



Course Companion for GCSE Edexcel B

Paper 3: Christianity

Section 2: Philosophy of Religion

Section 4: Equality

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Teacher's Introduction

This resource has been designed to support the learning and teaching of GCSE Edexcel B Religious Studies Area of Study 3: Section 2: Philosophy of Religion, and Section 4: Equality – for study with the religion of 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.

Remember!

Always check the exam board website for new information, including changes to the specification and sample assessment material.

The information is comprehensive, and images help to illustrate concepts. Key words and Bible quotes are included to help students to understand the material and to further their grasp of the subjects. A brief introduction to the course and answering exam questions is provided for students at the start, and answers and a mark scheme are included at the end.

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

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

Common and divergent Christian perspectives are covered, as are non-religious views where necessary.

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

Hopefully, this resource will encourage students in their learning and help to prepare them for their exams. It should take the pressure away from teachers by providing the bulk of the content which they want to teach to their class.

Note: this theme covers several controversial and potentially upsetting issues such as racism. It is advised that teachers review these sections before sharing them with their classes, and warn students about any content which may distress or offend.

June 2018

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* resulting from minor specification changes, suggestions from teachers and peer reviews, or occasional errors reported by customers

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Introduction to the Course and How to Answer

This course aims to cover Christian and non-religious beliefs, teachings and arguments, as well as philosophical and ethical theory – and to assess your understanding of these ideas.

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

The exam board will give you multiple-choice questions and ask you to give brief examples, as well as asking you to 'explain' and 'evaluate' beliefs and opinions. When answering all questions it is important to use technical terms where possible, and to write well using a style that is easy to follow and using correct spellings 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 longer ones.

For each of the two sections you will get a 3-mark, 4-mark, 5-mark, and 12-mark question in the exam.

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

For the **3-mark question** you will be asked to 'outline three' examples of teachings. For 'outline' questions you will give one-sentence answers. You will get one mark for each point up to a maximum of 3 marks.

For the **4-mark question** you will be asked to 'explain' two things, e.g. reasons for a teaching. You need to give two different points, and, to get full marks, you must develop both; for example, with a quote or other evidence. So you can think of it as two points per point and a mark for developing each point. This should show that you understand the information as well as being able to recall it. The developments must be relevant to the point they are justifying and to the question, and you will not get full marks if you give the same justification for both points you give in one answer.

The **5-mark question** is very similar to the 4-mark question. As well as making points, you need to develop/justifying both, you should refer to at least one source of wisdom or authority, e.g. Bible or Catholic teaching (as well as your development/justification). Again, the points are as different as possible so that the person marking gives you credit for each point/development you make.

The **12-mark question** is the longest and there is a little more to remember. You will need to give reasons for and against the statement (so agreeing with or disagreeing with the statement, or an alternative view). Make sure you have good reasons for all the points you make and also need to reach a conclusion, picking the most convincing side of the argument (based on the given!) and saying why you think this is the case. You need to refer to Christian teachings, non-religious arguments and philosophical/ethical arguments, or different Christian points of view.

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Philosophy of Religion

Many Christians believe that God has **revealed** himself to humans, including **miracles**, which they may take to be **proof** of the existence of God, or at least. Christians may also feel that they experience God through other types of **revelation** when they are **praying**. However, some people are not convinced that religion is true. Some Christians have used arguments, such as the **design argument** and **cosmological argument**, to try to prove the existence of God, though **atheists** have argued against these. Consider whether a religious or non-religious upbringing contributes to whether you believe in God or not.

Keywords:

- ❖ **atheist** – someone who does not believe in God or gods
- ❖ **cosmological argument** – a case for the existence of God, based on the idea that something exists rather than nothing and because certain natural laws about the universe point towards a creator
- ❖ **design argument** – a case for the existence of God, based on the idea that the universe appears to have been created for a purpose and appears organised
- ❖ **evidence** – indicates that something is likely to be true
- ❖ **miracles** – events which seem supernatural and unexplainable by natural laws; events which Christians believe to be performed by God or his agents
- ❖ **prayer** – communication with God
- ❖ **proof** – shows something to definitely exist or be true
- ❖ **religious experience** – in Christianity, when people feel God's presence
- ❖ **revelation** – experiencing God in a way in which he is seen, heard, or gives knowledge
- ❖ **vision** – a type of experience where God, or a messenger of God, is seen

Revelation

Many Christians believe that God has revealed himself to humans, and that this revelation is evidence of God's existence, because if people have experienced God then he must exist. **Revelation** generally refers to where God has been seen, and/or he has imparted knowledge. There are many instances of revelation in the Bible, including to those such as Noah, Moses, and Jesus. In the **Old Testament**, and through Jesus, as the **incarnation** of God (God as a human).

Keywords:

- ❖ **compassion** – love and mercy for others
- ❖ **covenant** – a promise between God and humans
- ❖ **disciple** – in Christianity, a follower of Jesus
- ❖ **faithful** – loyal
- ❖ **idol** – a false God, sometimes created as a statue or image
- ❖ **incarnation** – God as a human, in the flesh
- ❖ **just** – fair and lawful
- ❖ **Jewish law** – a set of important rules which Jews live by
- ❖ **New Testament** – the second section of the Bible, dealing with events to do with Jesus and his disciples
- ❖ **Old Testament** – the first section of the Bible dealing with the time before Jesus

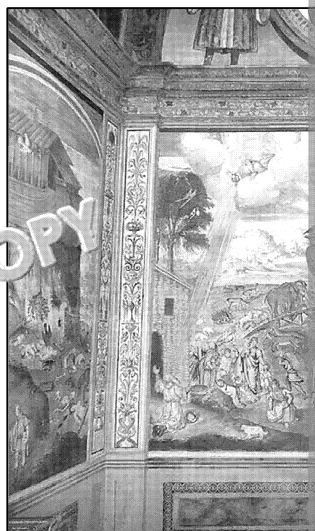
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Old Testament Revelation – Noah

One person to whom God **revealed** himself in the **Old Testament** was Noah, according to the book of Genesis chapters 6–9. God is displeased with humankind, but sees that Noah is a good man. He commands Noah to make an ark, a large boat, and take aboard with him his family and many animals – some animals should take one pair of, some seven pairs – and food. God tells Noah that he is going to send a great flood to wipe out all the other life on earth. However, he will make a **covenant** with Noah. A covenant is a promise between God and humans.



A fresco (painting on a wall) of Noah's Ark. On the left, the artist portrays God's anger at the wickedness of humanity.

Noah does as God has commanded him, and after the flood, God tells Noah to come out of the ark with his family and the animals so that they can fill the Earth.

‘Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh – birds, every creeping thing that creeps on the earth – so that they may abound and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.’ (Genesis 8:17 NRSV)

Noah offers some of the animals to God by bringing them as a sacrifice, which God accepts, and he promises that he will not wipe out humanity again.

God gives Noah and his sons instructions. He tells them to multiply and noah's ark contains birds. He also decrees that humans should kill anyone who kills a human.

God establishes a **covenant** with Noah, for all humans and all living creatures. He promises not to flood the whole earth and destroy its life. He says that the rainbow is a sign of the covenant.

‘Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, “As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature – birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as well as every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.”’ (Genesis 9:8–11 NRSV)

Many Christians believe the **revelations** of God to Noah show that God is just. He punishes bad people, but also that he is **merciful**, because he saved Noah, his family, and the animals from the flood.

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Old Testament Revelation – Abraham

Another person God **revealed** himself to in the **Old Testament** was Abraham in Genesis. Originally, Abraham was called Abram. God tells Abram to leave his land and go to another land, and that he will make him, 'a great nation' (Genesis 12:2 NRSV).

'Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and go to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation and make your name great so that you will be a blessing.'" (Genesis 12:1 NRSV)

In the land of Canaan, God appears to Abram, saying he will give this land to him and his descendants. In another occasion, he also says that Abram's descendants will be as many as the stars in the sky. Later, he appears to Abram in a **vision** (remember this for the next section) saying that his descendants will be as many as the stars in the sky. He makes a covenant with him, saying that he will give his descendants the land he had promised, though they will be slaves to the Egyptians for 400 years.

Years later, God makes another covenant with Abram; that he will make him a great nation as well as giving his descendants land. He renames him Abraham, and tells him to circumcise (remove the foreskin of) all the males of his household, as a sign of the **covenant**.

Unlike the previous covenants, this one required something of humankind, as God says that uncircumcised males would no longer belong to God's people, because they would have broken the covenant.

God tells Abraham he will have a son with his wife Sarah, though Abraham finds this hard to believe because they are both old. God tells Abraham that his son Ishmael, whom he had had with Hagar, one of his slaves, will be the father of a great nation. However, God promises that Abraham will have a son called Isaac, with his wife Sarah, who will be the ancestor of God's people and continue his covenant.

Christians believe that God made a covenant with his people through Jesus. The covenant is no longer new, but it is the same as the old one. God has a new covenant with his people through Jesus.

God appears again to Abraham and Abraham also welcomes three guests to his tent. God predicts that Sarah will have a son, and Sarah, overhearing, laughs. God asks her why she laughed, saying that she will have a son.

Later, Sarah does have a son. When the son, Isaac, is older, God tells Abraham to sacrifice him. Abraham is about to do this when an angel stops him, telling him it had been a test. Because he had been prepared to sacrifice his son, God will indeed grant him a great nation.

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Many Christians believe that the **covenants** God made with Abraham show that he cared for his people, because he promised Abraham his son Isaac, and that he would give the land of Canaan to the Jewish people the Promised Land. However, God's promises to Abraham in the Old Testament also show that he tests people, and that he does not always fulfill his promises. Abraham had to wait for Isaac, and his descendants had to wait to inherit the land of Canaan.

Many Christians believe that these revelations of God show that he cared for his people and wanted to show them how to follow him and live good lives, even when they did not trust him. They think that other instances of revelation in the Old Testament show that God is **faithful**, because even when the Jewish people do not keep his laws, he does not break his promise to Noah.

New Testament Revelation – Jesus

Keywords:

- ❖ **authority** – power over something or someone
- ❖ **baptism** – in the Gospels, immersion in water (a river), symbolising repentance
- ❖ **gentile** – non-Jew
- ❖ **Last Supper** – Jesus' last meal with his disciples before his death
- ❖ **prophecy** – predicting the future, and/or expressing communication from God
- ❖ **reconcile** – reunite people who are separated, e.g. Christians believe Jesus reconciled Jews and Gentiles
- ❖ **suffering** – experiencing pain
- ❖ **Temple** – the Jewish holy building in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus
- ❖ **Transfiguration** – the event in which Jesus miraculously changes before several people and his clothes become dazzling
- ❖ **Trinity** – the concept that God is one being, but three persons
- ❖ **Word of God** – Jesus, through which God's power is expressed, and his teaching

In the New Testament, Christians believe that God **reveals** himself through Jesus. Many Christians believe to be God **incarnate**, God as a human. Therefore Christians know about God's nature through Jesus.

'He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, who sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.' (Hebrew 1:3-4)

Many Christians believe that God showed that he desires to have a relationship with humans by coming to be human in the person of Jesus, to experience what humans experience. Jesus' death symbolised his sacrifice for humans. The **Temple** was destroyed to show that humans are no longer separated from God. Previously, Jews worshipped in the parts of the Temple where Jews worshipped from before. Christians believed to live.

Christians believe that God showed his love and **compassion** by sending Jesus into the world to heal people, and share God's word with them, and also to die for them. At the **Last Supper**, Jesus says that his blood is given for 'many', 'for the forgiveness of sins' (Mark 14:24, Matthew 26:28 NRSV), which Christians believe was fulfilled when Jesus died on the cross and then rose to life again, conquering death. Christians believe that God must be loving if he was willing to die to save them from sin and death.

Christians also believe that Jesus showed that God cares for everybody, because he associated with outcasts and women, who would not have been of high social status, and also healed **gentiles** (non-Jews), like the Greek woman's daughter and the Centurion's servant. Jesus also told his **disciples** to spread teaching about him, showing that God wants everyone to be able to have a relationship with him.



Moses writing the law given by God

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Jesus' healings, including where he casts out demons, also show God's **authority** over the spiritual realm, reassuring Christians that they have a powerful God.

Christians also believe that God fulfilled his plan through sending Jesus to Earth. It was always his plan to make a new **covenant** with humans through Jesus, and this has been through different covenants, his nature is consistent. God's promise does not always carry out his plans immediately, though he is working towards them. The new covenant is symbolised in John's Gospel where Jesus turns water into wine. This could symbolise that Jesus is bringing the older covenant given to Moses into the new covenant (water replaced by wine). This new covenant is shown to God promising to those who follow Jesus to forgive their sins and give them eternal life. Christians believe to follow Jesus rather than the **Jewish law**.

Other indications for Christians from the **New Testament** that Jesus is a fulfilment of the **Old Testament prophecies**. For example, some link Jesus with the Messiah prophesied in the book of Isaiah, and some see different features of his death as fulfilling words of prophecy. For his clothes and his side being pierced with a spear, as fulfilling words of prophecy. Christians believed that Jesus was a continuation of God's message to humanity.

'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 he also created the worlds.' (Hebrews 1:1-2 NRSV) [A Christian's belief in Jesus is based on the revelation through the prophets and Jesus]

Taking it further.

Why don't you read the rest of one of these inspired revelations in the Bible to gain a better understanding of revelation?

Isaiah also shows God's mercy where he is transformed and revealing that God is glorious (see section on **visions** below)

Many Christians also believe in the Trinity, made up of three persons

this is also expressed in the New Testament. For example, during Jesus' baptism, God the Father speaks his approval from heaven, and God the Spirit descends upon Jesus. The Gospel also talks about Jesus as the **Word**, and the Word being present with God. Christians may see different aspects of God's nature displayed in the three persons. They may feel that God is more accessible through the person of Jesus who experienced human life, taught humans how to follow God, or through the Holy Spirit whom they experience in their everyday lives.

Different Understandings about what Revelation shows about the Nature of God

Many Christians will claim that **revelation** of God shows him to have a consistent nature. However, not everyone would agree.

Arguably, the revelations of God to Noah show God to be jealous and angry with those who were not following him. However, the revelation of God in Jesus was to save humanity. However, it can be argued that both revelations of God to Noah and Jesus show God to be **just and merciful** – God rightly punished those who were killed in the flood, and Jesus paid the price for sin, which both show justice. However, God was merciful in saving humanity from sin and allowing them to have a relationship with him. It is consistent for God to be just and merciful.

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It can also be argued that the two (main) **covenants** which Christians believe (through Abraham and Jesus) are very different – the covenant with Abraham was possessive and controlling, as all males had to be circumcised, while the covenant with Jesus was based on love, extended to all. However, Christians would argue that the covenants with Abraham and Jesus were appropriate as part of God's long-term plan. He was **faithful** to the Jewish people, even when they betrayed him. They could argue that the covenants were appropriate as part of God's long-term plan.

Some argue that the revelation of God to Abraham shows that God is only communicating with those who are willing to show that they are different from the world. However, Jesus is kind to everyone and told his disciples to preach to all – show God's love to all humanity. Christians would argue that this was part of God's plan, and that God has always been like this.

It can be claimed that God changed his attitude to communicating with humans. In the Old Testament, God communicated directly and through prophets, and then through Jesus. This shows that God has a changing nature. Christians, however, would argue that all revelation of God's nature shows that his nature has not changed; he has just shown humans his nature in different ways.

Old Testament revelations showed God to be one, while Christians believe that New Testament revelations showed God to be three persons, the **Trinity** – Father, Son and Spirit. One could argue that Old Testament revelations did not reveal the true nature of God, but Christians still do) believe God to be one person, the God who spoke to Noah and Abraham. Christians would claim that because Noah and Abraham had revelations of God the Father, they only understood part of God's nature, but not that God revealed his nature to them. Christians believe that God's nature changed.

Quick Questions

1. Outline **three** things which Old Testament revelation shows about the nature of God to Christians.
2. Explain **two** ways in which Christians believe God has revealed himself to humans.
3. Explain **two** things which New Testament revelation shows about the nature of God to Christians.

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Visions

Visions are a type of **religious experience** where someone sees, and often be taken as **proof** of the existence of God, often an apparition of a saint, and who see visions are called visionaries. Some visions take place while the vision occurs within dreams. Many Christians believe that if God or messengers from humans, then this proves the existence of God and shows that he is active. God's existence makes them important to Christians as it justifies their faith.

Keywords:

- ❖ **Annunciation** – the announcement to Mary that she will give birth to Jesus
- ❖ **Chi Rho** – combination of the letters 'X' and 'P' which are the first two letters of the word Christ
- ❖ **conversion** – in religion, changing from one religion to another, or from non-religion to religion
- ❖ **doctrine** – set teaching or belief
- ❖ **evangelism** – spreading the news about Jesus and trying to convert others to Christianity
- ❖ **hallucination** – seeing or hearing something which is not really there
- ❖ **humanist** – someone who aims to live a good life, without belief in God or religion
- ❖ **Immaculate Conception** – the doctrine that Mary was conceived without sin
- ❖ **ministry** – work teaching and helping people
- ❖ **persecution** – targeting people and treating them badly because of prejudice or religious beliefs
- ❖ **religious experience** – in Christianity, when people feel God's presence
- ❖ **salvation** – being saved from something; something physical like an illness, or something spiritual like sin
- ❖ **vision** – a type of experience where God, or a messenger of God is seen

Old Testament Visions

There are several different **visions** recorded in the **Old Testament**, which often foretell the future.

As mentioned above, God revealed himself many times to Abram/Abraham. In Genesis 15, the word of God appears to Abraham (then Abram) in a vision to protect and reward him. Abraham questions God, as he has no children, but God promises him many children and says his descendants will be as many as the stars in the sky. God tells Abram to leave his land, and asks him to make an animal sacrifice.

'After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield; your reward shall be very great."' (Genesis 15:1)

In a dream, God foretells the future to Abraham – that his descendants will be many and lead them to the land he has chosen for them. He also tells Abraham that he will live to old age. God makes a covenant with Abraham, promising his descendants the land where he is currently living.

Another vision in the Old Testament occurs near the start of the book of Exodus. Moses, a shepherd who is a member of the Jewish (Hebrew, or Israelite) people, but who was raised in Pharaoh's household before leaving the kingdom of Egypt. The angel of God appears to Moses in a burning bush (the bush appears to be on fire, yet the flames do not destroy it). God calls to Moses from the bush, and tells him not to come closer to the bush, and to remove his footwear, because he is



Moses Sees the Burning Bush

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standing on holy ground. God tells Moses that he is the God of his ancestors and to go and free the Jewish people, who are slaves in Egypt. He gives Moses a sign to show them that he is God, and if they will not believe that God has sent him, including turning his staff into a snake.

[God said to Moses] "'So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people out of Egypt.'" (Exodus 3:10 NRSV)

This vision was important because it led to Moses leading the Jewish people out of Egypt. It showed that God was not abandoned his people. This vision, like many others, confirmed his faith in God (for Moses) because a supernatural source would provide an explanation for the vision.

Yet another important vision in the Old Testament occurs to the prophet Isaiah in chapter 6. Isaiah sees God in heaven on a throne, attended by seraphs (angels). Because he has seen God, but one of the seraphs takes a hot coal from the altar and touches Isaiah's lips, telling him that it has removed his guilt and sin. This is thought to symbolise being cleansed so that he can speak God's holy word. In the vision, God then asks Isaiah volunteers. God sends him to the Jewish people with a message.

'In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and exalted; his hem of his robe filled the temple.' (Isaiah 6:1 NRSV)

This vision was important, because it led to Isaiah prophesying for God.

A similar vision in the Old Testament occurs to the prophet Ezekiel, at the start of the book. He also sees God and God gives him a scroll to eat, which tastes sweet, symbolising the word of God.

'He said to me, "Mortal, eat this scroll that I give you and fill your stomach with it; and in my mouth it was as sweet as honey.'" (Ezekiel 3:1-2 NRSV)

This vision was important in the same way as Isaiah's because it led Ezekiel to prophesying for God.

All these 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. The prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel would likely have strengthened their belief in God because they were called to care about his people.

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New Testament Visions

There are also many **visions** recorded in the **New Testament** which are linked to God's plan for the **salvation** of humankind.

Near the beginning of Luke's Gospel, Mary, soon to be the mother of Jesus, is visited by the angel Gabriel telling her that she will have a baby who will be the Son of God. This is the **Annunciation**, which means announcement, because the angel announces the birth of Jesus.

Later, Joseph, Mary's fiancé, and then his husband, receives a vision of an angel in his dream, telling him to marry Mary because she is carrying God's baby. He then receives another vision of an angel in a dream after Jesus is born, telling him to flee to Egypt because King Herod wants to kill Jesus. These are recorded at the start of Matthew's Gospel.

These visions are important to Christians because they help to keep him from giving up and help to strengthen his belief that angels are real. This fits with the Bible's teaching that angels are real.

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke also record a vision including Jesus. This is the version from Matthew 17:1–13 – take care not to confuse these details with the Transfiguration. Jesus takes three of his closest **disciples** (Peter, James and John) up a mountain. There, Jesus is transfigured – he shines and his clothes become bright white. Moses and Elijah, who had died long before, appear with Jesus. Jesus' disciple Peter asks if the disciples should put up tents for them like Elijah. A cloud appears overhead, and the voice of God tells the disciples that Jesus is his Son, and they should listen to him. The disciples fall down in fear. When they look up, Moses and Elijah are gone.

'And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly they saw two men standing beside him, Moses and Elijah. (Matthew 17:2–3 NRSV)

Jesus told his disciples not to tell anyone what they had seen until after he had been raised from the dead. The disciples ask about Elijah coming back (a Jewish belief). Jesus tells them that Elijah will come, but has also already come and not been recognised, but been badly treated. Jesus says that he will also be badly treated. The disciples understand that Elijah has come back as John the Baptist (who was killed).

This vision is important to Christians because it shows Jesus' authority. It also indicates his divinity, and therefore his role in Christianity, as God voices his approval of Jesus and his mission for the future. It also shows Jesus' obedience and his willingness to die as part of God's plan.

Moses and Elijah appearing is also significant – the fact that Jesus had a mission from God, as Moses and Elijah were. The disciples also witness the Transfiguration, this shows that Christians have a mission from God; to spread the Gospel. Some try to fulfil this by becoming **missionaries**, who go to other parts of the world to spread the Gospel.

Other explanations for the appearance of Moses and Elijah are that as the one who received the **Jewish law**, represents the old law, and the other, a great Jewish prophet, represents the prophecies that the teachings of Jesus complete the teachings of the Old Testament and that following Jesus takes precedence over the Old Testament. This has been significant to Christians in the Early Church, showing that Jesus was the fulfilment of Jewish teaching. Christians today in showing that if they follow Jesus, they do not have to follow the complete Jewish law.

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Moses is incredibly important within Judaism for receiving the Jewish law and leading his people from slavery in Egypt.

The Jewish law was, and is, very important because Jews follow it to show their devotion to God and in order to try to be holy; set apart for God.

Another important New Testament vision occurred in Acts 9. **Paul**, known as Saul before, was persecuting Christians because he was not following God correctly. On a journey to Damascus, to arrest Christians there, he was blinded by a vision from heaven, and hears a voice speaking.



'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' (Acts 9:4 NRSV)

He asks who the voice is, and is told that it is Jesus. The voice instructs him to do what he is told. Saul is blinded from the vision. After this, his sight is restored.

St Paul is important for many Christians because he evangelised many people, and wrote many letters to early Christians which are included in the New Testament as teaching for Christians.

This vision was important because Saul became a **conversion** experience for him – and for Christianity. This vision can be seen as significant because God chose to enlighten someone who was once against him. This vision brought Saul/Paul to believe because something about the vision completed for people who experience visions claim that they know God because this vision has led them to *know* the quality of some religious experiences, and was seen in the *Religious Experiences* below. They were strengthened by Ananias coming to restore his sight.

Another important vision in the New Testament was Peter's vision in Acts 10. Peter saw a sheet coming down from heaven filled with many animals which would have been deemed unclean to eat by the Jews. A voice says:

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



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

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



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 the gentiles who had been thought unclean, were now included in 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. The vision is also an important reason for why most Christians do not follow Jewish dietary laws.

All these visions show that God had a plan for all humanity, and that he chose to carry out his plan through Peter. This shows that God has a plan for all humanity because he chose to carry out his plan through Peter.

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Non-biblical Visions

There have also been many **visions** after the time of the Bible.

The Emperor Constantine had a vision in 312 CE in which God promised to his soldiers that if they followed the Christian sign of the **Chi Rho** on their shields,

This vision was important, as when Constantine followed the instructions and **converted** to Christianity, and made it the religion of the Roman Empire, the spread of Christianity began. People such as Constantine may come to believe in God and believe that God has helped them.



Joan of Arc saw visions of saints in the 1400s, instructing her to help reconcile France.

The visions were important in directing Joan to serve God, as she believed in God.

A young girl called Bernadette had a vision of Mary in 1858 in Lourdes, France. She claimed that she was the **Immaculate Conception**. The Immaculate Conception was conceived without original sin, though every other human inherits sin from Adam and Eve. Shortly before the vision, the Immaculate Conception had become a belief, in the Catholic Church, and the vision helped to reinforce this. The vision told Bernadette to dig into the ground, and the spring of water which came out had healing properties – thousands of people have claimed to have been healed of other medical conditions at Lourdes. The Catholic Church recognises Lourdes as a place where God supports people making pilgrimages to him.

This vision was important in clarifying Church beliefs, and establishing a place for the healing.



Many other people have claimed to have had visions of God, angels or saints. Visions are important because they reinforce faith, and Christians believe that God will help people and fulfil his plan.

Importance of Visions for Christians (Recap)

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

What Visions Show about the Nature of God (Recap)

- He has power and authority.
- He is **compassionate** and cares about humanity.
- He is **faithful** and keeps his word.
- He has a plan and guides humanity to follow it.
 - ✦ Some visions may be taken to indicate that God changes his mind. This is taken to indicate that God's message was also for **gentiles**. How God treated the Jews as distinct from others.



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Visions and Belief in God – Arguments For and Against Trusting

- ✓ Many Christians may believe that **visions** provide **evidence/proof** of God. However, they may only have a supernatural explanation. Therefore, they might lead to belief in God.
- ✓ One stronger case for visions is that they can occur against what people believe. For example, St Paul was not a Christian, and yet he had a vision which **converted** him to Christianity. If a vision conflicts with what you believe, it must have been caused by God, as it cannot be your own internal thoughts.
- ✗ However, not everyone believes that visions provide evidence of God. Non-religious people (including **atheists** and **humanists**) argue that there can be physical explanations for why someone might see a 'vision'. The book of Acts says that Peter was hungry before he saw his vision, so it is possible he was **hallucinating** due to lack of food. The accounts of some visionaries also correlate with symptoms caused by conditions known about today, but were not known about hundreds of years ago. For example, epilepsy can cause hallucinations, which could be thought to be visions if the person has been suffering from such conditions. Some drugs are also known to cause hallucinations, which could be responsible for 'visions'. Therefore, they feel that visions provide no evidence of God.

Use the example of Peter to explain why some people might believe that visions are caused by God, and others might believe they are caused by physical factors.
- ✗ A common criticism of this argument used by non-religious people to suggest that visions provide no proof of God's existence, is that people see visions of Jesus, Muhammad (Muslim god), Hindu god), and many others. They argue, therefore, that visions are not from God. If visions come from God, then it seems strange that they appear to confirm different religions.
 - ✦ Christians can respond that visions are not hallucinations – it has been suggested that visions are hallucinations (even if some might believe so). Further, it is possible that humans have a capacity for receiving 'visions' – which would be similar to how some people experience hallucinations or an epileptic seizure. This does not mean they are caused by God.
- ✗ A common criticism of this argument used by non-religious people to suggest that visions provide no proof of God's existence, is that people see visions of Jesus, Muhammad (Muslim god), Hindu god), and many others. They argue, therefore, that visions are not from God. If visions come from God, then it seems strange that they appear to confirm different religions.
 - ✦ Christians can respond that even if visions appear to confirm a variety of different religions, they can still confirm *God*. Some suggest that God may often reveal himself in ways that are not immediately understandable, or that as all visions are mediated by the human brain, they may appear differently to people of different religions, but that the human brain processes information in different ways.

Quick Questions

4. Outline **three** examples of visions.
5. Explain **two** reasons why a non-religious person might argue that visions provide no evidence of God's existence.
6. Explain **two** reasons why visions may be important to Christians. Refer to your own wisdom and authority.

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Miracles

Miracles are extraordinary happenings which do not appear to be explainable by natural laws, which may be attributed to the divine. Many Christians believe that miracles confirm the existence of God, and show that he is active in the world and cares about his people.

Keywords:

- ❖ **faith** – belief and trust in something, here in Jesus and God
- ❖ **idol** – a false God, sometimes represented as a statue or image
- ❖ **miracles** – events which are supernatural and unexplainable by natural laws; Christians believe they are ordained by God or his agents
- ❖ **reconciliation** – reunite people who are separated
- ❖ **resurrection** – being raised from the dead

Old Testament Miracles

There are many important **miracles** in the **Old Testament**, several of which are listed below.

In the book of Exodus, God parts the Red Sea for Moses, allowing the Jewish people to escape from slavery in Egypt.

‘Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were gathered into a heap. (Exodus 14:21-22)’



Artist's impression

This is an important miracle not just because it shows God's **authority**, but also God's **compassion** for his people; that he cares for them, and will look after them. This miracle is likely to lead to belief in, or confirmation of belief in, God because, for them, a supernatural explanation seems most likely, and the miracle indicates God's power over their lives and his care for them.

In the book of Judges, God calls Gideon to liberate the Jewish people from the Midianites. Gideon asks God to show him a sign that he will be successful. Overnight, God makes the dew fall on the ground whilst the ground remains dry, and then on the next night he makes the ground wet whilst the fleece remains dry. (Fleeces from animals such as sheep were used for many purposes, including warmth.)

This is an important miracle because it shows Christians that God may send signs to show what he wants them to do, and that he will be patient with them, as Gideon was, for each night. It shows that God is completely trusted.

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In the book of 1 Kings, at the **prophet** Elijah's call, God sends down fire from heaven on the offering to God which had first been drenched in water. This was to show that God was the true God, as the prophets of an **idol** called Baal could not call down fire.

This is an important miracle because it shows that God wanted to guide the people of Israel, after they had abandoned him to worship Baal. It shows that God did not want to be forgotten.

In the book of Daniel, three men are thrown into a fiery furnace because they refused to worship the golden image. The furnace is so hot that even the men who throw them in die. However, the three men exit the furnace unharmed.

This is an important miracle because it shows that God will protect those who are faithful to him.

New Testament Miracles

There are many **miracles** performed in the **New Testament** by Jesus and his apostles.

Did you know?

The feeding of the five thousand is the only miracle (other than the resurrection) to appear in all four Gospels. Some people think this means it is likely to have happened.



Jesus performs several nature miracles, such as calming the storm (Matthew 8, Mark 4) and multiplying the loaves (Matthew 14, Mark 6, Luke 9, John 6). He also controls the weather so that he and his disciples can travel safely at sea and make enough food to feed thousands of people.

'He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then there was a dead calm.' (Mark 4:39 NRSV)

As well as showing his power over physical illness, and the spiritual realm, God's and Jesus' compassion in restoring people to health.

Jesus also performs many healing miracles, for example, healing the blind and the lame, and casting out demons.

One healing miracle is found in John 4:43–54 – the healing of an official's son. (There are similar accounts in Matthew 8 and Luke 7; be careful not to confuse the details.) Jesus arrives in Galilee from Judea, and is welcomed. An official, whose son is ill in Capernaum, hears of Jesus' arrival and comes to him. He asks him to come to heal his son. Jesus tells him that the official will believe in him unless he sees signs, and the official responds by asking him again to come and heal his son, before the boy dies.

These miracles are important because they show God's **compassion**, because Jesus and his apostles feed those in need and expects people to have faith. Jesus provides for them, because he knows his disciples for not believing in him from the storm.

'Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe." (John 4:48 NRSV)

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Jesus tells him that his son will live, and the man trusts him and leaves for home. His slaves, come to tell him that his son has recovered. He asks them when he realised that it was at the time that Jesus said the boy would live. The official in Jesus.

This miracle is significant because it shows Jesus' power to heal at a distance, and his emphasis on faith. It is potentially significant as the official in the parallel stories in Matthew and Luke. Miracles where Jesus heals gentiles, like the woman's daughter (Matthew 15, Mark 7) show that God cares about all people.

The miracles in the New Testament are also important because they indicate that Jesus is prepared to show them his authority – Jesus acknowledges their faith if they do not see miracles.

Probably the most important miracle in the New Testament is the **resurrection**. Jesus recorded raising others from the dead, but he rises after his own death.

Resurrection miracles are important because they show God's power over death and the hope of life after death. Miracles which conquer death are especially likely to be believed in, as people may feel that no one apart from God can raise people from the dead.

Importance of Miracles for Christians (Recap)

- **Proof** of God's existence, and as signs to help to strengthen **faith**.
- They show that God wants to have a relationship with humanity and care for them.
- They teach about God's nature.

What Miracles Show About the Nature of God (Recap)

- He has power and **authority**. He is capable of granting life after death.
 - He is **compassionate** and cares about humanity.
 - He is **faithful** and keeps his word. He looks after those who believe in him.
 - 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 miracles may be taken to indicate that God changes his mind. The miracle of the Greek woman's daughter is taken to indicate that God's love is for all people. However, previously, God had treated the Jews as distinct from other people.

Miracles and Belief in God – Arguments For and Against Trusting Miracles

- ✓ Some people believe that **miracles** provide **evidence** for God's existence because they offer a better explanation for happenings which seem to be impossible, or defy natural laws. Therefore, they are more likely to believe in the existence of God.
- ✓ Some people also feel that miracles provide **evidence** for the existence of God. They occur in response to **faith**; like the men saved from the fiery furnace, or the man who was healed and is healed.

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- ✗ Other people do not believe miracles provide evidence/proof of God; they think miracles occur at all. One argument used by non-religious people (including atheists) against miracles is that apparent miracles could be coincidences or have a natural explanation. Weather can calm unexpectedly, lightning can strike and set things on fire, and people do recover from illnesses naturally, are some examples. Further, there have been many things which science has not been able to explain in the past but can explain now, and so it is likely that science will explain more things which humans do not currently understand in the future.

↳ Christians can respond that just because something has a natural explanation, this does not mean that God has not caused it (set the physical cause in motion), e.g. with weather-calming or lightning-striking. They can argue that many miraculous events are too amazing to be coincidences, and if science can explain many things, it cannot be proven that it will explain everything.

- ✗ Another argument from non-religious people against miracles being proof of God is that if miracles do take place, they seem selective. Some people do not believe in performing miracles, or he would heal more people and send more signs and let others suffer. To some, this is not the sign of a **compassionate** God.

↳ Christians can respond that humans cannot understand God's will, and God is acting, and not acting, as he does. They might argue that God is a God of signs in order to believe (John 4:48), and if God does not want to perform miracles, there would be no room for people to have **faith** that he exists – the whole point of miracles.

- ✗ A further argument from non-religious people that miracles are not genuine is that which have been reported seem silly. Statues of Mary, the mother of Jesus, weep blood and various foodstuffs have had the face of Jesus 'miraculously' appear. People do not think God would perform these kinds of miracles when there are people to whom he could help. And if these kinds of things are not real miracles, then all miracles – maybe they are not genuine either.

↳ Christians could respond that a) some of these may not be silly; they may be genuine and/or b) silly 'miracles' are not genuine, but just because some people believe actual coincidences to be miracles, does not mean that they are not miracles in the same way that one liar does not mean that humans are incapable of telling the truth.

Quick Questions

7. Outline **three** examples of Old Testament miracles.
8. Outline **three** examples of New Testament miracles.
9. Explain **two** ways that Christians can respond to non-religious arguments against miracles proving the existence of God.

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Religious Experiences

Revelation of God in any form, such as **visions** or auditory experiences (what is heard), or **miracles** can be termed **religious experiences**.

Other types of religious experience not mentioned above include:

- **Mystical experiences** – in a mystical experience, the person experiences a sense of unity with God.
- Experiences connected with prayer (prayer will be covered more fully in Section 4)
- **Numinous experiences** – in a numinous experience, someone feels the presence of God (unlike a mystical experience), and a feeling of awe.



Keywords:

- ❖ **conversion** – in religion, changing from one religion to another, or from no religion to a religion
- ❖ **evidence** – indicates that something is likely to be true
- ❖ **hallucination** – seeing or hearing something which is not really there
- ❖ **mystical experience** – in Christianity, feeling somehow united with God
- ❖ **numinous experience** – in Christianity, feeling the presence of God/the divine, and a feeling of awe
- ❖ **proof** – shows something to definitely exist or be true
- ❖ **religious experience** – in Christianity, when people feel God's presence

Nature of Religious Experiences

Some people would regard anything to do with talking to God, or feeling his presence, as a **religious experience**, but others would suggest that one must feel something that differs from normal experience – so just saying a **prayer** to God might not count.

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

- They would pass; they are often quick, and people experiencing religious experiences would return to normal experience again.
- They cannot be fully described, or the feeling experienced cannot be fully explained.
- People learn something from religious experiences – this could be God's will, or something about the world (e.g. that Abraham would have a son), or learning or coming to know God (e.g. leaving the experience *knowing* that God is loving).
- Religious experiences are not controllable – someone might be more likely to have a religious experience if they are worshipping or praying, but they cannot choose to experience God.

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

As dealt with above, not all religious experiences confirm what people already believe (e.g. Jesus was crucified, and Saul was **persecuting** Christians). In some religious experiences, people convert from people who do not believe in God to believing in God, or from one different religion to another.



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Christian Attitudes towards Religious Experiences

Christians believe that **religious experiences** occur, and most desire to experience religious experiences **prove** God, and most feel that they provide **evidence**.

Christians may use religious experience as a philosophical argument for the existence of God. The argument could be given like this:

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

Christians might want to check their religious experiences, if they feel that God is not real. They might check if their religious experience corresponds to the Bible, or talk to another Christian they know about it. This might help them decide if their experience is genuine or not.

Why Religious Experience May be Regarded as Revelation

Religious experiences can be very important to Christians. As seen above, Christians can have their faith strengthened and learn about God's nature, e.g. be reassured of his love for them through **visions** and **miracles**.

Christians may also feel that God guides them, and helps them to follow his commands. They may have 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 to people.

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

- 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)

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

'Then the Lord said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt. I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I will bring them out of Egypt. I will bring them up out of that land to a land flowing with milk and honey..." (Exodus 3:8-9)

- 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 Egypt.' (Exodus 3:10 NRSV)

- God reveals knowledge of the future through religious experiences.

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

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

Not all people believe **religious experiences** provide **proof** of God's existence. Non-religious people (including **atheists** and **humanists**) do not believe that religious experiences are genuine, and think that people are not really communicating with a god. Some reasons are presented in the sections on **visions** and **miracles**, and here are some more and some clarifications. Arguments that religious experiences can be trusted can be used as philosophical arguments for the existence of God.

- ✗ **Lack of evidence:** some people, including the famous philosopher David Hume, think there is not enough **evidence** to support religious experiences. No one today can prove what happened in biblical accounts of religious experiences could be fictional. In terms of religious experiences are temporary, they cannot be proven afterwards. Where it is argued that it is always more probable that a witness was confused, or that a supernatural had taken place. This is because, for Hume, natural laws are more reliable than religious experiences, and so should always be held as more reliable than testimony. It is also likely that people can be confused – maybe perceive something inaccurate. People do not know that God exists and that people experience him.

↳ Christians can argue that just because other explanations for religious experiences are likely, e.g. a confused or lying witness, this does not mean that religious experiences do not take place and provide evidence of God. Religious experiences are evidence of God because people experience them.

- ✗ **Use of drugs:** some drugs have been shown to produce experiences which are similar to religious experiences. These can include **hallucinations**, where people see and hear things that are not there, which may seem positive or disturbing. Some people who report religious experiences have been on drugs, which may be the true cause of their experiences. 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 the existence of God.

↳ Christians can respond that a) even if some religious experiences are not genuine, this does not mean God cannot communicate with people and/or b) some 'religious experiences' may not be genuine, but many are genuine religious experiences when they were not intoxicated.

- ✗ **Hallucinations:** as mentioned previously, there may be various reasons why people have hallucinations, for example for medical reasons, and hallucinations could 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 hallucinations (even if some might be). It has been shown that humans have a capacity for receiving visions – which would be a hallucination or an epileptic episode. This does not mean that visions are from God.

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- ✗ **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 tell themselves that they have, especially if they are under any kind of stress.
 - ↳ Christians can respond that not all religious experiences are desired, and not all are not always stressed when they receive them. It is probable that some people tell themselves they have had religious experiences when they have not had any other religious experiences.

- ✗ 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 many people believe 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 how 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 in Jesus because people saw him **resurrected**), then it becomes hard to justify the others.
 - ↳ Christians can respond that just because not all religious experiences are genuine does not mean all 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 believe otherwise.

Paul
If someone
claimed to
experience
them, or
alternatively

Quick Questions

10. Outline **three** features of religious experience.
11. Outline **three** alternative explanations for religious experience.
12. Explain **three** reasons why religious experiences may be considered revealing a source of wisdom and authority.

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Prayers

Prayer is communication with God. Many Christians talk to God for a variety of reasons to build a relationship with him. If Christians feel God responding to prayer, this may be a religious **experience**, but not all prayer will necessarily feel like a religious experience.

Keywords:

- ❖ **prayer** – communication with God

Types, Examples and Importance of Prayers

There are many different types of **prayers**:

- Christians pray to praise God, which is important as the God revealed in the Bible wants his people to worship him, and it helps Christians to strengthen their relationship with God.
- Christians pray to thank God, which is important because Christians want to express their gratitude, and it reminds them what God has done for them.
- Christians pray to confess their sins, which is important to Christians because they believe if they ask for forgiveness, then God will forgive them.
- Christians pray to ask God to help others, which is important as it shows that Christians trust God to help them.



Some examples of prayers are:

- The Lord's Prayer, which is important to Christians because this is the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples and Christians want to follow his example. It asks God for things which are important, as it teaches Christians to trust God. It also teaches about God's will, reminding them that God's plan should be their priority.

'Pray then in this way:

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one.'" Matthew 6:9–13 NRSV [A version of the Lord's Prayer]

- Rosary prayers, which are said with a rosary necklace (especially by Catholics); prayers with the rosary are important because familiar prayers allow Christians to focus on finding words to pray with. One popular rosary prayer is the 'Hail Mary'.
- Psalms; the book of Psalms in the Bible contains many prayers, which can give Christians ideas to pray with, and show Christians how other Christians pray. A famous psalm often used as a prayer is Psalm 23.

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Answered Prayer

If someone **prays** and their prayers appear to be answered in the way they reinforce, belief in God because:

- The person may believe that their prayer could only have, or is most likely, answered this way by God, and so the answered prayer is **evidence** for the existence of God that God is listening to them and will answer their prayers.

‘And this is the boldness we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have what he has made of him.’ (1 John 5:14–15 NRSV)



- The person may see the answered prayer as a sign that God loves them.

‘If you see your brother or sister committing what is not a mortal sin, you must not say they are committing a mortal sin – mortal sin is not as easy to recognise as it seems. You must only say to them, “Brother, be on your guard.” If you see your brother or sister committing what is not a mortal sin, you must give life to such a one – to those whose sin is not mortal...’ (1 John 5:17–18)

Note – the author of the first letter of John (not necessarily the same person as the Gospel) seems to suggest that people should not pray for those who have committed mortal sin (John 5:16–17). These are often interpreted (especially by the Catholic Church) to condemn someone to hell if they do not repent. These sins are serious but not necessarily bad action (e.g. murder) which is done intentionally. Therefore, so long as there are things which a Christian should not pray for, we expect from God – him to answer a prayer to forgive an unrepentant person who has committed a mortal sin.

Unanswered Prayer

If someone **prays** and they think their prayer has not been answered, they may lose faith in God, or lose belief in God because:

- The person may feel that if there was a God he would always answer their prayers.
- The person may feel that there cannot be a God because a God would take action based on their prayer, for example, to heal someone. If this does not happen, they may feel there is not a compassionate God.
- The person may feel that if they have had no contact with God, there is no God.

Alternatively, a Christian may have different responses to unanswered prayer:

- They may feel that God has answered their prayer, but possibly not in the way they expected. Maybe they do not realise how God has answered their prayer.
- They may feel that God will answer their prayer in the future, and they must wait.
- They may not feel that their prayer requires an immediate answer, but rather that it is about building their relationship with God.

Quick Questions

- Outline **three** examples of prayers.
- Outline **three** reasons why prayer is important to Christians.
- Explain **two** reasons why prayer which Christians feel has been answered reinforces faith in God.

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Design Argument

Christians, and people of other religions, have not just used **religious experience** to **prove** God's existence and justify belief in God. Some have also used philosophy to prove his existence, though not all religious people believe that these arguments are valid. One of these arguments is called the **design argument** (also known as the teleological argument) based on the idea that the world appears to be created and designed, so must have a designer: God.

Keywords:

- ❖ **analogy** – a comparison between things to note their similarity
- ❖ **evolution** – a scientific theory which states that organisms have adapted over time
- ❖ **fine-tuning** – where little things are altered to achieve the best outcome
- ❖ **proof** – shows something to definitely exist or be true

A Classical 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 paragraph above)...
 - ↳ ...the world has a similar designer which is God.

The first part of the argument leads to the conclusion that the world is like a designed object. The second part of the argument suggests that if objects appear to be designed, then they have a designer. And if the world is designed, then the designer is God.

'God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.' (Genesis 1:31)

Use by Christians as a Philosophical Argument for the Existence of God

- ① The scientist Isaac Newton gave the example of a *thumb print*, as evidence for the design argument. He said they indicated that the world had been designed, because they were unique, and there would be no natural reason for humans to all have different thumb prints. Therefore, he thought they must have been designed by God.
- ② A philosopher called William Paley said that **evidence** for the **design argument** was all at the world:
 1. contained *complex parts*, e.g. there are weather cycles, and life continues.
 2. had a *function* or a purpose – it allowed life.

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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 purpose of telling the time. Watches are known to be designed by hand, a rock does not have organised parts, and has no purpose on its own. Paley used this comparison to argue that the world is designed. This is an **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 suggest a designer, as designed objects cannot exist without a designer, so the world must have a designer in this sense.

- 3 Some Christians argue that a strength of the design argument is that things have to be 'just so' for life to exist on earth. It might be possible that things 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 is fine-tuned; to have had lots of little things contribute to an overall outcome.
- 4 Another strength of the design argument is that it points to a purpose. Things were designed, and many humans like to feel that they have a purpose in life.

Non-religious Arguments against the Design Argument

Atheists, humanists and others have argued against the design argument. They think that it provides **evidence** for God's existence.

- 1 One argument against the design argument is that the world does not seem to be designed. Earth has natural disasters, there is disease, and animals kill each other. A world which did not have natural disasters, or disease, or creatures which kill each other would seem 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 create a world where suffering exists. Therefore, they argue there cannot be a designer God, because there are flaws in the world.
- 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 be alternative explanations. For example, a puddle on the ground could have been caused by the natural process of rain, or by someone watering the ground. If you see rain clouds you may assume it was rain, or if you see a hose, you might assume not. In the same way, as world-design processes are another.

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- 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 humans are intelligent; but the traits that make species successful have been passed on to their offspring. In other words, if animals might not have been 'fine-tuned' to fit into their environment, then humans were not designed, then this casts doubt on whether anything was designed.

! Some people also point out that even if the world was designed, this is not one Christian God, there could be many designer gods.

Christian Responses 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.
- ! It is possible, from the **design argument**, that there are multiple gods, but Christians believe in one God for other reasons.



What the Design Argument May Show About the Nature of God

- God has **authority** and is **sovereign**, if he could design a universe, a planet, and life on earth.

'For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they have been understood and seen through the things he has made.' (Romans 1:20)

Romans 1:18-24 discusses why people do not have an excuse for denying God, who is known through the creation he designed.

- ✦ Maybe God is not all-powerful, as there are some things which potentially could have been designed better to minimise **suffering**.
- God is **compassionate** and loving, because he chose to design a planet where life could exist.
- ✦ Maybe God is not all-loving, because he potentially could have designed a world that contained less suffering.
- God is *creative*; there are many beautiful and different features of the world, and the same.
- God is *similar* to humans, in that he designed the world and humans designed.

Quick Questions

- Outline **three** reasons non-religious people argue against the design argument.
- Explain **two** reasons why the design argument might seem successful.
- Explain **two** things which the design argument may show about the nature of God to Christians. Refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

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Cosmological Argument

Another type of argument used by some Christians and people of other religions to prove the existence of God is called a **cosmological argument**. The idea behind cosmological arguments is that certain natural laws about the universe point towards the existence of God. The argument says that God to explain why there is something rather than nothing. For example, the Big Bang theory seems to lead to the idea that the universe itself needed a cause. Therefore, the **proof** that there must be a creator, God, as a cause for everything.

Keywords:

- ❖ **Big Bang theory** – a scientific theory that the universe started with a rapid expansion from a single point
- ❖ **cause** – something which makes something else happen
- ❖ **contingency** – here, the possibility of things existing, or ceasing to exist in the future
- ❖ **cosmological argument** – an argument for God's existence based on the idea that the universe rather than nothing, and God caused this
- ❖ **evidence** – indicates that something is likely to be true
- ❖ **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
- ❖ **necessary being** – something/one which *must* exist
- ❖ **proof** – shows something to definitely exist or be true
- ❖ **unmoved mover** – God, as being a being who does not change, but who causes everything to change

A Cosmological Argument

Cosmological arguments are very old.

A basic version of a cosmological argument is:

- There is something rather than nothing.
- There must be a reason for this.
- The reason for this: God.

Use by Christians as a Philosophical Argument for the Existence of God

Many Christians have used **cosmological arguments** for the existence of God. One famous example of a theologian who used cosmological arguments is **St Thomas Aquinas**. He wrote down *Five Ways*, which he believed proved the existence of God. The first three of these *Five Ways* are cosmological arguments.

- 1 Here is a version of Aquinas' 1st argument – the **unmoved mover**:
 - The world contains change.
 - Change is caused by something other than the thing which changes.
 - There must be something which changes other things which does not change itself.
 - Therefore, there is an unchanging changer (unmoved mover).

Aquinas makes the point that all motion and change requires a source of the energy that causes the change. Therefore, there must be a source of this energy. He assumes that this must be God, who does not change, but causes change.

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- 2 Probably the best known of these three arguments is St Thomas Aquinas' paraphrased version of Aquinas' 2nd argument – the **first cause 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 we call God.

Aquinas makes the point that nothing can happen without a cause, and this is different – it involves a series of causes and effects which can be traced back to a first cause. If you trace the chain of causes and effects back to the start of time, there must have been a first cause which started everything else, which does not require an explanation. This, Aquinas says, is God – the only first cause which makes sense. (Aquinas was not willing to accept that there could be an infinite chain of causes and effects.)

Aquinas' first and second ways are very similar arguments. One way of differentiating the *First Way*, Aquinas is arguing for something which is *able* to cause change, and the *Second Way*, Aquinas is arguing that there must be something which was the first cause, and so *exists* eternally. The first argument makes more assumptions about the nature of God, aside from the existence of the universe and starting it off.

'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 1:1-5)

- 3 Here is a version of Aquinas' 3rd argument – the **contingency argument**: (Note: here we are using the word *contingent* to mean something which is possible to be, and possible not to be.)
- Things which exist in the world are possible (if they were not possible, they would not exist).
 - It is also possible for things *not* to be (people die, mountains are eroded, etc.).
 - If everything is contingent (possible to be, and possible *not* to be), then at some point everything will *not* be.
 - If everything is contingent (possible to be, and possible *not* to be), then at some point everything will *not* be.
 - Things do currently exist.
- ⇒ Therefore, there is something which is not contingent (it is necessary to be). This is God – the first cause which allows things to remain existing – this is God (a **necessary being**).

Aquinas makes the point that if everything ends, why has everything not ended? He assumes that there must be something (God) which sustains existence.

Strengths and Evidence for the Cosmological Arguments

Strengths and Evidence for 1 and 2:

- ✓ Aquinas is correct in stating that everything needs potential energy to exist. There is nothing in the world which does not require potential energy to exist. There must be some explanation for the beginning of the universe. Matter (physical, material stuff) to come into being, and to change, requires an unchanging cause. This indicates some sort of unchanging, non-material cause, probably with the power to make things happen, and this fits well with the idea of God.

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- ✓ Moreover, a first cause, which is God, seems (to many) to be more like going back forever, or chains of change going back forever, without a **cosmological arguments** are strong because things have causes, and energy, and it makes little sense for there *not* to have been a first cause for energy for change.

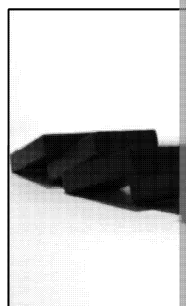
Strengths and Evidence for ③:

- ✓ It is possible to argue that if everything came from one point originally to one point in time – some theories in physics support this. However, yet, it may be that God has made sure that this does not happen.

Non-religious Arguments against Cosmological Arguments and Favour

Atheists, humanists and others have argued against **cosmological arguments** people think that they provide **evidence** for God's existence.

- ✗ 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, and could explain when potential energy first began to cause change. There is scientific **evidence** for this, and no scientific evidence for God, so this weakens the **cosmological argument**.



*Dominos in motion
first domino to
domino falling
that*

- ✗ Christians could respond that the **big bang** still needs a **cause**, and there needs to be a reason why suddenly potential energy caused change; God could have caused the big bang, which then caused everything allowed potential energy to be released.

- ✗ Even if everything has a cause now, and needs potential energy for change, it cannot be **proven** that causes and effects do not go back forever with there is not an infinite chain of change going backwards.

- ✗ Christians could respond that it is more likely that there is a God who has a cause, or that there is no reason why potential energy has the laws of nature in this way.

- ✗ Further, even if the universe needs a first cause and an unmoved mover of causes and effects, and change, does not necessarily solve the problem of what caused God and how and why he does not change.

- ✗ Christians could respond that God is different to everything else, cause and effect, and because he is perfect and complete he does not need anything in the physical world needs a cause and potential energy in the physical world, different rules may apply to him.

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- ✗ Physics does not really tie up with the **contingency** argument. Physics says that if the universe may end, there will still be something (be it matter or energy) that just disappears. Also, this is predicted to happen at some point far in the future, so it is *wrong* in expecting that the end of the universe would have *already* happened.
- ✗ Christians may respond to this, but this argument is not really used to show that other cosmological arguments are seen to be stronger.
- ✗ It is also important to note that even if cosmological arguments succeed in showing that Christian God – the **first cause**, **unmoved mover** and **necessary being** – exists, it does not rule out the possibility that there are multiple gods.
- ✗ It is also possible, from the **cosmological arguments**, that there is a **first cause**, but there are multiple gods, but Christians believe in their one God for all eternity.

What the Cosmological Arguments May Show About the Nature of God

- 1 God is unchanging and unmoving.
 - 2 God is different from everything else, because he does not have a cause.
 - 3 God has necessary existence – he must exist.
- ✗ God has **authority** and is powerful if he could cause everything to exist, create potential energy, and is the only **necessary being**.

What they do not show:

- The **cosmological arguments** do not really show that God is **compassionate** and creative. Some Christians might infer this, but if God is just a **first cause**, **unmoved mover** and **necessary being**, this does not necessarily mean that he did anything after setting the universe in motion, apart from sustaining life, or that he wanted to create a better planet for humans.
- The cosmological argument does not indicate much about God other than that he caused the universe to start, and sustains it.

Quick Questions

19. Outline **three** of Aquinas' cosmological arguments.
20. Outline **three** possible weaknesses of these cosmological arguments.
21. Explain **two** ways Christians may respond to non-religious arguments about the cosmological arguments being able to provide evidence for the existence of God.

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Religious Upbringing

If children are given a Christian upbringing, this can provide a *basis* for belief in God. This may be because children find it normal to believe in God and want to experience and build a relationship with God. However, sometimes children's doubts can drive children away from belief in God. If a child is brought up with an **atheist** parent, they may not believe in God, possibly because they have no reason to, or are rejecting God's existence.

Keywords:

❖ **atheist** – someone who does not believe in God



Christian Teachings about Raising Children to Believe in God

Christianity encourages parents to bring their children up in the religion. The Catholic Church, especially, believes that a good way of creating more Christians is to have children and raise them as Christians.

Christians want their children to follow the right path in life, and believe that religion will help them to do this. The Bible teaches that raising children correctly will set them on the right track for the rest of their life.



‘Train children in the right way, and when old they will not stray.’ (Proverbs 22:6)

Christians not only believe in teaching children to believe in God will allow them to grow up with him, but also that it will help them to develop good morals. The Bible teaches that raising children correctly will set them on the right track for the rest of their life. A Christian upbringing should not be harsh, and it should be a good person.

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

Christianity places an emphasis on children respecting the instruction of the Lord, which is a teaching from Judaism.

‘Honour your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land, for this is the first commandment your God is giving you.’ (Exodus 20:12 – the 5th of the Ten Commandments)

‘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 on the earth.”’ (Ephesians 6:1–3 NRSV)



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Why Features of a Christian Upbringing May Lead to Belief in God

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/exciting. 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 (e.g. Bible stories) Celebrating Christmas and Easter Attending Christian events (e.g. Church, Christian Brigade)
<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 Christian parents Knowing other Christians Attending a Church Attending Sunday School Attending Christian Activities (e.g. Bible Club) Being taught to pray
<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 have experienced God
<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 to pray Attending Sunday School Attending Christian Activities (e.g. Bible Club)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children may feel that God, Gods, 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 to pray Reading or being read to (e.g. Bible stories) Attending Sunday School Attending Christian Activities (e.g. Bible Club)
<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 rules telling them to believe in God, and they or their parents may have made promises about them growing up in the Christian faith. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being taught to follow the Ten Commandments Being baptised

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Non-religious Arguments about Why a Religious Upbringing May Lead to Rejection of God's Existence and Christian Responses

Non-religious people (including **atheists** and **humanists**) may argue that a religious upbringing may lead to a rejection of God's existence for many reasons:

- Christian parents/adults often do not live up to the example of Christianity. Children may feel that their parents are hypocritical. They may also feel that Christianity is hypocritical.
- Children who are taught religion by their family are also likely to be taught in school. If children feel that what they know about Christianity conflicts with their own beliefs or with history (e.g. the Crusades do not seem well-justified), then they may reject belief in God.
- If children feel that Christian rules are unfair, they may reject belief in God and to follow these rules. Humanists in particular object to certain religious teachings, such as opposition to same-sex marriage and euthanasia, and any religious institution that discriminates – if children of Christian parents who promote such ideas are seen as unfair or wrong, then they may become humanists.
- If children are taught to **pray**, and do not feel that their prayers are answered, they may have a rejection of belief in God's existence.
- Teenagers often rebel against their parents. If their parents are religious, they may rebel against something which they rebel against (because it is associated with their parents) because they disbelieve it for other reasons.
- If a child's friends / their social environment are/is secular, and they see a secular life as more interesting and fulfilling, they may become disinterested in religion if it is not part of their lives.
- Christian parents often bring their children up to believe in Father Christmas as well as believing in God. When the children realise that the former are not real, they may lose belief in God as well.

Christians may respond in a number of ways. Many will claim that an off-peddling of Christianity has gone wrong – parents should be good examples, explain Christianity to their children, and explain the concept of prayer thoroughly.

Some will also argue that parents should do their best to make a religious upbringing a positive experience – e.g. it should be explained that science and religion explain things in different ways and that religious people do not always do good.

Why an Atheist/Humanist Upbringing May Lead to Rejection of Christianity

Being brought up in a family which does not believe in God may lead to a rejection of Christianity. There are a number of reasons for this:

- If a child is never taught to believe in God, and they feel no *need* for God, they may have no reason to choose to believe in God.
- If a child has been taught there is no God and has *never experienced* God, they may have no reason to believe in him.
- Children may find *scientific* arguments for the creation of the world more believable – they may have been taught that humans were not **designed**, but **evolved**, and that the **big bang** caused the universe, for example.



Image of what the big bang might look like

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- Children who have been told there is no God may believe this if they feel **compassionate** God would not allow *pain, suffering and evil* in the world.
- Children who have had any non-religious upbringing, and especially those who have been brought up as non-religious, may feel that there are reasons other than faith for acting in certain ways, for example – and that there is a valid meaning to life without faith. They may also feel that their own interests and potential, as well as helping others – and so God is not necessary for meaning.

Christians may respond that being brought up as non-religious and feeling no need for God is a good reason to remain non-religious. They may also argue that non-religious people may feel a need for God but not realise it (and possibly fill the gap in other ways). They could also argue that just because atheism makes sense to people who have been brought up as non-religious, this does not mean that it is right.

Dis
rel

Quick Questions

22. Outline **three** features of a Christian upbringing.
23. Explain **two** ways in which features of a Christian upbringing may lead to a belief in God.
24. Explain two reasons why Christians may give their children a religious upbringing. Refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

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Summary of Philosophy of Religion

- Christians believe that some people have experienced **revelations** of God. In the **Old Testament**, revelations to Noah, Abraham and Moses were often directed **prophets** to help his people. He made **covenants** with them land and bless them, for example. In the **New Testament**, Christ revealed himself through his son Jesus, who showed God's love by dying for humankind. Christians believe that revelations are **proof** of God's existence.
- Some people have reported seeing **visions** of God, or messengers of God. In the **Old Testament**, the **angel of God** appeared to Abraham, the angel of God appeared in a vision to Moses. In the **New Testament**, several people received visions and **converted** people to following God's will, and helped to **transfigure** before his **disciples**. People in more recent times have felt visions, often leading them do something for God. Non-religious people feel that these are **hallucinations**, but Christians feel that visions are important **evidence** of God's existence.
- The Bible contains many **miracles** in the **Old Testament** and **New Testament**. Miracles are important, as they show God's **authority** and show he cares for those who follow him. Non-religious people feel that these are coincidences, or are explainable by science, though Christians feel miracles have no other explanation.
- There are many types of **religious experience** other than the ones mentioned. People might experience **mystical** or **numinous** experiences, or feel God communicating through **prayer**. Different people think that different things constitute religious experiences. Christians may wish to test religious experiences to see if it is genuine. Non-religious people may think there is little evidence for religious experiences; they may think them the product of **hallucinations** due to physical factors; or they may think them wish-fulfillment of people who want to experience them. Christians believe that religious experiences, such as God's revelation to Moses in Exodus 3.
- Christians may **pray** for many reasons; prayers are important for thanking God, for forgiveness, for example. Christians may pray set prayers such as the Lord's Prayer. If Christians feel that their prayers have been answered, this may increase their **faith**, but if people feel their prayers have not been answered, they may lose faith.
- One argument used to support the existence of God is the **design argument**. The world must be designed, designed objects have a designer, and so the world must have been designed by God. The world may seem to have been organised in a certain way, and so it must have been designed. On the other hand, it may also seem badly 'designed', as there is **suffering**, and why things seem designed.
- Another argument for the existence of God is the **cosmological argument**. The universe is not eternal, and so there must be a God. St Thomas Aquinas gave three versions of the cosmological arguments – the **unmoved mover**, **first cause**, and **contingency**. Some religious people argue against such arguments, e.g. the **big bang** may be the start of the universe. Christians disagree and feel that God must have created everything and this shows his power.

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- Christianity teaches that Christians should bring up children in the religion. Various features of a religious upbringing, such as Church attendance, and celebrating Christian festivals may lead to belief in God. On the other hand, an upbringing from an **atheist** or **humanist** perspective may lead to rejection of religion. Children never experience, or feel a need for, God. Religious upbringing may reject the existence of God, but Christians may argue that if this is the case, then all religious upbringings are flawed.

Now Try This...

25. 'The cosmological argument gives evidence for the existence of God.' This statement is true or false?

Argue for and against this statement. You must give Christian teaching arguments, and philosophical arguments. Reach a conclusion which follows from your argument.

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Equality

The concept of equality has an interesting relationship with Christianity. In the past, Christians have tried to promote human rights, equality, freedom from **prejudice** and justice. In other ways, certain groups, such as women and homosexuals, may have been denied rights by some Christian groups. Wealth and poverty are also controversial issues. Some people feel that wealth is a good thing, while others may feel it is a distraction. Some people feel that poverty should not be exploited, and that the rich should be helped with charity, while others feel that the poor should help themselves.

Human Rights

Human rights are rights that many people believe all humans have, things which should be protected. Human rights are not a new concept – many different countries and peoples have had rights for centuries. Many countries protect certain human rights by law, though not all countries.

Keywords:

- ❖ **atheist** – someone who does not believe in God or gods
- ❖ **consequentialist** – a type of ethical theory concerned with the morality of the consequences of actions
- ❖ **ethical theory** – something which suggests how people should act, and suggests what is right or wrong
- ❖ **humanist** – someone who aims to live a good life, without belief in God or gods
- ❖ **sanctity of life** – a belief that life is sacred/holy and of special value, implying that it should be protected
- ❖ **shari'ah** – Islamic law, derived from the Quran and other Islamic teachings
- ❖ **situation ethics** – ethical theory which suggests decisions should evaluate what would have the most loving consequences in a particular situation

Nature, History and Purpose of Human Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was decided in 1948 by the United Nations, with all the member countries working together, and many countries respected these rights. The Human Rights Act was applied in the UK since 2000, and this means that the UK has to protect the rights of its citizens by law – if people feel that their rights are being denied, they can take this to court. One of the reasons for this act is that people can now take a case to court in the UK if it breaches the Human Rights Act, rather than having to take it to the European Court of Human Rights in France. This was done to ensure that people had better protection of their human rights, and also so it was easier to claim large amounts of money to take cases about human rights abroad (to the court in Strasbourg).

However, the government may still make laws which appear to clash with the Human Rights Act. Some people also argue that they do not uphold the act when torturing or arresting terrorists. In the past, British soldiers have been accused of killing people who have been shot dead on arrest, and British soldiers have been accused of mistreating prisoners. There have also been reports from the Conservative government that they are planning to repeal the Human Rights Act and replace it with a 'British Bill of Rights' – just because they don't like it doesn't mean that the government will not want to get rid of it.

The purpose of human rights is to protect all people, wherever they are, to ensure that everyone has a minimum standard of living, and to ensure that governments take responsibility for their actions. By the middle of the twentieth century most people had acknowledged that everyone has the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Many people were feeling that they all have equal worth. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was created in 1948, and it states that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

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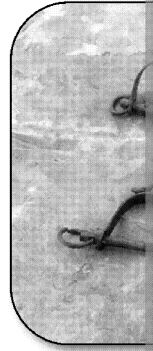
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prompted by the Second World War, where many humans endured horrible lives. The Declaration aimed to make sure that events such as the Holocaust

Human rights in the Human Rights Act include:

- The right to life
- The right not to be a slave
- The rights to fair treatment; no torture, and a fair trial if accused of a crime
- The rights of free belief and expression
- The right to education
- The right to a fair and public vote
- The right to freedom from discrimination, with regard to these rights
- Rights concerning private life, including marriage and family



Slave shackles

Many religious and non-religious people agree with these rights, or most of them. Some may feel that not everyone deserves them. For example, some people feel that if someone else, then the murder forfeits their right to life, and the state should have the penalty. There is also controversy surrounding the human rights of foreign criminals, the government can extradite them, or send them back to their home country. Foreign criminals have been allowed to stay in the UK, for example, because their rights are threatened in their home country, or because their family lives in the UK and they are allowed to have access to their family.

Some Muslims have disagreed with some human rights, because they feel that Islamic law – Islamic law. However, there is a Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which has many of the same rights as the Human Rights Act 1998, though in line with Islamic law.

Christian Teachings and Responses to Human Rights – Important Points to Remember

Modern Christians are generally supportive of human rights. They believe that many of the things that have happened in the past – such as the slave trade and the Holocaust – are wrong and contributed to by Christians. Most will feel that this should not happen again and that human rights helps to ensure the safety and dignity of humanity.

Christianity teaches that all humans are important to God. It teaches that harming the vulnerable or disadvantaged is a sin and that those who help the poor are blessed.

“‘Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are more valuable than many sparrows.’” Matthew 10:29–31

‘Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker, but those who are kind to the poor show respect for him.’ (Proverbs 14:31 NRSV)

Jesus taught that everyone should be treated with love, and many human rights (such as the right to life, the right not to be enslaved) can be seen as practical ways in which this love can be shown. Christians believe that human rights are important, and so support them, because they feel that this fulfils the command to love others well and not to harm them.

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Christian Responses to the Need for and Application of Individual Human Rights

While most Christians will support the concept of human rights in general, they may have different views about different human rights.

“‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’” (Matthew 22:39 NRSV)

‘In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the love of God.’ (Matthew 7:12 NRSV)

There are many human rights which are supported by Christian teaching. For example, the first commandment in the Ten Commandments not to murder is supported by the Bible. During biblical times, there are also biblical teachings which can be used against slavery, the right to freedom from being enslaved. The Bible also teaches that justice must be used to support the right to fair treatment / a fair trial if accused of a crime. Christians may feel that there should be laws protecting human rights such as these three and they can support them.

‘You shall not murder.’ (Exodus 20:13 NRSV)

‘Whoever kidnaps a person, whether that person has been sold or is free-born, that kidnaper shall be put to death.’ (Exodus 21:16 NRSV)

‘You must not distort justice; you must not show partiality; and you must not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the case of those who are innocent. Only justice, you shall pursue.’ (Deuteronomy 16:19–20 NRSV)

However, there are some human rights which some Christians do not completely agree with. For example, many Christians disagree with homosexual marriage, and so do not feel that homosexual couples have a right to marry. Therefore, they would disagree with the right to marriage and a family applying to homosexual couples.

Can you think of a human right that is not fully supported by Christians?

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

Situation Ethics

Situation ethics is an **ethical theory** associated with many theologians and Joseph Fletcher. It promotes evaluating individual situations by what is most loving, rather than by other laws, teachings or considerations. It is a **consequentialist** ethical theory, where the end is being loving consequences, rather than about what actions are carried out. Situation ethics does care that the intention is to do for loving consequences. Loving consequences are those which bring the best for the people involved.

In many situations, situation ethics is likely to support upholding human rights. For example, Christians may argue that respecting human rights is often going to be the most loving thing to do. For example, to not enslave, torture, etc. Situation ethics would also support such rights being protected.

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more loving to allow homosexual people the right to marry than not to, for e would not consider biblical teachings which oppose this as they are irrelevant

However, situation ethics would not argue that human rights should be up example, it may be more loving to torture a terror suspect without a fair trial which saves hundreds of people from a terrorist attack. Therefore, although be consistent with human rights in many cases, there will be some extreme situation ethics would conflict with human rights.

Christian Responses to Religious Arguments about Human Rights

In many ways, the views of Christians and non-religious people, such as **atheists** human rights are likely to be similar – most respect human life. However, there are areas where they may disagree.

For example, non-religious people, especially humanists, are likely to argue that human rights should apply equally, regardless of factors such as sexuality or gender.

↳ However, Christians may respond that if God has decided that marriage is for heterosexual couples, then human governments have no *right* to make human rights apply regardless of sexuality.

For example, atheists might argue that the right to life only begins at birth.

↳ However, some Christians would argue that the right to life begins at conception (many Christians believe in the **sanctity of life**). They might argue that human rights should extend to protect fetuses, and the current application of the human rights is not enough.

Ultimately Christians and non-religious people may have different views on human rights. Christians will want to do what fits with biblical teaching, whereas non-religious people will think what seems right to them.

Extension Responsibilities Which Come with Rights

Because the law protects people's rights, this also means that it enforces responsibilities.

- If everyone has the right to life, all have the responsibility not to kill others.
- If everyone has the right to freedom, all have the responsibility not to enslave others.

People have a responsibility to respect the rights of others, and not to deny rights to others if they disagree with their opinions or beliefs.

Sometimes these rights and responsibilities conflict with each other. For example, everyone has the right to marry, and everyone has the right to freedom of religious belief. However, some religions may mean that they do not acknowledge, or wish to perform, certain marriages.

In the UK, the rights of homosexuals to get married have been protected, and the rights of religious organisations *not* to perform such marriages have also been protected. It is up to the courts to decide whether registrars who are religious should have to perform homosexual marriages.

Quick Questions

- Outline **three** human rights.
- Explain **two** reasons why some Christians may not support all human rights.
- Explain **two** reasons why Christians may support human rights. Refer to biblical teaching, wisdom and authority.

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Equality

Equality usually refers to being equal and/or being treated equally. To treat everyone equally means treating them all with the same respect and dignity, and giving them the same opportunities regardless of their personal situation or characteristics. In the UK, the Human Rights Act 1998 guarantees the right to equality; for example, everyone has the right to be free and not a slave; a right to a fair trial and to vote (there are some exceptions; children cannot vote). Equal rights extend to everyone, and everyone has an equal right to education and an equal right to protection from discrimination. This includes protection for men and women, for heterosexuals and homosexuals, for example.

Many religious and non-religious people feel that equality is a good thing – a person who is enslaved or not allowed to vote, so most people want to make sure everyone has these rights, not just because they want to be fair, because they would not want to be in that position themselves.

There are some debates about how best to apply equality. Most people would agree that there are some cases in which people should not be given equal opportunities; for example, someone with medical training should be employed as a doctor over someone without medical training. However, not everyone takes the same approach to education. Many people argue that students who struggle at school should be given extra help, and maybe even have extra money spent on their education – they should be given a shot at equal opportunities in life by being treated differently (being given more help).

There is also a conflict with other issues in this area – does being treated equally mean being treated the same as everyone else, or do people need to be treated differently to be treated equally? In France, a secular country, religious symbols are banned in schools, including Sikh turbans. Some French people believe that it is important that everyone is treated 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.

Find out how the Equality Act 2010 protects your rights.

The Equality Act 2010 protects against many inequalities, including unfair treatment.

Causes of Inequality and Problems caused by Inequality

There are many causes of inequality in the world, including:

- Poverty – this directly means that people have less than those who are not in poverty. People in poverty may have less access to healthcare or other necessities. Poverty can cause inequalities, e.g. no access to free healthcare may mean that people poor if they need medical treatment.
 - The economic status of a family can influence one's relative wealth.
 - The area in which a family lives can also influence future status – there are many examples of this in developing countries, for example.
- Ethnicity – this generally causes inequality indirectly, as people may be treated differently depending on their ethnicity, but this is human culture rather than something that disadvantages people.
- Sex/gender – in some ways this could be seen to make people unequal, as only women are able to be pregnant and breastfeed, etc. (which can be seen to disadvantage men). Culturally women also face inequality which is not the result of biological differences.

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- Sexuality – homosexuals have often been treated unequally.
- Disability – those with physical and mental disabilities may be less able to access education and public services.

There are many problems caused by inequality. For example:

- Those living in poverty may face horrible living conditions, and have poor life expectancy. They may also find it impossible to get out of poverty, and pass this on to their children. Poor countries may have large amounts of interest on loans, which can become poorer and inequality increases.
- People of certain ethnicities may find it harder to get university places, and may be more likely to be arrested (unfairly).
- Women may find that they are less likely to be considered for certain jobs, which can mean that women are less economically well off, and may be disadvantaged. Men may also be less likely to be employed in some jobs which are seen as 'male'.
- Historically (and currently in some countries), homosexuals have been persecuted for their relationships. They may also not be allowed to marry/adopt, as heterosexual couples.
- Those with disabilities may feel marginalised, and may find it harder to access services, leaving them with the problems caused by poverty.

Christian Teachings and Responses to Causes of Inequality and Inequality

Christianity teaches that the poor should be helped, and Christians might see inequality as unfair and as much as possible should be done to combat it. Many Christians use charity to help with economic inequality and the problems it causes.

Christians generally feel that all people are equal, and that Christians should treat people of all ethnicities fairly and with respect. (See more below in the section on Racial Discrimination.)

Many Christians feel that people should be treated equally regardless of sex/gender or sexuality. They feel that there should be better legal protections to ensure that this is the case. However, some feel that men and women should not be treated in the same way and that homosexuals should not be able to marry, for example. Freedom of religion may conflict with equality laws – the Catholic Church is allowed to only employ male priests, when normally companies could not discriminate in this way. However, Christians may not always be allowed to fully act on their religious beliefs if these conflict with equality laws.

Christianity has been taken to court for discrimination against gay couples and taken to court for discrimination against gay couples. These people are often called 'religious bigots' and these things are often called 'religious discrimination'.

Christians might argue that treating men or homosexuals/heterosexuals differently is not discrimination, as they can claim that these are valid biblical reasons for treating them differently. They might also claim that some of the problems which appear to be caused by 'inequality' are misunderstandings of God's plan for them. However, they still might see gender inequality as unfair, and act personally to try to change this, or support others to do so.

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'I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is as the church, which was formed first, then Eve' (1 Timothy 2:12 NRSV)

'Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the church, just as Christ is the head of the church' (Ephesians 5:22-23)

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

Solutions to inequality (and reasons for them)

Some possible solutions to inequality include:

- A better redistribution of wealth and personal, national and international poverty. This could allow people to improve their standards of living and there would be less inequality, as more children would be born into families with less poverty.
- Better laws to target inequality. This is important, as there are always people who exploit or abuse others, and laws should help to protect them.
- Improved personal attitudes – those of all disadvantaged groups, whether disability, or anything else, will have greater equality if people work to change their personal and professional lives.
- Better education and awareness of issues so that people and governments can address inequality and want to work against it.

Christian Teaching about Equality

Christianity teaches that humans are equal before God. Various Bible passages talk about both men and women being created in the image of God – this means 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 taught that people should show love for others and treat everyone well. He should not only treat certain groups of people well, but treat everyone with love.

“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, so you should 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 us.' (Matthew 22:39 NRSV) [The Golden Rule]

Jesus also taught that it was not only those who seem holy who are doing God's will. In the Good Samaritan, Jesus teaches that a priest who avoids helping someone in need is not doing God's will. In contrast, someone who would be looked down on but who does help is doing God's will. This shows Christians several things, including that they should not judge people without knowing them – people they do not expect to be good people may well be good. It also shows Christians that helping others and treating them well is very important to God.

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“... Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man the robbers?” He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to them (Luke 10:36–37 NRSV)

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

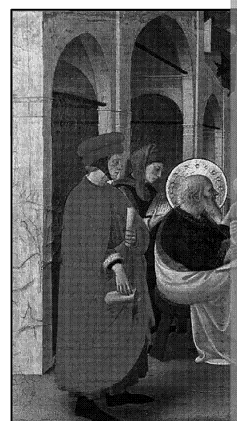
‘You are told that you really fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, “Love your neighbour as yourself.” But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are transgressors.’ (James 2:8–9 NRSV)

The New Testament also continues the biblical theme of spiritual equality, that all humans are created by God and 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.”

‘... From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would seek God and perhaps grope for him and find him, though indeed he is not far from each one of us.’ (Acts 17:26–27 NRSV)

These teachings mean that Christians should believe all people are equal. This may not always have been the case, depending on Church teaching and culture, but today many do believe this. Christians have also not always treated people equally, a notable example being the slave trade. Sometimes beliefs in spiritual equality have not resulted in Christians treating people equally, and also sometimes teachings have been overlooked and certain Christians have felt that they are superior to other humans.



Painting

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

Galatians 3:23–29

Galatians is a New Testament letter sent by St Paul to a group of Christians in Galatia. Galatians 3:23–29 is a particularly important Bible passage on equality. It states that through Jesus’ sacrifice humans had to follow the law to be right with God. However, now that Jesus has died, people are right with God through faith, rather than through following the law. Those who accept him become equal, regardless of previous religion, race, status or gender.

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'... for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you were once slaves to sin, but now you are free from sin, having been made slaves to righteousness. 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. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise' (Galatians 3:26-29 NRSV)

This demonstrates a common Christian belief that men and women, rich and poor, and different nationalities are all equal to God. If people are all equal to God, then it follows that we should not think badly of different groups, or treat them badly – many agree with this.



This is a useful passage for arguing that all people are equal **and** should be treated equally. However, it can also be interpreted in different ways. One counterargument to using this passage to justify practical equality (treating people in the same way, such as allowing women to be priests) is that this passage only shows humans to be spiritually equal. The New Testament, including the other letters of Paul, does not actually teach against keeping slaves. The passage says slaves and free people are equal; however, early Christianity did not insist that slaves were freed, so they were clearly treated differently in practice. Therefore, it could be argued that while all genders/races, etc. are seen as equal before God, it is acceptable to give different treatment in practice.

Bible search can be used (preferably see other resources)

Quick Questions

29. Outline **three** causes of inequality.
30. Explain **two** possible solutions to inequality.
31. Explain **two** reasons why many Christians support equality. Refer to a scriptural passage and authority.



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Religious Freedom

Keywords:

- ❖ **blasphemy** – something said or done against God or religion
- ❖ **census** – a way of counting a population and collecting statistics about them
- ❖ **evangelism** – spreading the news about Jesus and trying to convert people
- ❖ **exclusivism** – the belief that there is only one right religion and way to God
- ❖ **inclusivism** – the belief that one religion contains the most truth, but that other paths to God
- ❖ **niqab** – a Muslim face veil that covers the whole head and face with a slit for the eyes
- ❖ **Qur'an** – the Islamic holy book, which the majority of Muslims believe to be revealed through the Prophet Muhammad
- ❖ **tolerance** – allowing a different practice or belief without discrimination

Today in the UK everyone has religious freedom. This means they are free to choose their religion and choose what to believe, and can worship and carry out religious practices. It also means that people are free to be religious, or to have no religious beliefs. The freedom of religion and religious belief only ends if someone's religious belief would lead them to do something illegal, and/or something which went against the rights of others. A clear example of this is that no one is allowed to kill or physically harm someone else in the name of religion.

There has not always been religious freedom in the UK. For many years following Henry VIII's break from the Catholic Church in the 1500s, when there were Catholic monarchs it was dangerous to be a Protestant, and when there were Protestant monarchs it was dangerous to be a Catholic. Certain branches of Christianity were not allowed full rights to public worship, and neither were members of non-Christian religions. People who did not follow the religious status quo were disadvantaged in other ways. Becoming an MP was restricted to those of certain religious/non-religious beliefs; one could only attend university (when Oxford and Cambridge were the only English universities) as a member of the Church of England, and atheists could not give evidence in court. However, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the UK gradually moved closer to religious freedom.

Even today, freedom to practise certain religions does face some challenges in the UK. For example, some religions, such as Islam, require the ritual slaughter of animals. British laws surrounding animal rights can complicate matters, but Muslims can pay licensed slaughterers to perform ritual slaughter for their own use, which many see as acceptable. Islam also requires that a person's body is buried within a certain amount of time after they have died, but British law sometimes requires post-mortems after death. Hospitals may try to accommodate Muslim deaths to the best of their ability and seek to speed up paperwork so that they can be buried quickly. However, if there is a medical need to keep the body, they do not need permission from relatives to carry out post-mortems.

Some very important issues arise at the intersection of religion and law in some countries, such as Germany. In 2017, the German government passed a ruling that made the practice of circumcision (the removal of the penis) illegal. This was seen as a line between an important religious practice and protection of children's rights. The ruling is seen as controversial because it is seen as conflicting with religious freedom and protecting children's rights. The ruling cannot make the practice irreversible so concerns that it might affect children at risk of unlicensed practice in some countries were to get

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Religious freedom is even more limited in some other countries, either because of pressure from terrorist groups. For example, while North Korea allows freedom of religion, some have claimed that this is not the case in practice, and that the government restricts people for practising their religions, including Christians.

Freedom of Religious Expression (Extension)

Freedom of religious expression is part of religious freedom. Some ways people express their religion include through religious practice, which includes worshipping, and wearing religious clothing, through making statements concerning religion.

Religious expression through dress and symbols can be a particularly controversial issue. Some people feel that it is acceptable for people to wear religious symbols in public places, in particular, and others feel that this should not be the case, or should be restricted in certain places, such as schools or the workplace.

Some people who disagree with the wearing of religious symbols believe that it is inappropriate to promote their religion in certain places (e.g. at school or work).

Others may feel that it is unfair for certain people to be able to wear symbols that are forbidden to wear certain items (e.g. it might be unfair that a Sikh can wear a turban while a religious person would not be allowed to wear a hat); and others may feel that certain symbols should be banned for practical reasons (e.g. a cross necklace could be dangerous in certain environments, and a Muslim face veil might limit communication). Religious groups could hold any of these views.

This issue can also be complex because some religious symbols can be considered optional. For example, some Muslims feel that the **Qur'an** commands head and/or face covering. Therefore, for many of them this is to legislate against their religion. On the other hand, nowhere in the Bible does it say that Christians should wear crucifix necklaces, though many desire to, to express their religion. Some feel that it is acceptable and to display their religion in workplaces where others feel it is discriminatory for them to express their religion if people of other religions can. Complicating this further, Muslims who wear head veils feel they are commanded in religion – they may feel it is a religious reason or because they help them to feel closer to Allah or liberated from worldly concerns.

‘And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (necessarily) appears thereof...’ (Qur'an 24:31)

This quote is interpreted by some to command head/face covering, but others argue it is possible to dress modestly without covering the head.

There is also an issue about what people can say to express their religious beliefs. In the past, laws were passed which prohibited people from saying or writing certain things which were deemed to be blasphemous (to offend other religions). So even though there was freedom of speech, the right to express the religious beliefs, these rights were restricted to some extent.

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Important to note...

Debates surrounding veiling in the UK have been controversial. The UK allows women to wear a headscarf and also to veil their face. There have, however, been rulings where Muslim women have been allowed to veil their face – such as both teachers and students in schools, where it is argued that this limits the interaction needed for learning. Some people feel that veiling the face, such as the niqab and burka, should be banned in public, as they form a barrier to communication and identity. However, others argue that women do have a right to cover their face and that they should have a right to cover any other part of their body. Some argue that not allowing women to wear a headscarf or dress in revealing clothing is unfair and that women should be able to dress as they want, but this should not include being able to dress modestly, if they are allowed to dress in a way that is considered provocative.

There is also debate about whether banning any type of veil would help women. Some argue that veiling is oppressive and forced on women. However, others claim that it is a choice and should not be prohibited. They may also argue that regardless, if veils are banned, women who wear them will choose not to interact in places where they cannot veil, and will be confined to their house by relatives. This debate is complex because neither side is entirely right. There are those who are pressured to veil by relatives and those for whom veiling is a choice – they may even veil against their family's wishes.

Christian Teachings and Responses to Religious Freedom

Most Christians accept at least some freedom of religion because Jesus taught that we should treat others as we would want to be treated. Some Christians want to restrict freedom of religion and express their religion, this would imply that they should extend others the same freedom.



'Therefore, do to others as you would have them do to you' (Matthew 7:12 NRSV, the Golden Rule)

Jesus was also kind to people who did not follow the same religion or worship. For example, in John 4 Jesus speaks to a Samaritan woman, indicating to her that her religious group someone belonged to, or where they worshipped, but that it was not the relationship with God.

However, as shown above, in practice Christians have not always allowed others the same freedom of religion. People of other religions, full religious freedom; people have been persecuted. There were restrictions on public worship and religious practice for some religions. Some people today may also feel that there should not be religious freedom, including freedom of expression, or not to the extent that there is in the UK. Lack of **toleration** for other religions may be due to the belief held by some Christians that their way of worshipping is the only way – some believe that only Christians can know God and/or go to heaven. Others believe that people could only know God through Jesus. It may also be because of differences regarding religious practices such as circumcision and religious dress. The negative attitude towards other religions, with God commanding the Jewish people to be different from other religions.

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'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)

'You shall annihilate them – the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites – just as the Lord your God has commanded' (Deuteronomy 20:17)

The Catholic Church supports religious freedom in as much as it feels that it is therefore, someone's religion should be their own choice, and hence their religion should be protected by law.

'... Every human person, created in the image of God, has the natural right to freedom as a free and responsible being... The *right to the exercise of freedom*, especially in religious matters, is an inalienable requirement of the dignity of the human person. This right is recognized and protected by civil authority within the limits of the common good' (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1738)

However, while it, therefore, recognises the concept of religious freedom, it does not feel that humans have the right to do just *anything* – there are actions which are not allowed to be carried out. Therefore, if any acts which the Catholic Church feels are wrong are carried out by a different religion (or another branch of Christianity), it would not accept some of those acts. For example, in many religions, divorce is allowed in a number of circumstances but the Catholic Church does not feel that divorce is acceptable.²

'The right to the exercise of freedom of religion, especially in religious and moral matters, is an inalienable requirement of the dignity of the human person. But the exercise of freedom does not mean the right to do or not to do anything.' (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1738)

Christian Responses to Non-religious Arguments Regarding Religious Freedom

Some non-religious people (including **atheists** and **humanists**) feel that everyone should have religious freedom as this respects their beliefs, while others believe that some religious freedoms should be limited.

So some Christians and non-religious people will agree that religious freedom is a good thing. They wish to be able to practise their religion, or be free not to believe in God/gods, and wish others to have the same freedoms. Humanists are likely to promote the freedom of everyone to choose their own beliefs.

Some Christians and non-religious people agree with religious freedom in general but feel that certain practices which are allowed under freedom of religious practice should not be allowed.

- For example, some may feel that allowing Muslim face veils in public is a bad thing because it could lead to terrorism or that it is unfair to a boy who is a child cannot give consent. Humanists may oppose religious practices if they feel that it would cause harm, as they do not believe that religious practices should be followed if they appear to be unsafe or inhumane.

¹ http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p3s1c1a3.htm

² http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p3s1c1a3.htm

Christians who feel that such acts should be allowed as religious freedom practices which are harmful should not be allowed, many people really argue religious practices/expressions because it is something different to what they argue that just because something is not the cultural norm, does not mean it should be more understanding of difference.

Some non-religious people have been very vocal against religion, arguing that the way for extreme religion. Such people might desire that there was less religion.

- For example, they might argue that Christians should not be allowed to create life from the dead, because this contradicts science.
- Christians might argue that it is unfair to blame extreme religion on modern religion. Modern religion does not teach extreme beliefs or practices. Equally, to be extreme does not harm anyone, unless applied in extreme ways – Christians should be able to hold their beliefs and practise their religion if they are not harming anyone.
- Christians might argue that religious freedom is beneficial for both religious and non-religious people alike. They argue that Christians are not trying to impose their beliefs on other people, but want to teach their children their beliefs. In the same way, non-religious people are free to disbelieve in religion, and promote their own views. Regardless of the evidence of science, it would be unfair for atheists to stop religious people from expressing their beliefs, in the same way that it is unfair for religious people to disallow atheists from holding and sharing their views.

Dis
relig
with

As seen above, some non-religious people may not agree with some religious beliefs. However, many people believe that everyone should be treated in the same way to be treated equally. In certain cases where people of certain religions are treated differently to others, some people would see this as unfair.

- For example, a Christian should not be given Christmas day as a bank holiday, as people of other religions are not entitled to specific days off.
- For example, a Sikh should not be allowed to wear a turban where a non-religious person would be allowed to wear a hat.

Christians may argue that as Britain has traditionally been Christian, and the majority of the population is Christian, it is natural and fair for culture to reflect Christian values and customs. Christians might also argue that equality within religious freedom should not mean that everyone's differences are taken into account and respect everyone, even if it means treating people differently.

On the other hand, when some Christians believe that their religious views should be followed, many people argue that other religious beliefs should not be tolerated to a great extent, many people argue that this is unfair as it does not extend to others equal treatment.

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Church Response to Multifaith Society

In 2011 there was a **census** taken of the population in England and Wales. the option of telling the government their religion.

Here are the results of the data on religion from the 2011 census:

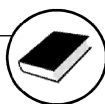
Christianity – 59.3%, No religion – 25.1%, Unknown (the question on religion was not asked) – 4.8%, Hinduism – 1.5%, Sikhism – 0.8%, Judaism – 0.5%, Buddhism – 0.4%, Jainism and Paganism) – 0.4%.³ This shows that Britain is a multifaith society and what people believe and practice.

The Catholic Church showed its stance on living in multifaith societies and other religions in its 1990 document *Redemptoris Missio* – the Mission of the Redeemer. Although the Catholic Church does believe Christianity to be the correct religion, it respects other religions, and the Church can still present Christianity as the true religion in dialogue with other religions. As the Catholic Church believes that all humans are made in the image of God, it feels that different religions, and people of different religions, will be respected. Therefore, it feels it is important to have meaningful communication between religions so that they can stand with each other and also so that the Church can be a part of the world.

The Church of England also promotes a positive stance on multifaith societies and dialogue between religions, shown in the 2010 document *Sharing the Gospel of Salvation*. It holds a similar view to the Catholic Church – all are made in God's image and should be respected. It recognises that Christianity has benefited from ideas from other religions and that Christians, certainly those in Britain, live in a multifaith society, and should have dialogue with those of other religions. The Church recognises that all (atheistic) religious beliefs are valid, and that having a relationship with God, and so that there should be dialogue which respects all religions.

Many Christian churches have similar views – they respect those of other religions and promote harmony with them. However, some Christians believe that Christianity is the correct religion (Jesus is the only way to God) and that those who follow other religions can also know God (although this knowledge is not certain). This is known as **inclusivism**. Inclusivist Christians believe that a loving God would not condemn anyone – they believe that followers of other religions may be able to receive God's relationship with him, and leading good lives, although this is not certain.

'Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.' (1 John 4:8 NRSV)



However, there are some Christians who feel that their country should support only Christianity, and may be hostile to those of other faiths living there. **Exclusivism** is the view that only one religion is right and others are wrong. Some Christians are exclusivists and believe that only Christianity is right and that it is the only way to be saved. Some exclusivists believe that only Christians will go to heaven. These Christians are likely to be less tolerant of other religions.



An artist's impression of a religious scene.

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'The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned.' (Mark 16:16 NRSV)

³ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/articles/religion>

Benefits and Challenges for Christians Living in a Multifaith Society

Benefits for Christians living in a multifaith society include:

- Opportunities to share the love of Jesus with others.
- Opportunities to learn from other religions (to help with their own faith).
- Opportunities to learn about other religions and understand them.
- Opportunities to build better relationships with those of other religions.
- Support from other religions on hard issues (e.g. many religions share views on abortion and war).
- Opportunities to work together (some feel this is important, others would prefer to remain separate).

Challenges for Christians living in a multifaith society include:

- Christians may find it hard to strike a balance between sharing their beliefs and respecting the beliefs of others.
- In countries such as the UK, Christianity plays a large part in the culture. It has been challenged to make British culture more inclusive for those of other faiths.
- Christians may have to tolerate views and practices which they do not agree with.

Quick Questions

32. Outline **three** examples of religious freedom.
33. Outline **three** benefits for Christians living in a multifaith society.
34. Explain **two** reasons why Christians may support religious freedom. Refer to biblical wisdom and authority.

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Prejudice and Discrimination

Sometimes within, and towards, religion there is **prejudice** and **discrimination**. Some certain groups of people are worth less than others, and may treat them worse. Some religious people have been on the receiving end of such prejudice and discrimination. There are other factors which can result in prejudice and discrimination, including gender and disability. In UK law, unfair discrimination is illegal. For example, as shown in much workplace legislation (although there can be no laws against prejudice based on someone's own internal thoughts or feelings – however, someone cannot

Keyword



- ❖ **discrimination** – treating someone differently or unfairly because of prejudice
- ❖ **gentile** – non-Jew
- ❖ **prejudice** – a biased belief about someone or a group of people

Christian Teachings and Responses to Prejudice and Discrimination

Christianity teaches against **prejudice** and **discrimination**. Many Christians believe that prejudice and discrimination are the same as those which teach in favour of equality (treating people well, including those who would have been outcasts in his society due to race or gender – Jesus touches a man and heals his leprosy, which would have been a taboo (Mark 1); he heals the servant of a centurion (who would not have been a Jew) and the daughter of a **gentile** woman (Mark 7).

These acts, along with others, show that Jesus did not believe that people from different backgrounds had less worth, and he did not treat them unfairly. He also discouraged negative religious teaching; for example, in the story of the Good Samaritan, where the hero of the story would have been seen as a villain.

After Jesus' resurrection, he tells his disciples to go to all nations with the good news of salvation and Christian love do not have limits.

‘Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...’ (Matthew 28:19)

Therefore, many Christians believe that prejudice and discrimination are wrong because Jesus taught against them, and they mean that people are being treated unequally. However, while all Christians believe that prejudice and discrimination is wrong, some believe that some acts of discrimination (in the sense of treating people differently) are justified; for example, not allowing women to become priests (e.g. in the Catholic and Orthodox churches), or disagreeing with homosexual marriage (e.g. the Catholic Church and many evangelical Protestants). They would argue that such different treatment is not unfair, because it is in line with God's will. Many other Christians would argue that such discrimination is unfair, as it goes against biblical teaching for equality and against loving others.



‘Or how can you say to your neighbour, “Let me take the speck out of your eye,” while the log is in your own eye?’ (Matthew 7:4 NRSV [Jesus on not judging others, when you are not perfect yourself])



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Christian Responses to the Problems Caused by Prejudice and Discrimination

Prejudice and **discrimination** can divide societies and disadvantage individuals. It causes pain, and Christians would feel that if someone is prejudiced they are not fulfilling the teachings of Jesus.

Christians believe that they should show love to combat prejudice and discrimination. They should talk to those who hold prejudice in the hopes that they can make them see the error of their ways for prejudice, and that it only does harm. They should feel that they should reach out to those who are the ones who are being discriminated against.



“You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” (Mark 12:31)
 ‘But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who persecute you.’ (Matthew 5:44)

Christians may also work towards laws which protect people from discrimination. They should ensure that everyone is treated equally in their own lives.

Christian Teachings against Prejudice, and Discrimination against Jews and Gentiles

Christianity is a religion which does not view any people less worthy of receiving God's love. Early in the history of Christianity, the first Christians were unsure if they should preach the good news of Jesus to Jews, or if they should preach to people of other religions.

One day when St Peter was praying, he received a vision in which God appeared to him. He was told to eat food which was believed to be unclean within the Jewish religion. Peter was told not to see anything as unclean which he had made clean. After Peter had received a message from a gentile, who wanted to hear Peter preach. Peter realised that all people of all religions were clean before God, and should be able to receive God's love. To the gentiles who had listened to him, they received the Holy Spirit, confirming their salvation and that they were part of God's plan.



“The voice said to [Peter] again, a second time, “What God has made clean, do not call profane.”... and [Peter] said to them, “You yourselves know that it is forbidden to associate with or to visit a Gentile; but God has shown me that I should not call anything unclean...” Then Peter said, “Can anyone withhold the water for baptism if these people have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” (Acts 10:15, 28, 47)

St Paul also preached that after Jesus had brought salvation it was unnecessary for Christians to fulfil the Jewish law, such as becoming circumcised. This was unnecessary – there were no physical boundaries to receiving God's love.

‘Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but obeying the commands of God is everything.’ (1 Corinthians 7:19 NRSV)



This is reinforced in Galatians 2:1–10, where Paul tells of how he feels that a Jew, and a follower of Jesus, and now he feels that he has been called to preach to non-Jews (the Gentiles).

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“‘God shows no partiality[favouritism] ... they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel for the circumcised ... I worked through Peter making him an apostle to the circumcised also working through me to the Gentiles)’” (Galatians 2:6–8 NRSV)

Therefore, many Christians feel that **prejudice** and **discrimination** against people of any religion is wrong, as they believe that Jesus died for everyone and God does not want there to be prejudice or discrimination against others.

On the other hand, while **inclusivist** Christians are likely to want to work with people of other religions, **exclusivist** Christians may feel that though Jesus died for everyone, only those who are Christians are saved. This may lead them to be prejudiced against those of other religions. Christians truly know God and will go to heaven.

‘For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but may have eternal life.’ (John 3:16 NRSV)

Quick Questions

35. Outline **three** different types of discrimination.
36. Explain **two** reasons why Christians may oppose prejudice and discrimination.
37. Explain **two** reasons why Christians believe that prejudice and discrimination against other religions is wrong. Refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

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Racial Harmony

Racial harmony is where people of different ethnicities/races and nationalities live together without conflict. While in some places, and for some individuals, this is the case, it is often not reality.

Christian Teachings and Responses to Racial Harmony

As well as believing that equality is very important, Christians also believe that there should be racial harmony with others. As people of different races/ethnicities are seen as equal (some see them negatively), Christians support racial harmony.



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

Many Christians also support racial harmony because of Jesus’ emphasis on his disciples that they should love each other as he loved them. As Jesus extended his love to all people, many of whom did not belong to the Jewish race, many Christians believe that Christians should show love to all, regardless of their skin colour or nationality.

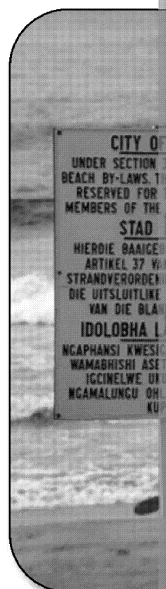
‘I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, that you also love one another.’ (John 13:34 NRSV)

However, there are some Christians who do not believe that such teachings do promote racial harmony. Some might interpret John 13:34 to imply that Jesus’ disciples (conceivably of one race/group) should show love to each other, and live in harmony with each other, but that different racial groups do not need to live in harmony with each other.

A clear example of where many Christians did not support racial harmony was the Holocaust – where many Christians participated in the genocide of many Jews. Today, there are still many white supremacist Christians, notably many living in the United States.

The New Testament, where Jesus associates with gentiles and sinners, does not seem to provide any evidence for racial segregation (separation in living and associating). However, there are parts of the Old Testament which suggest that the Jewish people should not live with or marry non-Jews.

‘When the LORD thy God brings you into the land that you are about to enter, and says to you, “I will clear away the nations before you – the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites... then you must utterly destroy them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons.’ (Deuteronomy 20:17-18 NRSV)



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However, it is clear in this passage (and in others) that God is against harm because they worship false gods, and he does not want the Jews to turn away. This suggests that Christians of different ethnicities should not mix or marry. Arguing that Christians should marry non-Christians is a different issue entirely.

‘... for that would turn away your children from following me, to serve other gods.’
(Deuteronomy 10:16-17, 32-33)

In addition to this, the Old Testament is concerned with Jewish ritual purity, which is separate from other people as God's chosen race. Christians no longer observe these laws, so it could be argued that even if Jews are not supposed to support racial harmony, it is not relevant to Christians.

Situation Ethics

Situation ethics is likely to support racial harmony, as it is compassionate for people to be kind to each other and see each other as equal. It is likely to support legislation that all races/ethnicities have the same opportunities. However, situation ethics is a flexible approach to any issues – although it is hard to see where conflict between different groups would ever be loving.

How and Why Christians Have Worked for Racial Harmony

There are many examples of Christians who have worked for racial harmony. One example is William Lloyd Garrison, a Christian who worked tirelessly to end the slave trade, as he saw black and white people as God's children.

Martin Luther King Jr (1929–1968) was a Baptist minister who campaigned for racial equality for white people in America, so that all could live in harmony, until he was assassinated. His teachings included encouraging civil disobedience and organising marches. He gave his famous ‘I have a dream’ speech.

Some of King's teaching on equality can be found in this speech – King believed that all people were created equal because they had all been made as equals by God. Much of King's teaching was based on his religious faith, and he also references the American dream – the belief that all people have equal opportunities to do well if they work for it. King felt that this ought to be true for black American citizens at the time he was campaigning.

King felt that people should not be judged on arbitrary (unimportant and irrelevant) factors like skin colour, but by the type of people that they were. He wanted equality for black people the same civil and social rights as white people, increasing the economic opportunities (including in better jobs), and by the government spending a lot of money on education for the less fortunate people of the country to get ahead and on other things.

Another example of Christian work for racial harmony occurred after the end of apartheid in South Africa. Apartheid included racially segregated housing and facilities, and restricting relationships between people who were not considered to be the same race. This took place between the middle and late part of the twentieth century, but abolishing apartheid in law in the 1990s did not mean that black and white people automatically became friends and forgot what had happened.

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The Christian Church, including members such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1931 –, an Anglican), helped to reconcile white people and black people after apartheid in South Africa. He helped to run the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* which held hearings to hear from people on both sides of the divide. The Commission wanted to discover the truth about everything that 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. (Tutu had also protested peacefully for an end to apartheid before it occurred.)

Tutu did this work because he believes completely in the equality of human beings, and in the power of love, compassion and understanding between people. He believes that prejudice should be challenged, and that people should work to treat others as they would want to be treated.

‘In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the love of God.’
(Matthew 7:12 NRSV)

Benefits for Christians of Living in a Multi-ethnic Society

There are many benefits for Christians of living in a multi-ethnic society, including:

- Learning about different cultures.
 - This can enrich day-to-day life
 - This can benefit Christians. Christians can learn about different cultures, and how this has been interpreted by people of different ethnicities and from different backgrounds, and integrate this into their worship.
- Challenge Christians not to be prejudiced, or to discriminate against others.

Quick Questions

38. Outline **three** benefits for Christians of living in a multi-ethnic society.
39. Explain **two** ways in which Christians have worked for racial harmony.
40. Explain **two** reasons why Christians may work for racial harmony. Refer to biblical wisdom and authority.

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Racial Discrimination

One kind of **prejudice** and **discrimination** is **racial prejudice and discrimination** – the belief that there are different races, and that certain races are superior/inferior to others, and are treated differently based on their perceived race. Racism often means prejudice/discrimination against people with a particular skin colour, but can refer to prejudice/discrimination against people from a different country or different to one's own – for example, against someone from the same skin colour but a different country. Racism is often from a majority group against a minority group, but a minority group can still be racist against a majority group.

There has been a long history of racism, which for centuries was legal, and even in the UK, people treated black Africans, justifying this (in their opinion) with the belief that they were superior. Some people even tried to argue that black people were closer to monkeys, than white people, though there was no scientific basis for this. In South Africa, apartheid, or 'separateness' between groups of people with different skin colours, was a major issue in the twentieth century – campaigned against by those such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu. In the twentieth century, Martin Luther King Jr campaigned for equal rights for all people.

Christian Teachings and Responses to Racial Discrimination

Christianity did little to combat **racism** in the past, with the Church supporting the status quo. However, many Christians have campaigned against racism, and many modern-day Christians believe that all races are equal – they believe that **racial discrimination** is wrong because it goes against the teachings of equality and love. Teachings for equality and racial harmony (see above) are part of Christianity's response to discrimination.

'There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free... for all are one in Christ Jesus.' (Galatians 3:28 NRSV)



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

There is no teaching within Christianity against people of any racial background. This implies that religious people should not treat people any differently on the basis of race. Everyone should feel that God accepts everyone.

Acts 17:22–28 teaches about Paul's speech to the people of Athens, in which he tells them that they no longer need to worship an 'unknown' god, but that they can have a relationship with God and know him. He talks of how God created all people – implying that they are all equal, so should not be discriminated against. He shows this lack of discrimination by preaching to the non-Jewish Athenians.

'From one ancestor [or blood] he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth.'



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How and Why Racial Discrimination Causes Problems in Society

Examples of **racial discrimination** which countries allowed, or insisted upon in the past include:

- People of different colours were separated, e.g. in restaurants.
- Black people were required to give up their seats for white people on the bus.
- You could choose to give a job to a white person over a black person.

Racial discrimination is now illegal in the UK, and racial prejudice is frowned upon.



Important

Race is different to religion. It is a set of characteristics which can be inherited, not a choice. People can be racist against Muslims', but it is important to remember that not all Muslims are Jewish. However, some people use the term 'Jewish' as a controversial term); then there are Jewish families who are not Jewish. Similarly, UK law

However, racial discrimination still takes place. People shout racist abuse at each other. It may sometimes be hard to prove if someone was denied a job on the basis of race. If they were similarly qualified, though in certain professions there is under-representation of certain groups, especially in leadership positions. Many media outlets are also owned by certain groups, meaning that their interests are conveyed in the press, which may mean ethnic groups are not presented positively. Police officers and courts are sometimes accused of bias against certain racial groups are more likely (in certain areas) to be stopped and searched. For minority racial groups appear to get harsher punishments. These types of discrimination are bad because they mean that people of certain ethnicities experience inequality – being treated badly, or be unable to provide for their families if they cannot find work.

Some people believe that racism stems from fear. If you are afraid of difference, you may be racist. People who have grown up in a multicultural society where there are people of many different nationalities, there may be less fear of difference. However, there can still be racism. In the UK there are many people who have negative views of immigrants, sometimes seeing them as a drain on government resources and take jobs, disadvantaging British people. Racial discrimination against immigrants from other countries is viewed by some as a problem. Racial discrimination causes problems in society, because where certain racial groups are discriminated against, they may cease to associate with those outside their racial group, furthering the division of ethnic groups. This can mean that there is less trust in the future, and prejudice continues, meaning that society becomes more divided and less cohesive.

Many religious people and non-religious people disagree with racism because they feel that people are equal and have equal rights.

However, others may be racist for social or cultural reasons, such as a lack of education about different cultures, and fear. People may also generalise or stereotype – if they have had a bad experience with one person of a certain racial group, they may believe that they would have similar experiences with all people of the same group.

Ethical Arguments Related to Racial Discrimination – Extension

Many people argue that everyone should be treated equally, and it is, therefore, wrong to discriminate against anyone negatively on racial grounds.

Argument for Equality

The philosopher John Rawls' *Veil of Ignorance* concept – where people would agree on the rules of a world without knowing who they would be, or whether they would be black or white, or what country they live in, or an immigrant – is useful. Rawls argues that, from a position of fairness, the rules should be such that no one is disadvantaged.

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would choose rules which would benefit all groups, and would not allow race. They would not want to be on the receiving end – they would want equal treatment.

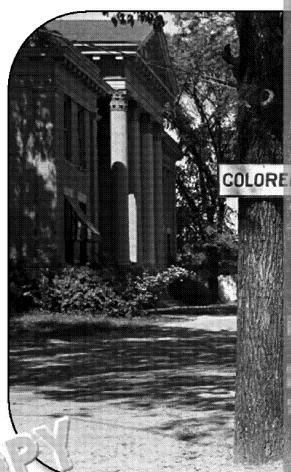
Teaching from Galatians 3 (see above) backs up this point – if people are saved by faith, surely they should not be treated unequally by people.

Argument from Justice

People also argue against racial discrimination, because they believe that to discriminate – there is no reason why someone from a particular racial group is worse at something than someone else, or be potentially more or less dangerous. Discrimination is unjust and unfair.

Argument from Impracticality

Another argument against racial discrimination is that discrimination undermines society. If particular groups feel that they are being targeted by discrimination, this may make them feel anger against those targeting them; for instance, a black community feeling as if white police are stopping and searching them unfairly. This could influence members of a community who are being discriminated against to retaliate against those who discriminate against them. This would end up reinforcing **prejudice**, and lead to greater distrust, and possibly antisocial behaviour. Therefore, this would imply that if people want to live in a stable society, they should not discriminate, because this will lead to problems.



Treating people differently, like separate fountains, may not be fair.

Summary

So people should not discriminate on the grounds of race because:

- People would not like to be discriminated against themselves – they would want to be treated equally
- There is no reason to discriminate – people of different races are not biologically different, and are not just different
- Racism just makes problems worse – if people are discriminated against, they may respond negatively against the people they believe are discriminating against them

Positive Discrimination – Extension

So far **discrimination** has generally been treated as negative discrimination in these terms. However, some people believe that to help to solve problems caused by discrimination, **positive discrimination** is needed. Not all people agree.

The idea of positive discrimination is to help great groups of people, such as racial groups disadvantaged by discrimination, to become better than groups which have not been discriminated against.

For example, a country might see that a particular group has a lower percentage of people with higher education than other groups. This might be because families in this group have traditionally had lower levels of education because they would have been discriminated against, and therefore would require a higher level of education. The government may wish to provide more support for these groups to go to university, and hopefully to gain more qualified people.

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society where groups, such as racial groups, do not dictate wealth or social equal chances and expectations.

This is where positive discrimination comes in – to encourage certain groups. The government may make universities keep a certain number of places just for certain groups. It might also tell the universities to offer places to people from this group who have lower grades than the university would normally ask for. In some cases, they might give places to people from such a group. The US has a history of affirmative action, e.g. reserving places for black students, though this is controversial.

Positive discrimination can also be used in the workplace – companies might decide to give a certain number of jobs to certain groups (e.g. black people, or women, in sectors where there is a low percentage of such groups working). They might also choose to hire a member of a certain group over any other candidates if they are suitable.

Positive discrimination is banned in the UK. It is not possible to have two equal opportunities and one under-represented group.

Some people feel that positive discrimination is a good thing. In some areas, certain groups, such as racial groups, have much higher rates of low income, low education, and unemployment, compared to other groups. People may feel that people from these groups should have the same opportunities, and so they should be given a helping hand, so that they can succeed as anyone else.

However, others disagree with positive discrimination, or disagree with it in some cases. They feel that it is overused. Some may feel that positive discrimination is positive discrimination is illegal, anyone should be able to achieve a good level of education. They could argue that if positive discrimination is in force, then people from these groups have only got university places and good jobs, because of positive discrimination. This could lead to their confidence or self-esteem.

People may also disagree with positive discrimination because they feel that it is unfair. They may feel that groups who are not seen to be negatively discriminated against. They may feel that a person with higher grades loses out on a university place to someone with lower grades (because of positive discrimination), then the person who loses out is being discriminated against. The same goes if a candidate is better qualified for a job, but loses out because of positive discrimination. Some people see this discrimination as just as bad as any other form of discrimination. It is still treating people unequally.

Christianity emphasises justice, and so this could be used to argue for or against positive discrimination depending on whether it is seen as just or unjust.

'Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue...' (Deuteronomy 16:19)

Quick Questions

41. Outline **three** examples of racial discrimination.
42. Explain **two** reasons why racial discrimination causes problems in society.
43. Explain **two** reasons why Christians may oppose racial discrimination. Refer to the Bible, the teachings of wisdom and authority.

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Social Justice

Social justice is the idea that everyone deserves equal legal rights and opportunities. Different genders and ethnicities, for instance, should all be equally protected. Options, and wealth should be distributed fairly.

Keywords:

- ❖ **welfare** – practical or financial support to make sure all people have a basic

Christian Teaching about and Attitudes to Social Justice

Many Christians have campaigned for social justice, because they believe that Jesus loves all people and views them equally. This has inspired Christians to work for equality, such as the abolition of the slave trade.

As well as treating people well, Jesus also promoted helping the poor. Because of him, the tax collector Zacchaeus promised to pay back those he had cheated. Many Bible verses support helping others, and many Christians believe that they should pay people fair wages, and give money to help those in need.

‘... if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.’ (Isaiah 60:1)

‘Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute and oppressed of the earth; for the rights of the poor and needy.’ (Proverbs 31:7-8)

The parable of the sheep and the goats (Matthew 25:31–47) promotes social justice by encouraging Christians to help others. Jesus teaches that those who feed, water, and give clothes to the hungry, who welcome strangers, care for the sick and visit prisoners will inherit the kingdom of heaven. This shows that Christianity teaches that wealth should be redistributed to help the poor. It also indicates that Christians should not see certain groups as undesirable – they should care for those who have less, who need support, who are ill, and even those who have been rejected. This suggests that Christians should support the part of social justice about equality of opportunities as well as redistribution of wealth. Not only does the parable encourage good deeds to be rewarded, it also teaches that this is important, and that people will be punished for not doing them. Jesus says that those who do *not* do these things will be condemned.

‘And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.”’ (Matthew 25:40)

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 churches, priests, bishops and Pope, when this money could have been spent on the poor. The Church supported the slave trade, as the Bible does not forbid slavery.

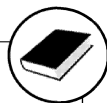
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In modern times, some Christians have felt that *God helps those that help themselves*, and conservative thinkers have often felt that the rich deserve the reward of wealth, which they believe to be earned, while thinking the poor should be given minimal **welfare**, as they believe they should work harder. They do not necessarily believe that Christians need to work for social justice in terms of greater equality of wealth.

'A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich.' (Proverbs 10:4 NRSV)



More views

Christian Teachings and Responses to Distribution of Wealth and

Wealth has never been distributed evenly in modern societies where there is private ownership and possession. Even communist societies (where property is supposed to be owned by the community rather than individuals) have been condemned as failing by many. In the UK, there are people who have more, and those who have less.

Some might argue that there is now less divide between the rich and poor, with welfare protecting the most vulnerable, and the ability for those born into poverty to improve themselves rich. For example, Lord Alan Sugar had humble beginnings in life.

However, it can also be argued that the divide between rich and poor is just as big as in the past. In the UK, there are still people who are homeless, and many children and adults live in poverty. There are also many people who are billionaires and many millionaires. Such divides in wealth exist all around the world.

However, distribution of opportunity has changed a lot within UK society (as has in the world). Women now have equal legal rights with men, which they did not in the twentieth century. The rights of people of non-white ethnicities have also improved in the second half of the twentieth century, and in theory people of all ethnicities have equal rights. Homosexuals have very recently been given equal legal rights with heterosexual groups, such as transgender people and disabled people, who face greater discrimination in the workplace than in previous centuries. In many countries this change has occurred, though it varies by country.

As seen above, different Christians have different ideas about the distribution of wealth, support welfare, and helping the poor. Some conservative Christians do not believe that the poor are entitled to what they have not earned. This can be seen in debates surrounding the NHS where many Christian politicians do not believe that healthcare is a right, and that people have to pay for it – despite the teaching in the parable of the sheep and the goats.

Some Christians will feel that distribution of wealth is fairer now than it has been in the past, with more opportunities to progress and improve one's economic status. However, some feel it has gone far enough.

Christians who have different responses to the change in distribution of wealth. Some are more traditional (e.g. Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican) Christians will support the status quo and some will support greater opportunities. Most of these will support equal opportunities for those of all ethnicities, support greater opportunities for women, and the more liberal will support greater opportunities for homosexuals.

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However, not all Christians feel that a greater distribution of opportunity is fair. Some right-wing conservative Christians – for example, in America – do not have the right to vote, and disagree with them being given equal opportunities. Members of the Dutch Reformed Church (a church in South Africa which supported apartheid) felt that members of certain non-white ethnicities should not be given equal opportunities. Many Christians do not believe that homosexuals should be entitled to all the same rights and freedoms as heterosexuals, such as the right to marry. This is especially true of evangelical Protestants and the Catholic Church. If Christians feel that there is biblical teaching which suggests that certain groups are not equal, they will prioritise this over social justice.

Use
some
between

How the Church Works for Social Justice

The Salvation Army is one Christian church which does a lot for social justice. It uses various means, such as charity shops and musical street performances. They help people out of poverty by providing for them, and also provide personal support to others in need, such as victims of human trafficking or domestic abuse, so that they can have the same quality of life as others.

Many churches hold collections for charities to support those in need. Many also have centres in the community. For example, the Bristol Methodist Centre is run by the Methodist Church and provides services and facilities in Bristol; for example, hot food and access to showers and laundry facilities. It provides advice, and activities. People of all faiths / no faith are welcome to receive help and support.

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Many church-run charities also campaign for changes to the law to protect vulnerable groups. Leaders, such as the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury, have spoken out against discrimination.

Links to Social Ethics

Situation ethics would support social justice, as it is loving for everyone to have the same opportunities and rights, and to have a fair distribution of wealth. Situation ethics could be used to support greater taxation of the rich, so that the money could be given to the poor. It would also support equal rights for all groups, regardless of whether Christians feel that they do (e.g. women, homosexuals), as situation ethics is not bound by rules, and would not follow biblical teachings which disadvantage certain groups, as this would be unloving.

John Rawls' *Veil of Ignorance* argument (mentioned above in the section on Fairness) is in favour of social justice, and could be used to see why situation ethics would be a good approach. If people did not know if they would belong to groups which were or were not disadvantaged, and they wanted a just society, one which was fair to all people, and gave them all opportunities, they would support social justice.

Quick Questions

44. Outline **three** things which Jesus teaches Christians they should do in relation to the sheep and the goats.
45. Explain **two** ways in which the church works for social justice.
46. Explain **two** reasons why social justice is important to Christians. Refer to biblical teaching of wisdom and authority.

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Wealth and Poverty

Wealth usually refers to financial wealth – to money, or to possessions which

Keywords:

- ❖ **virtue ethics** – an ethical theory which teaches that good actions are those which are based on positive character traits

Christian Teachings about Attitudes to Wealth

Some Christians believe that wealth is a good thing because having money allows you to provide for your family, and not worry about being in need.

Some Christians feel that they can use wealth as they want to (within reason), because it is a reward from God. Some branches of Christianity, such as charismatic Christianity, teach this; that wealth is a reward and blessing from God. Christians who believe this may feel justified in keeping their wealth if they feel that God blesses those who follow him, and so it is not their responsibility to redistribute wealth.

Consider
After
view

‘The Lord has greatly blessed my master, and he has become wealthy.’

Some Christians feel that wealth is a bad thing, and is not important – because as important as family, friends or health, that money cannot buy happiness or at least an obsession with wealth will make someone unhappy, because other things which are more important, e.g. that wealth is a distraction from God.

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

‘No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.’ (Matthew 6:24 NRSV)

‘Jesus looked at him and said, “How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!”’ (Luke 18:24 NRSV)

Many Christians believe that wealth should be used to help others. Jesus taught for spiritual rather than worldly wealth. He encouraged using wealth to help others with love and compassion for those in need, because it helped strengthen a relationship with God. He said that what people did for him, they did for him, and so some Christians see helping others as doing something for God.

‘... give of what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven...’ (Mark 10:21 NRSV)

‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are here, you did it to me.’ (Matthew 25:40 NRSV)

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The parable of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25:31–47 (see above in the book) can be interpreted in different ways regarding wealth. It can be seen to promote good for others – anything which Christians do for others, they do for God. In this view, it implies that people should not build wealth – as when they have the ability to do so, and as there are always people to help, having more than they need is not fully following Jesus' teachings. However, the parable does not directly condemn Christians, such as charismatic Christians, might enjoy wealth as long as they are using it for visiting prisoners, etc. then they should be able to enjoy their wealth. They should not be told that those who follow him and made sacrifices for his sake should not have material wealth – as when they are rewarded in heaven.



'Jesus said, Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age – houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and persecutions – and in the age to come eternal life.'" (Mark 10:29–31)

However, this teaching comes after Jesus' encounter with the rich man, who was told to give up all his wealth to the poor (see Mark 10:21 above). Some Christians believe that people should give up all possessions and wealth and follow God – some become monks and nuns and focus their lives on God, not possessions.

Many Christians have a moderate view of wealth. They believe that money is useful, and is necessary to a certain extent to buy food and clothes and provide security. However, they may believe that too much wealth is a bad thing because it is a distraction from their spiritual life, and encourages them to become greedy.

Christian Things about and Attitudes to Poverty



Some Christians feel that those living in poverty have a responsibility to help themselves out of the difficulties which they face. They feel that some, or all, poor people could improve their condition.

Some feel that if poor people were to work harder, they would be better off. This tends to be a more conservative Christian view.

'A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich.'

On the other hand, many Christians feel that for many poor people, poverty is not their fault.

They feel that poor people should take opportunities which are given to them. They believe that rich people always have opportunities.

Most Christians feel that they have at least some responsibility to help those in poverty. These responsibilities may be seen to include:

- Not doing anything to harm the environment
- Not exploiting others, or society (rich people may be able to disobey the law and pay fines or bribe officials)
- A duty to tackle poverty
- A duty to tackle the causes of poverty

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One way in which ordinary Christians try to tackle poverty is by giving to charity. Jesus taught us to love their neighbours, and his life shows how much he helped others; charity is a practical application of loving others. Therefore, for Christians who give charity, Jesus is a teaching and example.

'Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who asks of you.
(Matthew 23:23 NRSV)

Tackling the causes of poverty may include (among other things):

- Providing education so that people can take care of themselves and get good jobs
- Paying workers a fair wage so they do not need to rely on benefits
- Helping poor people to find jobs and start businesses so that they can support themselves
- Investing in less economically developed countries so that they can provide for themselves in the future, including investment in healthcare
- Negotiating peace deals and supporting those who have been displaced
- Providing rehabilitation programmes so that people cease to be reliant on benefits
- Campaigning for fairer and kinder laws, which can help those who are vulnerable to a compassionate policy on benefits.

If the causes of poverty are tackled, this should help to reduce poverty in the long term, rather than just giving people money, which will eventually run out, meaning they need more.

The Bible is very clear in its teaching about helping those in poverty, and, therefore, Christians should do these. It teaches that someone cannot say that they love God if they do not help those in need; that Christians should always give help to those in need; and that those who do not help are going against God.

'How can God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother in need and yet refuses help?' (1 John 3:17 NRSV)

'If there is among you anyone in need, a member of your community in the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted toward that needy neighbour. You should rather open your hand, willingly lending whatever it may be.' (Deuteronomy 15:7-8 NRSV)

'Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker, but those who are kind to the poor show respect for him.' (Proverbs 14:31 NRSV)

Links to Virtue Ethics

Virtue ethics is an **ethical theory** which considers good actions to be those that are virtuously, and to build good character by practising positive character traits. It is based on the Greek philosophy of Aristotle (as well as many more modern philosophers). It focuses on good actions that help a person to flourish. Virtue ethics can be seen to be concerned with as much as the good of the person. It can be argued that both promote people acting according to their virtues, being truthful and helping others. However, it can also be argued that virtue ethics focuses on actions for the sake of an individual becoming a good person, rather than helping others. The parable of the sheep and the goats shows that Christians will be judged on whether they have genuinely helped others, not because they are perfect people.

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Regarding wealth and poverty, giving to the poor would be seen to be a virtue which demonstrates the virtue of charity, rather than the vice of greed – and so the virtue ethics. It could also be seen to be in line with other virtues such as justice which teaches that those in poverty should be treated justly. However, virtue ethics would not suggest that one should give away all one's money to the poor, because it could be argued that this goes against the virtue of temperance – it would not be sensible to give away all one's money so that one has nothing left and neither is it considered virtuous to do anything in excess, and this could be seen to be against the teachings of Jesus. Therefore, it is likely to suggest many of the same courses of action in respect of poverty as Christianity, but it would not go as far as Jesus' teachings in suggesting people should give away all their money to the poor.

'... learn to do good, seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan and plead for the widow' (Isaiah 1:17 NRSV)



Christian Responses to Poverty, including Absolute and Relative

Relative poverty is poverty compared to something else. For example, many people in the UK are poor, but most (or all) of them are *relatively* poor. They cannot afford expenses such as driving a car, going on holiday, or eating in restaurants. Some may not be able to buy their children school uniform or put the heating on for long enough. Many people will argue that in a country such as the UK, such levels of poverty are unacceptable as they do not represent a decent standard of living. However, the **welfare** system in the UK means that most people have somewhere to live, food to eat and clothes to wear, so compared to many people around the world they do have a better standard of living. For homeless people, there are many who do not have a home and clothes.



A box end

However, some people live in **absolute poverty** (many people in other countries live in absolute poverty). This is usually seen to be when someone lives on the very edge of what is needed to survive on. It is sometimes described as living on less than a pound a day.

Note: Sometimes people will do challenges for charity where they try to live on less than a pound a day. This is a good eye-opener and fundraiser, but remember: there are many factors to consider. People may try to consume food for the day which costs less than a pound, but they are still living somewhere, which almost certainly costs them more than one pound a day, and they are also likely to be using facilities such as water, electricity, education, transport, a mobile phone, and other things which may not cost much but do cost a lot of money.

Christians may feel that there are various causes of poverty – some may feel that poverty is caused by people being lazy and not bettering themselves, others will feel that poverty is caused by governments not helping their people, some may feel that poverty is caused by people being born into poverty and their circumstances, lack of jobs, education, and/or other causes which are not their fault.

For poor people living in countries such as the UK, some Christians feel that they should:

- look harder for work
- get a higher standard of education
- work longer hours / more days
- spend their money more carefully

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For poor people in countries which are worse off – for example, due to famine – poor people should do similar things, though they may acknowledge that it is not fair, or that they need education, or a good job, in such circumstances.

However, other Christians recognise that there is not always much someone can do to get people out of poverty.

For example, many poor people:

- may be unable to get a job which will pay them enough, if there are no other opportunities
- may have lost all their possessions due to natural disasters, or due to war
- may suffer from poor health if they have no access to clean water
- may be physically ill, or addicted to drugs, and unable to get work because of this

Most Christians feel that the existence of poverty is awful, and want to work on campaigns such as *Make Poverty History* have (had) this goal. They will feel that absolute poverty is much worse than relative poverty, and this is why many Christian charities work in developing countries, helping those who are in extreme need. However, many Christians also recognise that relative poverty also causes suffering, and so many Christians split their efforts between helping those in absolute poverty, but also those in relative poverty. Often they may wish to help people out of poverty in the local community; for example, by donating food to local food banks, or helping people struggling to pay their bills and afford food.

Many Christians also recognise that there are issues related to giving money to help people out of poverty through charities.

- Some people argue that giving money is not a long-term solution – it only helps people temporarily.
 - Therefore, many charities try to use money given to them to make people self-sufficient, so they can help people get out of poverty behind them so they do not need charity.
- Some people argue that if you give money to the poor then people do not work hard enough to get out of poverty, as they are being provided for.
 - Many people would argue that no one wants to live in poverty, and that giving money to the poor is helping people out of poverty permanently, as well as helping them to work hard to get out of poverty.
- Some people also argue that money should not be given to charities, as it is often wasted, or that money, such as on paying the heads of charities large salaries.
 - However, others may argue that people should still give money, as it is better than no money.

Below are three issues which are connected to poverty, and the causes of poverty, and the responses to poverty.

Fair Pay

Not everyone is given a fair wage for the work they do. This can lead to people being unable to afford to pay for the things which they need; and this can also lead to debt, as people are unable to provide for themselves and their families. The Bible suggests that people should be paid fairly for their work.

‘You shall not withhold the wages of poor and needy labourers...’ (Deuteronomy 24:14)

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In the UK there is often debate about what the minimum wage should be, and such as the Anglican Church, and academic organisations such as universities that the minimum wage is not enough. They suggest raising the minimum wage so people have enough money to live on.

However, there are problems with raising the minimum wage:

- As soon as everyone is paid more, companies and individuals will raise the prices of food and housing, to take advantage of the fact that people have more money. So everyone will have more money, but they will be worth less, as the same things will be more expensive to buy. When prices become more expensive, and money becomes less valuable, it is called inflation. It is possible that raising the minimum wage could lead to inflation, and people living in poverty.
- Some small companies may be unable to pay higher wages if they are not profitable overall. This could lead to businesses closing, or reducing staff, leading to unemployment, which will mean some people (those who lose their jobs) may be worse off overall.
- Companies may pay people a higher basic wage, but then remove other benefits such as holiday pay, or a higher rate of pay at unsociable times. This may mean people are worse off overall.

However, in many countries there is no minimum wage, and employers are free to pay as little as they like. Many people wish to improve pay for these people, so that they can have a better life. However, this is difficult.

- People in Western countries could refuse to buy produce from, or do business with, companies who do not pay a fair wage to their workers.
 - But this could just mean that the companies stop employing these people, and they will be worse off with no source of income.
 - If people in Western countries want everyone abroad to be paid a fair wage, the prices in the UK, e.g. food and clothing will be more expensive, and some people cannot afford to.

However, many Christians (and others) are supporting Fairtrade, an organisation that ensures workers are paid a fair wage. People can choose to pay more for items which are Fairtrade, knowing that this money is going to support those who need it.

Excessive Interest on Loans

Another way that the poor are exploited is by charging them excessive interest on loans. This means that not only must they pay back a debt, which they may not have, they must pay back *much more*. This often means that poor people and poor countries are stuck out of a cycle of debt.

Many people believe that this is unfair, especially when richer countries lend money to poorer countries. They believe that these countries should not charge interest, and many people believe that the debt should be cancelled. Campaigns, such as Make Poverty History, have tried to make governments cancel debt which poorer countries owe.

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Many people also disagree with payday loan companies who operate in countries where they can lend people money until payday, but charge such high rates of interest that they can trap people in levels of debt.

The Bible teaches not to charge interest to poor people, and also teaches that debts should be forgiven every seven years. This may reflect the likelihood that if poor people cannot pay their debts in one period, they may never be able to. It allows even poor people a fresh start.

‘If you lend money to any of your people, to the poor among you, you shall not exact interest from them.’ (Exodus 22:25 NRSV)

‘Every seventh year you shall grant a remission of debts. And this is the way: Every creditor shall remit the claim that is held against a neighbour, not against a foreigner, who is a member of the community, because the Lord’s remission is proclaimed for that year. (Deuteronomy 15:1–2 NRSV)

People Trafficking

People trafficking is illegal and is a form of slavery: the involuntary movement of people who are often slaves, used for sex or labour. Most people feel that there is no justification for exploiting people’s human rights in this way. People trafficking differs from people smuggling, where people are moved voluntarily, often because they desire access to a foreign country.



Photo of a scene where people trafficking often occurs.

Unfortunately, criminals can make a lot of money out of people trafficking, and they can charge a lot of money, for example, for the transportation of those they traffic, without having to give them much money, or even much on looking after them.

Poor people are often more likely to be victims of people trafficking, as traffickers often look for them, and they may go with traffickers voluntarily, believing they will be able to improve their lives.

The Bible teaches against kidnapping and enslaving people, whether to keep them as slaves or to sell them.

‘Whoever kidnaps a person, whether that person has been sold or is free-born, that kidnaper shall be put to death.’ (Exodus 21:16 NRSV)

Quick Questions

47. Outline **three** causes of poverty.
48. Explain **two** ways in which Christians may view wealth. Refer to a source of authority.
49. Explain **two** Christian attitudes to poverty. Refer to a source of wisdom.

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- A black and white photograph of a textured surface, possibly a book cover or endpaper, showing horizontal lines and a small white mark.

Empty chain symbolising
they have a right to
orientation; to practi
enslaved; to be trea



- Racial harmony is where people of different ethnicities coexist without support racial harmony because of biblical teachings about equality. Some support racial harmony as being a loving course of action. Christians such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu have worked for racial harmony, influenced by Christians can benefit from living in a multi-ethnic society by learning to understand different cultures.
- **Racial discrimination** means treating someone badly because they are in a particular group. Racial discrimination is illegal, but still continues, possibly because of fear of insecurity, lack of education, or stereotyping. Christians generally support racial harmony because of biblical teachings that all people are spiritually equal, and because of the need for a harmonious society.
- Many Christians believe that they should work for **social justice** – the idea that equal opportunities and wealth should be distributed fairly. Churches/organisations work for social justice in many ways, e.g. through giving charity and providing support for the disadvantaged. Situation ethics is likely to support social justice as it is loving for everyone and seeks equal opportunities.
 - Christians may agree with this because of biblical teachings to help the poor (e.g. the parable of the sheep and the goats).
 - Christians may disagree if they believe that certain people are not deserving and should not take wealth from the rich who have earned it.
- There are different Christian attitudes to wealth. Most Christians feel that we should help others and that excessive wealth is bad.
 - Some feel that wealth is a good thing.
 - Some feel that wealth can be used as one chooses.
 - Some feel that wealth is a distraction from other important things.
 - Some feel that wealth should be used to help those in need.
- There are also different Christian attitudes to poverty. All Christians believe that we should help those in poverty.
 - Some feel that poverty is the fault of the poor, who could improve their situation.
 - Many feel that poverty is not the poor's fault, but that those with money have a duty to try to end poverty.
 - Virtue ethics is likely to support helping the poor.

Now Try This...

50. 'All wealth above a certain threshold should be given to the poor.' Evaluate this statement.

Argue for and against this statement. You must include Christian teachings and your own Christian points of view. Reach a conclusion which follows from your arguments.

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Answers

Philosophy of Religion

Question Number	Answer / Mark Scheme
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ That he is compassionate. ◆ That he is powerful. ◆ That he is committed to keeping his promises. ◆ That he is faithful. <p>Accept any relevant point 1 mark per point, maximum 3</p>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Christians believe that God revealed himself to be compassionate when he saved Noah and his family, and all of humanity, from the flood. ◆ Not only did God save Noah and his family, but he made a covenant with Noah to wipe out life on Earth with a flood. ◆ Christians believe that God revealed himself to be compassionate when Jesus to teach people how to live and die for humanity's sin. ◆ Christians believe that because of Jesus' sacrifice they are reconciled to God and can have a relationship with him. <p>Accept any relevant reason, and any relevant development 1 mark per simple point, 2 marks per developed point (maximum 4) One development cannot be credited twice. Each development must be supporting <i>and</i> to the question asked.</p>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ New Testament revelation shows Christians that God is a Trinity. God the Father reveal himself at Jesus' baptism and Transfiguration. The Son is revealed in the flesh as the incarnation, and God the Spirit received in the church at his baptism. ◆ New Testament revelation shows Christians that God cares about everyone. Jesus tells his disciples to preach to all people, including non-Jews, showing that God wants a relationship with everyone. <p>1 mark per simple point, 2 marks per developed point (maximum 4) One development cannot be credited twice. Each development must be supporting <i>and</i> to the question asked.</p>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Moses' vision of the burning bush. ◆ The Transfiguration. ◆ Saul's vision on the road to Damascus. <p>Accept any relevant example 1 mark per point, maximum 3</p>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ A non-religious person might argue that visions do not prove the existence of God because they are hallucinations. ◆ If visions have a physical explanation then they do not prove the existence of God. ◆ A non-religious person might argue that visions do not prove the existence of God, because visions are used to confirm different religions. ◆ If visions are a true religion, then visions would only provide evidence for that religion. As visions conflict with each other, they cannot be used to prove the existence of God because they appear to prove different (conflicting) things. <p>Accept any relevant reason, and any relevant development 1 mark per simple point, 2 marks per developed point (maximum 4) One development cannot be credited twice. Each development must be supporting <i>and</i> to the question asked.</p>

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Question Number	Answer / Mark Scheme
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Visions are important to Christians because they teach them God's will. For example, many Christians are certain that God wants everyone to follow the good news about Jesus, and that they no longer have to follow the law because of St Peter's vision of the animals on the sheet. ♦ 'What God has made clean, you must not call profane.' (Acts 10:15) ♦ Visions are also important to Christians because they believe they provide evidence for the existence of God. They believe that if many people have had visions recorded in the Bible, and after the time of the Bible, then God must exist. <p>1 mark per simple point, 1 mark per development (maximum 4), 1 mark per reference to source of wisdom and authority. One development cannot be credited twice. Each development must be a point it is supporting <i>and</i> to the question asked, as must the reference to source of wisdom and authority.</p>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Moses parted the Red Sea by raising his staff. ♦ For Gideon, God made a fleece wet with dew while the ground remained dry and then made a fleece remain dry while the ground it was on became wet with dew. ♦ For Elijah, God sent down fire from heaven which burnt an offering of water. ♦ Several men survived being thrown into a fiery furnace in the book of Daniel. <p>Accept any relevant point 1 mark per point, maximum 3</p>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Jesus calmed a storm. ♦ Jesus fed 5,000 people with a few loaves of bread and some fish. ♦ Jesus healed an official's son from a distance. <p>Accept any relevant point 1 mark per point, maximum 3</p>
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Christians can respond to the non-religious argument that miracles are just physical explanations and so do not prove the existence of God by saying that just because something has a physical explanation does not mean it was not set in motion by God. ♦ They can argue that some things are truly too miraculous to be explained by science and so they must be down to God – science cannot explain away miracles. ♦ Christians can respond to the non-religious argument that miracles cannot prove the existence of God because some are silly by claiming that miracles are not really miracles. ♦ They can say that just because some reported miracles are not real does not mean that there are not genuine miracles. <p>Accept any relevant reason, and any relevant development 1 mark per simple point, 2 marks per developed point (maximum 4) One development cannot be credited twice. Each development must be a point it is supporting <i>and</i> to the question asked.</p>
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Religious experiences pass, they are temporary. ♦ Religious experiences cannot be fully described. ♦ Religious experiences give people knowledge. ♦ Religious experiences are not controllable. ♦ Religious experiences involve a felt connection with the divine/God. ♦ Religious experiences often make people feel happy / at peace. <p>Accept any relevant point 1 mark per point, maximum 3</p>

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Question Number	Answer / Mark Scheme
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Religious experience could actually be a hallucination, possibly due to hunger/thirst or drugs. They could be wish fulfilment, where someone convinces themselves they had a religious experience because they want one, perhaps when they are lonely. People could lie about having religious experiences; for example, to get attention. <p>Accept any relevant point 1 mark per point, maximum 3</p>
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Religious experiences may be considered revelation because God's message from God is sometimes revealed visually. Moses saw the angel of the Lord in a burning bush, revealing God's will. Religious experiences may be considered revelation because God communicates through them. Christians believe that God reveals his will, and also aspects of his character through religious experiences. God told Moses what he wanted him to do – 'So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.' (Exodus 10:24) <p>Accept any relevant reason, any relevant development, and any relevant reference to a source of wisdom and authority 1 mark per simple point, 1 mark per development (maximum 4), 1 mark per reference to a source of wisdom and authority. One development cannot be credited twice. Each development must be the point it is supporting <i>and</i> to the question asked, as must the reference to a source of wisdom and authority.</p>
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Lord's Prayer is a prayer which Jesus taught his disciples to pray. The 'Hail Mary' is a popular prayer said with a rosary. Psalms, such as Psalm 23, are often used as prayers. <p>Accept any relevant point 1 mark per point, maximum 3</p>
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prayer is important to Christians because it allows them to praise God. Prayer is important to Christians because it allows them to confess their sins to God and ask for forgiveness. Prayer is important to God because it allows them to spend time with him, deepening their relationship with him. <p>Accept any relevant point 1 mark per point, maximum 3</p>
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prayer which Christians feel has been answered may lead to / reinforce their belief in God because they believe that answered prayer provides evidence of God's existence. They may feel that answered prayer could only have been answered if God exists and so he must exist. Prayer which Christians feel has been answered may lead to / reinforce their belief in God if Christians feel that God has answered their prayer because of their faith. They may see answered prayer as a sign that God is involved in their lives and looking out for them. <p>Accept any relevant reason, and any relevant development 1 mark per simple point, 2 marks per developed point (maximum 4) One development cannot be credited twice. Each development must be the point it is supporting <i>and</i> to the question asked.</p>

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Question Number	Answer / Mark Scheme
16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Evolution explains the appearance of design. ♦ The analogy between the world and designed objects is weak. ♦ The world does not seem well-designed as there is evil and suffering. <p>Accept any relevant point 1 mark per point, maximum 3</p>
17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The design argument might seem successful because there are examples of the natural world which appear to make no sense if they were not designed. For example, Isaac Newton pointed out that thumb prints were unique, and seemed to have no natural reason for them – other than that they were made by humans. ♦ The design argument might seem successful because the world does contain organised parts and have a function, as William Paley argued. Things such as the weather, seem to work as though designed, and the purpose of the world is to be designed to allow life. This does make it seem similar to designed objects, and, therefore, implies it needs a designer: God. <p>1 mark per simple point, 2 marks per developed point (maximum 4) One development cannot be credited twice. Each development must be linked to the point it is supporting <i>and</i> to the question asked.</p>
18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The design argument shows Christians how powerful God is, as it provides evidence of the universe appearing designed to suggest that God created it, which would take great power – for the scale of the universe and to make the world a habitable place. ♦ 'For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God is manifest to them. Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made.' (Romans 1: 19-20 NRSV) ♦ The design argument also shows that God is creative, because he has created a beautiful and interesting world. In this sense, it also demonstrates that humans are similar, because humans are creative and design things. This is why Christians believe God designed the world. <p>1 mark per simple point, 1 mark per development (maximum 4), 1 mark per reference to a source of wisdom and authority. One development cannot be credited twice. Each development must be linked to the point it is supporting <i>and</i> to the question asked, as must the reference to a source of wisdom and authority.</p>
19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ There is an unmoved mover (God) who caused change to begin. ♦ There is a first cause (God) who started causes and effects. ♦ There is a necessary being who makes sure that all contingent things exist. <p>Accept any relevant point 1 mark per point, maximum 3</p>
20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ It is possible that nothing needs a first cause and that causes and effects go back to infinity. ♦ God being a first cause does not explain what caused God. ♦ Physics suggests that the universe as we know it may end, but matter and energy will never disappear – there is no evidence that the universe is disappearing. Aquinas says it would without God. <p>Accept any relevant point 1 mark per point, maximum 3</p>

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Question Number	Answer / Mark Scheme
21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christians may respond to the non-religious argument that the big bang is the first cause, and so cosmological arguments do not provide evidence for the existence of God (needed as a first cause), by claiming that God caused the big bang. They may claim that there cannot be a physical cause for the start of matter, and there would be no physical process for conditions that cause the big bang. Christians may respond to the non-religious argument that there is an infinite chain of causes and effects, and of change, going back for ever. Just because causes and effects and change need causes now, this does not provide evidence for there being a God starting it, by claiming that God is the start of an infinite chains of causes and effects and change. They can claim that if there is not a spiritual unmoved mover and first cause, then not having a start of chains of causes and effects and change would mean the laws of nature. <p>Accept any relevant reason, and any relevant development</p> <p>1 mark per simple point, 2 marks per developed point (maximum 4) One development cannot be credited twice. Each development must be linked to the point it is supporting <i>and</i> to the question asked.</p>
22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Praying, to learn to have a personal relationship with God. Reading the Bible to learn about Christianity. Attending church to learn about Christianity and worship God. Following rules such as the Ten Commandments to act as God wants. <p>Accept any relevant reason, and any relevant development</p> <p>1 mark per simple point, maximum 3</p>
23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Features of a Christian upbringing such as reading the Bible and attending church and Christian festivals may lead to a belief in God if such features interlink with the Christian faith. If children are encouraged in the Christian faith and enjoy activities with it, then they may feel that belief in God is a positive thing, which encourages them to believe. Features of a Christian upbringing such as being baptised and taught rules may lead to a belief in God, if children feel that this is what is expected of them. They may find that it is natural to believe in God, because others do, and teach them that it is a good thing. <p>Accept any relevant reason, and any relevant development</p> <p>1 mark per simple point, 2 marks per developed point (maximum 4) One development cannot be credited twice. Each development must be linked to the point it is supporting <i>and</i> to the question asked.</p>
24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christians may give their children a religious upbringing in order to bring them up with moral values. They may feel that Christianity provides a good framework for teaching children about right and wrong, especially as they believe in what Christianity teaches them. 'Train the child in the right way, and when he is old, he will not stray.' (Proverbs 22:6 NRSV) Christians may give their children a religious upbringing because they want to have a relationship with God. Not only do they want their children to feel loved and supported by God, but they also want them to be able to go to heaven. <p>1 mark per simple point, 1 mark per development (maximum 4), 1 mark per reference to a source of wisdom and authority. One development cannot be credited twice. Each development must be linked to the point it is supporting <i>and</i> to the question asked, as must the reference to a source of wisdom and authority.</p>

Question Number	Answer / Mark Scheme	
25	You must fulfil the criteria for connections AND judgements to get top each band. If you do not refer to non-religious arguments then you can get more than 6 marks.	
	Connections	Judgements
	A few shallow links between little material relevant to question. Very narrow understanding of religion and philosophy/ethics.	Points are well supported and conclusion does not follow from arguments.
	Many shallow links between material relevant to question. Narrow understanding of religion and philosophy/ethics.	Some attempt at supporting argument and evaluation, though conclusion does not <u>completely</u> follow.
	Good reasoning and different positions considered – many links made. <u>Partially</u> answers question. Good understanding of religion and philosophy/ethics.	<u>Most</u> points are well supported with reasonable evaluation, leading to a conclusion which is <u>somewhat</u> supported.
	Good critical reasoning and different positions considered – substantial links made. <u>Fully</u> answers question. <u>Consistently</u> good understanding of religion and philosophy/ethics.	<u>All</u> points are well supported with thorough evaluation, leading to a conclusion which is <u>completely</u> supported.
	<p>Points and Justification for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change, such as the start of the universe, must be caused by something other than the thing(s) which change(s) – God would be a good explanation for why change and movement started. St Thomas Aquinas argued this in his <i>First Way</i>. It seems likely that there is a God because something needed to cause existence to come into being – St Thomas Aquinas argued this in his <i>Second Way</i>. 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. The first cause argument ties up with Genesis 1 – with God being 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 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>at any relevant point or justification.</p>	<p>Points and Justification for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is more likely world was caused by bang and life developed through evolution. It is possible that effects do go back to infinity; it cannot be proven otherwise. Just needing a first cause does not provide evidence for God, as this does not explain what caused the first cause. Physics does not support the continuing argument.

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Equality

Question Number	Answer / Mark Scheme
26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People have a human right to life, so murder is prohibited. They have a human right to not be a slave, so people cannot trade in slaves without good reason (e.g. if they commit a crime). They have a right to fair treatment, so they cannot be tortured and must have a fair trial if accused of a crime. They have a right to education, so everyone should receive an education. <p>1 mark per point, maximum 3</p>
27	<p>Some Christians do not support all human rights because they believe in teachings in the Bible which prohibits certain actions. Some Christians feel that homosexuals should not be entitled to the same rights as heterosexuals and have a family, because they believe that the Bible teaches that homosexuality is wrong.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some Christians do not fully support all human rights because they believe there are some actions which mean someone forfeits certain rights. For example, many conservative American Christians do not fully support the right to life, because they believe that the state should be able to impose the death penalty for severe crimes. <p>1 mark per simple point, 2 marks per developed point (maximum 4). One development cannot be credited twice. Each development must support the point it is supporting <i>and</i> to the question asked.</p>
28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christians may support human rights because many human rights are based on specific commands in the Bible. For example, murder is prohibited, and people should not be sold into slavery. There are also teachings about treating people justly and fairly. (Exodus 20:13 NRSV) Christians may also support human rights because they believe in justice. You must not distort justice; you must not show partiality; and you must not take bribes, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the cause of those who are in the right. Justice, and only justice, you shall follow. (Deuteronomy 16:19–20 NRSV) Christians may also support human rights because they believe in love. To support human rights – in many cases, even if not in all cases – is to treat people fairly and equal rights is treating them with love. <p>1 mark per simple point, 1 mark per development (maximum 4), 1 mark per reference to a source of wisdom and authority. One development cannot be credited twice. Each development must support the point it is supporting <i>and</i> to the question asked, as must the reference to wisdom and authority.</p>
29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poverty can cause inequality because people with less cannot afford the same standard of living as those with more. Disability can cause inequality, if someone is not physically able to do the same things as others. Sexism causes inequality, as men and women physically can do the same things, and culturally many women are treated as inferior to men. <p>1 mark per point, maximum 3</p>

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Question Number	Answer / Mark Scheme
30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One possible solution for inequality is redistribution of wealth taken from the rich and given to the poor, then this would have previously had less would have more opportunities, a person who previously had more would have less of an unfair advantage. Another possible solution for inequality is having stronger laws to ensure people equal treatment. When people are prejudiced, they will be more inclined to treat the disadvantaged equally so they do not break the law. <p>1 mark per point, 2 marks per developed point (maximum 4). Each development cannot be credited twice. Each development must be supporting <i>and</i> to the question asked.</p>
31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many Christians support equality because the Bible teaches that all people are spiritually equal. When the Bible says that both men and women are in the image of God, and that all people have equality in Jesus, Christians are encouraged to see their fellows as equal. '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) '... for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. For all who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no distinction of sex, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.' (Galatians 3:26-29) Many Christians also support equality because Jesus taught that we should treat each other with love. Many Christians believe that treating people unequally, e.g. treating women or homosexuals as inferior, is not loving, and believing that treating people equally is part of loving them. 'You do not show a really fair and loyal law according to the love that is in you. You are proud of yourself.' But if you show partiality, you are convicted by the law as transgressors.' (James 2:8-9 NRSV) <p>1 mark per point, 1 mark per development (maximum 4). Each development cannot be credited twice. Each development must be supporting <i>and</i> to the question asked, as must the point it is supporting <i>and</i> to the question asked, as must the point of wisdom and authority.</p>
32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One example of religious freedom is being allowed to hold and practice beliefs, choose, and being able to express them freely. One example of religious freedom is being able to practise religion, be able to worship freely and in public. Another example of religious freedom is being able to wear religious clothing, for example a cross necklace or a hijab. <p>Accept any relevant point 1 mark per point, maximum 3</p>
33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One benefit for Christians living in a multifaith society is being able to learn about other religions so that they can understand them. Another benefit is that perspectives from other religions can challenge Christians to think further and deepen their faith. Another benefit is that Christians have opportunities to evangelise to other faiths. <p>Accept any relevant point 1 mark per point, maximum 3</p>

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Question Number	Answer / Mark Scheme
34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christians may support religious freedom because they feel that it is important for others to choose which religion to follow (or choose to follow no religion). Jesus taught his followers to love others, and also taught them to treat others as they want to be treated – if Christians want to have religious freedom for themselves, then, following this teaching, they should allow others religious freedom. 'In everything do to others as you would have them do to you...' (Matthew 22:39, NRSV, the Golden Rule) Christians may also support religious freedom because they believe that humans were created with free will, and if they could not choose a religion for themselves, this would be a restriction on their free will. The Church believes that it is important for someone to have religious freedom so that they can keep their dignity. '... Every human person, created in the image of God, has the nature and freedom recognized as a free and responsible being... The <i>right to the exercise of religion</i>, especially in moral and religious matters, is an inalienable requirement of the dignity of the human person. This right must be recognized and respected by civil authority within the limits of the common good and public order' (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1738) <p>1 mark per simple point, 1 mark per development (maximum 4), 1 mark per reference to a source of wisdom and authority</p> <p>One development cannot be credited twice. Each development must be a development of the point it is supporting <i>and</i> to the question asked. Each must the reference to a source of wisdom and authority</p>
35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender discrimination is discrimination on the grounds of someone's sex. It often affects women and girls in particular. Racial discrimination is discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity. People of different ethnicities may be more likely to be searched or stopped. Discrimination can be on the basis of sexuality – for example, many religions do not allow homosexuals to marry. <p>Accept any relevant point</p> <p>1 mark per point, maximum 3</p>
36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christians may oppose prejudice and discrimination because of their belief in equality. The Bible teaches that all humans were made in the image of God and should love everyone, and having prejudice or discriminating goes against this. Christians may oppose prejudice and discrimination because Jesus taught his disciples to spread the good news to everyone, showing that no one should be discriminated against, and St Peter also had a vision conveying that everyone was 'clean' to God. <p>1 mark per simple point, 2 marks per developed point (maximum 4)</p> <p>One development cannot be credited twice. Each development must be a development of the point it is supporting <i>and</i> to the question asked.</p>

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Question Number	Answer / Mark Scheme
37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christians believe that prejudice and discrimination against religion is wrong because Jesus and early apostles have spread the good news to all people, showing that Jesus' message and salvation was not just for this race. For example, St Peter had a vision which he interpreted as telling him to share good news to the gentiles. 'The voice said to [Peter] again, "Second time, "What God has made clean, must not call profane or unclean..." and [Peter] said to them, "You yourselves know it is unlawful for us to associate with or to visit a Gentile; but God has shown me that I should not call anyone profane or unclean..." Then Peter said to them, "Who can withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the word of the Lord just as we have?"' (Acts 10:15, 28, 46–47 NRSV) St Paul also taught that not only does someone's original religion not matter, people should not have to follow specific religious practices, such as circumcision, to become a Christian. This shows that prejudice and discrimination against other religions is wrong in Christianity, because Paul believed not to show favouritism to those who observe specific practices. Paul viewed everyone as equal – not only was Jesus for non-Jews, but people did not have to become Jewish when receiving him. God shows no partiality[favouritism]... 'they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel for the circumcised (for he who worked through Peter ministered to the apostle to the circumcised also worked through me in sending me to the Gentiles)' (Galatians 2:6–8 NRSV) <p>1 mark per simple point, 1 mark per developed point (maximum 4), 1 mark per reference to a source of wisdom and authority. One development cannot be credited twice. Each development must be supported by the point it is supporting and to the question asked, as must the reference to wisdom and authority.</p>
38	<p>Christians are benefited by living in a multi-ethnic society because different cultures can enrich their everyday lives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christians can be benefited by living in a multi-ethnic society because they can learn about different ways in which Christianity is practised in other cultures; this can help inspire their worship. Christians can be benefited by living in a multi-ethnic society, as they can learn to respect and appreciate people of other ethnicities. <p>Accept any relevant point 1 mark per point, maximum 3</p>
39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Archbishop Desmond Tutu worked for racial harmony by helping to establish the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa after apartheid. He encouraged those who had committed wrongs to ask for forgiveness, and to encourage those on both sides of the divide could live together and treat each other with respect. Martin Luther King worked for racial harmony by campaigning for civil rights for all ethnicities in America. He gave speeches and also promoted non-violent action, such as the March on Washington to make white Americans realise that justice for all was needed. The colour of someone's skin and segregating people on this basis was wrong. <p>1 mark per simple point, 2 marks per developed point (maximum 4). One development cannot be credited twice. Each development must be supported by the point it is supporting and to the question asked.</p>

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Question Number	Answer / Mark Scheme
40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christians may work for racial harmony because they believe that peace should result from peace and treating others with love, and the Bible says that peace and love are important. Jesus also showed that this was the way to live with people who did not belong to the Jewish race with love and compassion. 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.' (Matthew 5:9 NRSV) 'I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, so that you should love one another.' (John 13:34 NRSV) <p>Christians may also work for racial harmony because they see situations where there is not racial harmony as wrong and sinning against God. For example, William Wilberforce worked for racial harmony, where black people were treated alongside white people as equals, because he saw the slave trade as wrong. All humans are equal before God.</p> <p>1 mark per simple point, 1 mark per development (maximum 4), 1 mark per reference to a source of wisdom and authority One development cannot be credited twice. Each development must include the point it is supporting <i>and</i> to the question asked, as must the reference to a source of wisdom and authority</p>
41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not being given a job due to race/ethnicity Being stopped and searched by police due to race/ethnicity Experiencing verbal or physical abuse due to race/ethnicity <p>Accept any relevant point 1 mark per point, maximum 3</p>
42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Racial discrimination causes problems in society because it leads to unequal treatment and unequal opportunities. If people of a particular ethnicity do not get good jobs, they may be underrepresented in the workforce, and in leadership roles. They may also not have the money to provide for their families. <p>Racial discrimination can also cause problems in society if it leads to a cycle. If people of a certain ethnicity are not trusted, they may not interact with those who are discriminating against them, forming a cycle. This is not cohesive. If groups of different ethnicities do not trust each other, this furthers prejudice and discrimination in the future.</p> <p>1 mark per simple point, 2 marks per developed point (maximum 4) One development cannot be credited twice. Each development must include the point it is supporting <i>and</i> to the question asked.</p>
43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christians may oppose racial discrimination because they believe that all humans had the same beginnings. Therefore, they do not feel that any one group is worth more, and so all should be treated equally. 'From one ancestor [or blood] he made all nations to inhabit the earth.' (Acts 17:26 NRSV) Christians may also oppose racial discrimination because teaching in the New Testament promotes equality and treating others well. Racial discrimination goes against the teaching of Jesus for God there is no race, and that everyone is created in the image of God. <p>'I am no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, male and female, but all of you are one in Christ Jesus.' (Galatians 3:28 NRSV)</p> <p>'"You shall love your neighbour as yourself."' (Matthew 22:39 NRSV)</p> <p>1 mark per simple point, 1 mark per development (maximum 4), 1 mark per reference to a source of wisdom and authority One development cannot be credited twice. Each development must include the point it is supporting <i>and</i> to the question asked, as must the reference to a source of wisdom and authority</p>

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Question Number	Answer / Mark Scheme
44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Christians should feed the hungry ♦ They should visit those in prison ♦ They should welcome the stranger ♦ They should clothe the naked <p>Accept any relevant point 1 mark per point, maximum 3</p>
45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The Church works for social justice by encouraging people to give to others and help those in need. They also help to distribute the money to the hungry, e.g. through drop-in centres, so that people do not have to live in absolute poverty. ♦ The Church works for social justice by trying to provide disadvantaged groups with equal opportunities. They may lobby the government for new laws to protect the vulnerable, or provide personal support to victims of trafficking. <p>1 mark per simple point, 2 marks per developed point (maximum 4) One development cannot be credited twice. Each development must develop the point it is supporting <i>and</i> to the question asked.</p>
46	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Social justice is important to Christians because Jesus worked for it. He convinced the tax collector Zacchaeus to pay back those he had treated outcasts, and disadvantaged groups, such as women, were given equal opportunities. ♦ Social justice is important to Christians because they believe that to have equal opportunities is God's will, and helping others is his command. The parable of the sheep and the goats not only teaches that Christians are rewarded for helping others, but also that they will be punished if they do not. ♦ 'And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."' (Matthew 25:40 NRSV) <p>1 mark per simple point, 1 mark per development (maximum 4), 1 mark to a source of wisdom and authority One development cannot be credited twice. Each development must develop the point it is supporting <i>and</i> to the question asked, as must the reference to a source of wisdom and authority</p>
47	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Not being paid fairly causes poverty. ♦ A lack of jobs so that someone cannot earn to support themselves causes poverty. ♦ Natural disasters which destroy people's possessions and livelihoods cause poverty. <p>Accept any relevant point 1 mark per point, maximum 3</p>
48	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Some Christians view wealth as a reward from God. This also means they feel entitled to their wealth and do not feel that they should give to help others. ♦ 'The Lord is greatly blessed my master, and he has become wealthy because of me.' (Matthew 23:11 NRSV) ♦ Some Christians feel that wealth is a distraction from God. Some monks, nuns and give up all their wealth to focus on God. ♦ 'No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one or the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.' (Matthew 6:24 NRSV)

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49	<p>◆ Some Christians believe that people are poor due to their own choices. Therefore, they may be less likely to want help from others and that they should help themselves.</p> <p>◆ 'A little seed and causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes much' (Proverbs 10:4 NRSV)</p> <p>Many Christians believe that it is their duty to combat poverty. This can be done by campaigning against keeping small countries in debt, by giving to charity to help people currently in poverty, and to help end poverty in the future.</p> <p>◆ 'If there is among you anyone in need, a member of your community, your towns within the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hearted or tight-fisted towards your needy neighbour. You should give your hand, willingly lending enough to meet the need, whatever it may be' (Deuteronomy 15:7–8 NRSV)</p> <p>1 mark per simple point, 1 mark per development (maximum 4), 1 mark to a source of wisdom and authority</p> <p>One development cannot be credited twice. Each development must the point it is supporting <i>and</i> to the question asked, as must the reference of wisdom and authority</p>										
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Question Number	Answer / Mark Scheme	
	<p>Points and Justification for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Jesus seemed to imply that all/much wealth should be given to the poor ♦ '... go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven...' (Mark 10:21 NRSV) ♦ Jesus taught that Christians should help those in need (in the parable of the sheep and the goats). If Christians do not give away a lot of their wealth it can be argued that they are not helping others to the best of their ability. Many Christians believe they must help others by giving to charity in order to serve God. ♦ 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' (Matthew 25:40 NRSV) ♦ Jesus taught his disciples not to be greedy, and giving away wealth above a threshold is one way for Christians to try not to act with greed. ♦ And [Jesus] said to them, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." (Luke 12:15 NRSV) ♦ Jesus taught that people could not serve both God and money, and if Christians are not prepared to give away all wealth over a threshold then this shows they may be prioritising wealth over God. ♦ 'No one can serve two masters, for a slave will either love the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.' (Matthew 6:24 NRSV) 	<p>Points and Justification for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Jesus seemed to imply that all/much wealth should be given to the poor (above a threshold). Monks and nuns gave up all their wealth, not just a portion. ♦ '... go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven...' (Mark 10:21 NRSV) ♦ Some Christians, such as monks and nuns, believe they should give up all their wealth, as a reward for their faith. ♦ 'The Lord has greatly blessed you, and he has become rich, but you have not become rich. (Genesis 24:35 NRSV) ♦ Christians may choose other ways than giving away wealth above a threshold to help others by paying for education or campaigning for debt cancellation. They may feel that doing what is taught in the parable of the sheep and the goats is more important than having to sacrifice their wealth. ♦ 'You shall not withhold help from the poor and needy labourer, lest they become angry with you, and become a curse to you, and not a blessing.' (Deuteronomy 24:14 NRSV)
	Accept any relevant point or justification.	