Matters of Life and death

Revision
Cosmology
This is the science of studying how the world came into existence. George Lemaitre (1894-1966) had a big impact on the way that science understands the beginnings and development of the universe. He came up with two theories:

- **Expanding Universe**: expansion of the universe can be traced back to one single point and he suggested himself that the universe has emerged from a small, dense and hot state known as singularity.
- **Primeval Atom**: later became known as the Big Bang

Christian responses
Although Lemaitre was deeply religious he totally discouraged people from connecting his ‘primeval theory’ to that of creation. His work as a scientist was not influenced by his Christian faith. Equally he stated that God did not need science to prove divine creation.

Sometimes science and religion can seem to be in conflict with each other as they seem to prove different points. Creationists do not accept any scientific theories and claim that the universe has been created by God and he cares for everything that is in it. Many Christians believe that the universe is a source of general revelation and something that shows the existence of God.

Natural theology- is the idea that Christians can find evidence for God through the laws of nature.

Argument from design- developed by William Paley uses the idea of a

Responses to the view of the universe as a commodity
- Christians in the past have been criticised for their attitude to the environment (Genesis 1:28) which has led them to dominate earth.
- Advances in technology has led to peoples ability to destroy and exploit the environment.
- Creation story makes distinctions between humans and the rest of creation that leads them to be inferior.
The Sanctity of Life

- Christianity teaches that life is special and comes from God.
- The teachings on why life is special come from the Bible and it is believed that we are different from all other forms due to humans having a soul.
- The value of life is reinforced through the 10 commandments ‘Thou shall not kill’ and they believe that God has a plan for everyone.

**The Importance of a belief in the sanctity of life for Christians today**

- Impacts the way that a Christian might live their life for example not drink alcohol, smoke or take drugs.
- Some Christians may become doctors or nurses so they can help others.
- Christians will base their decisions on these matters in reference to situation ethics.
- Christians believe they have a responsibility to make the most of their lives.
- They show respect for all living things as God made them and gave them life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bioethics</th>
<th>Quality of Life</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medical ethics that is closely linked to Christian beliefs.</td>
<td>Means overall well-being of someone and how good their health is. <strong>Lots of quality of life indicators used to measure someone's life.</strong> Some Christians believe that there are certain circumstances where a benevolent God would not want life to continue (if someone was in extreme pain) and so it would be more acceptable for life to end.</td>
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<td>Abortion, euthanasia and fertility treatments are examples of bioethical issues. Sanctity of life can be important when considering</td>
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## Origins and value of human life

- The study of human origins is called **Anthropogeny**.
- Scientific perspective is it difficult to establish how life on Earth began but it is thought to have developed over a long period of time.
- Over the next billion years life evolved and it is only in the last 570 million years that anything we now recognise came into being.
- Modern human beings have only been around for a small part of Earth’s history.

### Evolution
- The idea that life has evolved over a long period of time is known as **evolution**.
- Charles Darwin first put forward the theory of evolution and he maintained that organisms gradually change and evolve into new species through ‘natural selection’.
- More recent theories argue that modern humans originated in Africa and migrated through the world and

### Christian responses to scientific theories
1. No doubt that modern scientific theories about the origins do cause problems for Christians today. For some it may test their faith. Their ideas will depend on how they interpret the Bible.
2. The significance of these responses is that while they try to seek ways to explain the origins they all agree that ultimately God is responsible and that humans have a special place in God’s creation.

### Christian responses to non-religious views
 Scientific theories do not alter the Christian views on the sanctity of life. Most people agree that human life is important and has value. The value of human life maybe down to human rights and that we don’t have to earn them. The belief in the intrinsic value of human life is crucial when considering end of life
This is the medical process of terminating or ending a human pregnancy so that it does not result in the birth of a baby.

**Pro-life and Pro-choice**

Pro-life is generally against abortion as the foetus has a right to life. Pro-choice is the idea that individuals have the right to choose

**Ensoiment**

The issue of when life begins is very closely linked to people’s attitude to abortion. There is much debate among Christians about when life begins and the consequence whether abortion is actually ‘murder’. Ensoulment is the idea that God introduces the soul into the embryo. Some Christians believe this happens at conception, others later in the development.

**Different Christian attitudes**

Church of England- accepts that there are differences of opinion and will allow abortion under limited circumstances such as if the mothers life is at risk. The Church of England believe that they should be compassionate towards the mother.

Catholic- Life begins at conception and therefore abortion is murder. 6th Commandment states not to kill and it is a very grave sin against God.
Situation Ethics
In some cases Christians will make their decision on abortion based on what is the most loving thing to do for the mother and the unborn child.

Humanist and Atheist views

Humanists believe that abortion can be morally acceptable. The Humanist movement fought for the legalisation of abortion in the 1960’s and they don’t believe that all life is sacred. They believe that quality of life is more important than a right to life. They don’t believe that a foetus becomes a human at conception and they put the needs of the women ahead of the foetus. Most Humanists do agree however, that abortion should be the last option and there needs to be ways such as teaching about contraception and making it more available to aid in its reduction.

Atheists have no single view on abortion and their attitudes depends on personal circumstances.

Christian responses to Humanist ideas

There may be some agreement between Humanists and Christians when it comes to abortion as both groups affirm their beliefs in the value of human life. However all Christians would disagree with anyone that was
People might believe in an afterlife for many different reasons:
- Hold this belief for religious reasons
- They or someone they know has experienced something extraordinary
- Cannot accept a single lifetime on Earth is all there is (energy that makes up a human cannot be destroyed)
- Emotionally comforting to think that you will be reunited with a loved one in heaven.
- Consequences of good and bad behaviour are addressed.

**Christian teachings and beliefs about life after death**

Christianity teaches that life has a purpose and that death is not the end of our existence. The resurrection of Jesus and his later ascension proves that there is life after death. They also believe that it means that Christians have the opportunity to be with God in heaven after death. Many Christians refer to death as a physical death as they believe that the soul of a human is immortal,

Christians believe that the destination of the soul is dependent upon whether it has attained salvation. Souls that have been saved from salvation will go to heaven, whereas, those that haven’t will need to accept the consequences of their sins. They will be judged by God who will decide the destination of the soul at the ‘end times’
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<th>Heaven</th>
<th>Hell</th>
<th>Purgatory</th>
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<td>Traditionally understood to be a transcendent, spiritual realm rather than a physical place.</td>
<td>Place or state of being where unrepentant sinners go after death.</td>
<td>Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches teach that there is also an immediate state after physical death known as purgatory.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Bible teaches that there is no sin, pain or suffering in heaven.</td>
<td>Christians believe that hell is not being in the presence of God after death.</td>
<td>This is the place where souls are purified in order to be holy enough to enter into heaven.</td>
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<tr>
<td>It is a state of being with God and Jesus after death.</td>
<td>Hell is seen as the desolation and isolation of the soul.</td>
<td>Christians, who believe in purgatory, believe that the time a soul spends there can be shortened by the prayers said of those left behind.</td>
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<td>No one knows exactly what heaven is like</td>
<td></td>
<td>While other denominations, such as Anglicans, don’t refer to purgatory they do still believe that the soul continues to</td>
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### Atheist and Humanist beliefs about life after death

- Atheists do not believe in life after death or an idea of an afterlife. They think that we only live once and reject the idea of an immortal soul.
- Richard Dawkins, a prominent atheist, maintains that humans are a product of evolution and not a unique creation of God.
- A belief in an afterlife is ‘wishful thinking’ and as there are many things as human beings we don’t know yet, surviving our own death is one of them.
- Humanists also believe that we only live once and reject the idea of life after death. The only way that we live on is through our achievements, the memories that people have of us and through our children.
Euthanasia is a term used to describe the act of ending a person’s life, or allowing them to die. It can also be referred to as assisted dying. A person who undergoes euthanasia is usually extremely ill with an incurable condition. There might also be situations where a person might want their life ended.

In many cases euthanasia is carried out at the person’s request. This is called voluntary euthanasia and there are many circumstances which can be classed as voluntary euthanasia such as:

- Someone asking for help to end their life
- Declining potential life-saving treatment, including resuscitation
- Refusing to eat or drink or requesting medical treatment be stopped

Sometimes a person maybe too ill to communicate their wishes and so the decision is made by the next of kin/ or other relatives or medical professionals. This is called non-voluntary euthanasia.

Living will: Some people prepare a living will in case they become ill and cannot communicate their wishes. This is a document that sets out how you want to be treated and cared for in particular circumstances.

Active Euthanasia: this is when someone such as a medical professional deliberately does something to make the patient die, such as giving them a legal dose of drugs.

Passive Euthanasia: this is when the death of a patient occurs because someone such as a doctor does not do something

THE LAW AND EUTHANASIA

Euthanasia can be considered as manslaughter or murder. It is illegal within the UK and in most other countries in the world. Albania, Belgium, the Netherlands and Switzerland are among very few countries that allow it. In 2015 there was an attempt to change the law in the UK through the
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<th>Catholic Views</th>
<th>Humanist &amp; Atheist Views</th>
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<tr>
<td>✤ Strongly opposes euthanasia.</td>
<td>✤ Teaches that euthanasia is morally wrong.</td>
<td>✤ Support voluntary euthanasia.</td>
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<td>✤ Most recent opposition highlighted in the Assisted Dying Bill 2015.</td>
<td>✤ Pope John Paul II referred to it as ‘a grave violation of the law of God’</td>
<td>✤ Under some circumstances it maybe the morally right thing to do.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✤ They do believe that people have the right to refuse aggressive treatment.</td>
<td>✤ They do not believe in God and so they don’t believe that only God can decide when people die.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✤ Doctrine of Double Effect - this is when something morally good, such as giving pain relief, has an unwanted side, morally bad, such as the death of a patient.</td>
<td>✤ Atheists also agree with this view.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✤ Beliefs are based on the Bible.</td>
<td>✤ Believe that human beings have a fundamental right to die with dignity and in a way that they have chosen.</td>
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CHRISTIAN RESPONSES
Most Christians would disagree with Humanist and atheist views as they believe in the sanctity of life. Free will does not give humans the right to take life away, not even their own. Stewardship means they have a responsibility to protect the weak in society. Many Christians believe that by legalising euthanasia this could lead many people to feel pressured to end their lives so they are not a burden.

HOSPICE CARE
The Christians and non-Christians that disagree with euthanasia support hospice care. Purpose is to improve the quality of life for people who have an incurable illness. Hospice care can begin when the person is first diagnosed and ends when they die. It can take place at home or in another setting such as care home or purpose built hospice. This treatment, does not have to be continuous. People may feel that they can take a break from the care when they are stable enough. Hospices can also provide respite care. Hospice care also includes palliative
Stewardship: Christians believe that stewardship is a way of life. It means living in a way that recognises that everything belongs to God. Christians believe that if they are good stewards then God will reward them.

In the past Christianity has been criticised for its attitude towards the Earth and the natural world and now say that ENVIRONMENTALISM is the best response. Environmentalism is concerned with the protection and improvement of the environment.

**Green Christianity:** is a term that is used to refer to Christians from all denominations that celebrate and protect the environment.

**Shrinking the Footprint:** is the Church of England’s national environment campaign. The Archbishop of Canterbury says that Christians have a duty to be involved in the reducing of pollution which contributes to global warming.

**Operation Noah:** is an Ecumenical Christian charity which represents many different Churches. It focuses on the growing threat of global warming and climate change. While many Christians are committed to protecting the environment, some believe that they should be more involved in politics and pass environmentally friendly laws or impose penalties for damage done.

Some other ways that Christians support the environment through Operation Noah are:

1. Encouraging the local Church community to get more involved in environmental issues
2. Lobbying local politicians
3. Fundraising and donating money

Christians are also focused on the importance of animal rights as they too are part of God’s creation.