

Christian Thought Revision Guide

Name: _____



How to plan and write an essay

A-B-C

SAMPLE QUESTION: 'Episteme can be gained through reason not doxa'

Introduction

1. General statement referring to the key concept or issue referred to in the question.
2. Specific statement outlining the scholars for and against the issue.
3. Thesis statement stating the direction and aim of the essay.

Thesis: 'Though Aristotle believed knowledge derives through experience of the physical world, physical experience is liable to give changing opinion, and so I will argue through Plato's Theory of Forms that it is through reasoning that we gain true knowledge.'

A. Plato's Theory of Forms points to knowledge coming from reason (claim)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Concluding Statement (linking back to thesis)

B. Aristotle's challenge to Plato and claim knowledge comes from experience (counter claim)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Concluding Statement (linking back to thesis)

C. Weaknesses of counter claim and defence of original position

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Concluding Statement (linking back to thesis)

Conclusion

1. Thesis statement should be restated and a judgement reached on the question.
2. A specific statement giving a summary of what has been argued and justifying the position.
3. A general statement presenting the implications of your argument or posing questions that it provokes.

3.1 Augustine on Human Nature

Will: the part of human nature that makes free choices

Sin: disobeying the will and commands of God

Grace: in theological terms, God's free and undeserved love for humanity, epitomised in the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross

The Fall: the biblical event in which Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command and ate the fruit from the forbidden tree in the Garden of Eden; also used to refer to the imperfect state of humanity

Neoplatonism: philosophical thinking arising from the ideas of Plato

Redeemed: in theological terms, 'saved' from sin by the sacrifice of Christ

Concordia: human friendship

Cupiditas: 'selfish love', a love of worldly things and of selfish desires

Caritas: 'generous love', a love of others and of the virtues; the Latin equivalent of the Greek word agape

Concupiscence: uncontrollable desire for physical pleasures and material things

Ecclesia: heavenly society, in contrast with earthly society

Summum bonum: the highest, most supreme good

Augustine – Evaluation Table

Paradox of Human Nature: Man is both made in the image of God and yet sinner.

Augustine	Objections	Response/ Strengths
<p><u>Weakness of will is defining characteristic of human nature</u></p> <p><u>Before the Fall</u> Starting Point is Genesis Will is God-given and can choose to do good or evil Will driven by selfish love (cupiditas) or selfless love (caritas)</p> <p>Friendship expresses caritas as amor Dei (love of God). After fall more fraught with anguish.</p> <p><u>After the Fall</u> Pride is Adam's sin Will becomes divided and man is no longer able to control his libido and appetitive or desiring aspect of the soul is dominated by concupiscence</p> <p>Sin an ontological condition of human existence not just a description of our behaviour on occasions. No one is good.</p> <p><u>Grace</u> <u>Pelagius</u> argues that humans can live morally pure lives after the Fall if they tried hard Augustine argues that human can only be saved through God's grace not good works</p>	<p>1. Dawkins: Evolutionary biology <u>Dawkins</u>: (i) It is absurd to image the corruption of all humans rests on two individuals if humans emerged from less sophisticated animal forms which lacked kind of consciousnesses ii) Even if the Fall is symbolic, it does not rid Christianity with its unhealthy obsession with sin associated with sex iii) Idea God should want to restore human nature by killing Jesus on the cross is sado-masochistic.</p> <p>2. Psychology of sex <u>Freud</u>: Rejects Augustine's connection between original sin and its transmission to future generation through sexual intercourse and pleasure is part of it. Freud argues sex is not just for reproduction but natural aspect of human development. Human disorders result of environment (family, education, religion) not passed down.</p> <p>3. Kant's The Good Will Augustine said salvation only through grace. <u>Kant</u> says 'salvation' through reason. Kant recognises there are powerful human emotions but no such thing as sin, just lack of reason. Moral life seeks to rise above animal instincts and rests on the 'good will' obedient to reason.</p> <p>4. Sartre: Bad Faith <u>Sartre</u> rejects the notion of an essential human nature as suggests we can never be truly free to develop our own personalities. Man is 'condemned to be free' and is defined by his choices. To deny our freedom to choose how we act is to be in bad faith.</p>	<p>Response to Dawkins <u>Barbour</u>: agrees that evolutionary biology means the idea of an original event makes little sense but suggests suffering, conflict and death long preceded humanity. Genesis 3 is an imaginative story about humans use of their potential and relationship with the world. Creation, Fall, redemption are not separate events but continuing processes in each individual's life.</p> <p>Response to Freud Augustine understands and attempts to account for human emotions</p> <p>Response to Kant <u>Reinhold Niebuhr</u>: immoral society Niebuhr argued though post-Enlightenment thinkers have made it unfashionable to talk about sin, it is wrong to think reason can bring about just and fair societies. (war, poverty, cruelty)</p> <p><u>Colin Gunton</u> observes that modern debates have failed to mention Augustine's important insight that science and philosophy do not consider the religious dimension of being human.</p>

3.2 Death and Afterlife

Disembodied existence: existing without a physical body

Resurrection: living on after death in a glorified physical form in a new realm

Beatific vision: a face-to-face encounter with God

Purgatory: a place where people go, temporarily, after death to be cleansed of sin before they are fit to live with God

Election (in a theological sense): predestination, chosen by God for heaven or hell

Limited election: the view that God chooses only a small number of people for heaven

Original Sin: a state of wrongdoing in which people are born (according to some Christians) because of the sin of Adam and Eve

Unlimited election: the view that all people are called to salvation but only a few will be saved

Universalism: the view that all people will be saved

Parable: a story told to highlight a moral message

Particular judgement: judgement for each person at the point of death

Parousia: used in Christianity to refer to the Second Coming of Christ

Afterlife – Evaluation Table

Heaven	Hell	Purgatory
<p>Aquinas: human beings have souls which are different from other creatures. Other life forms' souls die when the body dies but we have a rational soul which enables life after death. The beatific vision is a timeless moment rather than length of time which stretches onto infinity. Escapes from problem that heaven would be boring as there would no before or after.</p> <p>Bible reference: Jesus had physical body after Resurrection that ascended to heaven so it must have gone to a physical place.</p> <p>Biblical descriptions of heaven: physical place full of angels. It must be everlasting length of time because Bible refers to activities in heaven such as singing God's praise or learning about God. Singing and learning take place in time i.e. one note follows the next, new piece of knowledge is added to another.</p> <p>Dante: Heaven might be allegory and symbols of a person's moral life as experienced on earth heaven when blissfully happy, hell when in despair. Avoids problem of life after death but discards biblical teaching.</p>	<p>Hick argues for universal salvations and believes an eternal hell would contradict Christian concept of a benevolent God. Is any sin so bad that it deserves eternal punishment?</p> <p>Pope John Paul II: The Church has condemned no one to hell, not even Judas, it is God that decides. However, the God of love is also the God of justice.</p> <p>Augustine: we have all failed to live in God's image and likeness and all deserve eternal punishment in hell.</p> <p>Mark 9:47–48 Jesus warns, "[I]t is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, where the worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched"</p> <p>Dante: Hell might be allegory and symbol of a person's moral life as experienced on earth.</p>	<p>2 Mac 12:42-46: The Maccabean text shows that Judas, and the Jewish priests and people believed that those who died in peace could be helped by prayers and sacrifices offered by the living</p> <p>Mt. 12:32: Christ warns the Pharisees that anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven either in this world or in the next implying opportunity to be forgiven after death.</p> <p>Pope Innocent IV: "the souls ... are purified after death and can be helped by the prayers of the Church."</p> <p>Calvin: Little biblical basis for purgatory and undermines teaching about God's saving grace Jesus' sacrifice on cross sufficient to defeat sin, enabling people to go straight to heaven if they are accepting Jesus' salvation.</p> <p>Martin Luther: Doctrine of Purgatory abused and gave rise to selling 'indulgences' in Middle Ages to reach heaven. Indulgences way of reducing suffering of a loved one in purgatory e.g. prayer, fast, buy token from Church.</p>

3.3 Knowledge of God's existence

Faith: voluntary commitment to a belief without the need for complete evidence to support it

Empiricism: a way of knowing that depends on the five senses

Natural theology: drawing conclusions about the nature and activity of God by using reason and observing the world

Protestantism: a form of Christianity which rejects the authority of the Catholic Church and places greater emphasis on the Bible and on personal faith

Revelation: 'uncovering'. In theological terms, this is when God chooses to let himself be known

Immediate revelation: where someone is given direct knowledge of God

Mediate revelation: where someone gains knowledge of God in a secondary, non-direct way.

Grace of God: God's unconditional and undeserved gifts

Wisdom literature: a genre of writing from the ancient world, teaching about wisdom and virtue. In the Bible, books such as Proverbs and Job are classified as wisdom literature

Discuss critically the view that Christians can discover truths about God using human reason.

This question invites a discussion of natural theology, and will require an exploration of the extent to which reason can lead Christians to knowledge of God, if at all. You will need to consider the views of those who support natural theology as well as those who disagree with it.

Introduction

Key Issue: Natural knowledge of God distinguished from revealed knowledge of God in terms of the ways in which people have arrived at such knowledge i.e. one through reason the other through faith. However, as Aquinas argued, God can reveal truths to us through our reasoning, and that our reasoning was given to us so that we might learn more about God, the distinction becomes blurred.

REASON 1 Supporting Natural Theology = order and beauty of universe

- Propositional knowledge (generally Catholic approach): knowing or accepting something is so.
- Propositional revelation is faith as acceptance of truths revealed by God, as propositions to be accepted.

Aquinas = Existence of the world points to the existence of God

- Aquinas' Five Ways (First three ways are the cosmological argument)
- Paley's Teleological Argument

Objection: Mackie observes that traditional arguments for the existence of God have been criticised to the extent that no rational proof of God's existence is possible and that most believers acknowledge that most believers must hold that God's existence is known in some other, non-rational way. Note: Aquinas didn't intend his 5 Ways to be proofs for the existence of God but rather demonstrate the rationality of belief.

RESPONSE –

John Leslie – anthropic principle (universe finely tuned to such degree suggests designer)

- Principle of special relativity ensures that forces such as electro-magnetism have an invariable effect regardless of whether they act at right angles to a system's direction of travel. This enables genetic codes to work and planets to hold together when rotating.
- Quantum laws prevent electrons from spiralling into atomic nuclei.
- Electromagnetism has one-force strength which enables multiple key processes to take place.

REASON 2 SUPPORTING NATURAL THEOLOGY - Calvin = innate sense of divine

- Bible: supports idea that people are born with a sense for God e.g. Genesis God breathes into Adam with his own breath. We are made in the image of God and so can appreciate beauty and goodness in the world which are manifestations of God's goodness and creativity.
- Calvin: sensus divinitas – seed of divinity – innate sense of God
- Anyone who reflects on the natural world and its beauty and order should be able to understand the existence and character of God.
- Created world is a 'mirror' or 'theatre' for God.

- **Epistemic distance between God and man is created by human beings:** God's existence is obvious and it is only human sin that clouds understanding.

Objection to Natural Theology: reasoning is flawed – God can only be known through revelation

Gap too great between humans and God to accept the *sensus divinitas*

Revealed Theology

- Non-propositional knowledge (generally Protestant approach): knowledge of how to do something and gain skills through experience e.g. knowing how to ride a bike. My knowledge of such things will increase the more I practice them.
- **Non-propositional revelation: faith of a personal encounter with God through experience.**

Objection against Natural Theology from Augustine: original sin prevents people from knowing God

Augustine

- Faith is superior to reason
- 'I believe in order to understand' – faith
- SYNOPTIC LINK: AUGUSTINE ON HUMAN NATURE (cupiditas and concupiscentia, effects of original sin, humans fall away from image of God)

Martin Luther

- Martin Luther had low estimate of reason as a human faculty because he considered it to be corrupted by **egoism** and sin.
- Like Augustine, he argued that faith, being above reason, was a more reliable path to truth. But if it was to be a saving faith, it required taking the risk of trust (***fiducia***)

Karl Barth

- Witness to rise of Nazism in Germany
- Human reason is fallible and cannot lead into any knowledge of God and it is arrogance to believe we are clever enough to access absolute and eternal truths.
- God can only be known when God chooses to disclose himself (revelation)
- People are incapable of working out right and wrong by themselves and need to follow God's commandments as revealed in the Bible.
- God revealed through Jesus Christ and so no truth to be found in other world religions.
- Augustine: original sin prevented people from being able to know God because they had become corrupt in their will and could never be holy enough to approach God through their own efforts.

RESPONSE:

- If people have no way of judging between true and false belief then how can we distinguish different claims by people e.g. one person might claim God had disclosed a truth to him, another something different
- Aquinas' Five Ways 0 God has given us the ability to use our senses and reason for a purpose. Reason and Revelation work together.
- Bible suggests that humans can gain natural knowledge of God e.g. writings of Paul

Objection against Natural Law – leap of faith is required

Soren Kierkegaard

- Faith is a leap of the will unsupported by rational evidence like the feeling of being suspended over 60,000 fathoms.
- The decision to make the **leap of faith** is not simply a suspension of reasoning but a conscious and morally intelligent decision which enables us to find religious enlightenment in a world of frustration and mystery.
- Kierkegaard – human beings cannot use observation of the natural world to support belief that God exists but that does not alter the fact that God exists or not. Human beings must make a choice.
- Yet object of faith is a paradox – the paradox of God’s love
- Leibniz – what human observe might reflect objective truths but we cannot know with certainty because we cannot escape our subjectivity

Quotes

“I do not believe... that God exists but I know it” – truth is beyond our comprehension
“there is no gradual accumulation of sensory data or rational proof for God’s existence or for the resurrection for Christ etc. One performs a willed act of faith despite fear, doubt and sin. The leap of faith is not out of thoughtlessness but out of volition”

Objection: faith is not sufficient

- Dawkins: faith encourages people to be lazy in their thinking. Where there is a gap in human knowledge it is described as a mystery and that evidence is not necessary.
- Nietzsche: faith in God who is dead was an obstacle to living a morally courageous life and human flourishing.
- Belief in God based on faith is like belief in the tooth fairy. It cannot be conclusively disproved but there is no evidence to support them, and therefore no good reason to commit to them.
- Hume: ‘a wise man proportions his belief to the evidence.’ We should look to evidence. Cf. Probability Argument against miracles

Response

- Many Christians would agree that faith alone is not sufficient but that it builds on knowledge developed through reasoning. The fact that we exist in a beautiful ordered world underpins Christian faith. This makes it a very different claim to ‘there’s a teapot orbiting Mars.’ At the same time, the knowledge gained through sense experience and reason does not provide conclusive evidence and hence why faith is necessary.
- Many cases where we have insufficient empirical or rational evidence on which we base our decisions, e.g. whether we have free will or whether the sun will rise tomorrow. Some beliefs can be justified by emotion, memory or intuition.

Conclusion

Natural and Revealed Theology – Evaluation Table

Natural Theology		Revealed Theology	
Strengths	Weaknesses	Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Calvin's Innate sense of the divine Creation is mirror of God Anyone who reflects on the natural world and its beauty and order should be able to understand the existence and character of God. Epistemic distance between God and man is created by human beings. God's existence is obvious and it is only human sin that clouds understanding.</p> <p>Design Argument William Paley's Watch Analogy Thomas Aquinas' Five Ways</p> <p>Paul demonstrates logic in his debate with the Jewish leaders as he tries to show them similarities between the Messiah they are expecting and the figure of Jesus.</p> <p>Swinburne: order, purpose, regularity in universe</p>	<p>Hume's criticisms of the Design Argument i) The analogy is false. A watch is a mechanical and static device, whereas the world or universe is organic. It would be better to compare the universe with an orange. If there is no obvious creator of the orange, then there is no obvious creator of the universe. ii) Epicurean thesis. As all things require some kind of stability to exist then the universe can sustain some degree of randomness. This being so, then it is likely that an infinite universe over infinite time will develop patterns and order to give the appearance of design. iii) Like effects do not imply like causes. Even if the universe has an apparent design (effect) the cause does not have to be attributable to a single design cause.</p> <p>Criticism from RT Barth: Human reasoning is fallible</p>	<p>Barth: Witness to rise of Nazism in Germany.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human reason is fallible and cannot lead into any knowledge of God and it is arrogance to believe we are clever enough to access absolute and eternal truths. God can only be known when God chooses to reveal himself People are incapable of working out right and wrong by themselves and need to follow God's commandments as revealed in the Bible. God revealed through Jesus Christ and so no truth to be found in other world religions. <p>Augustine: original sin prevented people from being able to know God because they had become corrupt in their will and could never be holy enough to approach God through their own efforts.</p> <p>Kierkegaard: leap of faith</p>	<p>The Problem of Fideism is that by ruling out reason, there is no means of testing true or false beliefs. The Roman Catholic position stated at the First Vatican Council (1869–70) in the 'Dogmatic Constitution of Faith' outlawed fideism preferring instead a midpoint between the rationalism of natural theology and faith position of revealed theology</p> <p>The problem of distinguishing different truth claims. If people have no way of judging between true and false belief then how can we distinguish different claims by people e.g. one person might claim God had disclosed a truth to him, another something different.</p> <p>Dawkins: faith encourages people to be lazy in their thinking. Where there is a gap in human knowledge it is described as a mystery and that evidence is not necessary.</p> <p>Hume: Probability Argument</p>

3.4 The person of Jesus Christ

Son of God: a term for Jesus that emphasises he is God incarnate, one of the three persons of the Trinity

Liberator: a general term for someone who frees a people or group

Rabbi: a Jewish teacher, often associated with having followers

Hypostatic union: the belief that Christ is both fully God and fully human, indivisible, two natures united in one person

Homoousios: of the same substance or of the same being

Word: from the Greek logos, another name for the second person of the Trinity, used at the beginning of John's Gospel to describe the incarnation which existed from the beginning, of one substance with and equal to God the Father

Redemption: the action of saving or being saved from sin, error, or evil

Incarnation: God born as a human being, in Jesus Christ

Zealot: a member of the Jewish political/military movement that fought against Rome in the first century AD

Messiah: in Christianity, the word is associated with Jesus Christ, who is believed to be the Son of God and the Saviour. In Judaism the word is associated with individuals who rose up against oppression, the people of Israel

Jesus' role was just to liberate the poor and weak against oppression.' Discuss.

Introduction

Context: Roman Occupation of Israel

- Jewish people lived under Roman occupation through a client king in the north and the Roman Procurator, Pontius Pilate, in the south.
- AD 73 Great Revolt – Jerusalem Temple burnt down, tens of thousands enslaved, million dead
- One of the groups leading the revolt were the Zealots – who called for violent revolution
- Jews had history of oppression e.g. Exodus Story of freedom from slavery in Egypt – re-enacted in feast of Passover
- Many Jews hoped God would send a military Messiah to lead a rebellion against Roman rule.

1) Jesus' message for freedom for poorest, outcasts, most needy and he associated with outcasts (**social liberation**)

2) Some scholars have gone further (Reza Aslan, *Zealot*) – Jesus was interested in **political liberation** for Jewish people under Roman occupation.

3) For Christians, Jesus is much more than a figure in history. Bible speaks of **liberation from sin and death**.

1. Entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday

- Jesus was Jewish and held the Passover (with narrative of liberation from slavery). Jesus chose to celebrate it in Jerusalem at a time when violent revolution was in the air.
- People spread **cloaks** on the road = like when Israelites spread cloaks when Jehu was declared **king**
- People waved **branches** = like in remembrance of **Macabees** who liberated Israel.
- Jesus requests donkey = fulfilment of Zechariah's prophecy "your king is coming to you... humble and riding upon an ass"
- He is hailed with politically contentious titles - hailed as Lord, King
- Jesus' followers have suspicious names e.g. Simon the Zealot, Judas Iscariot (= Sword = Zealot)

Objection: Jesus could not be a 'zealot', a member of the Zealot Party because it did not exist until another 30 years after his death.

Response: Question not whether a zealot but that his views on violence are more complex than sometimes suggested.

Church may have tidied his views to avoid persecution

2. Behaviour in Temple's public courtyard

- No law that forbids presence of vendors in court of the gentiles
- Outer court was free-for-all arena that served as bazaar and administrative headquarters of the Sanhedrin, supreme Jewish council
- Jesus says to destroy the Temple – capital offence of **sedition** punishable by crucifixion. An attack both on the Sanhedrin and the Temple's relationship with Rome.

3. Lawful to Pay Caesar

- Question to test zealotry
- Rome's demand for tribute a claim of ownership over the land and its inhabitants.
- Jesus' answer 'give back to Caesar what is Caesar and give back to God the property that belongs to God.'

Objection: Jesus is saying to give taxes to Caesar and give our 'heart' to God; worship and obedience. At most compromised answer between the priestly and zealot position between those who thought it lawful to pay taxes and those who did not.

Response: *apodidomi* = verb, give back = specifically used when paying someone back property to which he is entitled to. Caesar is entitled to be given back his denarius coin because it is his coin, with his picture stamped on it, not because he deserves tribute. By extension, God is to be given back his land that was seized by the Romans. = sedition
Cf. Leviticus 25:23 'The land is mine.'

4. Arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane

- Cohort of soldiers arrest Jesus carrying torches and weapons.
- In preparation, Jesus made sure his disciples were armed. After the Last Supper instructs 'if you do not have a sword go sell your cloak and buy one.'
- When his disciples response 'here are two swords', Jesus responds 'it is enough'. (Luke 22:36-38)
- Jesus guilty of civil crime not religious crime. He is crucified with two bandits (*lestai*). As with every criminal who is crucified, a plaque detailing his crime is placed above his head stating his crime. His *titulus* reads 'King of the Jews' = not mocking him, his crime is **sedition** (claiming to be king and messiah)
- Jesus one of many people tried for same crime: e.g. Hezekiah and Judas

Objection: Jesus explicitly rejects violent revolution

- he stops his disciples from defending him with violence
- he does not confirm messianic title Pilate accuses him
- Jesus sidesteps questions about Roman rule
- Emphasised peace "Blessed are the peacemakers"... "those who live by the sword, die by the sword", "love thy enemies"

Conclusion

Jesus Christ – Evaluation Table

Liberator		Teacher		God	
Strengths	Weaknesses	Strengths	Weaknesses	Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Reza Aslan: i) Jesus’ followers have suspicious names e.g. Simon the Zealot, Judas Iscariot and they had weapons e.g. Gethsemane</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When arrested and put to death on civic not religious crime “King of the Jews” = sedition • Entrance on Palm Sunday orchestrated to fulfil Messianic prophecy (Zechariah 9:9) • “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s” = liberate land of Israel <p>Cone: Jesus is ‘black’ because he belongs to an ethnically oppressed group. Jesus sided with poor and death due to corrupt society.</p>	<p>Ratzinger: against LT Jesus rejects violent revolution: “those who live by the sword will die by the sword” (in Gethsemane), he does not confirm messianic title Pilate accuses him, sidesteps questions about Roman rule, “Blessed are the peacemakers”</p> <p>Aslan assumes Jesus is poor but as a carpenter he would not be. Jesus is also called a rabbi suggesting he is educated. Jesus’ disciples were not poor men e.g. fishermen are small businessmen.</p> <p>COUNTER: Possible the Early Church tried to hide Jesus’ revolutionary tendencies to avoid persecution</p>	<p>Hick, Jesus’ ability to be aware of and act on God’s will is not unique but shared with prophets e.g. Moses Treating incarnation as metaphor sets aside questions about Jesus’ divine nature but still holds significance as model to live a moral life.</p> <p>Burton Mack: Jesus not a liberator but a Cynic - wise men whose parables and aphorisms were designed to challenge their audiences and make them question their values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus provides guidance on the application of the law to moral problems and is sometimes called rabbi. 	<p>Bonhoeffer: incarnation linked to human salvation and understanding that we meet God in human beings. We encounter God in the oppressed, the struggle for justice.</p> <p>Hick’s understanding of salvation is personal salvation which is different from salvation from sin and death and lacks political message of Gospel.</p> <p>Hitchens: Jesus is not wise e.g. his teaching ‘whoever is without sin may cast the first stone’ - if only non-sinners have the right to punish, how can we prosecute offenders?</p>	<p>Early Christians identified Jesus with God. The New Testament applies the term ‘God’ to Jesus. Paul speaks of Jesus as God’s ‘own son’ implying unique status.</p> <p>Baptism of Jesus and Transfiguration suggests Jesus is uniquely close to God.</p> <p>Council of Nicaea: Jesus of one substance with the Father (homoousios)</p> <p>Council of Chalcedon: Christ is in two natures, which come together in one person and one hypostasis without confusion</p> <p>Miracles esp. resurrection</p>	<p>Hume: no evidence for miracles e.g. Probability Argument</p> <p>Schillebeeckx: Jesus miracles = metaphor e.g. calming storm = source of calm > But how?</p> <p>Wright: Jesus healing people who have been excluded > Jesus showing power to unite all Israel for renewed covenant and forgiveness of sins to inaugurate a Kingdom of Heaven on Earth.</p> <p>Not Unique - Prophets in the bible who heard God’s voice, martyrs who gave up their lives like Jesus on the cross, healers who looked after people like Jesus did.</p>

Jesus Christ's Self Knowledge – Evaluation Tables

Problem of Jesus' Self-Knowledge	Response	
<p>Begin this answer by discussing Christian beliefs that Jesus is fully human and fully divine above.</p> <p>If Jesus was aware of his divine nature, how can he be a human being? As a child he would know adult aspects of his life. He would know what was going to happen and what other people were thinking. (omniscient). If this is the case how can we understand moments of questioning did he feign emotions? but that would suggest dishonesty?</p> <p>If he wasn't divine, how could he have said the things with authority on death and sin, forgiveness and God's love? How meaningful is it if Jesus is fully divine if he did not have full access to his divine consciousness?</p>	<p>Sanders' Historical Jesus saw himself as last messenger</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jesus saw himself 'as God's last messenger before the establishment of the kingdom'. ● He considered that the Temple would be renewed and the twelve tribes of Israel would be reassembled. ● Like other charismatic leaders of his day, his vision of society was that there would be a major reversal in society where the poor, meek and lowly would have leading places. ● He was a popular figure among the ordinary people who were attracted to him because of his healings – some even thought he would be like other great figures from Israel's past as a 'son of God'. ● His miracles, teaching on non-violence, hope for outcastes, eschatological hope or teaching of God's grace make him substantially different from others at the time, but these are not sufficient to make him unique. 	<p>Rahmer: human consciousness must have unknown future in front of it. If Jesus was conscious of God the Father's awareness all the time, then it would not be human.</p> <p>His solution is to think of an onion: psychologists sometimes describe human self-consciousness as layered like an onion. We have a deep understanding of our self within us but it is not always on the surface of our consciousness.</p> <p>Therefore, in the Garden or on the cross or in the desert his human self-consciousness was close to the surface but his divine was deep within.</p> <p>O'Collins challenges the idea these questions can ever be answered.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is very difficult to undertake any study of the inner world of any being, especially for one who has left no writing of his own 2. To make any claim on Jesus' self knowledge requires an understanding on the complexity of the multi-layered structure of how we can experience reality with memory, emotion, experience, intuition 3. Consciousness is not the same as knowledge of a separate object.

3.5 Christian Moral Principles

Bible/Scripture: the collection or canon of books in the Bible which contain the revelation of God

Church tradition: the traditions of how Christian life in community works, in worship, practical moral life and prayer, and the teaching and reflection of the Church handed down across time

Sacred Tradition: the idea that the revelation of Jesus Christ is communicated in two ways. In addition to Scripture, it is communicated through the apostolic and authoritative teaching of the Church councils and the Pope

Agape love: unconditional love, the only ethical norm in situationism

‘The Bible is all that is needed as a moral guide for Christian behaviour.’ Discuss.

For this question you need to consider whether the Bible is totally sufficient as a guide for Christians or whether it needs to be supplemented or even overruled by other sources of moral authority.

Introduction

Aim: It will be argued that the Bible is not all that is needed as a moral guide for Christian behaviour.

Outline: This essay will consider the limitations of a propositional approach to the Bible and argue that the Church Tradition (prima scriptura: holding the Bible as principle source of authority but in light of Church tradition) and the Sacred Tradition (the Bible and authority of the Magisterium and Church Tradition holding equal authority) are more convincing.

Context: Even if the Bible is the ‘Word of God’, we cannot straightforwardly say that its meaning will be plain. Even if it is communicating truths about God, the Bible is written in human words and understood in human ways. For example, if God is **timeless** or outside time, he will have to communicate to us in a language we speak with human tenses and the words within those senses will be human words that we can understand and could not be absolutely literal when describing God. To reduce the Bible to its literal sense would be in danger of committing idolatry – making God in our own image.

Sola Scriptura

Some Christians may argue that the Bible contains propositional knowledge and is all that is needed as a moral guide for Christian behaviour, however this is problematic.

- **Propositional approach to bible – God revealed directly through the words on the page = commandments are fixed moral principles & parables have fixed meaning**
- **What those truths are will vary from tradition to tradition ... see page 70**
- Evangelicals = literal **Word of God**
- **Amanuensis** = writers recorded what God dictated Cf. Jeremiah ‘I have put my words in your mouth.’
- **Sola scriptura** = scripture alone = bible is supreme authority and self-authenticating (we do not need an interpreter)
- Contains **Propositional revelation**
- **Inspiration** – different interpretations
- Strength - Mouw: argues against situational ethics – other commandments and teachings – there can be parallels between the history recorded in the Bible and present issues

Problems with sola scriptura

- **Objection: impossible to read without interpretation** – we are all humans with our own experience and context and cannot separate ourselves from that when reading the Bible.
- **Objection: different styles** – if God dictated the Bible word for word how come it contains different styles of writing e.g. John more mystical suggesting influence from other Gospels, Matthew contains Jewish allusions as if writing for a Jewish audience, Luke explains different aspects of Judaism as if his audience is unfamiliar with it, Mark is written in a simple Greek.
- **Objection: conflicting commands** - Jesus teaching on the Sermon on the Mount contradict some earlier teachings in the Hebrew Scripture. Some rules in Hebrew Scripture are not followed by Christians today e.g. touching pig skin.

Prima Scriptura = Why Bible needs to be supplemented with Church teaching

In addition, Anglicans may argue that the Bible may come first but it cannot be separated and needs to be supplemented with Church tradition.

- **prima scriptura** = bible principle source of authority but understood through Church tradition and reason
- Church tradition = early traditions of the first Christians + current traditions of the Church.
- Tradition = life of prayer, worship, organisation of the Church and teachings of the Church.
- Church and tradition work together:
 - Church tradition = How community worships and prays using scripture
 - Bible = starts Church tradition because it record the life of the first Christians
 - Bible = already interpreted by tradition, the Church chose which texts were reliable

Sacred and Church Tradition

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Evaluation & response

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Agape

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Evaluation & response

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Conclusion

Moral Principles – Evaluation Table

Bible		Church		Agape	
Strengths	Weaknesses	Strengths	Weaknesses	Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Bible is inspired word of God.</p> <p>Neil Messer: guidance in Bible found not just commandments but in role models and stories</p> <p>Richard Mouw: there can be parallels between the history recorded in the Bible and present issues</p> <p>Jeremiah 'I have put my words in your mouth.' (Amanuensis)</p>	<p>William Spohn: scripture cannot be interpreted in isolation from Christian communities and traditions in which it functions</p> <p>There are different styles within the Bible e.g. John more mystical, Luke writing to non-Jewish audience so explains different aspects of Judaism, Mark is simple Greek</p> <p>There are conflicting commands e.g. Jesus' teaching on Sermon on Mount contradict some earlier teachings in the Hebrew Bible</p> <p>Hays: Bible cannot be interpreted in vacuum but shaped by the Church.</p>	<p>Vatican II: Bible and Sacred Tradition linked</p> <p>Apostolic Succession = Pope and bishops inherit their authority from the apostles, who have inherited their authority from Christ.</p>	<p>Martin Luther criticised practices within the Church such as paying indulgences to shorten time in purgatory</p> <p>Jesus attitude to tradition – traditions criticised by Jesus as rules of men rather than commandments of God.</p> <p>Ruether: church excludes women – Ruether – tradition and bible both shaped by male experience of life.</p> <p>Concern about reason being set against faith cf. Barth, Bonhoeffer</p>	<p>Tilich: justice, love, wisdom</p> <p>Agape is central to Jesus teachings cf. 'Greatest Commandments 'love God and love your neighbour'</p> <p>Influential on Fletcher (see Situation Ethics)</p> <p>Robinson: An ethic for 'man come of age'</p> <p>Pope Francis: revisiting some of the rules and traditions of the Catholic Church to remind people of the emphasis on love. He criticises approaches which take an authoritarian, rigid attitude and aims to show compassion and openness to the grace of God.</p>	<p>It shares with utilitarianism the difficulty of predicting into the future.</p> <p>There are many differences among Christians about what exactly is love and how it is shown E.g. abortion</p> <p>Richard Mouw Prioritising one biblical principle (agape) over other biblical principles cf. 'If you love me, keep my commandments'</p> <p>Jesus broke only religious conventions (e.g. Sabbath Law) rather than moral laws.</p> <p>Love of neighbour depends on fidelity to God's laws.</p> <p>Macquarrie: Situation Ethics is incurably individualistic</p>

3.6 Christian Moral Action

Discipleship: following the life, example and teaching of Jesus

Cheap grace: grace that is offered freely, but is received without any change in the recipient, and ultimately is false as it does not save

Costly grace: grace followed by obedience to God's command and discipleship

Passion: Jesus' sufferings at the end of his life

Solidarity: an altruistic commitment to stand alongside and be with those less fortunate, the oppressed, those who suffer

To what extent, if at all, does the theology of Bonhoeffer have relevance for Christians today.

To truly answer this question you must consider whether there are some aspects of his thought that are more relevant for today (e.g. solidarity with the poor) than others (e.g. his emphasis on suffering which was heavily influenced by the extreme ideologies of his time).

Introduction

- Run an illegal seminary for the Confessing Church first in Zingst and then Finkenwalde
- *The Cost of Discipleship* = his most influential book
- Lived during the Nazi era

Discipleship = Path of costly grace (AO1)

- Receiving grace = total obedience to God.
- Costly Grace is grace that is worth sacrificing everything for to get.
- BIBLE REF: Christ presents the model of cost of discipleship especially by following the will of his father through his sacrifice on the cross.
- Path of discipleship begins with baptism = death
- But costly grace goes beyond martyrdom; simply to hear the word of God where God chooses to speak it
- Cheap grace endangers salvation and involves no cost on part of believer
- Cheap grace arises when grace is universalised as a principle e.g. taking God's forgiveness taken for granted for breaking commandment

- Church has become too secularised and has lost this sense of costly grace.
- It has taken the values of modern age cf. early church integrated in Roman Empire and monks that lived apart.
- Luther an example of someone who has taken path of costly grace.

Irrelevant = Too much emphasis on suffering? (AO2)

- Discipleship = passion and death of Jesus.
- Not the same as general suffering but a specific suffering essential to Christian life. Rejection and suffering not for a cause for the sake of Christ.
- Costly Grace
- Temptation and burden

Objection

- **Bonhoeffer overemphasises suffering as a concept of discipleship.** Bonhoeffer lived at a time of extreme ideologies (communism and fascism) and great suffering (Great Depression).
- Bonhoeffer downplays the joy and hope of the Resurrection. Gospels = Good News. Jesus' Passion includes suffering but he goes beyond it. Bonhoeffer is stuck on the cross.

Response

- **Bonhoeffer's message is about solidarity not just suffering.** Many people suffer injustice, illness, betrayal or bereavement. They can find consolation through friendship.
- **Bonhoeffer would say we need to pass through our own cross** if we are to follow Christ.

Discipleship = being obedient to God's will

- First disciples responded to obedience to Christ
- Bible ref: “there is only obedience to the call of Christ”
- All other legal ties nullified = discipleship above law and responsibilities of citizenship
- Luke 9:57-62 – a man says he has to first bury his father (legal responsibility) but Jesus says ‘let the dead bury the dead’.
- Reason, conscience, responsibility and piety are obstacles to ‘single-minded obedience.’
- P. 181 = Sermon on the Mount; not just not to commit adultery discipleship involves the extraordinary “be as perfect as my Father in heaven”; love as your enemy

Irrelevant = distorted view of God’s will over the state?

- Duty to God outweighs duty to the state
- ‘There is no standing amid the ruins of one’s native town in the consciousness that at least one has not oneself incurred guilt.’ doing nothing in face of evil as bad as doing evil.
- Spoke out against Nazi ideas in the university where he worked and lost his job. He spoke against the Nazis at public lectures and was banned. He criticised his own confessing church for faltering to pressure from Hitler. He participated in illegal seminary. He described Hitler as the anti-Christ. he helped the allies and smuggled Jews into Switzerland.

Objection = is it possible to know God’s will

- **Bonhoeffer’s interpretations of God’s will in the Bible may be wrong.** If we cannot be confident what God wills, how can we act confidently in the way Bonhoeffer thought disciples should.
- **p. 179 Mark 2:41** Jesus calls his disciples and they follow with no time lapsed. Bonhoeffer interprets this to mean that a disciple should not weigh up reasons for and against God’s calling but just obey, but this may not be accurate.
- **Bonhoeffer encouraged distorted views of God’s will.** He became involved in an assassination attempt which encourages violence. This could be the result of uncertainty about God’s will.

Response

- **Common life together reduces risk of distorted meaning.** Bonhoeffer advocated a life in a community based on shared reflection and reading of scripture. i.e. seminary he led. Only through common life with the Bible that we can understand all of the Bible not just the parts we want to read.
- **Bonhoeffer did not encourage distorted views of God’s will.** Most Christians would sympathise with Bonhoeffer’s criticism of the German Christian movement and Confessing Church as it kowtowed to Hitler.

Objection: state loyalty

- **Bonhoeffer encouraged distorted views of God’s will.** He became involved in an assassination attempt which encourages violence. This could be the result of uncertainty about God’s will.

Church = community

- 'visible community of the church.' > be a sign for others
- Bible ref: 'salt and light' > just as salt adds flavour to food, Christians must be light and act as moral people
- Good works
- Bonhoeffer founding member of Confessing Church. Jesus central over worldly leaders like Hitler. God has authority over a person's life not another ideology (National Socialism).
- Bonhoeffer led a secret and illegal seminary (training new pastors) way to evade Aryan law restrictions and train ministers from Nazi ideology.

Conclusion

Bonhoeffer – Evaluation Table

Bonhoeffer	Objections	Response/Strengths
<p>1. Role of suffering Discipleship = path of passion and death of Jesus. Not the same as general suffering but a specific suffering essential to Christian life. Rejection and suffering not for a cause but for the sake of Christ. Costly Grace Temptation and burden</p> <p>2. Discipleship is being obedient to God's Will First disciples responded to obedience to Christ All other legal ties nullified = discipleship above law and responsibilities of citizenship Luke 9:57-62 – a man says he has to first bury his father (legal responsibility) but Jesus says 'let the dead bury the dead'. Reason, conscience, responsibility and piety are obstacles to 'single-minded obedience.'</p> <p>3. Duty to God outweighs duty to the state Spoke out against Nazi ideas in the university where he worked and lost his job. He spoke against the Nazis at public lectures and was banned. He criticised his own confessing church for faltering to pressure from Hitler. He participated in illegal seminary. He described Hitler as the anti-Christ. He helped the allies and smuggled Jews into Switzerland.</p>	<p>1. Bonhoeffer overemphasises suffering as a concept of discipleship. Bonhoeffer lived at a time of extreme ideologies (communism and fascism) and great suffering (Great Depression). He is stuck on the cross</p> <p>2. Bonhoeffer's interpretation of God's will could be wrong. He became involved in an assassination attempt which contradicts Jesus' teachings on violence. This could be the result of uncertainty about God's will.</p> <p>3. Christianity should be inclusive and adopt values of modern age. Bonhoeffer encouraging us to follow God's commands not trends of the day but state loyalty is important today.</p>	<p>1. Bonhoeffer's message is about solidarity not just suffering. Many people suffer injustice, illness, betrayal or bereavement. They can find consolation through friendship.</p> <p>2. Common life together reduces risk of distorted meaning. Bonhoeffer advocated a life in a community based on shared reflection and reading of scripture. i.e. seminary he led. Only through common life with the Bible that we can understand all of the Bible not just the parts we want to read.</p> <p>3. Bonhoeffer's challenge to abandon comfortable Christianity gives people prospect of meaningful life. In western societies there is an obsession with material benefits and self-interest alongside deep sense of unhappiness.</p>

Year 2

3.7 Religious Pluralism and Theology

Exclusivism: the view that only one religion offers the complete means of salvation

Inter-faith dialogue: sharing and discussing religious beliefs between members of different religious traditions, with an aim of reaching better understanding

Theology of religion(s): the branch of Christian theology that looks at the relationship between Christianity and other world religions from a Christian perspective

Inclusivism: the view that although one's own religion is the normative (setting the standard of normality) means of salvation, those who accept its central principles may also receive salvation

Pluralism: the view that there are many ways to salvation through different religious traditions

Particularism: an alternative name for exclusivism, meaning that salvation can only be found in one particular way

Vatican II: the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, held from 1962 to 1965 to discuss the place of the Catholic Church in the modern world

Noumena: a Kantian term to describe reality as it really is, unfiltered by the human mind

Phenomena: a Kantian term to describe reality as it appears to us, filtered by the human mind

Pluralism – Evaluation Table

Exclusivism		Inclusivism		Pluralism	
Strengths	Weaknesses	Strengths	Weaknesses	Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Barth: -Jesus = “The way, the truth the life” - Christ= fully unique → the only reliable way of gaining knowledge of God Cf. “No one comes to God but through me” - Reasoning can be mistaken ∴ Rejects natural theology</p> <p>D’Costa: - Broad exclusivist (salvation is only for those baptised into the church) As opposed to narrow exclusivist (salvation only available to those belonging to specific denomination)</p> <p>Calvin/Augustine - Salvation happens after death - Christian doctrine states ‘Extra ecclesiam nulla salus’</p>	<p>1 Timothy: God wants all people to be saved -God is benevolent - suggestion that God condemns people who haven’t heard the Christian message to hell goes against this idea - Matthew 25 – salvation based on actions not beliefs – implies universal salvation - exclusivism leads to wars and conflict + treating others as less valuable people – completely against church teachings eg: ‘Love one another as I have loved you’ - Nature of God cannot be fully understood by humans (He is infinite, we are finite) ∴ impossible to say that anyone can have full control of truth)</p>	<p>Rahner: Catholic theologian • Christianity is the absolute religion with a unique offering of salvation through the grace of God in Christ • People could be ‘annoymoy’s’, following Christian ideals without realising • Non-Christians may achieve salvation if they seek God with a sincere heart • Partial truth in other non-Christian religions • Some people through no fault of their own are not exposed to the Christian message e.g. those who lived before Jesus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Christian message is diluted if there is the suggestion that Christ need not be necessary for salvation. • Inclusivism is still arrogant, stating that Christian belief is the best and putting itself as the judge and measure of other faiths. • People who have made free choices to have beliefs that are not Christian should not be labelled as ‘anonymous Christians’; if they wanted to be Christians, they would say so. 	<p>Hick: Copernican Revolution → God= Central not doctrine -PoE = Benevolent God guarantees universal salvation -demythologise religion →which uses myths (phenomena) in noumena reality of God Cf. Sheep/Goat – Matthew 25 →Salvation/judgement based on action not beliefs ∴ compatible with Pluralism+ universal salvation</p> <p>Panikaar: -Emphasises a transhistorical Christ - Window, rainbow, mountain analogy - Christ= present in all religions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - undermines Jesus’ death +resurrection (more central to Christianity than idea of judgement) - Christian doctrine states ‘Extra ecclesia nulla salus’ = Outside the church there is no salvation - Hick’s Pluralism assumes Kant’s philosophical approach is correct (is not, idea is significantly weakened) - idea of a ‘Real’ in terms of divine being rejected by many forms of Buddhism - If Christianity

3.8 Religious Pluralism and Society

Multi-faith societies: societies where there are significant populations of people with different religious beliefs

Encyclical: an open letter sent to more than one recipient

Missionary work: activity that aims to convert people to a particular faith or set of beliefs, or works for social justice in areas of poverty or deprivation

Synod: the legislative body of the Church of England

Social cohesion: when a group is united by bonds that help them to live together peacefully

Pluralism and Society Evaluation Table

Mission & Interfaith Dialogue		Scriptural Reasoning Movement	
For	Against	For	Against
<p>Jesus: told his followers to ‘make disciples of all nations’ (Matthew 28:19)</p> <p>Sharing the Gospel of Salvation (2009) – Church of England Reaffirms that God’s plan for the salvation of the world is uniquely achieved in Jesus Christ and that the Church has a mission to be a witness to this.</p> <p>Redemptoris Missio (1990) – Catholic Church</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christians should be empowered by the Holy Spirit to bring other people to Christian faith. • John Paul II said that inter-faith dialogue part of Christian mission rather than in opposition to it. God wishes to share his revelation with people of all faiths even though other religions could contain ‘gaps, insufficiencies and errors’. • He underlined the need for respect in inter-faith dialogue. He said that the Catholic Church gladly acknowledges all that is true in Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. However, Christians still have a duty to emphasise that the way to salvation is through Jesus Christ. Christianity is unique in offering the means to salvation. 	<p>Rahmer: If an inclusivist position is taken to the theology of religion, people of other faiths could be considered to be ‘anonymous Christians’ without needing to convert explicitly.</p> <p>Hick: If a pluralist position is taken, there is no need for people of faiths other than Christianity to be converted as they are on their own path to salvation in a way that is culturally appropriate for them.</p> <p>Assuming that others need to share Christian beliefs is arrogant and intolerant.</p> <p>Conversion to Christianity from other faiths could cause the convert family difficulties or even danger.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scriptural Reasoning began amongst Jewish scholars in the USA with meetings to discuss Jewish sacred texts. • Christians from the UK asked if they could join in as listeners and the Scriptural Reasoning Movement developed into an inter-faith forum, part of the Cambridge Inter-faith Programme. • The goal is not to achieve agreement but to look deeply at beliefs in different contexts, to foster a spirit of openness and respect. • They recognise that there are differences of belief and try not to over-emphasise points of similarity in a superficial way. • There is an agreement not to use meetings as an opportunity for missionary work, although participants can talk about their own commitment to their faith. • It might be argued that relativising Christianity is right, because it allows openness, inter-faith dialogue and a more inclusivist or pluralist approach to the theology of religion, which could be argued to be better than an exclusivist approach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Movement assumes that there is something to be learned from the scriptures of religions other than Christianity, which suggests that Christianity is not absolute. • The Movement assumes that there is something to be learned from the way adherents of faiths other than Christianity approach scripture, which assumes that Christian approaches might not always be the best or the only approaches. • The Movement does not allow people to try to convert others to their own faith during meetings, which suggests that this might not be seen as an urgent task for Christians. • It might be argued that relativising Christianity is wrong, because Christianity holds the full revelation of God through Jesus and is not just one option amongst many world religions.

3.9 Gender and Society

Feminism: the name given to a wide range of views arguing for, and working for, equality for women

Gender biology: the physical characteristics that enable someone to be identified as male or female

Gender identification: the way people perceive themselves in terms of masculine, feminine, both or neither

Gender expression: the ways in which people behave as a result of their gender identification

Socialisation: the process by which people learn cultural norms

Patriarchal society: a society that is dominated by men and men's interests

Gender and Society Evaluation Table

Gender Roles		Family	
For	Against	For	Against
<p>Mulieris Dignitatem ('On the dignity of women') was written in 1988 as an open letter by Pope John Paul II</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men and women have different, complementary characteristics given by God. Women are naturally more capable than men of attending to the needs of others • Women are naturally disposed to motherhood both physically and psychologically • No one would be here at all unless women fulfilled their unique role in bringing the next generation into the world. Jesus' incarnation was made possible by a woman. • Both virginity and motherhood are admirable. <p>Genesis teaches that: i) men and women are both made in the image of God ii) the man is created first, and the woman second to be a 'helper' and companion for the man iii) the woman was the first to succumb to temptation iv) men and women are both made in the image of God</p> <p>Paul's Letters: i) an orderly household has the man as the head of the house ii) husbands should love their wives in the way Christ loves the Church iii) the wife should accept the authority of her husband iv) women should not teach or speak in Church.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women cannot achieve dignity and respect unless they have access to artificial contraception, abortion and divorce which the Catholic Church does not allow. • Simone de Beauvoir wrote in the 1940s that motherhood forces women to crush their own personalities so that they can care for others. • The sociologist Ann Oakley wrote about the negative side of motherhood, saying that it often leaves women powerless and restricted. • Daly: Traditional Christian gender roles have been challenged by some as 'biblical patriarchy' – written by men, led by men's interests, to reinforce male dominance. • Secular ideas suggest there are not simply two separate genders created by God but that gender is a social construct, which can put Christians in uncomfortable positions over issues such as transgender rights. • Secular ideas encourage women to seek positions of authority in the Church even though this contravenes some biblical teaching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bible contains teaching about the importance of families and about how family life should be organised, including relations between husband and wife, parents and children, and masters and servants, showing that family life is part of God's plan for procreation, mutual protection and the education of the young. • Natural law ethics supports the view that family life with heterosexual married couples raising children is part of God's purposes for humanity. • People all over the world live in family units, suggesting that there is something universally right about family life. • It could be argued that relationships within a family are affected by and affect the norms of society, but the existence of the family itself as a unit is ordained by God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family life is different in different cultures, for example in more industrial societies people tend to live in smaller nuclear families, whereas in more agricultural societies people tend to live in wider extended family groups. • Different people have different views of what a family might consist of, for example there are different views about same-sex marriage, which could suggest that the family is whatever people say it is. • Living in families has practical advantages which provide a better explanation for the existence of family units than the view that God ordained the family.

3.10 Gender and Theology

Post-Christian theology: religious thinking that abandons traditional Christian thought

Reform feminist theology: religious thinking that seeks to change traditional Christian thought

Davidic Messiah: a Messiah figure based on the kingly military images of the Hebrew scriptures (the Old Testament)

Servant king: an understanding of the Messiah that focuses on service rather than overlordship

Sophia: Greek for 'wisdom', personified in female form in the ancient world

Theology: studying God based around the goddess ('thea' is Greek for 'goddess')

'Christianity should be abandoned by feminists because it is essentially sexist.' Discuss.

Introduction

Feminism and Feminist Theology

Problem: Christian monotheism reinforces social hierarchy of patriarchal rule. God as Sky-Father is modelled after patriarchal ruling class and address male heads of families directly only. This marks change from previous depictions of God as mother, with connotations of womb.

Solutions: Daly (post-Christian) and Daly (reform Christian)

Daly: Christianity should be abandoned by feminists

AO1

Trinity of Rape, Genocide and War

Rapism, Sovereigns of Sado-Society, Gynocide

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1. Problem of Androcentric language for Christianity

AO2

Daly: Christianity dependant on **androcentric** language

Phallic Morality

Alternative: Theology

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AO2

Simon Chan (in defence of male language, objection to Daly)

- Helps to explain relational concept of God (God as Father, God the son and God the Holy Spirit)
- Use of male language doesn't feminine qualities of God e.g. Isaiah 54: 5-7 God is described as acting with 'deep compassion'
- Describing God as heavenly father explains our relationship to him, both male and female
- Describing God as father reinforces idea that God and his creation are separate in contrasts with earlier ideas of God as mother connected with earth

AO2

Ruether (language needs reform)

Antipatriarchal use of God language exists in Old and New Testament

- God as Prophetic God challenges male-ruled society (e.g. prophets protests against)
- God breaks ties within male-ruled society e.g. Abraham has to break ties with his family, Exodus the Israelities break ties with their overlords

- Proscription on idolatry means words like Father should not be taken literally but as analogy.
- Equivalent images for God as male and female e.g. Parables of Lost Sheep and Lost, God compared to shepherd and woman, but both metaphors equivalent in meaning

All language is analogy and therefore must abandon male language and work towards

Apophatic language as solution?

2. Problem of Male Saviour for Feminists

AO2

Daly argued that the idea of a uniquely male saviour is one more legitimisation of male superiority. As a consequence, far from Jesus being a figure of salvation for women, he is a figure of male domination and enslavement.

AO2 (Objection to Daly: Universalisation)

Universalisation - Jesus was not black, elderly, Chinese etc. Women are not exclusively cast as outsiders.

Daly's Response: problem is not that Jesus is male, young and a Semite, but that the image of God is objectified in Jesus, and that Christ's maleness has affected Church to detriment to women, unlike his other particularities (women excluded from priesthood on basis Christ is male).

AO2

Fiorenza (feminist defence of Jesus Christ)

- Fiorenza argue that women living in patriarchal societies can take strength from the depictions of Jesus engaging with women, enabling women to be at important events in his ministry and speaking with them as he speaks to men.
- Jesus can offer a vision of salvation for women enslaved by patriarchal societies today

AO2

Ruether (Jesus = Servant King, Ruether)

- Messiah is God's 'anointed' one; a son of David who will restore Israel and deliver people from bondage through battle.
- Davidic Messiah is a conquering warrior who liberates people from their enemies. There is therefore a maleness associated with Christ: 'the Messiah can only be imagined as male.'
- Ruether argues that Jesus is not the traditional warrior Messiah. Traditional messiah is not expected to die and suffer. The future that Jesus brings is not the military victory of the male Messiah.
- Jesus is a **servant king** focussing on serving his people rather than ruling over them, attending to the poor and disposed rather than highest in social order. He is critical of Jewish authorities.
- Ruether argues that Messiah concept should not contain the Davidic Messiah idea but self-sacrificing, servant Messiah.

3. Problem of Trinity for Feminists

AO1:

Trinity can be reformed to incorporate feminine

AO1

Ruether (Christianity is salvageable- need to rediscover Sophia)

- Female wisdom has been obscured behind the patriarchal view of the male messiah, Jesus.
- Jesus is closely linked to divine wisdom. The Messiah, is not simply a male part of God but is also the incarnation of wisdom, which is female.

Ruether (Gaia and Ecofeminism)

- Ruether refers to God as Gaia (ref. goddess of earth, links divinity with earth). Attempt to recover concept of God found in Christianity which has been suppressed by patriarchy.

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Objection

- Simon Chan, argue that you cannot rewrite the Christian story to give more prominence to women because it is the story itself that shapes Christian identity. Belief in the concept of the Trinity (of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit) is central to Christianity.
- Chan, Christianity should resist the temptation to abandon the male language for God. God is never called 'mother' and that this was unique in ancient times. Previously, gods and goddesses were paired e.g. Isis and Osiris or Tiamet with Marduk in Babylon.

Conclusion

Lay out problems and suggest solution.

Feminist Theology – Evaluation Table

Daly – Post-Christian		Ruether – Reform-Christian	
Strengths	Weaknesses	Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Daly: Men have sought to oppress women and used religion to enforce oppression. Women must go beyond religion (cf. Nietzsche) Christianity defined by unholy trinity of rape, genocide and war Religious language is androcentric and women need new spirituality</p> <p>Hampson i) Theme of female sacrifice in bible ii) Christ = salvation through man reinforces male patriarchy iii) covenants reinforce male authority iv) agape love which demands one party sacrifices is patriarchal compared to philia which is based on equal transaction</p> <p>Hampson says that some of the stories of the Bible are inherently sexist (such as the story of Adam and Eve) and some of the morality of the Bible is sexist (such as the teaching about how to run an orderly household). She argues that it is better to interpret ideas about the love of God in new ways and to leave Christianity behind.</p>	<p>Fiorenza: Feminist objection: Jesus can offer a vision of salvation for women enslaved by patriarchal societies today. Women living in patriarchal societies can take strength from the depictions of Jesus engaging with women, enabling women to be at important events in his ministry and speaking with them as he speaks to men.</p> <p>Simon Chan: Father language i) explains relationship within Trinity ii) relationship between man and women and God iii) Distinguishes God as father who is separate from creation, from earlier conception of Goddess as mother earth who is one with creation.</p>	<p>Ruether: Jesus comes not as David warrior messiah but instead as the servant messiah focussed on serving his people rather than ruling over them, attending to poor rather than upper classes, critical of Jewish authorities and reigning powers, who sacrifices himself for others.</p> <p>She makes links between Jesus as the Word of God and the idea of God’s wisdom (Sophia), saying that Jesus is God’s wisdom in human form and therefore has both masculine and feminine aspects.</p> <p>Refer to God as Gaia = recapture female quality of God, which was the name of the ancient Greek goddess of the earth. She argues that she is recovering an ancient notion of God in the feminine, a notion that has been covered up by patriarchy, rather than inventing a new way of talking about God.</p>	<p>Chan: argues that Reuther is wrong to try to rewrite Christianity to give more prominence to women because beliefs in doctrines such as that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit are central to Christian tradition.</p> <p>Chan points out that many religions have had goddesses as well as gods, celebrating the feminine in deities as well as the masculine, but the societies holding these beliefs have nevertheless been patriarchal societies. He argues that therefore changing ideas of God to feminine as well as masculine would make no difference.</p> <p>Hampson: a modern post-Christian theologian, argues that Christianity and feminism are essentially incompatible. Christianity is too tightly interwoven with patriarchy to be reinterpreted with a feminist agenda. She thinks that trying to carry out a radical feminist transformation of Christianity, in the way Reuther is attempting, is impossible.</p>

3.11 The challenge of secularism

Secularism: a term that is used in different ways. It may mean a belief that religion should not be involved in government or public life. It may be a principle that no one religion should have a superior position in the state. It often entails a belief in a public space and a private space, and that religion should be restrained from public power

Secularisation: a theory developed in the 1950s and 1960s, developed from Enlightenment thinking, that religious belief would progressively decline as democracy and technology advanced. Sociologists now doubt such a linear decline

Secular: not connected or associated with religious or spiritual matters. Used colloquially in widely differing ways by atheists, pluralists and those who are anti-religion. Historically, the term was used to distinguish priests who worked in the world (secular priests) from those who belonged to religious communities, such as monasteries

Wish fulfilment: according to Freud, wish fulfilment is the satisfaction of a desire through a dream or other exercise of the imagination

How fair is the claim that Christianity has a negative impact on society?

This question invites discussion of the challenge that Christianity does more harm than good in society. For AO1 you need to be able to show an understanding of the reasons people might present this challenge. For example, they might think that Christianity encourages sexism or is divisive or homophobic. They might think that belief in God is infantile or that religious belief hinders scientific progress. You might be able to refer to specific thinkers who present different challenges. You also need to show knowledge and understanding of counter arguments, for example the argument that Christianity has been the driving force for social changes such as education and many aid agencies. For AO2 your argument should assess the strength of the challenge and reach a well-justified conclusion.

Introduction

Key Issue: There is a difficulty in talking about 'what Christianity does'. Does this mean 'what (some) Christians do', or 'what (some) Christian institutions do', or 'the impact that (some) forms of Christian thought might have'? Making a link between people's actions, the rules and systems of institutional bodies, and the systems of thought within them can be difficult, especially when it refers to a movement, such as Christianity, that takes on multiple cultural forms around the world.

Christianity's negative impact on education

Faith schools

BHA: a secular state should not fund schools with a religious character.

Richard Dawkins: religious fundamentalism subverts science, replacing an evidence-based approach to understanding the world with superstition, which leads to the fundamentalists missing the engrossing and fascinatingly beautiful truths of evolution and science

He is concerned that teaching that evolution is one theory alongside other theories, such as creationism, in science classes fails to give credit to the evidence that supports evolution and places a literal, geological interpretation of the Bible above more robust scientific accounts. Dawkins is also more generally concerned that religious schools are teaching children 'from their earliest years, that unquestioning faith is a virtue

RESPONSE: Christianity integral to education

In England, the **school system was established by Christian Churches long before the national government was prepared to ensure education for all children**

Churches built schools for the poor in England, and indeed continue to own a lot of school property, and so removing schools from Church control would be an act of robbery. Additional arguments are that such schools give parents who want an education framed by a religious ethos the **choice to have such schooling**, and that a plural and diverse society should have plural and diverse kinds of schools. Furthermore, **it is not clear that religious schools are necessarily less diverse than non-religious schools when the measure is ethnicity**. Catholic populations in England often have a greater proportion of poorer migrant families, and the resulting school **populations may have richly diverse cultural and linguistic traditions as a result**. Moreover,

religion is not the only factor that segregates school pupils in England. Socio-economic and cultural factors can also result in poor integration.

The **claim that 'separate' schools produce children who are less open to living in religious diverse societies and who are more prejudiced against people from other religious backgrounds is not supported** by sound empirical evidence according to researchers at the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit.

Critics of Dawkins note that his arguments against religious schools stem from a view of religion that is narrowly fundamentalist and extreme. If religion equates only to fundamentalist extreme belief, then religious schools would have serious questions to answer because they would limit children's ability to develop the skills of reason and logic. **However, if religion is viewed as a cultural phenomenon, that is associated as much with identity and cultural practices as with belief, then the Dawkins argument is significantly weakened.** Dawkins rejects this critique, suggesting that 'liberal' religion simply makes way for religion, and literal belief (which narrows thinking) is at the heart of religion. However, if a secular state is defined, not as a de-religionised space, but as a radically plural space containing many communities, many voices, multiple modernities, where different groups can experiment with different models of the good life, then shouldn't schools reflect that diversity?

Charles Taylor argues, in 'The Politics of Recognition' (Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition, eds. Gutmann and Habermas, 1994), that there should be recognition that societies are increasingly multicultural. Every person should be recognised for their particular identity rather than living in a way that leads to a loss of distinctiveness and individual peculiarities. **No culture, including an atheistic one, should impose itself on others because this causes minority cultures to diminish and vanish.**

Dawson points out that, where education systems have been dominated by a consciously antireligious ideology, as was found in communist countries, religion became endangered. In other words, a professed neutrality towards religion in secular education revealed a programmatic intention to remove it entirely. **Removing religion from culture, art, architecture and music not only deprives religion of a means of outward expression, it also deprives people of the ability to make sense of their own culture** given the extent to which culture is steeped in religion.

Professor James Conroy argues that religious schools have an important role in a liberal democratic state. He suggests religious schools perform a 'liminal function' that serves to test the perspective of human flourishing that is offered by the liberal democratic state in state-run schools (Conroy, *Between: The Liminal Imagination, Education and Democracy*, 2004, p. 143). **They exist to counter the general view that the market should define human flourishing and determine the aims of education, that individual people are little more than cogs in the machine of the economy. They instead propose an idea of the other that transcends capitalism.** 'The student is not a resource for a nation, or one who is to be cultivated within a consumer teleology'

Christianity hinders scientific progress

Freud – religion mass delusion

Dawkins - Christianity can encourage infantile and 'unscientific' views of the world. For example, Dawkins points to the role he says Christianity has played in the criminalisation of homosexuality (which was illegal in the UK until 1967). He points to the 'American Taliban' (evangelical Christians who say that Aids is God's punishment on homosexuals) as an illustration of how upsetting ideas can be developed through religion

An absolutist faith also has a negative influence on society in the area of the sanctity of human life and the attempts to restrict or limit women's access to abortion, Dawkins suggests. He offers up the example of George W. Bush. While Governor of Texas, Bush oversaw more than a third of the executions that took place in the USA at the time, while simultaneously preventing medical research on embryonic life. Dawkins sees applying the death penalty on the one hand, while preventing scientific research that might alleviate suffering on the other, as an example of the damage religious absolutism causes to society.

RESPONSE

Although some forms of religion do seek to indoctrinate or brainwash people, the testimonies of many scientists are evidence that it is not correct to assume religion and faith necessarily closes down thinking, particularly scientific thinking. To take just one example: Francis Collins was born in 1950 and is an American physician-geneticist who has made important discoveries about disease genes and led the Human Genome Project. At university he described himself as an atheist, but his work with dying patients led him to question his views.

Christianity encourages social division

Mary Daly

See Feminism and Society

RESPONSE

- Anglican Bishops were instrumental in the decriminalisation of homosexuality in the 1960s, at a time when other parts of the British establishment resisted change.
- Many prominent civil rights activists who played a leading role in challenging segregation in the USA, such as Martin Luther King Jr, were religious.
- Many of the food banks run by volunteers throughout the UK today were set up and are now run by Christians and local churches.

Secularism – Evaluation Table

Freud		Dawkins	
Strengths	Weaknesses	Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freud said that religion is infantile and a ‘mass delusion’. • Freud thought religion is a product of wish fulfilment. People experience vulnerability as children, and God is desire for father figure (cf. Feminist). • Freud related religious belief to his ideas about the Oedipus complex. He thought that male children secretly wanted to kill their fathers and marry their mothers. They know, however, that it is wrong, so they overcompensate by inventing a cosmic father-figure God to worship. • Religious believers invent a God who seems stern but is actually loving and forgiving. They invent a life after death that will begin a new existence, where the good will be rewarded and the wicked punished, to compensate for the injustices of real life. • Religion represses human desires such as sexual violence, theft and murder. • Freud thought that religion is fundamentally unhealthy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many religious people have been particularly strong and courageous in standing up for their beliefs in the face of danger. • The demands of leading a Christian life are difficult rather than comfortable (see Bonhoeffer’s ‘costly grace’). • Religious beliefs might be said to be more uniform than would be expected if different individuals made them up. • Jung: Religious can be a healthy path towards individuation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He criticises traditional arguments for the existence of God and gives scientific explanations of phenomena that are sometimes used as evidence for God. • He argues that human life is meaningful without reference to religious ideas. • He argues that religion is responsible for division, war and conflict in society, both in the modern world and throughout history. • He argues that religious belief discourages scientific enquiry by allowing a lazy mindset that says ‘it’s a divine mystery’ rather than looking for answers. • He claims that religions are repressive, and singles out religious dress codes as an example of the repression of women. • Dawkins is particularly concerned about the indoctrination of children into religion, citing examples of where babies are initiated into religious faiths before they can understand what is happening. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dawkins could be criticised for taking isolated, extreme examples and using them to draw general conclusions. • He glosses over the many positive contributions religion has made to societies, such as the founding of schools, the campaigning for civil rights, the work for the poor and the pressure for social change. • He does not take account of the many scientists who have also held religious beliefs and have been motivated by their faith to continue their scientific exploration (e.g. Polkinghorne) • It could be argued that keeping children away from learning truths about God is abusive.

3.12 Liberation Theology

Exploitation: treating someone unfairly in order to benefit from their work or resources

Alienation: the process of becoming detached or isolated

Capitalism: an economic system in which the means of production are privately owned and operated for profit, in contrast with communism where trade and industry is controlled by the state

Conscientisation: the process by which a person becomes conscious of the power structures in society

Basic Christian communities: Christian groups that gather together to try to directly resolve difficulties in their lives

Structural sin: the idea that sin is not just a personal action, but something that can be brought about through unjust organisations and social structures

Preferential option for the poor: the idea that Jesus Christ stood with the poor and oppressed, and that the Church should focus on the poor and oppressed and stand in solidarity with them

'Christianity is better than Marxism at tackling social issues.' Discuss

This question invites a comparison between Christianity and Marxism in relation to social issues such as poverty, low literacy rates and substance abuse.

In order to gain high marks for AO1, you should show knowledge and understanding of the ways in which both Christianity and Marxism understand and tackle these issues. For example, you might refer to the Christian understanding of social issues as symptomatic of a world that has been corrupted by human sin since the Fall, and the Marxist understanding of social issues as symptomatic of alienation due to private ownership of the means of production.

For AO2, you need to make a comparison between ways in which Christianity and Marxism tackle these issues, and say which you think is better. You could explain what you mean by 'better', for example whether you mean that it has longer-lasting results or reaches a greater number of people. You might want to argue that some kind of combination of Christianity and Marxism is most effective.

When an essay question asks you to make a comparison, try to look at the two ideas side by side throughout the essay rather than writing about Christianity on its own and then Marxism on its own.

Introduction

Context: Liberation Theology and Marxism; Preferential Option for the Poor

Aim: What will you argue towards?

Outline:

1. Marxism

Marx argues capitalism created a world in which wealth and power are concentrated in the hands of the few at the expense of the many.

- i) Alienation: humans alienated from each other and open to exploitation
- ii) False consciousness: religion, and the idea of God, is a source of alienation
- iii) Praxis: a better society is achieved through putting ideas into action
- iv) Private ownership of property: ownership of land gives individuals power over others which can lead to war
- v) Telos of history: state of real freedom and real happiness free from false ideologies

AO2: In agreement with Marxism's utility:

In their critique of capitalism and means to analyse structural oppression, Marxism provide a starting point for LT.

Boff: hierarchy of Church not how first envisaged but corrupted after becoming Roman state religion.

Torres: words without action are empty - revolution

AO2: Limitations of Marxist analysis:

Miranda: bible writers understand it better

- i) Marxism has underestimated the insight of biblical writers that capitalism is due to subjective human condition. The Fallen aspect of human nature is much fuller reason than Marx to explain why humans exploit each other.

ii) The Ten Commandments warn against idolatry and its abandonment has led to exploitation. Need to return to negative theological view that God is wholly different from material world.

2. Liberation Theology

Biblical basis for prioritising poor

- **Beatitudes 'blessed are the poor in spirit as theirs is the kingdom of heaven'**
- Exodus: liberation of God's people from Egyptian oppression
- Magnificat: announces coming change 'he has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty
- 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle...'

Objection 1: Liberation Theology fails to appreciate Marx's fundamental belief on violent revolution

Biblical basis: **Jesus Christ as liberator**

- Christ = Davidic Messiah
- Reza Aslan: put to death on civic crime; followers have suspicious names (e.g. Simon the Zealot, Judas Iscariot) and carry weapons; 'zealous' actions in Jerusalem (e.g. kicking the tradesmen from the Court of Gentiles in the Temple of Jerusalem)
- = Church born out of resistance to Roman occupation of the poor

Response:

Part 1: Liberation theology fails to fully appreciate the significance of Marx's fundamental belief in the need for revolution, which contradicts **Jesus' rejection of violence** (John Paul II).

- 'blessed are the peacemakers'
- 'turn the other cheek'
- 'Those who live by the sword die by the sword' – stops his disciples from defending him with violence upon his arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane.
- 'Give unto Caesar what is Caesar's and give to God what is God's' - sidesteps questions about Roman Rule
- John Paul: Christ is revolutionary = by advocating reconciling love!

Part 2: Marx claimed that, through revolution, many social problems would ultimately lead to a socialist, classless society. Yet many today would argue that **communism was unable to respond effectively** to suffering and poverty in society.

e.g. China, Soviet Russia

Part 3: Liberation Theology misreads Marx (Ratzinger)

- Marxism is not a science and you cannot pick and choose among its tenants.
- Landless peasants of Latin American poor rather than being proletariat of Marxist thinking are more like the lumpenproletariat that Marx thought useless for revolution. In any case, poor of the gospel cannot be set up as a popular church in opposition to the church hierarchy.

Part 4: At the heart of Marxism lies atheism

See page 316

Response: Via Negativa might make Marxism and Christianity compatible

Due to Liberation Theology's reliance on Marxism, which it has been argued is itself problematic, this means it is less satisfactory than Christianity at resolving social issues such as poverty.

Objection 2. Liberation Theology pits one group over another by defining the poor as economic/material rather than spiritual

Many Christians are deeply concerned about the poor and the oppressed, and many religious orders focus their vocation on working with those in greatest need.

Liberation Theology takes things one step further and suggests that **God takes the side of the poor against the rich and actively works for the poor**

Boff: God does not sit back and disengaged with world but takes sides with the poor
Gutiérrez, 'to know God as liberator is to liberate, is to do justice'

Liberation theology identifying poor with proletariat in Marxist's thinking and therefore advocating **class warfare**.

Vatican:

- Liberation Theology manifests a dangerous preoccupation with the poor and oppressed in Latin America'
- Rich people can be as much in need as the poor. The message in the bible 'blessed are the poor in spirit' **as much about spiritual poverty as material poverty**.
- Vatican II (*Gaudium et Spes*): 'The Christian who neglects his temporal duties, neglects his duties towards his neighbour and towards God, jeopardising his eternal salvation.'
- Alternative: **Preferential Option for the Poor**: John Paul II argued that the advancement of the poor constitutes a great opportunity for the moral, cultural and even economic growth of all humanity. However, he made it clear that the preferential option for the poor includes a concern for spiritual poverty, and does not focus exclusively on material or economic poverty
- **Christians should work to reduce poverty of all kinds**; in reducing spiritual poverty, rich are encouraged to live more socially responsible lives and to share their wealth with their poorer neighbours, this will impact material poverty, and improve the lives of the poor and dispossessed
- **The Kingdom of God** is both here now, in righteous actions, and in the future, in the realisation of a fully just and fair and loving world.

Objection 3: Liberation Theology is wrong to prioritise personal sin over structural Sin

Liberation Theology better because of its understanding of structural sin?

Structural sin: the idea that sin is not just a personal action, but something that can be brought about through unjust organisations and social structures

Hélder Câmara: Spiral of Violence (1971) structural injustice (level 1 violence) leads to rebellion (level 2 violence) and repressive reaction (level 3 violence)

Response:

Ratzinger: Accepts structural sin, which some conservatives wanted to reject. However, all structures, good and bad, are result of human action.

Bible ref: Jesus reached people in their personal lives and spoke of individuals coming back to God through forgiveness and reconciliation e.g. Parable of the Lost Coin

Is this response sufficient?

For the starving oppressed poor, is liberation from personal sin the most important liberation?

- Is change happening for the people in our world who live in poverty?
- Salvation and liberation may first be about inner spiritual change, but is there not a point when someone has to do something: see Matthew 25 'Parable of the Sheep and the Goats/Last Judgement', which focuses on human actions for the most needy.

Objection 4: Liberation Theology is wrong prioritise orthopraxis over orthodoxy

Liberation theology claims Truth must be understood within social and political sphere.

Orthopraxis =

Orthodoxy =

Within this context, authority can come from below in the Church.

Response:

- Truth not human or rational truth but truth that comes from God i.e. orthodoxy – sources of authority scripture + tradition
- Priests role is to be teachers of this truth, not to propagate liberation.
- Unity of church condition for effective preaching of the gospel... cannot make distinction between official church and new church springing from poor

Conclusion

Must be justified and follow argument in essay.

Liberation Theology Evaluation Table

Marxism		Liberation Theology	
Strengths	Weaknesses	Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Marx: i) Alienation: humans alienated from each other and open to exploitation ii) False consciousness: religion, and the idea of God, is a source of alienation iii) Praxis: a better society is achieved through putting ideas into action iv) Private ownership of property: ownership of land gives individuals power over others which can lead to war v) Telos of history: state of real freedom and real happiness free from false ideologies</p> <p>in their critique of capitalism and means to analyse structural oppression, Marxism provide a starting point for LT.</p> <p>Boff: hierarchy of Church not how first envisaged but corrupted after becoming Roman state religion.</p> <p>Torres: words without action are empty - revolution</p>	<p>Miranda: bible writers understand it better i) Marxism has underestimated the insight of biblical writers that capitalism is due to subjective human condition. The Fallen aspect of human nature is much fuller reason than Marx to explain why humans exploit each other. ii) The Ten Commandments warn against idolatry and its abandonment has led to exploitation. Need to return to negative theological view that God is wholly different from material world.</p>	<p>Freire: Education as conscientisation.</p> <p>Exodus paradigm: God calls Moses to revolutionary action against Pharaoh. In Latin American terms, Pharaoh represents rich landowners, government officials and Church hierarchy who own the means of production.</p> <p>Justice and Judgement: Amos mocks and condemns the rich</p> <p>Mary's Song of Reversal (Magnificat)</p> <p>Matthew 25 – Sheep and the Goats Those who consider themselves religiously good but are without praxis are singled out for condemnation</p> <p>Jesus as Liberator (see 3.4)</p>	<p>Ratzinger: LT is too Marxist i) LT wrongly emphasises political liberation instead of liberation from sin ii) Salvation and redemption is achieved through God's grace not praxis and revolution iii) LT wrongly emphasises structural sin, which it equates with praxis, and not personal sin, which requires God's grace.</p> <p>Kee: LT not Marxist enough Basis of Marxism is a criticism that all ideologies are false human projections on reality. Religion for Marx is the 'opium of the people'. LT cannot be selective and cherry pick passages they like.</p>

