

Religion and Medical Ethics

In all questions about medical ethics, you should use the sanctity of life quotes (about humans being sacred):

- Humans are created by God in His image - Genesis
- “You knit me together in my mother’s womb” - Psalms
- “You are God’s temple and God’s Spirit is in you” – St Paul
- “Do not kill” – Ten Commandments



Abortion

There are lots of Bible quotes that say “God knew me before I was born” – Jeremiah, Isaiah, Psalms, St Paul. These are anti-abortion or pro life.

There are some that suggest you are not a person until you are born – “God breathed into Adam’s nostrils the breath of life”, and others that treat the death of a foetus as less important than the loss of a life, suggesting a foetus isn’t a person – these are pro-choice.

Fertility Treatment

All Christians agree that God’s plan is for men and women to have children, and the first instruction in the Bible is to “go forth and multiply”. However, there are two issues here:

1. Destruction of embryos in IVF (sanctity of life)
2. Attacks on the sanctity of marriage by involving a third person (e.g. donating sperm or eggs)

	Roman Catholics	Church of England
Artificial Insemination by Husband (AIH)	✓	✓
Artificial Insemination by Donor (AID)	✗ Sanctity of marriage	✓
IVF	✗ Sanctity of life	✓
IVF with donor egg or sperm	✗ Sanctity of life and marriage	✓
Surrogacy	✗ Sanctity of marriage	✗ “Strikes at the heart of the family”

Euthanasia

Jesus said “Love your neighbour” and said this was more important than following rules. However, most Christians believe human life is sacred (see quotes above) and that “God has given, God will take away” (Job). The Church of England and the Roman Catholics are both against euthanasia (the deliberate ending of a life to ease pain or suffering).

An alternative to cutting life short is the Hospice movement. This involves giving people dignity in death by making their last days as peaceful as possible. Hospices provide hospital care in a home-like setting.

Suicide

Suicide is seen as a sin, but Christians are taught about love and forgiveness. The Samaritans was set up by a priest, and Christians would try to follow Jesus’ example and help people who cannot face living.

Animal Research

- Christians **against** animal research will say that we should respect all of God’s creation; when God made animals, fish and birds ‘He saw that they were good’; life is sacred; God hates unnecessary suffering; humans are supposed to be ‘stewards’ looking after creation;
- Christians **for** animal research will say that only humans were made in God’s image; Jesus said God loves us much more than sparrows; humans were given power over animals by God (dominion); use any of the ‘sanctity of human life’ quotes

Religion and Human Relationships

The Roles of Men and Women in the Family

The traditional Christian view is that “the husband is the head of the wife” and “women submit to their husbands”. The vows used to include the woman promising to obey her husband. Staying at home and bringing up the children was seen as the woman’s role, while the man went out and earned money.

Modern Christians see the importance of equality between a couple, even if they have different roles. Many Christian mums go out to work, and there are an increasing number of Christian dads who ‘stay at home’ with the children.

Sex

The Bible and Christian churches teach that the purpose of sex is to make a couple closer and to have babies. Sex is seen as a beautiful and powerful thing. It was the first thing God asked humans to do, and there is a whole book in the Bible talking about how great sex is.

There are many passages in the Bible that say it is wrong to have sex outside marriage. Adultery is forbidden in the 10 commandments, and Jesus said that just looking at a woman in lust was as bad as actually having sex. Several passages warn against ‘Sexual immorality’.

Christian churches have always taught that sex should only happen in a committed relationship where a couple love each other enough to start a family together. In the past, homosexuality was seen to go against this. Today, many Christians see a committed gay relationship as a valid option, and a ‘gay wedding’ has taken place in a Church of England Church.

Marriage

Marriage is one of the sacraments of the Catholic church, and God unites the couple and blesses them. The couple make promises (vows) in front of God, which may include:

I take you to be my wife [or husband], to have and to hold from this day forward; for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish [and worship/obey], till death us do part, according to God's holy law; and this is my solemn vow.

The purpose of marriage can be summed up like this:

- Procreation - having children
- Union - a loving partnership of living together
- Raising children - providing nurture & security
- Pattern for society - family unit of mutual support
- One flesh - sexual intimacy
- Sacred - blessed by God
- Eternal - lifelong faithful relationship

Divorce

On the one hand, a couple has promised in front of God to stay together until they die. A prophet wrote “God hates divorce” and Jesus said that “what God has joined, man must not separate” and if you divorce and remarry, you are committing adultery. The Catholic Church is against divorce in all cases.

On the other hand, marriages do go wrong, and Christianity teaches about forgiveness. In the Church of England, you can divorce and remarry – it may be the ‘lesser of two evils’. As always, mention Jesus’ example of love and compassion – divorce may be the kindest thing for the couple and their children.

Religion and Equality

Equality

The sanctity of life quotes all apply here – everyone is made in God’s image, a temple of the Holy Spirit etc. Also, the principle of love applies to all people. James said “Do not show favouritism”.

Racism

There are some specific Christian teachings on race here:

- Moses said “Do not mistreat foreigners living in your land.”
- Paul said “From one man he made every nation of men”
- Paul also said: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”
- The Good Samaritan story, told by Jesus, showed a man from a hated race as the hero, showing we should love people of all races
- “Every human being created in the image of God is a person for whom Christ died. Racism is an assault on Christ’s values, and a rejection of his sacrifice.” World Council of Churches

Martin Luther King is a well-known Christian who stood up to racism – you should learn about him in detail for the exam (see the sample question in this booklet).

Sexism

The Church has a history of sexism. Women still cannot be priests in the Catholic Church, and St Paul said “I permit no women to teach or have authority over men, she is to keep silent.” The Bible was written at a time when women were seen as less important, and this comes across in sexist language and ideas throughout.



However, the Church of England now has women priests, and many Christians think Jesus treated women much better than the men of his day. He had women followers and appeared to women first when he rose. He also taught in a part of the temple where women could come and listen.

Arguments against allowing women priests	Arguments for allowing women priests
Jesus chose men to be his Apostles and the foundation of the Church, not women.	In the past, society did not allow women a leading role, but times have changed.
Jesus’ authority has been passed on through men – we should not ignore this powerful tradition.	Jesus came to break down barriers of sex, nationality, race, etc..
When celebrating Eucharist, the priest represents Christ who was a man. Women cannot play this role.	Jesus’ attitude towards women was revolutionary
Ordaining women is a stumbling block against great unity between churches. The R.C. and Orthodox churches are totally opposed to women priests!	Jesus chose men because women were not listened to publicly in his society. If Jesus came today, he would choose men and women without question.

Attitudes to other religions

Christianity has a bad record in how it treated other religions in the past. During the Crusades, Muslims and Jews who would not convert (become Christians) were killed, and there is a long history of Anti-Semitism (hatred of Jews) in Christian countries, where Jews are blamed for killing Jesus. Even today, many Christians believe that only those who believe in Jesus will make it to heaven.

However, Paul said “There is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised... but Christ is all, and is in all.” The sanctity of life quotes and love quotes all apply to people of every religion. Many Christians work to break down barriers between people of different faiths. Church schools welcome people of any faith or none.

Religion, Peace and Justice

War

There are many examples of wars in the Bible, and at times God commands people to fight a war. However, for Christians to support a war today, all of these conditions (the Just War Criteria) must be met:

1. PROPER AUTHORITY - war should be declared by a proper authority e.g. a government or king
2. JUST CAUSE – the war must be started for a good reason – e.g. self-defence, and not because of greed
3. RIGHT INTENTION – the war must be fought to establish good, or fight evil
4. LAST RESORT – it must be a last resort, when everything else has been tried, e.g. diplomacy
5. PROPORTIONALITY – the amount of force used must be only enough to succeed - no more
6. WIN POSSIBLE – it should be possible to win the war
7. JUST METHOD - no civilians should be involved, and no deliberate unnecessary cruelty.

Violence

The example of Martin Luther King (see sample question) shows how effective non-violent protest can be. Eg:

- Marches and demonstrations
- Strikes
- Boycotts
- Sit-ins
- Use of the vote, if you live in a country which lets you vote!
- Disobeying unjust laws
- Refusal to pay fines and bail for unjust arrests

Pacifism

Pacifism is the belief that it is always wrong to fight. In one Old Testament passage, the Jewish nation was told to “turn your swords into ploughs” (putting weapons to a better use, and making it clear they wouldn’t be used again). Jesus said that if someone strikes you, you should “turn the other cheek”. Jesus was called the “Prince of Peace” and he said “Love your enemies” and “Blessed be the peacemakers”. Paul said “Do not overcome evil by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Many Christians were conscientious objectors – they refused to fight in WW1 when you could be shot for cowardice. The Quakers are a pacifist church, believing war never solves problems.

Punishment

There are several reasons to punish criminals, and Christians may agree with any of these:

- Punishment works as a **deterrent**. Criminals should be afraid of what will happen if they're caught.
- Punishment offers **retributive justice** - victims want to feel that the criminal has not got away with it.
- Society needs **protecting** from criminals, preventing them from committing more crimes.
- Punishment should **reform** criminals, helping them to see the 'error of their ways' and stop offending

Christians teach that we are all sinners who deserve death, but that God saved us through Jesus dying on the cross. As such, Christians should be ready to forgive and give people a second chance.

Human Rights

The sanctity of life quotes and Jesus example and teaching on love show that Christians believe that all people are worthy of respect and fair treatment. Christians agree with the declaration of Human Rights:

- All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights
- Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person
- No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
- No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile
- Everyone has a right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Religion, Poverty and Capital Wealth

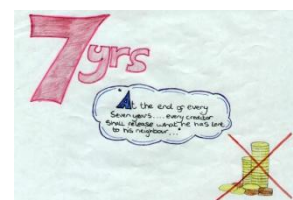
Causes of hunger, poverty and disease

AIDS	Lack of education	Poor sanitation	Lack of development	Illiteracy
Flooding	Unemployment	Debt	Trade restrictions	War
Child labour	Slavery	Disease	Malnutrition	Poor climate

Concern for the poor

As well as general love and sanctity of life quotes, use these:

- There will always be some people who are poor and in need, and so I command you to be generous to them
- At the end of every seven years... every creditor shall release what he has lent to his neighbour – *Moses*
- They sell into slavery honest men who cannot pay their debts... *Amos, a prophet*
- He has sent me to preach good news to the poor – *Jesus*
- Come into my kingdom... I was hungry and you fed me – *Jesus*



Giving to charity

Many Christians tithe – they give 10% of what they earn to charities such as Christian Aid:

- C** ommunity-based projects, working with local people
- H** elping people to help themselves, rather than offering handouts
- R** aising awareness as well as money, so people understand about debt, trade etc.
- I** nvolving ordinary people – collecting money, travelling abroad, working as volunteers
- S** aying prayers, holding special services, encouraging people to think about others
- T** eaching people new skills, farming methods etc. giving them a self-sufficient future
- I** nvesting in long-term projects rather than quick-fix solutions
- A** id in emergencies such as floods, famines, earthquakes
- N** ot only abroad, but helping the homeless, unemployed etc. in the UK
- A** ction against unfair laws, poor working conditions, low pay, child labour etc.
- I** ndividual campaigns – Jubilee 2000 to clear debt; Make Poverty History; Fair Trade
- D** evelopment – digging wells, building hospitals and schools, improving sanitation

The correct use of money

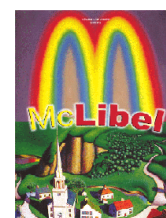
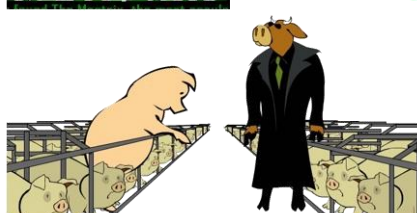
The Bible teaches that “the love of money is the root of all evil”. Jesus said “You cannot serve both God and money”. He said it was hard for a rich man to get into heaven. Jesus told a story about a man who had so much wealth he had to build a bigger barn to keep it in – then he died, and what use was there in storing up all that wealth? The early Christians sold their wealth and shared things out between them.

Moral and immoral occupations

Many Christians would avoid working for or buying from companies that:

- make or use gambling equipment
- produce firearms or sell military weapons
- create alcohol or tobacco
- operate nuclear power stations
- experiment on animals
- pollute the environment
- produce pornography
- have a bad human rights record
- have poor employment records
- work with oppressive regimes
- support GM foods, embryology, abortion etc.

MEATRIX



The exam takes 2 hours, and you must answer 4 questions. Please remember the following points:

- Only answer questions from Topics 6-10 (which we have studied for)
- Answer questions using a Christian perspective
- Each question has three parts – please answer a, b and c for each of the 4 questions

Religion and Human Relationships

- (a) Describe Christian beliefs about divorce.
- (b) Explain how a Christian marriage service might guide a couple in their married life.
- (c) 'Divorce is never the best way to solve problems with a marriage.' Do you agree?

Religion and Medical Ethics

- (a) Describe Christian attitudes towards abortion.
- (b) Explain how a Christian might respond to someone who was thinking about committing suicide.
- (c) 'Only God has the right to take away life.' Do you agree?

Religion and Equality

- (a) Describe Christian beliefs about forgiveness.
- (b) Explain how a Christian might respond to someone who has racist opinions.
- (c) 'We know from looking around us that people are not equal.' Do you agree?

Religion, Poverty and Wealth

- (a) Describe the main causes of hunger in the world.
- (b) Explain why a Christian might regularly give money to charity
- (c) 'It does not matter how you earn your money, as long as you make enough to live on.' Do you agree?

Religion, Peace and Justice

- (a) Describe what Christians mean by a 'Just War.'
- (b) Explain how Christians might respond if they see other people being treated very badly by a government.
- (c) 'Sometimes using violence is the only way to solve a problem.' Do you agree?

Religion and Human Relationships

- (a) Describe the roles of men and women in a Christian family. [8]
- (b) Explain Christian attitudes towards divorce. [7]
- (c) 'Every Christian should get married.' Do you agree? [5]

Religion and Medical Ethics

- (a) Describe Christian attitudes towards abortion. [8]
- (b) Explain why some Christians might be against fertility treatment. [7]
- (c) 'It is up to God to decide if a woman is going to have a baby.' Do you agree? [5]

Religion and Equality

- (a) Describe Christian beliefs about equality. [8]
- (b) Explain Christian teaching about the role of women in society. [7]
- (c) 'Men and woman are not equal.' Do you agree? [5]

Religion, Poverty and Wealth

- (a) Describe Christian teachings about concern for the poor. [8]
- (b) Explain why Christians might give money to charity. [7]
- (c) 'People must look after their family before they worry about the poor.' Do you agree? [5]

Religion, Peace and Justice

- (a) Describe Christian teachings about war. [8]
- (b) Explain why Christians might work for peace. [7]
- (c) 'Violence is sometimes necessary.' Do you agree? [5]

(b) Describe how and explain why one well-known Christian or group of Christians has worked to get rid of racism. [7]



Use the example of Martin Luther King. These notes may help:

Abraham Lincoln abolished slavery in 1869, but life for blacks in America was still difficult:

- Treated as inferior, second-class citizens. Not allowed to vote.
- Dreadful living conditions and exploited by white employers.
- Segregation: different schools, restaurants, seats on buses, swimming pools, etc..

MLK's father was a Christian minister in Georgia. At home and church MLK was taught that God created everyone in his own image. He heard stories about Jesus caring for all people. When he went out, however, he saw all blacks treated as inferior. MLK became a Baptist minister in Montgomery, Alabama.

1955: Mrs. Rosa Parks, a black woman, arrested for refusing to give up her seat to a white man. MLK decided to help blacks gain civil rights. He joined the American Civil Rights Movement, and became their leader in 1960.

What did he do?

1. Bus Boycott: blacks refused to use public buses until blacks and whites could sit side by side. 1956, a law was passed making a racial segregation on America's buses illegal.
2. Boycotts of Cafés, restaurants and schools.
3. "Freedom rides" across America.
4. Sit-ins in coffee-shops and at lunch counters
5. Marches and Demonstrations, non-violent. Black and white people marched together.
6. Speeches: August 1963, famous "I have a dream" speech to 250,000 in Washington.

How did he do it?

Non-violent protest (NVP, also NVDA - Non-Violent Direct Action). He said violence must not be used to gain equal rights. He carried on even though people bombed his house, and threatened to kill him, his wife and 4 children. He was attacked, and stabbed once.

Why did he use NVP?

1. Believed the teaching of the Bible and the Christian Faith that all people are born in the image of God, and loved by God equally. God sees no distinction between black and white.
2. Believed Jesus died for all people, not just whites.
3. Wanted to put agape love into action, but no-one has the right to fight, hurt or kill people to gain equal rights because God loves all people, including racists.
4. Believed you only change people through love, not hatred or violence. Hatred must be confronted by love.

Was he successful? Highly respected by President Kennedy, blacks allowed to vote, segregation became illegal. However, racist attitudes are still strong in USA, from both sides. In 2009, America is being led by the first ever black President.

April 1968, aged 38, MLK was shot dead by a white man in a hotel in Memphis, Tennessee. Now Americans remember MLK with a special holiday every year on MLK's birthday.

(c) "Men and women should have the same roles in society". Do you agree?

Remember to include points from both sides, and refer to Christian beliefs.

Some believe men and women should be treated the same in every way, e.g. be leaders, preachers and priests, too. Christians should recognise that everyone is made in the image of God. At Pentecost the Holy Spirit was given to men and women equally. Women should have important roles in the Church, not just arranging the flowers, organising the crèche or making tea! Christianity has been responsible for women being treated as inferior. The Bible, and the way it has been interpreted, has encouraged injustice. If a woman feels God is calling her to be a priest, who can argue?

Others believe that men and women are equally valuable to God, but have different roles and important differences, physical, psychological and emotional. They have different gifts which should be put to different uses. It is no good pretending that men and women are the same – they are not. Jesus did not choose men to be his Apostles by accident. Some roles in the church are more suitable for men. Who says raising a family is not important? It is the most important job in the world. We are equal, but different. Women should stop trying to be men.

I think that men and women should have the same rights, and should be free to choose which jobs they do or whether to stay home with the children or not. I'm not a Christian myself, but I agree with Christian ideas of equality and justice. I think the Church has been sexist in the past, but that this goes against Jesus' teaching and example.

(c) "Christians are not respected when they use violence." Do you agree?

This answer was written by an Arnewood student:

There are groups of Christians such as the Quakers who are pacifist, which means they don't agree with war and they agree with peace and they won't get involved in fighting of any sort. They follow Jesus' teaching such as 'Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.' Many people respect pacifists even if they don't agree with them.

Many Christians don't mind fighting in a war as long as it follows the Just War criteria, which are: Proper Authority, Just Cause, Right Intention, Last Resort, Proportionality, Win Possible, Just Method. I think Christians are respected if they only fight in wars following these criteria.

However, some pacifists wouldn't respect Christians who fight in wars. Jesus says, 'My peace I give to you, my peace I leave with you.' Pacifists believe violence goes against Christian teachings. Jesus said 'Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called sons of God.' People against violence would use this argument.

Christians who think violence is okay in some circumstances would say that there was a lot of violence in the Old Testament and in some circumstances violence is necessary.

I think that some people don't respect Christians who use violence but that people should respect Christians who use violence when necessary and if it is a war that they only fight in wars that meet the criteria of the Just War.