <i>So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them.</i> (Genesis 1:27 NRSV) Many feel that Jesus helped the disadvantaged and criticised the Pharisees for their religious laws above helping others. Christians also support social justice because Jesus taught that people should care for the poor, as does the Old Testament. <i>'... if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, you shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.'</i> (Isaiah 60:1 NRSV) Christians have not always put social justice into practice – the Church has been involved in church buildings, and supported the slave trade. Some Christians do not feel that everyone should have the same opportunities. Some oppose social justice – for example if they think women and homosexuals should not all have the same rights. Some feel that if people earn money, this should not be taken away from them. Some do not want wealth redistributed. 	
30 D	<p>Points and justification for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus taught to forgive continually. <i>Then Peter came and said to him, 'Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.'</i> (Matthew 18:21–22 NRSV) Jesus wanted even the people who killed him to be forgiven. The Amish try to follow this teaching and forgive everyone. <i>Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.'</i> (Luke 23:34 NRSV) Jesus came so that humans could be forgiven, so Christians should also forgive others. 	<p>Points and justification for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus says that people who blaspheme against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. <i>'blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven them.'</i> (Matthew 12:31 NRSV) It can be interpreted as Jesus told Peter to forgive the church. It can be interpreted as people only have to forgive others a few times, so at some point they have to forgive others. Some things are unforgivable.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus taught that if people did not forgive then God would not forgive them. <i>'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors... For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.'</i> (Matthew 6:12, 14–15 NRSV) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus implied that people should reconcile with those they have wronged and repent. <i>'If another member of the church is guilty of a sin against you, go and tell them the fault when they are alone. If they repent, forgive them. If they do not repent, take them with you and the other members of the church. If the member does not listen to the church, take it to the church as a whole. If the member is still not listening, tell it to the church as a whole. If the offender refuses to listen to the church, let such a person be like a Gentile and a tax collector.'</i> (Matthew 18:15–17 NRSV) It is a more common view to act in a more unforgiving, especially in the context of the death penalty, or in the context of drug clinics – they are not offences should be forgiven.

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Dialogue between Religious and Non-religious Beliefs

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Question No. & Type	Indicative Content
1 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrating Christmas Pancake Day Eating fish and chips on Fridays
2 (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christians have influenced British law, for example several of the Ten Commandments are reflected in British law. <i>You shall not murder... You shall not steal. (Exodus 20:13, 15 NRSV)</i> Many people celebrate Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter with the birth and death of Jesus. There are also traditions such as Pancake Day, which many people celebrate started with the Christian festival of Shrove Tuesday. Many people eat fish and chips on Fridays, which comes from the Catholic tradition of abstaining from meat on Fridays. There are restrictions on Sunday trading, because Sunday is the Christian day of worship (because it is the day Christians believe Jesus rose from the dead).
3 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There may be (more) services of worship. Religious matters may be raised in assemblies. You may need to be religious to get in. There may be more religious studies lessons. These may be more focused on Christianity.
4 (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many Christians feel that it is appropriate for religion to play a place in society because it provides good guidance. <i>You shall not murder... You shall not steal. (Exodus 20:13, 15 NRSV)</i> Many Christians may also feel that it is traditional for religion to play a role in Britain. Many Christians feel that having bishops in the House of Lords is good because they are not tied to a political party and will stand up for universal values, such as justice for the poor, following Jesus' example. Secularists disagree. Humanists UK argues that there should not be bishops in the House of Lords because they are unelected and represent a religion which is not held by all. The National Secular Society also feels there should not be bishops in the House of Lords or the say of religion in law, and feels that there should not be prayer in schools because this is also privileging religion.
5 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Humanism is a non-theistic philosophy. It holds that people should be treated equally and with respect. It supports people forming beliefs from reason.
6 (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secularisation can mean that religion becomes less important. There may be fewer religious people which can lead to church closure. Secularisation can mean that people want certain benefits of religion without believing in God – for example the Sunday Assembly runs popular secular alternative to church. Secularisation can make certain people more religious because they feel threatened by it or against secularisation. Religious people may make more effort to show society that religion is important. Secularisation can cause religious extremism in a backlash against secularisation. Secularisation can make religious people more liberal, as they are exposed to non-religious views.
7 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There may be issues over whether to teach about contraception. There may be issues about whether to have acts of worship at school. There may be issues about whether to serve halal meat (or similar).




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Question No. & Type	Indicative Content
8 ©	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Education Reform Act 1988 means that schools need to have a religious education. This clashes with the secular value of not promoting religion in schools. Certain schools may promote a particular religion because they value it within religious studies lessons. This contrasts with the secular value of freedom to choose what to believe. Schools promoting religious activity such as singing hymns goes against the secular value of freedom of practice. Religious values which go against sex before marriage, and Catholic opposition to contraception, can conflict with the secular value of freedom of choice in schools. Religious people often value having a religion in schools, but the National Secular Society feel that there should not be any religion in schools. Some schools provide halal meals for Muslim students, but both Hindu and National Secular Society feel that not all halal meat fulfils animal welfare requirements and should not be allowed.
9 A	<p>Christianity might clash with equality laws over views on homosexuality. Some Christians believe homosexual relationships are acceptable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For example, a Christian registrar might refuse to marry a homosexual couple as it is not their legal right. They might also refuse to allow a homosexual couple to share a hotel room as this also breaches equality laws.
10 B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many Christians believe that sex should take place only within marriage and adultery are both legal in the UK. <i>You shall not commit adultery. (Exodus 20:14 NRSV)</i> Many Christians disagree with divorce because marriage is a bond created by God and should not be destroyed, but divorce is legal in the UK. <i>'But from the beginning of creation, "God made them male and female." Man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.' (Mark 10:6-9 NRSV)</i> Some Christians also believe that sex should be between a man and a woman and homosexual marriage is legal in Great Britain. Technically, the Catholic Church allows girls to marry at 14 and boys at 16, however, marrying at 14 is illegal in many countries – although the Church does not actually want people to go against the law. Christianity does not accept forced marriage, which is also illegal in the UK.
11 A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many Christians, such as Catholics, do not agree with IVF, where embryos are created outside of the womb, because they believe that conception should only happen through sex. They also disagree with the scientific creation of life, because many Christians believe that life is sacred and should not be experimented on, and they believe that this is wrong. They also believe it is wrong to kill spare embryos – once life has been created it is sacred.
12 B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many Christians believe that euthanasia is wrong because they believe that life is sacred and has a purpose. <i>'You shall not murder.' (Exodus 20:13 NRSV)</i> They may feel that euthanasia is wrong because life is sacred and has a purpose. For these reasons, the Catholic Church does not allow active euthanasia, but it does allow passive euthanasia or double effect. Many Christians believe that they should support those who are suffering and that suffering may be sent as a test, so they do not support euthanasia. <i>'... if you hold back from rescuing those taken away to death, those who are taken away to the slaughter... Does not he who keeps watch over your soul know it and repay all according to their deeds?' (Proverbs 24:11-12 NRSV)</i>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> However, some Christians, such as Quakers, feel that euthanasia is acceptable in some circumstances, because they feel that people should be treated with love and consideration, and given the dignity of dying when they do not want to. <i>In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for the law and the prophets. (Matthew 7:12 NRSV) The Golden Rule</i> 	
13 ⓑ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many Christians believe that abortion is wrong because they believe that an embryo/foetus is a human life, and to kill it is murder. <i>'You shall not murder.' (Exodus 20:13 NRSV)</i> They may feel that abortion is wrong because life is sacred and has value. The Bible teaches that God creates foetuses and knows them before birth, which reinforces this belief for many Christians. <i>'For it was you who formed me in my mother's womb; you knit me together in my mother's womb. Before I was born you knew me, and before I was born you were my God.' (Jeremiah 1:5 NRSV)</i> For these reasons, the Catholic Church does not allow active (rather than passive) abortions for any reasons. Pro-life group SPUC was started by Anglicans and contains many Christians. It runs campaigns against abortion because it is killing a foetus, and because abortion is traumatic. However, some Christians feel that abortion is acceptable in some circumstances. They feel that people should be treated with love and consideration. <i>In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for the law and the prophets. (Matthew 7:12 NRSV) The Golden Rule</i> 	
14 ⓒ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many Christians believe in sanctity of life. They believe that human life was created by God, in his image, and that it should not be destroyed. They believe that murder is wrong. <i>'So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.' (Genesis 1:27 NRSV)</i> <i>'You shall not murder.' (Exodus 20:13 NRSV)</i> However secular people may not believe in sanctity of life because they do not believe in God, and so they may think that there are situations in which it is acceptable to end human, as well as other disagreements. For example, secular people may be more open to abortion, if they do not believe in a person. Christians feel that the foetus's life already has sanctity because they believe the foetus is in God's image, and also has a soul. <i>'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I sanctified you...' (Jeremiah 1:5 NRSV)</i> In cases of euthanasia, secular people are more likely to be concerned about quality of life, and so allow euthanasia where there is low quality of life, where religious people may prioritise sanctity of life, even when someone is in great pain and wants to die. Regarding issues of genetic manipulation, religious people may disagree, believing that human (and animal) life has been created by God, and meddling with it is wrong. However, secular people are likely to prioritise benefit over sanctity and not worry about 'playing God'. <p>Sanctity of life is also relevant to scientists creating new life – religious people may want scientists to do this, as they feel that life is something which only God can create and this makes it special. However, secular people may feel that there is no difference between life created in a lab and other life, as they do not feel that God created life.</p>	
15 ⓓ	<p>Points and Justification for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some people are brain-dead and will never recover; there is no point prolonging the suffering of relatives. 	<p>Points and Justification against:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It violates the sanctity of life. If God, humans are made in his image. <i>'So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.'</i>

Question No. & Type	Indicative Content	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People have a right to dignity; people may prefer to die rather than be unable to do anything. • People may feel they have no quality of life and prefer not to live in pain. • It may be more loving to kill someone / let someone die, than to let them suffer. Some Quakers believe that this is the case. <i>'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'</i> (Matthew 22:39 NRSV) • Some Christians feel that love is the most important thing and takes priority over preserving life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ten Commandments: Catholics completely agree <i>'You shall not murder.'</i> • If you allow euthanasia in certain circumstances, this is acceptable. • Unless someone is brain dead, the possibility they will recover. • Suffering may be a test of faith. • There are hospices where a medically good end-of-life should look after those who are dying. <i>'... if you hold back from helping, you are taken away to death, the staggering to the slaughter, who keeps watch over the righteous, and will he not repay a man's deeds?'</i> (Proverbs 24:11-12) • Some Christians believe that life is the most important thing and Christians find it hard to let someone die.
16 Ⓐ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believing that Jesus was God means prophets from other religions are not significant on the same level. • Jesus said that those who did not believe in him would not be saved. • Jesus said that people could only come to God the Father through him. 	
17 Ⓒ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If Christians are exclusivists and believe that other religions are not valid, this is particularly important. <i>'The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned.'</i> (Mark 16:16 NRSV) • If Christians are inclusivists and believe that other religions are adding to God, then this is likely to lead to inter-faith dialogue because Christians have relationships with other religions. <i>'In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places...'</i> (John 14:2 NRSV) • If Christians are not pluralists and do not believe that other religions are valid, Christianity then this could imply that they believe the religions are not valid and be seen as insulting. This could cause issues in inter-faith dialogue. • Because there are different Christian beliefs about whether other religions are valid means that there is no consensus, and could mean tension between different denominations. • If Christians are inclusivists or pluralists, they are more likely to be tolerant of other religions, which could mean a more tolerant society. 	
18 Ⓐ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious songs are used in church services and hymns. • Public holidays often reflect religious festivals. • Religion is often the topic of radio and television programmes. 	
19 Ⓐ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proselytisation is trying to convert someone to your beliefs. In Christianity, it is often referred to as evangelism. • In Christianity proselytisation is a response to Jesus' command for his followers to spread his message about him. 	

Question No. & Type	Indicative Content	
20 	<p>Points and Justification for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus is the son of God, and no other religions can compare to this. <i>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1, 14 NRSV)</i> Jesus taught his disciples to evangelise and said that those who did not believe in him would not be saved. <i>'The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned.' (Mark 16:16 NRSV)</i> Jesus said that he was the only way to God the Father. <i>Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'</i> (John 14:6 NRSV) Evangelical Protestants often believe this and so try to evangelise in order to save people. Some Christians believe that accepting the validity of other religions denies the truth of Christianity. 	<p>Points and Justification against:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus taught that God loves all people. Christians should accept a certain level because they would not abandon the world. <i>Whoever does not love the world has not loved the Father who has loved the world. (1 John 2:15)</i> Some Christians argue that heaven has many dwellers, so that other religions are of some extent, and so their followers are saved. People from other religions are not anonymous Christians. Pluralists would argue that all religions contain some truth, but that Christianity is not right as they are interpreted. Denying that other religions are true is insulting and implies that Christianity is the only true religion. If Christians accept the validity of other religions, then they can engage in inter-faith dialogue, work together and appreciate differences. In the Old Testament, God chose the Jews, so Judaism may be the only true religion to some extent. <i>Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one alone. (Deuteronomy 6:4)</i> Many Christians believe that accepting other religions should be rejected if there is a loving God who created so many people to follow a religion that is completely invalid.
21 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals may find it harder to get on with each other. There may be intolerance or marginalisation within communities. There can be conflict about important issues such as law and education that affect many people. 	
22 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Humanism believes in respecting others and treating them well. Christianity does this, for example in the parable of the sheep and the goats, and in the teaching of Jesus. <i>He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. The second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. (Matthew 22:37-40 NRSV)</i> Christianity also promotes the use of reason, like humanists. The Catholic Church has worked out how to act according to God's will using reason. Some Christians agree with secularists that there should not be a religion in Parliament, as this is not fair on people with different beliefs. Some Christians agree with secularists that schools should not promote worship or within religious studies lessons, because students should have a choice. Some Christians agree that there should not be legal exemptions for religious groups, such as those regarding gender or sexuality, because they believe that all people should be treated equally. Some Christians, like secularists, believe all religion and public life should be kept separate, because of Jesus' teaching that both can be important separately. <i>... 'Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's.' (Matthew 22:21 NRSV)</i> 	

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Question No. & Type	Indicative Content
23 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separation of religion and state / public life. For example, taking the influence of religion out of the law making removing bishops from the House of Lords. For example, stopping worship within the education system to give belief and choice.
24 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many Christians do not think that secularism should take precedence because they believe that religious values are right/important – e.g. contraception use is wrong, they may not think they should have to it. Christians may also feel that as they value things such as equality, it is not fair for non-religious people if religious values are prioritised, because they value them well. They may also feel that Christianity is a force for good in the world, and should be promoted in order to help others.
25 (D)	<p>Points and Justification for:</p> <p>Christians believe that it is important to love and value others, and many non-religious people also believe this. <i>'And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.'</i> (Matthew 22:39–40 NRSV)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christians believe in equality and tolerance, like many non-religious people. Christians believe that reason is important, especially Catholics who believe that it helps them to work out the will of God – this is a really important value for humanists. Some Christians agree with some secularist points – that it is unfair to have religion influence law, that worship should not be forced on students during education, and that abortion and euthanasia are appropriate in some situations. More liberal Christians are more likely to be similar to non-religious people, holding liberal values and accepting science, etc. <p>Points and Justification against:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-religious people do not believe in God and this is a massive disadvantage, because Christianity is the most important thing in the world. He said to him, "You shall love God with all your heart, soul, and with all your strength, and the greatest and first commandment is this: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and strength, and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. The second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matthew 22:37–40 NRSV) Many Christians do not believe in the same way as secularists. They believe that women should not be married. The National Humanists UK do not take a religious approach to education. Humanists believe that there is no God, not that there is one. Many Christians do not believe in secularism, and remove religion from public life. Many Christians disagree with abortion/euthanasia/IVF, seeing them as murder and blasphemy, sacred, but many secularists see them as normal. <i>'You shall not murder.'</i> More conservative Christians believe in having different beliefs to non-religious people, having less liberal values and opposing secularism.