



RELIGIOUS STUDIES SHORT COURSE REVISION MATERIAL



Death and Afterlife



Good and Evil



Religion and Human Relationships



Religion and Medical Ethics



Religion and Equality



Religion Peace and Justice

Contents

Answering Exam Questions

Topic 4: Death and Afterlife

Christianity
Practice exam questions

Topic 5: Good and Evil

Christianity
Practice exam questions

Topic 6: Religion and Human Relationship

Christianity
Practice exam questions

Topic 7: Religion and Medical Ethics

Christianity
Practice exam questions

Topic 8: Religion and Equality

Christianity
Practice exam questions

Topic 10: Religion Peace and Justice

Christianity
Practice exam questions

Answering Exam Questions

In your exam you will have to answer on 4 different topics on one paper. Each topic is divided into 3 sub questions. They are a), b) and c). You must answer all three for each topic from the same religion. You will only answer questions on Christianity.

Question a) – ‘Knowledge’ question

This usually starts by asking you to discuss Christian views on a set topic. It is worth 8 marks and easy to pick up at least 5 or 6. In your answer you must make sure you...

- Include as much detail as you can with definitions and examples.
- Include and explain at least 2 Biblical teachings or Church teachings.
- Give more than one opinion from within that religion where possible
- Use the correct names for the different Christian groups (e.g. Roman Catholic, Church of England.)
- Use correct terminology and explain yourself clearly.

A suggested plan for section a)

Christianity

- Definition and example of issue
- State a Christian **point** of view (for and against).
- Back up with **evidence** from The Bible or other Christian sources.
- **Explain** why the evidence supports that point of view.
- Give an alternative **point** of view.
- Back up with **evidence** from The Bible or other Christian sources.
- **Explain** why the evidence supports that point of view.
- If possible mention a famous Christian who responded to this issue.

Question b) – ‘Understanding’ question.

This usually starts by asking you to describe how a Christian puts their beliefs into action about a particular issue. You should refer to more than one Christian point of view where possible. It is worth 7 marks and is the question most people struggle on. In your answer you must make sure you...

- Briefly explain the Christian **point(s)** of view
- Back up with **evidence** from the Bible or other Christian sources.
- **Explain** why the evidence supports that point of view.
- **Explain** at least 3 points of action and link back to Biblical/ Christian teaching.
- If possible mention a famous Christian who responded to this issue.

Question c) – ‘Evaluation’ question

This usually gives a statement and asks if you agree or not. This is worth 5 marks and they are the easiest 5 marks to pick up as long as you follow the following structure. Make sure you refer to The Bible and Church views plus famous Christian view where appropriate.

- Some Christians agree with this statement because.....
- Other Christians might disagree with this statement because.....
- I have considered both view points and my view is ... because

Topic 4: Death and Afterlife: Christianity

Funeral Service

The Christian Funeral Service...

Church of England

- The body is processed down the aisle and laid on the **altar at the front before God**.
- The People will be formally dressed often in black as a **sign of respect**.
- The Vicar/Priest will lead the service from the front.
- Hymns will be sung (often the dead person's favourite) which **symbolises thanks to God for his/her life and sadness at their loss**.
- A reading from the bible such as **Psalm 23 'The Lord is my Shepherd'**.
- Often the vicar will talk about the Christian belief of heaven and **life after death**.
- A friend or family member might speak in order to **remember the deceased person**.
- The deceased person is **offered up to God** and then taken from the Church to either be buried* or cremated.

* Traditionally Christians are buried with their heads pointing towards Jerusalem, as that is where Jesus will arrive when he returns.

The Christian Funeral Service...

Quaker (Society of friends)

- The service starts when all people are sat down.
- **2 Elders** start and finish the service.
- The service is a **time of silence and reflection**.
- People only speak if they feel the need to share something about the deceased person.
- Long periods of **silence and prayer** may occur.
- **No person leads** the service but it simply runs by itself with people joining in how they like.
- It is finished when the two elders shake hands and the coffin is removed.
- There isn't the great procession or ordered service of the Church of England services.
- **Quakers will often be happy** that the person has passed on to a better life.
- People may also talk about **life after death** and their **beliefs**.

The idea of a funeral service for Christians is to say goodbye to the deceased, to thank God for their lives and to offer them up to him for looking after.

Roman Catholics however will also pray for the Soul's of the deceased. They believe that if a person has not quite made it into heaven they will go to Purgatory (a middle place also known as limbo, between heaven and hell).

Only Roman Catholics hold this view and they believe that praying for the Soul's of dead people will speed their transition from Purgatory into Heaven.

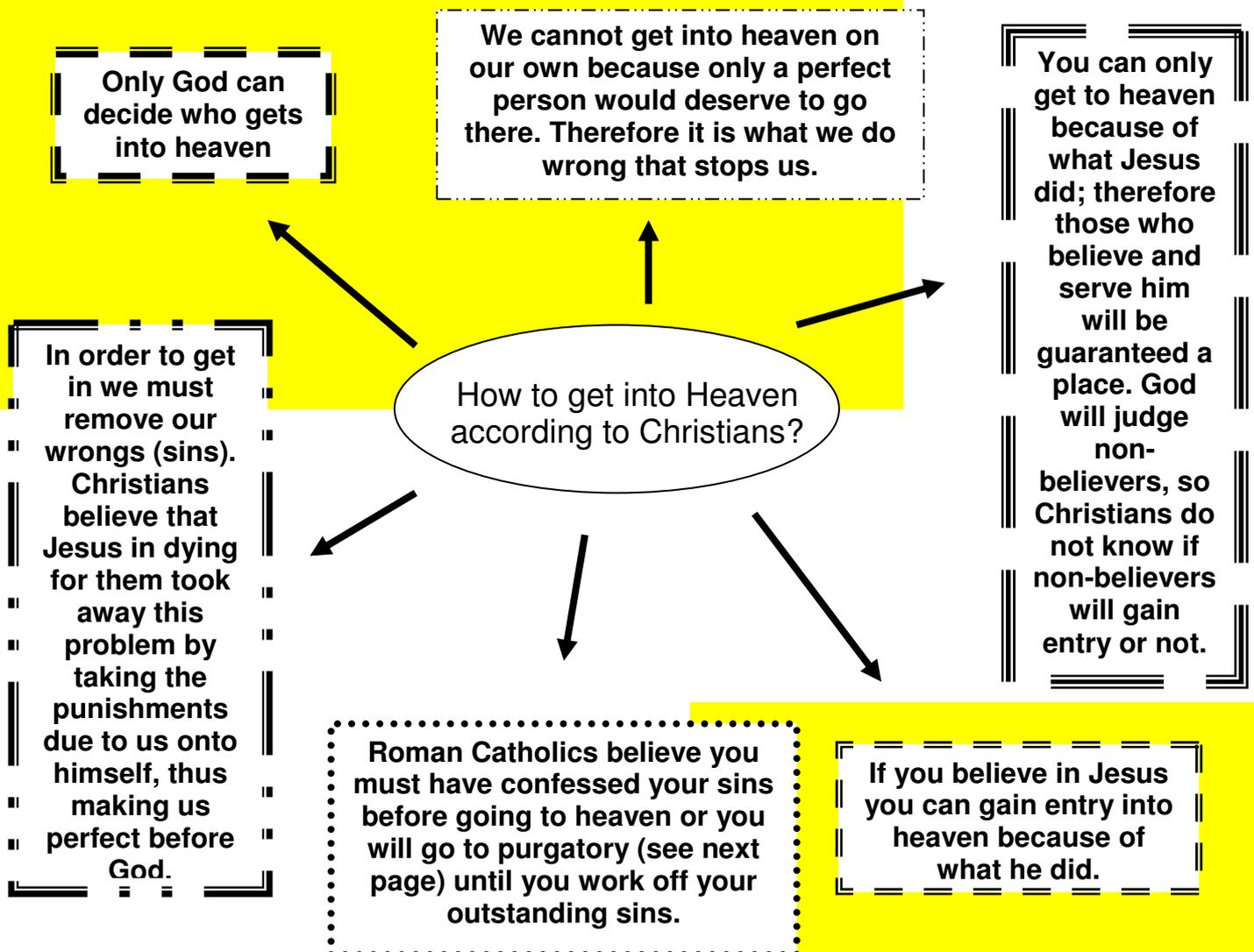
Topic 4: Death and Afterlife: Christianity

Life After Death

Different religions have different opinions on what happens once we die. All religions however believe that something happens to us, whether it is coming back in another form (re-incarnation) or living forever in paradise (heaven).

The Christian belief in Life after death comes from several different places.

- Jesus talks about rewards in heaven and about the *Kingdom of God*. By these, Christians believe he was talking about an afterlife.
- The bible mentions prophets such as **Isaiah**, who had a vision of God in which he went into heaven and spoke with God.
- **Genesis 14:19** talks about God being the creator of *heaven and earth*.
- On the cross Jesus turned to the thief next to him and told him that “*today you will be with me in paradise*”, **Luke 24:43**.





Topic 4: Death and Afterlife: Christianity Terms and Ideas

Purgatory:

Roman Catholics believe there is a place between Heaven and Hell where people go to work off any unconfessed sins before going to Heaven. They believe that praying for these Souls may speed up their passage to Heaven.

Judgement:

Christians believe that when the end of days comes all people will be judged on their lives. Only through the death and resurrection of Jesus (which gained forgiveness for all people) can they gain eternal life.

Re-incarnation:

Christians DO NOT believe in re-incarnation (this is a view held by Buddhists and Hindus). This is the belief that our Spirit or Soul are reborn in another form. Christians do not believe in it as they think that once you die you go to Heaven or Hell where you stay forever.

Angels:

Christians believe that Angels exist and are the messengers and servants of God. They live with him in heaven but do on occasions come to Earth. Some Christians claim to have seen Angels even today. They do not play harps or sit on clouds however but are 'spiritual beings'.



The Devil:

The Devil (Lucifer or Beelzebub) rules in Hell and is the enemy of all that is good. Most Christians believe he exists (though some don't think he is really a being) and that he was an Angel who was thrown out of Heaven and turned evil.

Life is a Test:

Christians believe that this life is a test and that it is not how the world was meant to be. We were designed to live in companionship with God but because of human greed we were separated by what we do wrong. As God is perfect only through Jesus' gift of life can we be with God. Therefore if we pass the test we will be as we were designed to be which is with God.

The Soul:

Christians believe in the Soul. This is your Spirit or Consciousness. It is the part of you that lives on after death. It is what makes you who you are and what makes you human. Some Christians believe the Soul is an actual physical part of them, others that it is like the wind, something you cannot see.



Topic 4: Death and Afterlife: Christianity

Heaven and Hell

There are many different opinions over what Heaven and Hell are. Many different Christians hold different opinions because they have not been and because the bible does not specifically say what the afterlife will be.

Christians believe that to get to heaven you must not only believe in God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit but you must give your life to him as well. By this they mean living their lives for God, doing what he wants and saying sorry (asking for forgiveness) when they do something wrong (commit a sin).

Christian Heaven views

Heaven is where God lives; it is a physical place where those who are rewarded will one day go.

Heaven is a place of outstanding beauty which physically exists. It is also known as paradise and is perfect.

Heaven is a world like ours at the moment but a perfect one without any flaws and without any evil or greed.

Heaven

Heaven is being without pain and suffering, it is existing and being at peace.

Christian Hell views

Hell is the absence of God, it is a place without his love and his warmth.

Hell is a place that exists where there is no happiness or joy. It is a place where people simply exist without any pleasant things.

Hell

Hell is not existing. When you die you do not go to a physical place but rather cease to exist anymore. That is hell.

Hell is the residence of the Devil who delights in pain and suffering, if you are sent there you are his for eternity.

Hell is a pit of fire where you will suffer eternal damnation and pain. It is a place without any happiness where there is only suffering, hate, greed and other evil things.

Topic 4: Death and Afterlife Practice Exam Questions

Christianity

a) Describe Christian teachings about Life after death [8]

b) Explain the significance of a Christian Funeral Service [7]

c) 'Christians are more concerned with the next life than this.' [5]

Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer.

Topic 5: Good & Evil



Use the information from your previous lessons and the information boxes to answer the following questions. When you can answer all these questions without the extra information you can attempt the practice exam question that follows



1. Where does good come from?

- **God:** Genesis 1: 31 “God looked at everything he had made and it was very good”. Good comes from God and the world was good until humans sinned.
- **Free Will:** Exercising your free will correctly. God gave us the gift of free will. This means that we choose whether to do good or evil. Our choice is made easier by
 - Referring to the Bible. For example the 10 commandments (Exodus 20) help Christians understand that murder is wrong and that they should preserve life at all costs. Therefore if there was a war they may choose to do good and be a conscientious objector.

2. Where does evil come from?

- **Genesis 3:** Adam and eve have **free will**, are **tempted** by the devil (snake) and commit the **original sin**. All descendants of Adam are sinners and must seek forgiveness and reconciliation with God.
- The **Devil** works in a similar way in the world today and tempts us to do evil things (sin). Christian’s believe we have free will and therefore sometimes we choose to commit sins. Evil is present in the world because people choose to sin. For example, when there is a war you can choose whether to murder people or not. If you choose to murder you create evil.

3. What different types of evil are there?

- **Human/ Moral:** caused by man’s bad decisions E.g. Murder of James Bulger
- **Natural:** caused by nature E.g. Tsunami December 2004

4. What do Christian’s believe about God?

- God is **omnipotent**= All powerful
- God is **omnibenevolent**= All loving
- God is **omniscient**= All knowing

5. What do Christians believe about the Devil or Satan?

The Devil is a **fallen angel** who tempts people to do wrong. The devil can take many forms and presents himself as **temptation** to abuse our freewill. He appeared first in Genesis 3 where he tempts Eve to eat from the tree of knowledge. The devil also tries to tempt Jesus in the desert after he has been baptised (Luke 4:1-13). Jesus manages to resist each temptation.

6. How do Christians explain why there is suffering in the world?

Original sin: The world is now in a fallen state. Therefore humans inherit the first sin and must also be punished for it. Humans still make bad decisions which causes suffering and natural suffering is part of the punishment for the original sin.

Free will: Humans choose to do wrong.

The Devil: Tempts us to do wrong

7. Do these explanations work for atheists (people who are not religious)?

No! Evil and suffering is precisely why many people do not believe in God. If God is all powerful (omnipotent) and all loving (omnibenevolent) how can he allow suffering in the world? He is either unable to stop it or does not want to. This leads many to believe that God does not exist and therefore that evil and suffering has no purpose.

8. How do people cope with suffering?

A Test: to test faith. If we put up with it and stay loyal to God we'll be rewarded.

God has a plan: we have to just accept God's plan. After much suffering Job questions God. In the end he realises he just has to accept God's plan (Job)

God's compassion: God carries and supports us through bad times (footprints)

Ultimate reward: in heaven there is no suffering for eternity. 10 years suffering is nothing compared to an eternity of bliss.

9. How do Christians know how to be good?

Christians could use the following sources to guide them

- Bible: 10 commandments, 2 greatest commandments, Good Samaritan, Sermon on the mount,
- Example of Jesus
- Conscience

10. Why be good?

Heaven is the ultimate reward!

KEY RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS

Genesis 1 and 3
Job
Matthew 4
10 commandments
2 Greatest commandments
Matthew 5-7



Topic 5: Good & Evil: Exam Questions

CHRISTIANITY

- a) Describe what Christians believe about the power of Good and Evil (8)
- b) Explain how Christians cope with suffering (7)
- c) “If God really loved the world we would never have to suffer”

Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. (5)

Topic 7: Religion and Medical Ethics

Abortion

There are several different groups involved in the debate over the right and wrongs of Abortion.

Pro life: This is a non-religious movement that believes life should be preserved at all costs. Despite being non-religious many religious groups agree with their stand.

Pro choice: This is a movement that believes it is up to the mother whether she chooses to have an abortion or not.

Roman Catholic Church: This believes that abortions are always wrong. They think that it is murder as **life is sacred** (special) and a **gift from God**.

Church of England: They believe that abortions are almost always wrong but there are some circumstances when it might be acceptable (These are marked below with 'CofE').

Arguments given for and against abortion

For:

- ✓ It's the Woman's body; it's up to her what she does with it.
- ✓ The mother may not be able to support the child once born.
- ✓ ***The child may be severely handicapped and not have a worthwhile life (CofE).***
- ✓ ***The Mother's life may be at risk (CofE).***
- ✓ ***The Mother may have been the victim of rape (CofE).***
- ✓ The baby may be unwanted or be a reminder of an unhappy relationship.
- ✓ The mother may not feel emotionally equipped to deal with the baby.



Against:

- × ***The baby has a right to life.***
- × Why should the Woman's life be more important than the baby's.
- × If she didn't want a child then she should have used precautions.
- × The baby might not have a good life either for lack of money or because of a disability but still it may enjoy what life it can have.
- × The mother could put the baby up for adoption if she couldn't cope with it.
- × ***Life is a gift from God and shouldn't ever be taken away (Sanctity of life).***
- × ***Only God has the right to decide whether someone lives or dies.***

Euthanasia

Euthanasia is the taking of your own life with the assistance of another. It is also known as assisted suicide. Euthanasia can be divided into two categories.

- **Active** – *this is when someone physically takes an action to end a life such as a lethal injection.*
- **Passive** – *this is when the person will die naturally anyway but is being kept alive by artificial means, then what is keeping her alive is stopped (ie: turning off a life support machine).*



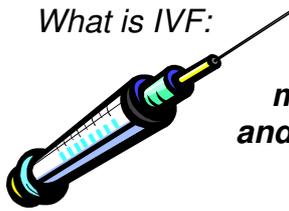
The Christian viewpoint on Euthanasia is mixed just as it is on abortion. The two viewpoints are summed up by two important statements.

1. ***Thou shall not kill*** – *This is one of the 10 commandments which are of vital importance to a Christian.*
2. ***Christians believe in compassion***, *they believe that you should always be kind and caring to people. (Story of the adulteress who Jesus says you shouldn't judge unless you are innocent John ch 8 v 2-11)*

The Christian Viewpoint:

*Most Christians believe Euthanasia in general is wrong but some think it is acceptable in some circumstances. Usually it is **Roman Catholics** who believe it is always wrong and more moderate views are found amongst **the Church of England** or **Methodists**.*

IVF / Cloning



What is IVF:

In Vitro Fertilisation – this refers to the medical act of taking a woman’s egg and man’s sperm combining them in a lab and then placing the fertilised egg back into the woman.



What is cloning: **The act of making an exact genetic replica of a living being.**

Why are Christians against them?

- × It goes against the natural order of things (ie: the way God intended it to be).
- × There are many children needing adopting out there so why go through this process when other children are in care homes.
- × If God intended them to have children he wouldn’t have made them infertile.
- × IVF can lead to multiple births and then the baby’s often die or some require aborting to save the others.
- × Experiments in these areas have involved taking aborted cells from foetuses and testing on them – this is testing on and killing living beings.
- × If God had meant us to become cloned it would happen naturally.
- × It could easily be misused to create specific human beings
- × Just because we can do something doesn’t mean we should.

Why are Christians for them?

- ✓ If God didn’t intend us to use IVF then he wouldn’t have given us the resources to achieve it.
- ✓ God designed man and woman to create life and have a family.
- ✓ The Catholic Church sees the family as a sacrament (something special).
- ✓ Cloning can help to find cures for medical diseases such as Alzheimer’s which affect many people.

Generally Christians are divided on IVF as it is not the natural way of having children. As is often the case Roman Catholics are stricter and think it is going against God’s plans. The Church of England sees it more that it is simply us using God’s gifts to help people who are suffering from infertility which is not from God.

Most Christians however agree over cloning and other forms of genetic engineering that it is mostly wrong. This is because it is ‘playing God’ and also because it involves testing and killing of undeveloped foetuses which many see as living beings.

When does life begin?

There are many different arguments as to when life begins. Here are some of the most influential ones along with the reasons given for why they mark the beginning of life.

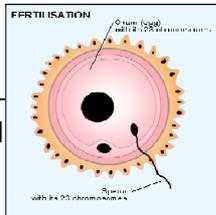


Stage 1: Sex

Some people in particular most Roman Catholics believe that as Sex is the beginning of the process it is also the beginning of life. Therefore this means that contraception is preventing life and therefore wrong.

Stage 2: Fertilisation

The second view point is that once the sperm meets the egg and fertilises it, then life begins. This is because sex doesn't necessarily lead to life but once fertilisation takes place life will undoubtedly begin. Many Christians (mainly Methodists or Church of England) will agree with this (but not all). This makes contraception that prevents fertilisation acceptable but not forms that kill the foetus after conception such as the morning after pill or the coil



Stage 3: Heart starts to beat (4-5 weeks)

This view believes that as the heart is what keeps you alive then when it starts beating life begins. Some more liberal Christians might agree with this view point. This view believes that all contraception is right and abortion is acceptable before this occurs.



Stage 4: Baby can survive outside the womb (20 weeks)

This is the main medical opinion on the beginning of life as after this point abortion is no longer thought acceptable unless necessary. This is important as it marks the point when a baby could survive outside the womb and therefore is independent.

Stage 5: When the baby is born

Some people believe that while the baby remains in the womb it doesn't have its own life but is simply part of the mother. Therefore life begins with birth itself. This view would mean abortion is acceptable in any circumstance.



Topic 7: Religion and Medical Ethics: Exam Questions

Christianity

- a) Describe Christian teachings about Euthanasia [8]
- b) Explain why a Christian might disagree with abortion [7]
- c) 'Only God should choose when people die.' [5]

Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer.

Topic 10: Religion Peace & Justice

Causes of crime:

- Poverty.
- Unemployment.
- Lack of morals – knowing what is right or wrong.
- Nature verses Nurture. Are people born criminals or are criminals made?
- Inequality.
- Homelessness.
- Drugs.

Why Punish:

People are punished for committing crimes because it is believed to be in the best interests of society. People can only live happily together if rules are accepted and stuck to. If we didn't have any laws at all people would be free to do as they please, leading to chaos.

Reasons for punishment.

- **Protection:-** society needs to be kept safe from criminals.
- **Retribution:-** This is based on the belief that victims have the right to make criminals pay for what they have done.
- **Deterrence:-** If people are punished they are less likely to commit crime again (in theory – in reality this is not always true).
- **Reparation:-** criminals have the right to pay for their crime so that they can gain a clean start free from guilt.
- **Reform:-** This type of punishment is positive and constructive to allow criminals the opportunity to change and learn from their mistakes. Criminals are helped to change for the better, making a useful contribution towards society.

Should we kill murderers?



For:	Against:
People who know exactly what they are doing deserve to die for their crime. 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'.	Life is sacred, it is wrong to take a life. Two wrongs don't make a right. God gives and God takes away.
People need to be protected from cold-blooded murderers.	A criminal can change. If he or she is murdered they are being deprived of the chance to reform.
It is a good deterrent; it stops that person from killing again.	There is little evidence to suggest that capital punishment is a deterrent. People still commit murder in countries that have the death penalty, e.g. America.
It puts others off who might be tempted to kill, seeing what the consequences are.	It could turn executed terrorists into religious martyrs.
It shows that society will not put up with antisocial and harmful behaviour.	Mistakes could be made and innocent people executed.

Is war ever right?

To some people all war is wrong. Others believe that there are certain circumstances under which war is acceptable and justified. Some Christians worked out the conditions of a 'Just War'

Just War Theory – Thomas Aquinas.



He outlined several conditions for a Just War.

1. There must be a just cause.
2. A proper authority e.g. the government must start war.
3. Fighting must stop when the aim is achieved.
4. Only the correct amount of violence should be used that is necessary.
5. There must be a chance that it will be a success. If there is no chance of winning it is wrong to send people out to fight.
6. It must be a last resort. Everything else must have been tried.
7. A war must only be started if it is possible to gain a positive outcome, good should outweigh evil.

Holy War:

A war made against people who are seen to be unbelievers such as people who believe in other faiths. E.g. the Crusades in the 11th and 12th century between Christians and Muslims. The idea of a Holy War raises many issues:-

- 1) It goes against religious tolerance and takes away peoples religious freedom.
- 2) It may mean that one religion sees themselves as being the true religion and being better than other faiths.
- 3) All religions promote peace so how can it be justified?

Nuclear War:



With the advancement of modern technology and the use of chemical weapons, it is impossible to limit the damage caused. For this reason many Christians feel that there can never be such a thing as a 'Just War'.

Bruce Kent; Bruce Kent left his profession as a priest to campaign and speak out against nuclear war. He believed that nuclear war went against the sanctity of life, he believed God created life and therefore God should be the only being to take it away.

Pacifist:

Someone who is against war.

Two famous pacifists were :-

- 1) Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948).
- 2) Martin Luther King (1929-68)
- 3) Both of these men were against violence. Both led peaceful protests in an attempt to over come what they felt was injustice. They led mass marches, meetings and boycotts: sit down protests, strikes and prayer pilgrimages.

Should we forgive?

It is very hard in reality to forgive someone who has done something that has hurt you or those close to you. Many people have forgiven, even when you would think it was impossible to do so.

- The wife of the murdered head master Philip Laurence of a school in London forgave his murderers.
- Survivors of the holocaust atrocities forgave those who had tortured and tormented them.
- Survivors of the Vietnam War who had been hit by napalm bombs forgave the Americans' who had launched the attacks.

Why do people forgive?

Forgiveness is central to the Christian belief.

Jesus taught that people should forgive one another.



- He taught us to pray and say sorry for the things we have done wrong. (Mathew 5:12)
- He said that we should not seek revenge on those who hurt us. e.g. murderers. (5:39)
- He said 'Love those and pray for those who persecute you'. (Mathew 5:44)
- Jesus himself forgave those who persecuted him. Even when he was on the cross dying he said 'Forgive them, Father! They don't know what they are doing'. (Luke 23:34)
- Even when Jesus was in great distress he still taught a message of peace. (Mathew 26:51-52)
- Jesus taught that God forgives those who have done wrong, no matter how bad, if they ask for his forgiveness and are truly sorry (repentant)
- Woman caught in adultery (John 8:2-11)

Should Christians fight for Justice?

Many Christians over the years have felt a need to fight against injustice, e.g. Martin Luther king and his fight against racism. However generally it is believed that this should be done in a peaceful way.

Liberation Theology:

This is a movement that developed out of the work of a bishop from El Salvador called Oscar Romero. It states the belief that Christians have a moral responsibility to fight against social injustice and the misuse of power by the government.

Many Christians believe in fighting for justice and equality and do this in a number of positive and peaceful ways, e.g. boycotts, non-violent protests, petitions and rallies.

Oscar Romero:

Romero was a quiet gentle man who was appointed Bishop of El Salvador in 1977. Because of his kind nature the government took advantage and tortured and tormented priests. It was not until; he witnessed the death of a fellow priest and close friend that Romero changed his thinking and attitude. From that point on he didn't see his role as being on the side of the government and set up a campaign to overcome the injustice in this place. He encouraged and introduced a new way of worshipping, one that was more suited to the oppressed.

Romero came to believe that it was wrong to ill-treat the oppressed but it was also equally as bad to remain silent and do nothing about it. Romero was prepared to die for this just cause and said "If I am killed, I will rise again in the people of El Salvador". He believed that his work would bring justice nearer.

In 1980 Romero was shot and killed but is still remembered as a martyr who gave his life up in the name of freedom and justice.

Topic 10: Religion Peace & Justice: Exam Questions

Christianity:

- (a) Describe the ways in which Christians might work towards peace.(8)
- (b) Explain the Christian attitudes towards war. (7)
- (c) “All Christians should be pacifists” Discuss.(5)

Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer.

Sources of Information:

- Bible
- Discovery: Philosophy and Ethics For OCR GCSE Religious Studies, Nelson Thornes, Jon Mayled, Libby Ahluwalia
- Religion in Focus: Christianity in Today's World, Jon Murray
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- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/re/>
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