

Afterlife: Life after death; existence continues after physical death

Environmental Sustainability: Demands placed on natural resources can be met

Euthanasia: Good death; Killing of a person who is suffering from a serious illness

Evolution: Living creatures have developed from earlier, less complex forms

Abortion: Ending a pregnancy so that it does not result in the birth of a child

Quality of Life: Extent to which life is pleasurable or meaningful

Sanctity of Life: Life is precious, sacred. Human life holds this special status

Soul: The spiritual part of a human that connects them to God. The soul is non-physical

STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship is caring for the world. A steward is a caretaker of the world. Christians believe that God gave humans a **duty** to look after the world – God’s creation.. **Global citizenship** is the idea that we are part of a world community. We each have a responsibility to look after the rainforests and to **prevent climate change**, as much as our duties to prevent pollution within our local communities.

Christians and Stewardship

- Dominion:** humans were told to “rule over” nature, meaning that we can use the world’s resources as we wish
- **Stewardship:** We should live in harmony with nature, not exploit it. God told Adam to ‘cultivate and care for’ the Garden of Eden.
- We have a **responsibility** to be global citizens
- ‘**Green Christians**’ are environmental activists who promote awareness and action at church, community and national levels
- Jesus’ commandment to “**love thy neighbour**” can be interpreted to refer to fellow humans, therefore it is acceptable to kill animals. Others interpret “**love thy neighbour**” to mean that we should have respect for all living beings. If God created all life, and all life is sacred, then this must be extended to plant and animal life.

What happens when we die?

Atheists and Humanists
Nothing survives death. The chemicals in our bodies are recycled into the environment

Christians
-There is an eternal life in heaven
-The dead will rise to be judged by God and go to heaven or hell



The order of Creation in Genesis 1	Light & Dark
Clouds & Oceans	Sun, Moon, & Stars
Land, Plants, & Trees	Fish & Birds
Man & Animals	God Rested

“Natural selection...has no purpose in mind. It has no vision, no foresight.” (Richard Dawkins)

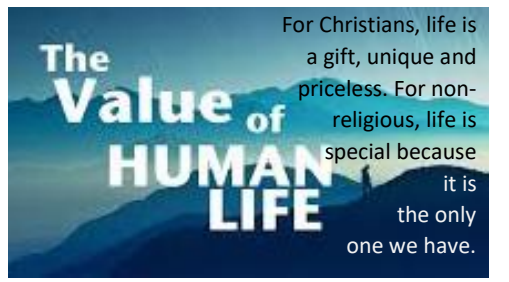
Evolution and the Big Bang

Charles Darwin argued that life came from the slow, natural process of **evolution**. Therefore the earth must be millions of years old.

The Big Bang theory argues that the universe has a beginning. A ‘Big Bang’ happened around 15m years ago, starting the universe from an **infinitely tiny point**. This point expanded and formed the planets and stars.



Humanists believe that we have a responsibility to work for a more sustainable world, causing as little harm to the environment as possible.



For Christians, life is a gift, unique and priceless. For non-religious, life is special because it is the only one we have.

Christian Creation: Different Views

-God created life, it did not happen by chance. God said, “*Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness*”

-Undermining the Bible leads to crime and disorder as it takes away the value of the morals
-Humans have a soul that is God-given. If we are evolved from animals then how can this be true?

-Genesis says that each species was made “according to its kind”, meaning that species don’t change: species are fixed. Therefore evolution is wrong.

-The Big Bang still doesn’t explain what caused the explosion that kick-started the universe. For Christians, the answer is God

“In the beginning, God made the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1)



Literal Interpretation
Creation happened EXACTLY as it says in the Bible, because “*all scripture is God-breathed*”, meaning that the Bible is the exact word of God.
-The Bible is the inspired ‘**Word of God**’. Evangelical Christians refer to the Bible as ‘God-breathed’ meaning that it came directly from the mouth of God. Scientific theories are wrong because they contradict the Biblical account.

Liberal Interpretation

The creation story is a **myth**, containing symbolic meaning only. The stories carry true meaning, but don’t refer to historical events. The stories are best understood as a **metaphor**. Evolution could have been guided by God or God set down the laws of evolution or the course of the universe’s expansion as a result of the Big Bang

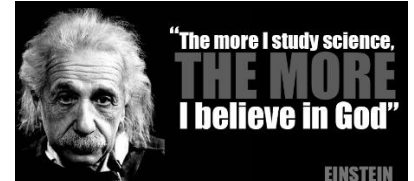


The Design Argument

The fact that the world is beautiful, well-ordered and perfect for life implies that there must have been a creator. **William Paley** used the ‘**watch analogy**’ to demonstrate this conclusion of intelligent design. If you were to find a watch, you know it must have had a designer – a watch-maker. It is so complex that it cannot have come about by chance. Likewise, the world is so complex with its patterns and structures that it **must have had a designer**, i.e. God.

The Illusion of Design

Richard Dawkins argued that the world might appear to have been designed, but this is not true. *“The illusion of design is explained with far greater economy by Darwinian natural selection.”*



Hospices are an alternative to euthanasia. They relieve the symptoms of the terminal illness and allow a patient to die with dignity. *“We should concern ourselves with the quality of life as well as its length.”* (Dame Cicely Saunders)

Passive euthanasia is where life-sustaining treatment is removed, e.g. removing the respirator. Some accept this form of euthanasia because the patient then **dies of natural causes**

The Slippery Slope Argument
The acceptance of euthanasia will inevitably lead to abuse or manipulation. E.g. an elderly woman might be convinced to commit euthanasia in order to no longer ‘be a burden’ on her relatives.

Pro-life campaigners oppose abortion because every human being has a right to life – even embryos. However some people do not consider an embryo a ‘person’

Humanists consider ‘**Situation Ethics**’ and consider what would be the kindest action for that situation. Humanists consider happiness and suffering when making ethical decisions.

Active euthanasia is when a person takes a specific course of action to end their own life, e.g. overdose. Some believe that taking your own life may result in being refused entry to heaven.

Voluntary euthanasia is when a person asks for help to die. Some consider this their human right as they are acting on their (God-given) **free will**.

RC: IVF is wrong because the **embryo is created outside of the human body**. The process also destroys embryos, which are seen as life, because life begins at conception.

Only God should give and take life. “Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?”

Some Humanists believe that **life begins at birth** because the child is now surviving on its own, outside the womb.
Stephen Hawking: We don’t let animals suffer, (we put animals down) so why humans?



Humanists believe that our purpose is to make ourselves and everybody around us as happy as possible because it is **compassionate, kind and the right thing to do**. Life is seen with the highest respect, but sometimes decisions might be made that go against the sanctity of life

“God saw all that he had made and it was very good.”

“Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you.”

RC: Life begins at **conception**. The sperm and the egg are the source of life.

RC: Taking a life in any circumstance is immoral. Abortion, euthanasia and IVF all involve **murder**. The Ten Commandments say: *“Do not murder”*

CoE: Life is precious, however some things can be permitted, e.g. an abortion if the mother’s life is in danger, or if the woman was raped. Jesus said to *“love thy neighbour”* and sometimes the most compassionate course of action would allow abortion.



Some people have a **DNR**, or ‘Do Not Resuscitate’ to uphold their quality of life. It guarantees that if in the event that the patient will have a seriously decreased quality of life, doctors are instructed to let the patient die.



Peter Singer argues that euthanasia should be legalised. Safeguards should be put into place to protect vulnerable people. **Quality of life** is important and forcing someone to live an undignified life is cruel.

DNR

Literal Christians on Euthanasia:
-Those who assist are involved in murder
-Goes against the Ten Commandments
-Suffering can have a purpose and should be endured
-Suffering can be a way in taking part in the suffering of Jesus
- Hospices provide an alternative

Liberal Christians on Euthanasia:
-Acceptable to turn off life support if **brain-dead**
-They would consider withholding a treatment that prolongs a painful life as they follow Jesus’ teaching of acting in the most **loving and compassionate** way

