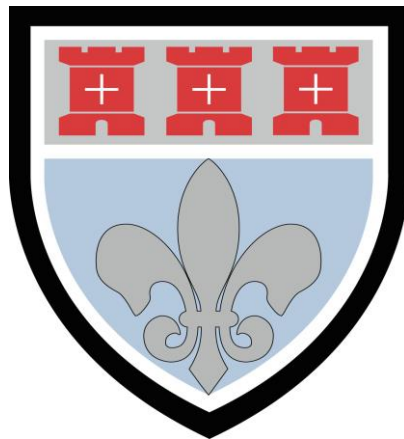


St Mary's - Religious Education Department



A Level Religious Studies: Edexcel

Paper 3: Christianity (4)

Name: _____

Year group: 13 Teacher _____

Overview of Paper 3:

The content for this paper comprises a focused and in-depth study of a chosen religion. The study provides a foundation for understanding the key beliefs and values of a religion, recognising that 'belief' itself does not necessarily have the same role and emphasis in religions or between religions. The study helps students explore how believers attribute authority both to key people in the religious community and to various kinds of traditional, sacred texts. This study also explores various and diverse ways in which religious believers express their sense of identity through, for example, their most sacred rituals and their codes of behaviour. It gives students an opportunity to explore both common ground and diversity in the religious tradition. They will broaden their understanding through familiarity with the views of various contributors, from within and outside the tradition, who have studied this religion in some depth.

Throughout the course you will be practising exam style questions to help you develop your skills in preparation for your A Level examination at the end of Year 13.

Lesson number:	Topic being studied:	Page number:
0	Guide on A Level questions	3 - 4
0	Key words	5
1	Science - Challenges to Religious beliefs	6 - 11
2	Strengths and weaknesses of the challenges to religion	12 - 19
3	Secularisation	20 - 25
	Anthology Text (2)	26 - 29
4	The rise of New Religious Movements	30 - 33
5	Liberation Theology, Feminist Theology and Black Theology	34 - 39
	Practice exam questions (No section B questions included)	40 - 46
6	Evangelicalism and its impact	47 - 50
7	Impact of Liberation, Black and Feminist Theology	51
	Examples of questions and mark scheme	52
	Revision notes to be completed	53 - 59

Please note the End of Paper 1 Assessment will be provided on a separate sheet

Types of Questions at A Level (there are four questions to answer at A Level):

Section A1

Q1 is worth **8 marks** and will ask you to **explore**. The question wants you to show specific knowledge and understanding of the topic being asked about. You are required to demonstrate understanding by investigating different reasons, concepts and ideas. **Full marks are given for showing a wide range of knowledge, using key terms throughout correctly, a broad range of ideas are looked at and key religious beliefs and ideas are developed to show the depth of knowledge.**

Examples:

(A1) Explore the view of **one** modern atheist regarding religion (8)

(A1) Explore the work of Meta-Ethics to help give ethical language meaning (8)

Section A2

Q2 is worth **12 marks**. They are open-response "**Assess**" questions. The marks are allocated as **A01 is worth 3 marks and A02 is worth 9 marks**. The A02 marks are divided between analysis and evaluation. This style of question requires you to move beyond explanation of a concept and demonstrate the A02 skills of evaluation and come to a conclusion about an issue, concept or argument.

Examples:

(A2) Assess the claim that science may replace religious ideas of the universe. (12)

(A3) Assess the strengths of "New Religious Movements". (12)

Section B - this involves a two part question.

Q3a is a **10 mark "Clarify" question where you are to identify key ideas and explain key concepts. (10 marks for A01)** You are provided with an extract from one of the four extracts from the anthology. For this question you are to demonstrate your understanding of the issue in the question.

Examples:

(B3a) Clarify the approach of Liberation Theology. (10)

(B3a) Clarify the teachings of Atonement theory. (10)

Section B - second part of the question

Q3b is a **20 mark extended response which asks you to "analyse"**. This requires you to deconstruct information or issues to find connections and provide logical chains of reasoning in order to make judgements regarding their importance / relevance to the question context. **This question focuses more on A02. (5 marks for A01 and 15 marks for A02)** **These questions are linked to the topic asked in 3a.** You will be rewarded for finding relations or links to other areas of the specification, although this is not necessary to attain full marks. There are 5 A01 marks in order to reward you for information you use to underpin your analysis.

Examples:

(B3b) Analyse the success of Barth's thinking of Jesus taking God's judgement upon himself. (20)

(b3b) Analyse the success of Hick's work on Jesus being a moral exemplar. (20)

Section C

Q4 is a 30 mark extended response which asks you to "Evaluate". This requires you to deconstruct information or issues to find connections and provide logical chains of reasoning in order to make judgements regarding their importance / relevance to the question context. **This question focuses more on A02. (5 marks for A01 and 25 marks for A02)** You must be find relations or links to other areas of the specification, such as Ethics or Christianity. There are 5 A01 marks in order to reward you for information you use to underpin your analysis.

Examples:

(Q4) Evaluate the progress that Feminist Theology has made. (30)

(Q4) Evaluate the different practices of the Eucharist (30)

KEY WORDS!

You will learn about the twelve key words below in different lessons within this Chapter. These key words are very important and it is important that you learn these key words so that you can use them in your exam answers.

Black Theology - contextualises Christianity in an attempt to help those of African descent overcome oppression

Diaspora - dispersal or spread of people from their original homeland

Empirical evidence - information acquired by observation or experimentation. This data is recorded and analysed by scientists and is a central process as part of the scientific method.

Feminist Theology - Looking at the teachings of the religion from a woman's view

Intelligent Design - Intelligent design refers to a scientific research program as well as a community of scientists, philosophers and other scholars who seek evidence of design in nature.

Liberation - being set free from something

Liberation Theology - a movement that tries to address the problems of poverty and social injustice as well as spiritual matters

Pentecostal - a Christian movement that emphasises baptism in the Holy Spirit

Pentecost - the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles

Religious - belonging or relating to a monastic order or other group of people who are united by their practice of religion

Secularisation - refers to the historical process in which religion loses social and cultural significance

Spiritual - relating to deep feelings and beliefs

Social and historical Lesson 1 developments

Lesson Topic

Science
Challenges to Christian beliefs.
(Anthology extract needed for this!)

Outcomes

To have explored the challenges of science to religious belief throughout history

Starter

On a post-it note complete the following:

- ✓ Define Science
- ✓ Define religion
- ✓ In what ways are they similar?

Share your thoughts with those around you. Then stick your post-it note on the board.

Main activity 1

Exploring the distinction between religion and science

The terms science and religion are fairly new terms in the history of western thought. Before the nineteenth century, theologians like Aquinas used terms that meant worship or orthodoxy. Furthermore, science was referred to as natural philosophy. Scientific answers were often sought after by members of the clergy. The distinction between science and religion is a fairly new one. Karl Popper (1959) claimed that scientific hypotheses (unlike religious ones) are in principle falsifiable.

One way to distinguish between science and religion is the claim that science concerns the natural world, whereas religion concerns both the natural and the supernatural. Scientific explanations do not appeal to supernatural entities such as gods or angels (fallen or not), or to non-natural forces (like miracles or karma). For example, neuroscientists typically explain our thoughts in terms of brain states, not by reference to an immaterial soul or spirit.

Task

1. Read and discuss the information above.
2. On A3 paper answer the following questions.
 - Explain Karl Popper's distinction between science and religion. How does this relate to other aspects of this course? (Think Philosophy)
 - What are the benefits of involving faith groups in the pursuit of scientific knowledge?
 - What are the possible problems?
 - Should they be separated?

Using the stations around the room, create a timeline of key historical developments in science that have challenged religious beliefs.

For each point on your timeline include:

- ✓ Explanation of the development in science
- ✓ How and why this development challenged aspects of Christian beliefs

Copernicus and the solar system

Copernican heliocentrism is the name given to the astronomical model developed by Nicolaus Copernicus and published in **1543**. It positioned the Sun near the centre of the Universe, motionless, with Earth and the other planets rotating around it in circular paths modified by epicycles and at uniform speeds. The Copernican model departed from the Ptolemaic system that prevailed in Western culture for centuries, placing Earth at the centre of the Universe, and is often regarded as the launching point to modern astronomy and the Scientific Revolution.

The earth was placed at the centre of universe for two reasons:

1. Observations of the night sky in early astronomy made the universe appear to be rotating around the earth.
2. Perhaps more importantly the view of the earth at the centre of the solar system is more fitting with a Biblical view of creation. It places humanity at the centre of all God made.



Heliocentric model from Nicolaus Copernicus' *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres)



Nikolaus Kopernikus.

The Galileo Affair

The Galileo affair (was a sequence of events, beginning around 1610, culminating with the trial and condemnation of Galileo Galilei by the Roman Catholic Inquisition in 1633 for his support of heliocentrism.

In 1610, Galileo published his *Sidereus Nuncius* (Starry Messenger), describing the surprising observations that he had made with the new telescope, namely the phases of Venus and the Galilean moons of Jupiter. With these observations he promoted the heliocentric theory of Nicolaus Copernicus. Galileo's initial discoveries were met with opposition within the Catholic Church, and in 1616 the Inquisition declared heliocentrism to be formally heretical. H

eliocentric books were banned and Galileo was ordered to refrain from holding, teaching or defending heliocentric ideas

Galileo went on to propose a theory of tides in 1616, and of comets in 1619; he argued that the tides were evidence for the motion of the Earth. In 1632 Galileo, now an old man, published his *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*, which implicitly defended heliocentrism, and was immensely popular. Responding to mounting controversy over theology, astronomy and philosophy, the Roman Inquisition tried Galileo in 1633 and found him "vehemently suspect of heresy", sentencing him to indefinite imprisonment. Galileo was kept under house arrest until his death in 1642.

By 1835, in the face of overwhelming evidence, the Church had dropped all opposition to heliocentrism, and in 1992 Pope John Paul II gave an official apology for his treatment. There are now plans to build a statue to Galileo inside the Vatican walls.

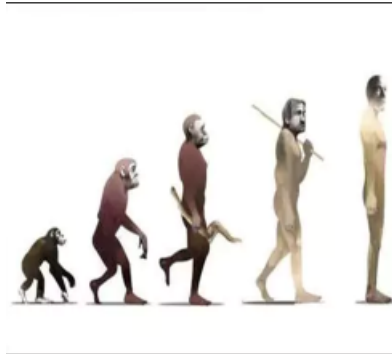
The Age of the Universe

While the Bible never explicitly states the age of the Earth, many Bible scholars attempted to deduce it using the dates and ages of its characters.

While there were problems with this approach - the chronology becomes confused after King Solomon - several attempts nonetheless came up with strikingly similar figures. The Venerable Bede suggested that the Earth was created in 3952BC.

The most famous, however, was the Ussher chronology, put forward in 1650 by the Archbishop of Armagh, James Ussher. With an incredible attempt at precision, it claimed that the first moment of creation was in the evening of 22 October, 4004BC. Scientists point out that all of these dates would mean that the planet came into existence a full thousand years after the domestication of the guinea pig.

However radio dating using lead ores suggests the Earth is around 4.54 billion years old, while the age of the Universe has been put at around 13.7 billion years. This has been established partly by looking through powerful telescopes at distant stars; the Hubble Space Telescope's (launched in 1990) Deep Field Image shows galaxies over 13 billion light years away, in the first few hundred million years after the Big Bang.



Creation and Evolution

The 1859 publication of *On the Origin of Species*, Charles Darwin's great book detailing his discovery of the processes of evolution, caused the greatest split between the Church and empirical science since Galileo. The idea that man was not created in God's image, but evolved from an ape-like ancestor, appalled many Christians.

While not all clergy were opposed to the theory of evolution, some were furious. In the famous debate at the Oxford University museum, the Bishop of Oxford, Samuel Wilberforce, asked "Darwin's Bulldog", Thomas Huxley, whether he claimed descent from the apes on his mother's or his father's side.

The argument rages to this day, although the weight of evidence is overwhelmingly in favour and very few biologists now question the basic idea of evolution. However, some Christians - those who believe that God created the world as described in *Genesis* - have called for Creationism or "Intelligent Design" to be taught alongside evolutionary biology in school science lessons.

The Church of England issued a posthumous apology to Darwin last year, saying that it showed too much "anti-evolutionary fervour" when his book was published.

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) - Psychology

The narrative of religious philosophy stated that the mind and body were distinct entities. This belief suggested that the soul was separated from the body and could exist beyond it (dualism). Western philosophy often portrayed the soul/mind as a higher entity and it was the body and its desires that weakened it.

Then psychology arrived, and united the mind and body in a complex union. Psychology pointed out that the mind and body affect each other challenging religious beliefs on the soul.

Furthermore for Freud religion is just wishful thinking to combat psychological turmoil.

This turmoil is due to pressures from society or fear of the natural world.

In order to fulfil basic needs and desires the mind creates images and beliefs.

For Freud religion is not necessarily false but illusionary - something which answers inner needs.

Freud focused on the function of religion in overcoming inner fears and turmoil.

Freud was interested in how the mind develops into adulthood. During childhood there are experiences which are traumatic. If these traumatic experiences are not resolved they are locked away in the subconscious mind.

Extension

Explain whether or not you believe religion can or has overcome the scientific challenge

Review 1

Record at least three facts you have learnt this lesson.

Do you believe religion is threatened by science? Give two reasons for your view.

Main Activity 3

Scientific challenges to religious belief

Watch the debate on The Big Questions. It asks whether or not evidence undermines Religion.

As you watch the first fifteen minutes of this debate, record at least three reasons for and against the statement.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mOe747BtMQA>

For

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Against

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Main activity 4	<p><u>Exam style question</u></p> <p>Explore the key scientific challenges to Religion (8)</p>
Plenary	<p>Write three things you have learnt today?</p> <p>What two things did you know already?</p> <p>What questions do you still have?</p>
Homework	<p>Read the following article and complete the tasks at the end</p> <p>Science and Christian Faith: Conflict or Cooperation? by Robert C. Fay • August 22, 2007</p> <p>Introduction The popular image of the relationship between science and Christian faith is one of antagonism, conflict, and even warfare. By contrast, I will attempt to show that despite some episodes of tension, the overall relationship between science and biblical theism has been largely cooperative and fruitful. We'll look first at the origins of modern science and the origins of the conflict thesis; then at the Galileo affair and the reactions of Christian scientists and theologians to the theory of evolution. Finally, I'll make a few remarks on the complementary relationship between science and Christian faith.</p> <p><u>The Origins of Modern Science</u> The scientific revolution Modern science arose in Western Europe in the 16th and 17th Centuries. The events of that period are known to us as the scientific revolution. The first (in 1543) was the publication by Nicholas Copernicus of his heliocentric model of the solar system.¹ Among the developments that followed were Kepler's laws of planetary motion, Galileo's telescopic observations, Newton's law of universal gravitation, and experimental studies of gases by the chemist Robert Boyle. It is significant that the scientific revolution occurred in a culture permeated with a Christian worldview and striking that nearly all its leaders were deeply committed to the Christian Faith. Both Copernicus, an administrator of the Roman Catholic Church, and Johannes Kepler, a Protestant, were devout Christian believers. Galileo remained faithful to his church, despite the opposition of individuals in the academic and ecclesiastical establishments who were unable to accommodate his discoveries to their Aristotelian view of the world. Newton spent more time studying the Bible than doing science, and both Newton and Boyle were prodigious theological writers.</p> <p>Why did modern science arise in Christian culture? One can ask the question: Why is it that modern science arose in the Christian culture of Western Europe, rather than in ancient Egypt, Greece, China, or the Middle East? Though non-Christian societies made important contributions to mathematics and astronomy, none of those societies produced anything remotely like modern science.</p> <p>For science to get going, one needs a set of presuppositions, or foundational beliefs, about the natural world. These beliefs include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The universe is good, and it is a good thing to know about it. If people believe that matter is evil, they won't be inclined to investigate it. 2. The universe is regular, orderly, and rational. If people believe that material behaviour lacks order, they won't bother to study it.

3. This order could be of two types. It could be necessary order, in which case we should be able to discover the order by pure thought. Alternatively, it could be contingent order, in which case we must discover the order by observation and experiment. Belief in necessary order is disastrous for science, whereas belief in contingent order is essential to its development.
4. Human sense perception and reason are basically reliable, and the regular patterns of material behaviour are intelligible to the human mind.

These beliefs seem obvious to us, but only because we live in a culture that has held them for hundreds of years. Other cultures held quite different beliefs about the material world.

A number of historians have suggested that modern science arose in a Christian culture because core Christian beliefs provided the presuppositions needed for science to get started. British scholar, R. G. Collingwood, has written:

"The presuppositions that go to make up this Catholic faith, preserved for many centuries by the religious institutions of Christendom, have as a matter of historical fact been the main or fundamental presuppositions of natural science ever since."

How do these presuppositions follow from core Christian beliefs?

1. The scientists of the 17th Century believed the material world to be good because God had made it good. Genesis 1 ends with the comment, "God saw all that he had made and it was very good" (Gen. 1:31). Moreover, the essential goodness of matter is affirmed by the Incarnation.
 2. The founders of modern science believed that the universe is regular, orderly, and rational because God is personal, rational, and faithful.
 3. They believed that the order of the universe is contingent because the existence and behaviour of the created world depends on the will of a sovereign Creator. The importance of this theological perspective, for science, is that one cannot deduce the behaviour of the natural world from first principles. God could have made a world that behaved in any way he wished, so if you want to know how the world does behave, you have got to go and look. Hence, the importance of observation and experiment, an approach that distinguished the science of the 17th Century from the deductive approach of the ancient Greeks.
 4. 17th Century scientists believed that the behaviour of the material world is intelligible to human reason because God has made us in his image and given us a mind with which to think.
- All these beliefs follow from the Christian doctrine of creation.

19th and 20th Century Christian scientists

It is true that there was a decline of religious faith among scientists following the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859. Nevertheless, Darwin's work does not seem to have shaken the faith of the great physicists of the 19th Century. Michael Faraday, James Joule, Lord Kelvin, and James Clerk Maxwell, for example, were all devout Christian believers. In the 20th Century, the astronomer Arthur Eddington, Charles Towns and William Phillips, Nobel laureates in physics, and Francis Collins, the director of the Human Genome Project, have publicly affirmed their belief in God. Collins has expressed the spiritual wonder of scientific research in these words: "When something new is revealed about the human genome, I experience a feeling of awe at the realization that humanity now knows something only God knew before."

I mention the theistic beliefs of these leading scientists, not to claim that most contemporary scientists are theists, but simply to challenge the popular image of conflict between science and religion.

Tasks

1. Name the scholars mentioned and summarise what their thinking / contribution was
2. How can scientists reconcile their personal beliefs of a God with science?


Social and historical Lesson 2 developments

Lesson Topic	Evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the challenges to religion
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Outcomes	To have explored the different perspectives of Richard Dawkins and Francis Collins. To be able to evaluate the different perspectives of Collins and Dawkins
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Key Terms	Intelligent design - Intelligent design refers to a scientific research program as well as a community of scientists, philosophers and other scholars who seek evidence of design in nature. Empirical evidence - information n acquired by observation or experimentation. This data is recorded and analysed by scientists and is a central process as part of the scientific method.
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Starter	From the previous lesson recall three scientific events that challenged religious belief. Bullet point anything you already know about Richard Dawkins.
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Main activity 1	<p><u>Who is Francis Collins?</u></p> <p>By graduate school Collins considered himself an atheist. However, dealing with dying patients led him to question his religious views, and he investigated various faiths. He familiarized himself with the evidence for and against God in cosmology, and used <i>Mere Christianity</i> by C. S. Lewis as a foundation to re-examine his religious view. He eventually came to a conclusion and became a Christian during a hike on a fall afternoon. He has described himself as a "serious Christian "</p> <p>Importantly to this topic, Collins is an incredibly successful scientist. He has been elected to the Institute of Medicine and the National Academy of Sciences, and has received the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the National Medal of Science.</p> <p>Collins also has written a number of books on science, medicine, and religion, including the New York Times bestseller, <i>The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief</i>.</p> <p>Tasks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Watch the clip2. Explain why Collins believes in God in at least 35 words <p>Extension</p> <p>Why do you think people are surprised by the idea of a scientist with religious belief?</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=obEBR5MbhNU</p>	
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Main activity 2



FRANCIS COLLINS

VS



RICHARD DAWKINS

As a class we will read the debate between Dawkins and Collins.
As we read the debate, highlight in two different colours.

Red - Points against religion

Green - Points in favour of religion

Collins and Dawkins Debate: Can Religion withstand scientific criticisms?

TIME: Professor Dawkins, if one truly understands science, is *God* then a delusion, as your book title suggests?

DAWKINS: The question of whether there exists a supernatural creator, a *God*, is one of the most important that we have to answer. I think that it is a scientific question. My answer is no.

TIME: Dr. Collins, you believe that science is compatible with Christian faith.

COLLINS: Yes. *God's* existence is either true or not. But calling it a scientific question implies that the tools of science can provide the answer. From my perspective, *God* cannot be completely contained within nature, and therefore *God's* existence is outside of science's ability to really weigh in.

TIME: Stephen Jay Gould, a Harvard paleontologist, famously argued that religion and science can coexist, because they occupy separate, airtight boxes. You both seem to disagree.

COLLINS: Gould sets up an artificial wall between the two worldviews that doesn't exist in my life. Because I do believe in *God's* creative power in having brought it all into being in the first place, I find that studying the natural world is an opportunity to observe the majesty, the elegance, the intricacy of *God's* creation.

DAWKINS: I think that Gould's separate compartments was a purely political ploy to win middle-of-the-road religious people to the science camp. But it's a very empty idea. There are plenty of places where religion does not keep off the scientific turf. Any belief in miracles is flat contradictory not just to the facts of science but to the spirit of science.

TIME: Professor Dawkins, you think Darwin's theory of evolution does more than simply contradict the *Genesis* story.

DAWKINS: Yes. For centuries, the most powerful argument for *God's* existence from the physical world was the so-called argument from design: Living things are so beautiful and elegant and so apparently purposeful, they could only have been made by an intelligent designer. But Darwin provided a simpler explanation. His way is a gradual, incremental improvement starting from very simple beginnings and working up step by tiny incremental step to more complexity, more elegance, more

adaptive perfection. Each step is not too improbable for us to countenance, but when you add them up cumulatively over millions of years, you get these monsters of improbability, like the human brain and the rain forest. It should warn us against ever again assuming that because something is complicated, God must have done it.

COLLINS: I don't see that Professor Dawkins' basic account of evolution is incompatible with God's having designed it.

TIME: When would this have occurred?

COLLINS: By being outside of nature, God is also outside of space and time. Hence, at the moment of the creation of the universe, God could also have activated evolution, with full knowledge of how it would turn out, perhaps even including our having this conversation. The idea that he could both foresee the future and also give us spirit and free will to carry out our own desires becomes entirely acceptable.

DAWKINS: I think that's a tremendous cop-out. If God wanted to create life and create humans, it would be slightly odd that he should choose the extraordinarily roundabout way of waiting for 10 billion years before life got started and then waiting for another 4 billion years until you got human beings capable of worshipping and sinning and all the other things religious people are interested in.

COLLINS: Who are we to say that that was an odd way to do it? I don't think that it is God's purpose to make his intention absolutely obvious to us. If it suits him to be a deity that we must seek without being forced to, would it not have been sensible for him to use the mechanism of evolution without posting obvious road signs to reveal his role in creation?

TIME: Both your books suggest that if the universal constants, the six or more characteristics of our universe, had varied at all, it would have made life impossible. Dr. Collins, can you provide an example?

COLLINS: The gravitational constant, if it were off by one part in a hundred million million, then the expansion of the universe after the Big Bang would not have occurred in the fashion that was necessary for life to occur. When you look at that evidence, it is very difficult to adopt the view that this was just chance. But if you are willing to consider the possibility of a designer, this becomes a rather plausible explanation for what is otherwise an exceedingly improbable event--namely, our existence.

DAWKINS: People who believe in God conclude there must have been a divine knob twiddler who twiddled the knobs of these half-dozen constants to get them exactly right. The problem is that this says, because something is vastly improbable, we need a God to explain it. But that God himself would be even more improbable. Physicists have come up with other explanations. One is to say that these six constants are not free to vary. Some unified theory will eventually show that they are as locked in as the circumference and the diameter of a circle. That reduces the odds of them all independently just happening to fit the bill. The other way is the multiverse way. That says that maybe the universe we are in is one of a very large number of universes. The vast majority will not contain life because they have the wrong gravitational constant or the wrong this constant or that constant. But as the number of universes climbs, the odds mount that a tiny minority of universes will have the right fine-tuning.

COLLINS: This is an interesting choice. Barring a theoretical resolution, which I think is unlikely, you either have to say there are zillions of parallel universes out there that we can't observe at present or you have to say there was a plan. I actually find the argument of the existence of a God who did the planning more compelling than the bubbling of all these multiverses. So Occam's razor--Occam says you should choose the explanation that is most simple and straightforward--leads me more to believe in God than in the multiverse, which seems quite a stretch of the imagination.

DAWKINS: I accept that there may be things far grander and more incomprehensible than we can possibly imagine. What I can't understand is why you invoke improbability and yet you will not admit that you're shooting yourself in the foot by postulating something just as improbable, magicking into existence the word God.

COLLINS: My God is not improbable to me. He has no need of a creation story for himself or to be fine-tuned by something else. God is the answer to all of those "How must it have come to be" questions.

DAWKINS: I think that's the mother and father of all cop-outs. It's an honest scientific quest to discover where this apparent improbability comes from. Now Dr. Collins says, "Well, God did it. And God needs no explanation because God is outside all this." Well, what an incredible evasion of the responsibility to explain. Scientists don't do that. Scientists say, "We're working on it. We're struggling to understand."

COLLINS: Certainly science should continue to see whether we can find evidence for multiverses that might explain why our own universe seems to be so finely tuned. But I do object to the assumption that anything that might be outside of nature is ruled out of the conversation. That's an impoverished view of the kinds of questions we humans can ask, such as "Why am I here?", "What happens after we die?", "Is there a God?" If you refuse to acknowledge their appropriateness, you end up with a zero probability of God after examining the natural world because it doesn't convince you on a proof basis. But if your mind is open about whether God might exist, you can point to aspects of the universe that are consistent with that conclusion.

DAWKINS: To me, the right approach is to say we are profoundly ignorant of these matters. We need to work on them. But to suddenly say the answer is God--it's that that seems to me to close off the discussion.

TIME: Could the answer be God?

DAWKINS: There could be something incredibly grand and incomprehensible and beyond our present understanding.

COLLINS: That's God.

DAWKINS: Yes. But it could be any of a billion Gods. It could be God of the Martians or of the inhabitants of Alpha Centauri. The chance of its being a particular God, Yahweh, the God of Jesus, is vanishingly small--at the least, the onus is on you to demonstrate why you think that's the case.

TIME: The Book of Genesis has led many conservative Protestants to oppose evolution and some to insist that the earth is only 6,000 years old.

COLLINS: There are sincere believers who interpret Genesis 1 and 2 in a very literal way that is inconsistent, frankly, with our knowledge of the universe's age or of how living organisms are related to each other. St. Augustine wrote that basically it is not possible to understand what was being described in Genesis. It was not intended as a science textbook. It was intended as a description of who God was, who we are and what our relationship is supposed to be with God. Augustine explicitly warns against a very narrow perspective that will put our faith at risk of looking ridiculous. If you step back from that one narrow interpretation, what the Bible describes is very consistent with the Big Bang.

DAWKINS: Physicists are working on the Big Bang, and one day they may or may not solve it. However, what Dr. Collins has just been--may I call you Francis?

COLLINS: Oh, please, Richard, do so.

DAWKINS: What Francis was just saying about Genesis was, of course, a little private quarrel between him and his Fundamentalist colleagues ...

COLLINS: It's not so private. It's rather public. [Laughs.]

DAWKINS: ... It would be unseemly for me to enter in except to suggest that he'd save himself an awful lot of trouble if he just simply ceased to give them the time of day. Why bother with these

clowns?

COLLINS: Richard, I think we don't do a service to dialogue between science and faith to characterize sincere people by calling them names. That inspires an even more dug-in position. Atheists sometimes come across as a bit arrogant in this regard, and characterizing faith as something only an idiot would attach themselves to is not likely to help your case.

TIME: Dr. Collins, the Resurrection is an essential argument of Christian faith, but doesn't it, along with the virgin birth and lesser miracles, fatally undermine the scientific method, which depends on the constancy of natural laws?

COLLINS: If you're willing to answer yes to a God outside of nature, then there's nothing inconsistent with God on rare occasions choosing to invade the natural world in a way that appears miraculous. If God made the natural laws, why could he not violate them when it was a particularly significant moment for him to do so? And if you accept the idea that Christ was also divine, which I do, then his Resurrection is not in itself a great logical leap.

TIME: Doesn't the very notion of miracles throw off science?

COLLINS: Not at all. If you are in the camp I am, one place where science and faith could touch each other is in the investigation of supposedly miraculous events.

DAWKINS: If ever there was a slamming of the door in the face of constructive investigation, it is the word miracle. To a medieval peasant, a radio would have seemed like a miracle. All kinds of things may happen which we by the lights of today's science would classify as a miracle just as medieval science might a Boeing 747. Francis keeps saying things like "From the perspective of a believer." Once you buy into the position of faith, then suddenly you find yourself losing all of your natural skepticism and your scientific--really scientific--credibility. I'm sorry to be so blunt.

COLLINS: Richard, I actually agree with the first part of what you said. But I would challenge the statement that my scientific instincts are any less rigorous than yours. The difference is that my presumption of the possibility of God and therefore the supernatural is not zero, and yours is.

TIME: Dr. Collins, you have described humanity's moral sense not only as a gift from God but as a signpost that he exists.

COLLINS: There is a whole field of inquiry that has come up in the last 30 or 40 years--some call it socio-biology or evolutionary psychology--relating to where we get our moral sense and why we value the idea of altruism, and locating both answers in behavioural adaptations for the preservation of our genes. But if you believe, and Richard has been articulate in this, that natural selection operates on the individual, not on a group, then why would the individual risk his own DNA doing something selfless to help somebody in a way that might diminish his chance of reproducing? Granted, we may try to help our own family members because they share our DNA. Or help someone else in expectation that they will help us later. But when you look at what we admire as the most generous manifestations of altruism, they are not based on kin selection or reciprocity. An extreme example might be Oskar Schindler risking his life to save more than a thousand Jews from the gas chambers. That's the opposite of saving his genes. We see less dramatic versions every day. Many of us think these qualities may come from God--especially since justice and morality are two of the attributes we most readily identify with God.

DAWKINS: Can I begin with an analogy? Most people understand that sexual lust has to do with propagating genes. Copulation in nature tends to lead to reproduction and so to more genetic copies. But in modern society, most copulations involve contraception, designed precisely to avoid reproduction. Altruism probably has origins like those of lust. In our prehistoric past, we would have lived in extended families, surrounded by kin whose interests we might have wanted to promote because they shared our genes. Now we live in big cities. We are not among kin nor people who will ever reciprocate our good deeds. It doesn't matter. Just as people engaged in sex with contraception are not aware of being motivated by a drive to have babies, it doesn't cross our mind that the reason for do-gooding is based in the fact that our primitive ancestors lived in small groups. But that seems

to me to be a highly plausible account for where the desire for morality, the desire for goodness, comes from.

COLLINS: For you to argue that our noblest acts are a misfiring of Darwinian behaviour does not do justice to the sense we all have about the absolutes that are involved here of good and evil. Evolution may explain some features of the moral law, but it can't explain why it should have any real significance. If it is solely an evolutionary convenience, there is really no such thing as good or evil. But for me, it is much more than that. The moral law is a reason to think of God as plausible--not just a God who sets the universe in motion but a God who cares about human beings, because we seem uniquely amongst creatures on the planet to have this far-developed sense of morality. What you've said implies that outside of the human mind, tuned by evolutionary processes, good and evil have no meaning. Do you agree with that?

DAWKINS: Even the question you're asking has no meaning to me. Good and evil--I don't believe that there is hanging out there, anywhere, something called good and something called evil. I think that there are good things that happen and bad things that happen.

COLLINS: I think that is a fundamental difference between us. I'm glad we identified it.

TIME: Dr. Collins, I know you favour the opening of new stem-cell lines for experimentation. But doesn't the fact that faith has caused some people to rule this out risk creating a perception that religion is preventing science from saving lives?

COLLINS: Let me first say as a disclaimer that I speak as a private citizen and not as a representative of the Executive Branch of the United States government. The impression that people of faith are uniformly opposed to stem-cell research is not documented by surveys. In fact, many people of strong religious conviction think this can be a morally supportable approach.

TIME: But to the extent that a person argues on the basis of faith or Scripture rather than reason, how can scientists respond?

COLLINS: Faith is not the opposite of reason. Faith rests squarely upon reason, but with the added component of revelation. So such discussions between scientists and believers happen quite readily. But neither scientists nor believers always embody the principles precisely. Scientists can have their judgment clouded by their professional aspirations. And the pure truth of faith, which you can think of as this clear spiritual water, is poured into rusty vessels called human beings, and so sometimes the benevolent principles of faith can get distorted as positions are hardened.

DAWKINS: For me, moral questions such as stem-cell research turn upon whether suffering is caused. In this case, clearly none is. The embryos have no nervous system. But that's not an issue discussed publicly. The issue is, Are they human? If you are an absolutist moralist, you say, "These cells are human, and therefore they deserve some kind of special moral treatment." Absolutist morality doesn't have to come from religion but usually does.

We slaughter nonhuman animals in factory farms, and they do have nervous systems and do suffer. People of faith are not very interested in their suffering.

COLLINS: Do humans have a different moral significance than cows in general?

DAWKINS: Humans have more moral responsibility perhaps, because they are capable of reasoning.

TIME: Do the two of you have any concluding thoughts?

COLLINS: I just would like to say that over more than a quarter-century as a scientist and a believer, I find absolutely nothing in conflict between agreeing with Richard in practically all of his conclusions about the natural world, and also saying that I am still able to accept and embrace the possibility that there are answers that science isn't able to provide about the natural world--the questions about why instead of the questions about how. I'm interested in the whys. I find many of those answers in the

spiritual realm. That in no way compromises my ability to think rigorously as a scientist.

DAWKINS: My mind is not closed, as you have occasionally suggested, Francis. My mind is open to the most wonderful range of future possibilities, which I cannot even dream about, nor can you, nor can anybody else. What I am sceptical about is the idea that whatever wonderful revelation does come in the science of the future, it will turn out to be one of the particular historical religions that people happen to have dreamed up. When we started out and we were talking about the origins of the universe and the physical constants, I provided what I thought were cogent arguments against a supernatural intelligent designer. But it does seem to me to be a worthy idea. Refutable--but nevertheless grand and big enough to be worthy of respect. I don't see the Olympian gods or Jesus coming down and dying on the Cross as worthy of that grandeur. They strike me as parochial. If there is a God, it's going to be a whole lot bigger and a whole lot more incomprehensible than anything that any theologian of any religion has ever proposed

Review 1

On post-it notes recall various points made by Collins and Dawkins.

Place your post-it notes on their faces.

We will feedback as a class.

Main Activity 3

Evaluating scientific methods

As a group, you will discuss and reflect on the limitations of science and the challenges to religion. Create a detailed evaluation table.

<i>What are the problems and limitations of science?</i>	<i>What are the problems with religious arguments for the existence of God?</i>
<p>Link with Philosophy of Religion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ What are the possible problems of empirical evidence?✓ Is there a limit to what science can discover?✓ Does science simply use the wrong tools when applied to religion?	<p>Link with Philosophy of Religion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ What are the problems with looking for God in nature?✓ Evidence? Proof?✓ Methods?

Main activity 4

Exam style question

Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the belief that science alone can explain the universe. (30 marks)

In your response to this question you must include how developments in Christianity have been influenced by one of the following:

- ✓ Philosophy of Religion
- ✓ Religion and Ethics
- ✓ New Testament Studies

Plenary	<p>Summarise your learning from this lesson in at least 30 words</p> <p>Create two questions you would like to ask Dawkins</p> <p>Create two questions you would like to ask Collins</p>
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Homework	<p>Watch the following 1-hour long episode on YouTube.</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UcZ44kQphlo</p> <p>Make at least 1 page of notes from the documentary on scientific challenges to religion.</p>
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Social and historical Lesson 3
developments

Lesson Topic Secularisation

Outcomes

- To be able to understand what is meant by secularisation
- To have evaluated secularisation
- To have explored and reflected on the rise of popular athiests

Key Terms **Secularisation** - refers to the historical process in which religion loses social and cultural significance.

Starter

In groups, you have been provided with two pieces of A3 paper.

On one sheet, describe / draw / brainstorm the key distinctive features of a society without a religion

On the other sheet describe / draw/ brainstorm the key distinctive features of a society with a religion.

Be prepared to share your ideas / thoughts

Main activity 1 As a class, we will read the article exploring what secularisation is and why / how it is occurring.

Highlight information as we read.

Tasks

Must

Brainstorm information on the article (at least eight bullet points)

Should

Choose a statistic or fact that most surprises you and explain why

Could

Do you think secularisation will spread throughout the world? Give reasons for your view.



What is secularisation?

Secularisation in Europe

Over the last 60 years, religion in Europe has seen a strong decline. On average throughout the 27 EU countries, only half of its people believe in God and 25.4% directly say that they have no religion. There is much variation from country to country. Only 16% of the populace of Estonia believe in God and the Scandinavian countries are highly atheist. But 95% believe in Malta.

Despite the low rate of belief in God, many Europeans still claim to belong to theistic religions. 49.5% of the population of Europe say they are Catholic Christian, 15.7% say they're Muslim, 12.7% say they're Protestant Christian, 8.6% say they're Orthodox Christian and 0.4% say they are Jewish. These numbers mean that at least 30% of Europeans are putting down a religion despite not believing in the very basic first principal of the religion they put down. In some places, this percent is higher.

In France only 52% of Catholic believe in God and "only 18 percent define God according to the teachings of the Catholic Church". This is all because most people in Europe confuse religion and cultural heritage, and for many the actual beliefs of a religion don't really matter.

The Defiers of Secularisation

The world is not secularising evenly. Academics can be found asking "is the situation best captured by secularization theory, or by the notion of resurgence of spirituality? By the decline in traditional religiosity, or by the upsurge of fundamentalism?" Some of the exceptions to secularisation (even in the developed world) are pronounced enough to count as evidence against Secularisation Theory. Sociologist of religion Rodney Stark condemns secularisation theory "to the graveyard of failed theories." Others (erroneously) believe it is only a European phenomenon²¹. We will respond to these arguments below, for example Steve Bruce points out Japan as an example of a non-Christian, non-European country that has also secularized extensively.

The USA still has a very high religiosity rate, as high as third-world countries, and is, with the possible exception of parts of Scandinavia the most advanced country in the world. So this is a serious exception that needs explaining. Most explanations have concentrated on the high level of immigration, something which tends to harden people's religions. See: Political Power Struggles and Identity Reinforcement: Why are People Religious?

The developing world is highly religious; there are countries and cultures that can hardly imagine what life without religion is like. Critics imagine that these countries will not lose their religious beliefs as they develop higher rates of education and technological development.

Sections of society within secular countries remain highly religious. The middle-ground believers are now swayed into a religiosity by the same inertia that used to lead them into religion. Now these are largely gone, what is left behind are the hardcore believers, who are both more vocal, more educated and more activist about their beliefs. These fanatical groups show no signs of dissipation. A report in The Economist (2007) reads: "It is the tougher versions of religion that are doing best - the sort that claim Adam and Eve met 6,003 years ago. Some of the new converts are from the ranks of the underprivileged (Pentecostalism has spread rapidly in the favelas of Brazil), but many are not. American evangelicals tend to be well-educated and well-off".

The growth of New Religious Movements in secularized countries makes some doubt the depth of secularisation²³. However, the numbers involved in NRMs are small in comparison to the numbers lost by world religions in the developed world, and their middling increase in numbers is simply part of the decentralisation process of religions. It is just that the NRMs are often newsworthy, hence, have a higher profile.

Some Muslim countries are modernizing without secularizing. In contrast, some of these states are seeing dwindling minority religions and increasing power of Islamic institutions. Yet, the type of science accepted is often engineering and branches of science that lack teleological and theological implications. Evolution is, for example, still comprehensively rejected in all gulf states. So, we are not seeing a true adoption of modernism in these countries, just an uptake of pragmatism.

Main activity 2

You have been provided with various statements that make points on secularisation.

Discuss in pairs and place the statements under headings of either for or against.

Statistical trends - Decline in church attendance, therefore there is no longer a place for religion.

Change in place of worship: just because football has declined does not confirm people aren't praying etc elsewhere like at home.

Postmodernism and Pluralism: multi faith countries cause no one truth to exist, questioning one religion against another. Therefore, there is no real place for a religion that claims ultimate truth. (LYOTARD)

Pluralism: more diversity, can chose a change of religions. If secularisation is happening we lose our moral fabric

Rationalism: scientific explanations have replaced and clashed with religious explanations.

People do believe in God or a deity, the religious climate has changed. New Age Religions and spiritual explorations. Religion is simply just different and therefore is certainly existent.

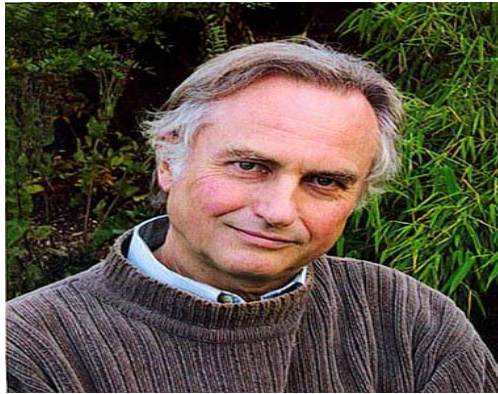
Disengagement theory: Sects and diverse and more spiritual religious groups have become more interesting than organised religion and in is replacing these religions.

Just because religion has lost its authority in law does not mean it has lost its spiritual influence and place in the world.

Extension

Overall, do you believe secularisation has a more positive or negative effect on society?
Provide at least two reasons for your view.

Main activity 3



In the last thirty years people with strong atheist beliefs have become celebrities. Atheists such as Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens appear on radio and TV debates throughout the year promoting their anti-religious beliefs. We will now look at the work and opinions of these two atheists. Make notes on each one.



Christopher Eric Hitchens (13 April 1949 - 15 December 2011) was an American author, columnist, essayist, orator, religious and literary critic, social critic, and journalist. Hitchens was the author, co-author, editor or co-editor of over 30 books, including five collections of essays, on politics, literature and religion. A staple of public discourse, his confrontational style of debate made him both a lauded intellectual and a controversial public figure.

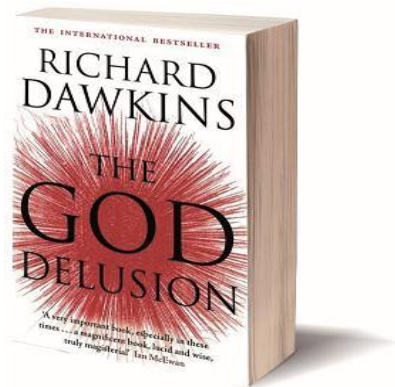
Hitchens advocated the separation of church and state. As a self-described antitheist, he regarded the concept of a god or supreme being as a totalitarian belief that impedes individual freedom. He argued that free expression and scientific discovery should replace religion as a means of informing ethics and defining codes of conduct for human civilization.

Watch Hitchens's attack on religion.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MQox1hQrABQ>

Make a note of Hitchen's points.

Do you agree with them?



In 2006 Richard Dawkins wrote a book titled the God Delusion. It was an attack on religious belief. A series of arguments that aimed to prove that God and in particular Christian beliefs are not real.

Watch the following clip

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VjnECJVwReo>

Plenary

How do you think popular atheists have an impact on society?

In pairs discuss this point record your ideas on a post-it note and stand somewhere in the room.

Be ready to share your thoughts.

Plenary

Read the summary of The God Delusion

A Summary of The God Delusion by Richard Dawkins (2006), Bantam Press Phil Edwards, © April 2008

Notes • This short summary has omitted reference to Chapter 3 Arguments for God's Existence as there have been many critiques of these arguments from believers and non-believers. • These notes and other related information can be found at <http://www.bolton.ac.uk/chaplaincy> and following the Link on the right to The God Delusion - Richard Dawkins. • Contact details: Phil Edwards, Co-ordinating Chaplain, The University of Bolton, Deane Road, Bolton, BL3 5AB. Email: chaplain@bolton.ac.uk, Direct tel: 01204 90 3415.

1) The God Hypothesis

"There exists a superhuman, supernatural intelligence who deliberately designed and created the universe and everything in it, including us."

A theist believes in such a God who is intimately involved in human affairs: answering prayers, forgiving or punishing sins, intervening in the world by performing miracles. This God is a pernicious delusion.

The existence of God is a scientific hypothesis: The religious claim of an interventionist God who answers prayers leads to a very different world from one without such a God. If God communicated with humans, that fact would not lie outside science. Even if we believe in a non-interventionist God, to claim an ultimate design of the universe implies a very different universe.

2) No Design - No God

Evidence for design: The natural world looks as though it is designed. However, evolution through natural selection (Darwinism) gives us evidence to reject creation by design as well as creation by chance. Religious people have argued that the natural world is so complex, it could not have evolved (for example, the human eye). But natural selection is a cumulative process so that what seems highly

improbable can be broken up into steps which are not prohibitively improbable. Evolution is the only process, as far as we know, capable of generating complexity from simplicity. We cannot be satisfied to say that this is a mystery as it would mark an end to scientific investigation; ignorance drives scientists on.

We live on a planet that is friendly to our kind of life. There are two reasons for this: 1) Life has evolved to flourish in the conditions provided by the planet; 2) There are billions of planets in the universe and our planet is one of the few which is evolutionary friendly.

We live in a friendly universe. The laws and constants of physics are friendly enough to allow life to arise; a very small difference would make life impossible. • A theist says that God tuned the constants such that the production of life was possible - but this leaves the existence of God unexplained. A God capable of calculating the values of the constants is very improbable. • Some physicists think that the constants have to be the particular values they are for any universe. • Other physicists suggest that there are many co-existing universes, each one with a different set of constants and laws; we are in one of the universes which happened to be propitious to our eventual evolution.

A God capable of designing a universe (and who is claimed to be able to send and receive intelligible signals to millions of people simultaneously) would have to be complex and would be statistically improbable. To suggest that a great unknown is responsible for the universe existing rather than not is a total abdication of the responsibility to find an explanation. The God Hypothesis is untenable. God almost certainly does not exist.

3) Why are there religions?

As religious rituals have a cost in both time and resources, an evolutionist has to ask the question, What is the benefit? For evolutionists, 'benefit' normally means, What is the enhancement to the survival of the individual's genes?

There is little evidence that religious belief protects people from stress-related diseases. It may be a placebo that prolongs life by reducing stress but this does not explain the extent of the phenomenon. Neuroscientists suggest there is a 'god centre' in the brain, but Darwinians then want to know what natural selection favoured this.

I suggest that religion is a by-product of the way we bring up our children. There is a selective advantage for children to believe without question what grown-ups tell them in order for them to avoid what is dangerous. This, though, makes them vulnerable to misinformation (mind viruses) such as religion.

How did religion start? One psychologist suggests that children have a natural tendency to: • make a fundamental distinction between mind and matter. This compares with the view of most scientists who regard mind as a manifestation of matter. • assign a purpose to everything (for example, clouds are 'for raining').

Both tendencies predispose us to religion. Genes are the physical entities which are responsible for biological reproduction. In a similar way, memes may be responsible for transmitting culture in human society. Just as there are copying errors (mutations) in genes, religion may be seen as a mutation of these memes. Once religion has a hold, its attribute of being against reason helps its own survival.

4) Do we need religion in order to be good?

Genes are 'selfish' in the sense that, through the filter of natural selection, those that survive do so at the expense of rivals. But this does not necessarily make the organism (humans) selfish.

There are four good Darwinian reasons for individuals to be altruistic: • Genetic kinship: care for those who share similar genetic make-up. • Reciprocation: giving of favours in anticipation of a payback. • Acquiring a good reputation for generosity and kindness. • Conspicuous generosity demonstrates superiority.

These 'rules' of altruism may be carried out even when there is no genetic advantage (example of a reed warbler feeding a young cuckoo).

We don't need God or religion to have good morals. One study shows that there is no statistical difference between atheists and religious believers in making moral judgements. Moral principles based only upon religion may be called absolutist but, for example, "Is it always wrong to kill an embryo?"

Religious people don't derive their morals from scripture, or if they do, they choose the nice bits and reject the nasty. There are many Old Testament passages which we would now describe as immoral. In the New Testament we read that Jesus didn't derive his ethics from the scriptures of his day.

The central doctrine of Christianity is that Jesus was tortured and executed in payment for the hereditary sin of Adam, including possible future sins. This is vicious, sado-masochistic and repellent. If God wanted to forgive our sins, why not just forgive them?

Religion makes the world's troubles worse, even when they can be described as political. Religion exacerbates the world's problems through: • Labelling of children in terms of their religion before they know what they believe. • Segregated schools. • Taboos against marrying outside the religious culture.

We have all changed our attitude to what is right and wrong over time, whether or not we are religious. These changes have not come from religion. Individual atheists may do evil things but they don't do evil things in the name of religion.

5) What is wrong with religion?

As a scientist, I am hostile to fundamentalist religion because it actively perverts the scientific enterprise as it teaches us not to change our mind. Religious people who are not fundamentalists make the world safe for fundamentalists by teaching children that an unquestioning faith is a virtue.

Only religious faith is a strong enough force to motivate utter madness of the terrorist acts we have seen over the last few years. Our current war against terrorism is a war against religious idealists who have an unquestioning faith.

The treasured heritage of our sacred religious books can be retained even when we give up our belief in God. Any gap that religion leaves in the areas of explanation, exhortation, consolation and inspiration can be filled in other ways. Explanation and inspiration can come from science.

Task

Write a 200 word review of the book using the information you have just read above.

Success Criteria

- ✓ Provide a star rating out of five
- ✓ Explain why people should read this book
- ✓ Provide a strength of the book
- ✓ Provide a weakness of the book

Extension

Include quotes from famous atheists like Ricky Gervais

ANTHOLOGY TEXT

Extract 2: A. McGrath, 'Deluded about God? (2007)

Taken from: *The Dawkins Delusion* by A. McGrath (London: SPCK, 2007), Chapter 1, *Deluded About God?*, pp.1-13.

GOD IS A DELUSION - A 'PSYCHOTIC DELINQUENT' invented by mad, deluded people. That's the take-home message of *The God Delusion*. Although Dawkins does not offer a rigorous definition of a delusion, he clearly means a belief that is not grounded in evidence—or, worse, that flies in the face of the evidence. Faith is "blind trust, in the absence of evidence, even in the teeth of evidence." It is a "process of non-thinking." It is "evil precisely because it requires no justification, and brooks no argument." These core definitions of faith are hardwired into Dawkins's worldview and are obsessively repeated throughout his writings. It is not a Christian definition of faith but one that Dawkins has invented to suit his own polemical purposes. It immediately defines those who believe in God as people who have lost touch with reality—as those who are deluded. Dawkins rightly notes how important faith is to people. What you believe has a very significant impact on life and thought. That makes it all the more important, we are told, to subject faith to critical, rigorous examination. Delusions need to be exposed—and then removed. I agree entirely. Since the publication of my book *Dawkins' God* in 2004, I am regularly asked to speak on its themes throughout the world. In these lectures, I set out Dawkins's views on religion and then give an evidence-based rebuttal, point by point. After one such lecture, I was confronted by a very angry young man. The lecture had not been particularly remarkable. I had simply demonstrated, by rigorous use of scientific, historical and philosophical arguments that Dawkins's intellectual case against God didn't stand up to critical examination. But this man was angry—in fact, I would say he was furious. Why? Because, he told me, wagging his finger agitatedly at me, I had "destroyed his faith." His atheism rested on the authority of Richard Dawkins, and I had totally undermined his faith. He would have to go away and rethink everything. How dare I do such a thing! As I reflected on this event while driving home afterward, I found myself in two minds about this. Part of me regretted the enormous inconvenience that I had clearly caused this person. I had thrown the settled assumptions of his life into turmoil. Yet I consoled myself with the thought that if he was unwise enough to base his life on the clearly inadequate worldview set out by Dawkins, then he would have to realize someday that it rested on decidedly shaky foundations. The dispelling of the delusion had to happen sometime. I just happened to be the historical accident that made it happen at that time and place. Yet another part of me began to realize how deeply we hold our beliefs, and the impact that they make on everything. Dawkins is right—beliefs are critical. We base our lives on them; they shape our decisions about the most fundamental things. I can still remember the turbulence that I found myself experiencing on making the intellectually painful (yet rewarding) transition from atheism to Christianity. Every part of my mental furniture had to be rearranged. Dawkins is correct—unquestionably correct—when he demands that we should not base our lives on delusions. We all need to examine our beliefs—especially if we are naive enough to think that we don't have any in the first place. But who, I wonder, is really deluded about God?

Faith is infantile as anyone familiar with antireligious polemics knows, a recurring atheist criticism of religious belief is that it is infantile—a childish delusion which ought to have disappeared as humanity reaches its maturity. Throughout his career Dawkins has developed a similar criticism, drawing on a longstanding atheist analogy. In earlier works he emphasized that belief in God is just like believing in the Tooth Fairy or Santa Claus. These are childish beliefs that are abandoned as soon as we are capable of evidence-based thinking. And so is God. It's obvious, isn't it? As Dawkins pointed out in his *Thought for the Day* on BBC Radio in 2003, humanity "can leave the cry-baby phase, and finally come of age." This "infantile explanation" belongs to an earlier, superstitious era in the history of humanity. We've outgrown it. Hmm. Like many of Dawkins's analogies, this has been constructed with a specific agenda in mind—in this case, the ridiculing of religion. Yet the analogy is obviously flawed. How many people do you know who began to believe in Santa Claus in adulthood? Or who found belief in the Tooth Fairy consoling in old age? I believed in Santa Claus until I was about five (though, not unaware of the benefits it brought, I allowed my parents to think I took it seriously until rather later). I did not believe in God until I started going to university. Those who use this infantile argument have to explain why so many people discover God in later life and certainly do not regard this as representing any kind of regression, perversion or degeneration. A good recent example is provided by Anthony Flew (born 1923), the noted atheist philosopher who started to believe in God in his eighties. Yet *The God Delusion* is surely right to express concern about the indoctrination of children by their parents. Innocent minds are corrupted by adults cramming their religious beliefs down their children's throats. Dawkins argues that the biological process of natural selection builds child brains with a tendency to believe whatever their parents or elders tell them. This, he suggests, makes them prone to trust whatever a parent says—like Santa Claus. This is seen as one of the most significant factors involved in sustaining religious belief in the world, when it ought to have been wiped out ages ago. Break the intergenerational cycle of the transmission of religious ideas, and that will put an end to this nonsense. Bringing up children within a religious tradition, he suggests, is a form of child abuse. There is, of course, a reasonable point being made here. Yet somehow, it gets lost in the noise of the hyped-up rhetoric and a general failure to consider its implications. Having read the misrepresentations of religion that are such a depressing feature of *The God Delusion*, I very much fear that secularists would merely force their own dogmas down the throats of the same gullible children—who lack, as Dawkins rightly points out, the discriminatory capacities needed to evaluate the ideas. I do not wish to be unkind, but this whole approach sounds uncomfortably like the antireligious programs built into the education of Soviet children during the 1950s, based on mantras such as "Science has disproved religion!" "Religion is superstition!" and the like. There is

indeed a need for a society to reflect on how it educates its children. Yet no case can be made for them to be force-fed Dawkins's favoured dogmas and distortions. They need to be told, fairly and accurately, what Christianity actually teaches—rather than be subjected to the derisory misrepresentations of Christian theology that litter this piece of propaganda. The *God Delusion*, more by its failings than its achievements, reinforces the need for high-quality religious education in the public arena, countering the crude caricatures, prejudicial stereotypes and blatant misrepresentations now being aggressively peddled by atheist fundamentalism. For many years I gave a series of lectures at Oxford University titled "An Introduction to Christian Theology." I cannot help but feel that these might have been of some use to Dawkins in writing his book. As the cultural and literary critic Terry Eagleton pointed out in his withering review of *The God Delusion*: "Imagine someone holding forth on biology whose only knowledge of the subject is the *Book of British Birds*, and you have a rough idea of what it feels like to read Richard Dawkins on theology." Dawkins quotes with approval the views of his friend Nicholas Humphrey, who suggests that parents should no more be allowed to teach children about the "literal truth of the Bible" than "to knock their children's teeth out." If Humphrey is consistent here, he should be equally outraged about those who peddle misrepresentations of religion as if they were the truth. Might he argue, I wonder, that parents who read *The God Delusion* aloud to their children were also committing child abuse? Or are you only abusive if you impose religious, but not antireligious, dogmas and delusions?

Faith is irrational There is, I suppose, a lunatic fringe to every movement. Having been involved in many public debates over whether science has disproved the existence of God, I have ample experience of what I think I must describe as somewhat weird people, often with decidedly exotic ideas, on both sides of the God-atheism debate. One of the most characteristic features of Dawkins's antireligious polemic is to present the pathological as if it were normal, the fringe as if it were the centre, crackpots as if they were mainstream. It generally works well for his intended audience, who can be assumed to know little about religion and probably care for it even less. But it's not acceptable. And it's certainly not scientific. Dawkins insists that Christian belief is "a persistently false belief held in the face of strong contradictory evidence." The problem is how to persuade "dyed-in the wool faith-heads" that atheism is right, when they are so deluded by religion that they are immune to any form of rational argument. Faith is thus essentially and irredeemably irrational. In support of his case Dawkins has sought out Christian theologians who he believes will substantiate this fundamentally degenerate aspect of religious faith. In earlier writings, he asserted that the third century Christian writer Tertullian said some particularly stupid things, including "it is by all means to be believed because it is absurd." This is dismissed as typical religious nonsense. "That way madness lies." He's stopped quoting this now, I am pleased to say, after I pointed out that Tertullian actually said no such thing. Dawkins had fallen into the trap of not checking his sources and merely repeating what older atheist writers had said. It's yet another wearisome example of the endless recycling of outdated arguments that has become so characteristic of atheism in recent years. However, Dawkins now seems to have found a new example of the irrationalism of faith—well, new for him, at any rate. In *The God Delusion* he cites a few choice snippets from the sixteenth-century German Protestant writer Martin Luther, culled from the Internet, demonstrating Luther's anxieties about reason in the life of faith. No attempt is made to clarify what Luther means by reason and how it differs from what Dawkins takes to be the self-evident meaning of the word. What Luther was actually pointing out was that human reason could never fully take in a central theme of the Christian faith—that God should give humanity the wonderful gift of salvation without demanding they do something for him first. Left to itself, human common sense would conclude that you need to do something to earn God's favour—an idea that Luther regarded as compromising the gospel of divine graciousness, making salvation something that you earned or merited. Dawkins's inept engagement with Luther shows how Dawkins abandons even the pretence of rigorous evidence-based scholarship. Anecdote is substituted for evidence; selective Internet trawling for quotes displaces rigorous and comprehensive engagement with primary sources. In this book, Dawkins throws the conventions of academic scholarship to the winds; he wants to write a work of propaganda and consequently treats the accurate rendition of religion as an inconvenient impediment to his chief agenda, which is the intellectual and cultural destruction of religion. It's an unpleasant characteristic that he shares with other fundamentalists.

Arguments for God's existence? Dawkins holds that the existence or nonexistence of God is a scientific hypothesis which is open to rational demonstration. In *The Blind Watchmaker*, he provided a sustained and effective critique of the arguments of the nineteenth-century writer William Paley for the existence of God on biological grounds. It is Dawkins's home territory, and he knows what he is talking about. This book remains the finest criticism of this argument in print. The only criticism I would direct against this aspect of *The Blind Watchmaker* is that Paley's ideas were typical of his age, not of Christianity as a whole, and that many Christian writers of the age were alarmed at his approach, seeing it as a sure fire recipe for the triumph of atheism. There is no doubt in my mind that Paley saw himself as in some way "proving" the existence of God, and Dawkins's extended critique of Paley in that book is fair, gracious and accurate. In *The God Delusion*, Dawkins turns his attention to such other "arguments" based on the philosophy of religion. I am not sure that this was entirely wise. He is clearly out of his depth, and achieves little by his brief and superficial engagement with these great perennial debates, which often simply cannot be resolved empirically. His attitude seems to be "here's how a scientist would sort out this philosophical nonsense." For example, Dawkins takes issue with the approaches developed by Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century, traditionally known as the "Five Ways." The general consensus is that while such arguments cast interesting light on the questions, they settle nothing. Although traditionally referred to as "arguments for God's existence," this is not an accurate description. All they do is show the inner consistency of belief in God—in much the same way as the classic arguments for atheism (such as Ludwig Feuerbach's

famous idea of the "projection" of God... demonstrate its inner consistency, but not its evidential foundations).

The basic line of thought guiding Thomas is that the world mirrors God, as its Creator. It is an assumption derived from faith, which Thomas argues to resonate with what we observe in the world. For example, its signs of ordering can be explained on the basis of the existence of God as its creator. This approach is still widely encountered in Christian writings which argue that an existing faith in God offers a better "empirical fit" with the world than its alternatives. As Dawkins himself uses this same approach to commend atheism elsewhere, I cannot really see that he has much to complain about here. At no point does Thomas speak of these as being "proofs" for God's existence; rather they are to be seen as a demonstration of the inner coherence of belief in God. Thomas is interested in exploring the rational implications of faith in terms of our experience of beauty, causality and so forth. Belief in God is actually assumed; it is then shown that this belief makes sense of what may be observed within the world. The appearance of design can offer persuasion, not proof, concerning the role of divine creativity in the universe. Dawkins misunderstands an a posteriori demonstration of the coherence of faith and observation to be an a priori proof of faith—an entirely understandable mistake for those new to this field, but a serious error nonetheless. Where Dawkins sees faith as intellectual nonsense, most of us are aware that we hold many beliefs that we cannot prove to be true but are nonetheless perfectly reasonable to entertain. To lapse into jargon for a moment: our beliefs may be shown to be justifiable, without thereby demonstrating that they are proven. This is not a particularly difficult or obscure point. Philosophers of science have long made the point that there are many scientific theories that are presently believed to be true but may have to be discarded in the future as additional evidence emerges or new theoretical interpretations develop. There is no difficulty, for example, in believing that Darwin's theory of evolution is presently the best explanation of the available evidence, but that doesn't mean it is correct.

The extreme improbability of God Dawkins devotes an entire chapter to an argument—or, more accurately, a loosely collated series of assertions—to the general effect that "there almost certainly is no God." This rambling pastiche is poorly structured, making it quite difficult to follow its basic argument, which seems to be an expansion of the "who made God, then?" question. "Any God capable of designing anything would have to be complex enough to demand the same kind of explanation in his own right. God presents an infinite regress from which he cannot help us to escape." Dawkins is particularly derisive about theologians who allow themselves "the dubious luxury of arbitrarily conjuring up a terminator to an infinite regress." Anything that explains something itself has to be explained—and that explanation in turn needs to be explained, and so on. There is no justifiable way of ending this infinite regression of explanations. What explains the explanation? Or, to change the metaphor slightly: Who designed the designer? However, it needs to be pointed out here that the holy grail of the natural sciences is the quest for the "grand unified theory"—the "theory of everything." Why is such a theory regarded as being so important? Because it can explain

everything, without itself requiring or demanding an explanation. The explanatory buck stops right there. There is no infinite regress in the quest for explanation. If Dawkins's brash and simplistic arguments carried weight, this great scientific quest could be dismissed with a seemingly profound yet in fact trivial question: What explains the explainer? Now maybe there is no such ultimate theory. Maybe the "theory of everything" will turn out to be a "theory of nothing." Yet there is no reason to suppose that this quest is a failure from the outset simply because it represents the termination of an explanatory process. Yet an analogous quest for an irreducible explanation lies at the heart of the scientific quest. There is no logical inconsistency, no conceptual flaw, no self-contradiction involved. Dawkins then sets out an argument that makes little sense, either in the brief and hasty statement offered in *The God Delusion* or the more expanded versions he set out elsewhere. In a somewhat patchy and derisive account of the "anthropic principle," Dawkins points out the sheer improbability of our existence. Belief in God, he then argues, represents belief in a being whose existence must be even more complex—and therefore more improbable. Yet this leap from the recognition of complexity to the assertion of improbability is highly problematic. Why is something complex improbable? A "theory of everything" may well be more complex than the lesser theories that it explains—but what has that to do with its improbability? But let's pause for a moment. The one inescapable and highly improbable fact about the world is that we, as reflective human beings, are in fact here. Now it is virtually impossible to quantify how improbable the existence of humanity is. Dawkins himself is clear, especially in *Climbing Mount Improbable*, that it is very, very improbable. But we are here. The very fact that we are puzzling about how we came to be here is dependent on the fact that we are here and are thus able to reflect on the likelihood of this actuality. Perhaps we need to appreciate that there are many things that seem improbable—but improbability does not, and never has, entailed nonexistence. We may be highly improbable—yet we are here. The issue, then, is not whether God is probable but whether God is actual.

The God of the gaps In *The God Delusion* Dawkins criticizes "the worship of gaps." This is a reference to an approach to Christian apologetics that came to prominence during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—the so-called God of the gaps approach. In its simplest form it asserted that there were necessarily "gaps" in a naturalist or scientific understanding of reality. At certain points, William Paley's famous *Natural Theology* (1801) uses arguments along these lines. It was argued that God needs to be proposed in order to deal with these gaps in scientific understanding. It was a foolish move and was increasingly abandoned in the twentieth century. Oxford's first professor of theoretical chemistry, the noted Methodist lay preacher Charles A. Coulson, damned it with the telling phrase "the God of the gaps." In its place he urged a comprehensive account of reality, which stressed the explanatory capacity of the Christian faith as a whole rather than a retreat into ever-

diminishing gaps. Dawkins's criticism of those who "worship the gaps," despite

its overstatements, is clearly appropriate and valid. So we must thank him for helping us kill off this outdated false turn in the history of Christian apologetics. It is a good example of how a dialogue between science and Christian theology can lead to some useful outcomes. Unfortunately, having made such a good point, Dawkins then weakens his argument by suggesting that all religious people try to stop scientists from exploring those gaps: "one of the truly bad effects of religion is that it teaches us that it is a virtue to be satisfied with not understanding." While that may be true of some more exotic forms of Christian theology, it is most emphatically not characteristic of its approaches. It's a crass generalization that ruins a perfectly interesting discussion. After all, there is nothing wrong with admitting limits to our understanding, partly arising from the limits of science itself, and partly from the limited human capacity to comprehend. As Dawkins himself pointed out elsewhere: Modern physics teaches us that there is more to truth than meets the eye; or than meets the all too limited human mind, evolved as it was to cope with medium sized objects moving at medium speeds through medium distances in Africa. It's hardly surprising that this "all too limited" human mind should encounter severe difficulties when dealing with anything beyond the world of everyday experience. The idea of "mystery" arises constantly as the human mind struggles to grasp some ideas. That's certainly true of science; it's also true of religion. The real problem here, however, is the forced relocation of God by doubtless well-intentioned Christian apologists into the hidden recesses of the universe, beyond evaluation or investigation. Now that's a real concern. For this strategy is still used by the intelligent design movement—a movement, based primarily in North America, that argues for an "intelligent Designer" based on gaps in scientific explanation, such as the "irreducible complexity" of the world. It is not an approach which I accept, either on scientific or theological grounds. In my view, those who adopt this approach make Christianity deeply—and needlessly—vulnerable to scientific progress. But the "God of the gaps" approach is only one of many Christian approaches to the question of how the God hypothesis makes sense of things. In my view, it was misguided; it was a failed apologetic strategy from an earlier period in history that has now been rendered obsolete. This point has been taken on board by Christian theologians and philosophers of religion throughout the twentieth century who have now reverted to older, more appropriate ways of dealing with this question. For instance, the Oxford philosopher Richard Swinburne is one of many writers to argue that the capacity of science to explain itself requires explanation—and that the most economical and reliable account of this explanatory capacity lies in the notion of a Creator God. Swinburne's argument asserts that the intelligibility of the universe itself needs explanation. It is therefore not the gaps in our understanding of the world which point to God but rather the very comprehensibility of scientific and other forms of understanding that requires an explanation. In brief, the argument is that explicability itself requires explanation. The more scientific advance is achieved, the greater will be our understanding of the universe—and hence the greater need to explain this very success. It is an approach which commends and encourages scientific investigation, not seeks to inhibit it. But what of the relationship of science and religion more generally? Dawkins has had much to say on this, and we must move on to consider it.

SECTION B style question

Answer these questions based on the Anthology extract above

Throughout his career Dawkins has developed a similar criticism, drawing on a longstanding atheist analogy. In earlier works he emphasized that belief in God is just like believing in the Tooth Fairy or Santa Claus. These are childish beliefs that are abandoned as soon as we are capable of evidence-based thinking. And so is God. It's obvious, isn't it? As Dawkins pointed out in his Thought for the Day on BBC Radio in 2003, humanity "can leave the cry-baby phase, and finally come of age."

This "infantile explanation" belongs to an earlier, superstitious era in the history of humanity. We've outgrown it. Hmmm. Like many of Dawkins's analogies, this has been constructed with a specific agenda in mind—in this case, the ridiculing of religion. Yet the analogy is obviously flawed. How many people do you know who began to believe in Santa Claus in adulthood? Or who found belief in the Tooth Fairy consoling in old age? I believed in Santa Claus until I was about five (though, not unaware of the benefits it brought, I allowed my parents to think I took it seriously until rather later). I did not believe in God until I started going to university. Those who use this infantile argument have to explain why so many people discover God in later life and certainly do not regard this as representing any kind of regression, perversion or degeneration.

3a) Clarify the McGrath's analysis of Dawkins' criticism of religious belief. (10)

3b) Analyse the success of Dawkins' challenges to Religion. (20)

Social and historical Lesson 4 developments

Lesson Topic The rise of New Religious Movements

Outcomes To have looked at the meaning of New Religious Movements.
To have analysed the reasons behind the disillusionment with religion.

Key Terms **Spiritual** - relating to deep feelings and beliefs.
Religious -belonging or relating to a monastic order or other group of people who are united by their practice of religion.

Starter



Main activity 1 Read the information that outlines what a New Religious Movement is

New religious movement (NRM), the generally accepted term for what is sometimes called, often with pejorative connotations, a "cult." The term new religious movement has been applied to all new faiths that have arisen worldwide over the past several centuries.

NRMs are characterized by a number of shared traits. These religions are, by definition, "new"; they offer innovative religious responses to the conditions of the modern world, despite the fact that most NRMs represent themselves as rooted in ancient traditions. NRMs are also usually regarded as "countercultural"; that is, they are perceived (by others and by themselves) to be alternatives to the mainstream religions of Western society, especially Christianity in its normative forms. These

movements are often highly eclectic, pluralistic, and syncretistic; they freely combine doctrines and practices from diverse sources within their belief systems. The new movement is usually founded by a charismatic and sometimes highly authoritarian leader who is thought to have extraordinary powers or insights. Many NRMs are tightly organized. In light of their often self-proclaimed "alternative" or "outsider" status, these groups often make great demands on the loyalty and commitment of their followers and sometimes establish themselves as substitutes for the family and other conventional social groupings. NRMs have arisen to address specific needs that many people cannot satisfy through more traditional religious organizations or through modern secularism. They are also products of and responses to modernity, pluralism, and the scientific worldview.

Tasks

In groups on your A3 paper, complete the following:

- ✓ Create a description of New Religious Movements
- ✓ Provide any examples you can think of
- ✓ Why do you think NRM occur?

Main activity 2

NRMS are divided into three categories.

1. World Rejecting Movements

Highly critical of the outside world so tend to withdraw and adopt a communal lifestyle.

They vary in size but most are small, local groups which often have charismatic leaders. However, some are international in size such as the Unification Church (The Moonies). They are politically radical.

They cut off former ties - friends, relatives, possessions, and members have to hand over all assets and are forced to live an ascetic lifestyle.

2. World accommodating movements

Members of such groups (e.g. "born again Christian" groups) usually live "normal" lives. These are often offshoots of existing churches. They resemble denominations and are far more politically conservative than world rejecting NRMs. They are a breakaway from a church which they feel has lost its religious purity.

3. World Affirming Religions

Scientology is an example. The world is one of opportunity (acceptance of society's norms). We can be more successful and become 'better' people. Many involve expensive training programmes. Members live in the 'normal world.'

Using the information from the previous activity and the information on this slide complete the following A Level style question:

Explore the various types of New Religious Movements. (8)

Extension

Brainstorm ideas on why you believe there has been a rise in New Religious Movements

Review

Mini Debate

"New Religious Movements cannot replace traditional religion"

Discuss the statement, form an argument on a post-it note.

Main activity 3

Disillusionment with traditional religion

Disillusioned with organized religion, some people escape into New Age movements, and others retreat from spirituality altogether.

A more satisfying and transformative option for some people is to embark on a quest to discover God on their own.

Read the extract from a from a Jewish person who became disillusioned.

Record why Saranam became disillusioned in at least sixty words.

Create a list of at least five detailed reasons why people today become disillusioned with organised religion.

"Religion never satisfied me, and often infuriated me. Though I was raised to be a Jew, I thought of myself first and foremost as a human being and never viewed myself as wiser, luckier, or happier because my parents were Jewish or I adhered to the accepted truths of their religious tradition. To my mind, I would be progressing spiritually only by understanding what was universally right and natural in life and how to live accordingly.

After years of attending Hebrew school, I rebelled against the dogma I was taught there. In college I focused on subjects requiring the use of logic that appealed to my scientific mind. However, I eventually found that while the material sciences could answer some questions concerning how the world worked, they could not prescribe an ethical way to live.

Searching further, I investigated mystical techniques. I began practicing sophisticated methods of sense introversion. I implemented an inner science to address the concerns unresolved by my studies. Over the next decade, I came to realize God as a spiritually expansive substance extending throughout the cosmos—a much more universal presence than that proposed by many organized religions. God, I found, was everything, and being godlike meant identifying with, and not merely tolerating, more and more people. Understanding that the idea of God signified absolute unity, I concluded that anyone advocating unquestioning loyalty to a restrictive group such as a faith, ethnicity, or nation was in fact promoting the fall of humanity by advancing its division...."

Extract from - *God Without Religion* by Sankara Saranam

Extension

Explain whether or not you believe New Religious Movements will replace traditional Religion.

Homework

Must

- Research at least three examples of New Religious Movements
- Copy and complete the following table

NRM	Description

Extension task

Assess the belief that traditional religion cannot compete with New Religious Movements. (12 marks)

**Social and historical Lesson 5
developments**

Lesson Topic

Liberation Theology

Outcomes

To be able to explain Liberation Theology, Feminist Theology and Black Theology

To know the context of each one and its key themes

To be able to name, explore and assess key thinkers.

Key Terms

Liberation - being set free from something

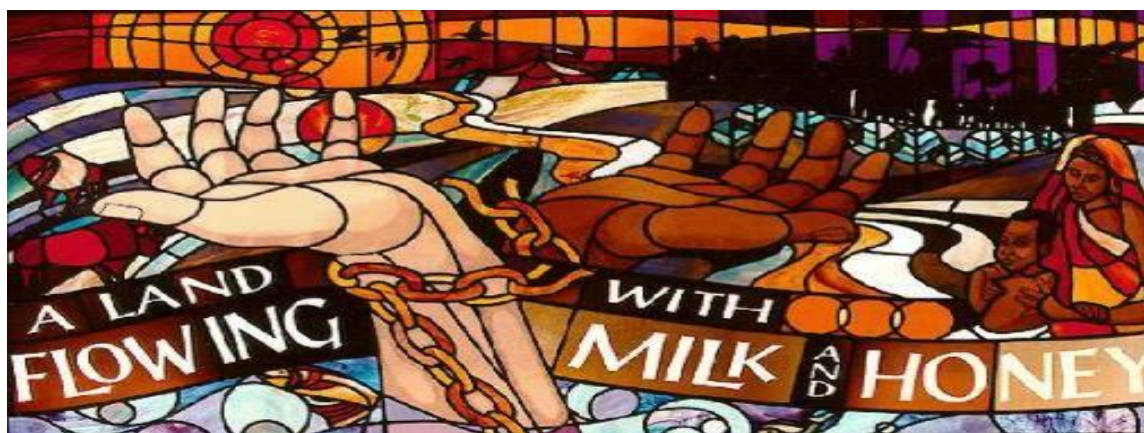
Liberation Theology - A movement that tries to address the problems of poverty and social injustice as well as spiritual matters.

Feminist Theology - Looking at the teachings of the religion from a woman's view

Black Theology - Contextualises Christianity in an attempt to help those of African descent overcome oppression.

Starter 1

Look at the picture and answer the questions.



- 1) What do you think Liberation Theology is about?
- 2) What would people need liberating from?
- 3) How may this approach change the portrayal of Jesus?

Main activity 1

The context and themes of Liberation Theology

Liberation Theology is the name given to a wide-ranging movement which began in Latin America in the 1960s and which seeks to detach Christianity from its political and cultural roots. The movement claims that, over the centuries, the Church has supported ideological power structures which have oppressed the weakest members of society. It is broadly Roman Catholic in outlook and looks at the Christian faith from the point of view of the poor and oppressed, who are searching for hope in a world of poverty and injustice.

The movement had its roots in the extreme poverty of Latin America - an area which had been deeply Christian for centuries, but which felt abandoned by the Christian Church. The founders of the movement believed that such suffering was against the will of God and contrary to the teaching of

Christ. Many of the ideas of liberation theology came from European political theology and the work of scholars such as Moltmann and Bonhoeffer, who had called for Christianity to enter the political and social life of the people.

The impact of Liberation theology on the Christian Church

Liberation theology, though Roman Catholic in origin, differs from traditional theology in that it looks first at conditions in the world, and then at how God is manifested in human history. It took on a new urgency when Vatican II (1962-65) examined the social and economic conditions of the world, and opened up the chance for a re-examination of the situation of the church in Latin America. This was undertaken at the Medellin Conference of Latin American Bishops in Columbia in 1968. This conference made the stunning admission that the Roman Catholic Church had often sided with oppressive governments in Latin America and that, in future, the Church would be on the side of the poor. In *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation* (Augsburg 1985) J.M. Bonino wrote: "Theology has to stop explaining the world, and start transforming it." However, since then, the Roman Catholic Church has been suspicious of the liberation theology movement and its supposed Marxist connections. In the Puebla Conference of Bishops in 1979, Pope John Paul II declared that, "...those who sup with Marxism should use a long spoon."

In 1986, the Pope's instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation adopted a more reconciliatory tone, and the Church recognised some forms of liberation theology and gave a higher priority to the relief of the poor in Latin America. J.M. Bonino notes: "God is clearly and unequivocally on the side of the poor." (*Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation* (Augsburg, 1985). However, the links between liberation theology and Marxism remained a thorny issue, particularly with the use of notions of "class struggle" and the economic system as a "factor of oppression".

At first, liberation theology was found in the universities and among the educated middle classes, but it has since moved into the lives of the common people of Latin America and elsewhere. Moreover, there has been a growth of "base ecclesial communities", which are small groups of ordinary people who meet to pray and address the social and political issues that affect their lives. Writers such as Gustavo Gutierrez use the language of ordinary people, while the priests try to restore the faith of the people into mainstream Catholicism.

The mission of the Church is seen in terms of the historic struggle for liberation, and theology is something to be "done", not "learned". This is the concept of praxis, or "action", whereby Christians are urged to change society on behalf of the poor.

Liberation theology talks about "structural sin", meaning that it is society rather than individuals, which is corrupt and requires redemption. However, critics of liberation theology say that it is too simplistic and avoids some of the deeper theologies concerned with sin, salvation and Atonement. They claim it has reduced salvation to a worldly problem and ignores the spiritual dimension. Nevertheless, it has brought new challenges and raised important questions that cannot be ignored. In *God of the Oppressed* (Orbis, 1997), James Cone wrote: "Is there a "hidden agenda" in our theological formulations that has helped to make the world-wide church more comfortable with the middle and upper classes than with the poor?"

The teaching of Gustavo Gutierrez

In *A Theology of Liberation* (SCM 1988) Gustavo Gutierrez introduced a new style of theology, which was based on the view that a Christian's first duty was to fight against oppression and that theology itself should come second to that and act as a reflection of it: "The starting point of liberation theology is commitment to the poor, the "non-person". Its ideas come from the victim."



Gutierrez called the oppressed masses the "non-human beings" (*hombres cactus* - "the cactus people"). These people are the victims of exploitation which strips them of their right to a human and dignified existence. He said that the message of Christianity demanded solidarity with the poor.

"Charity is God's love in us...loving us as a human, Christ reveals to us the Father's love. Charity, the love of God for human beings is found incarnated in human love - of parents, spouses, children, friends - and leads to its fullness (*A Theology of Liberation*, SMC, 1988)

Gutierrez argue that proclaiming the good news of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ also required the dismantling of those structures that lead to human poverty and oppression. Announcing the coming of the kingdom of God meant working in solidarity with the poor. This action, the "praxis of solidarity", he called the "option for the poor", and it was at the very heart of liberation theology.

Today, in Latin America, due to unrestrained capitalism and global economic policies, there are millions of poor and oppressed people. Changes in church structures have resulted in the rise of popular movements, such as the Movement of Landless People and the Children of the Street Movement, which is supported by many Christian Churches as a way in which professional people can give help to the most needs. Gutierrez states: "We are on the side of the poor, not because they are good, but because they are poor" (A Theology of Liberation, SMC 1988)

Tasks

1. Read the information and highlight the key points.
2. Summarise the information, picking out the key points. Use no less than 150 words to do this.

Review 1

What do you think these quotes mean?

1. In 1984, the Roman Catholic Church, after a long interview with liberation theologian Leonardo Boff, issued a severe criticism of the "excesses" of liberation theology in its Instructions of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith.
2. Liberation Theology argues that the poor and oppressed are the shapers of the new path for humanity. In *Christology at the crossroads* (Orbis, 1978), Jon Sobrino observed, "The poor are the authentic theological source for understanding Christian truth and practice."
3. In *Introducing Liberation Theology* (Orbis, 1987), Leonardo Boff linked Liberation Theology to the teachings of Jesus Christ. He said that Jesus came to earth as a poor man and his message was that the kingdom of God was concerned with the liberation of the poor. Jesus' death, Boff claimed, was a plot by the rich and powerful to prevent his mission from succeeding.

Main activity 2



What do you think is meant by this picture?

Read the article which explains what Feminist Theology is and its context. Highlight key points.

Once you have read the article, complete the following questions:

- 1) What strikes you the most about Feminist Theology?
- 2) Do you think Feminist Theology is justified?

3) Do you have any criticisms of this approach?

Be prepared to share your thoughts

Main Activity 3



Sallie McFague

Born May 1933

Influenced by Karl Barth and his emphasis on the role of the theologian as aiding the hearing of God's word, as being the helper and critic of the preacher.

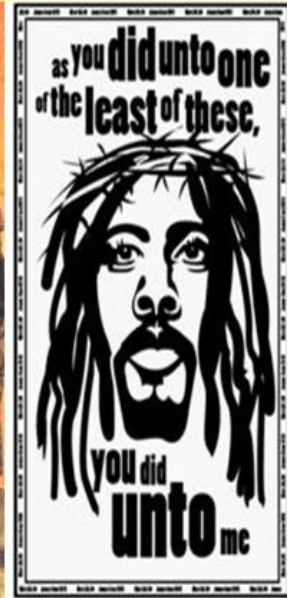
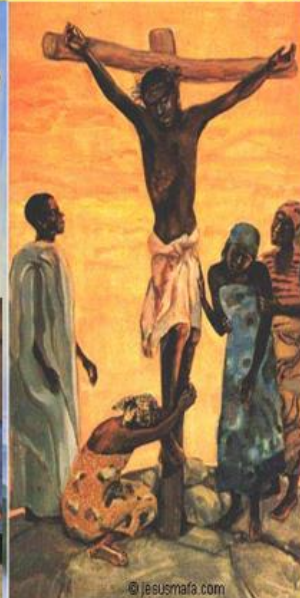
Read the article about her work picking out the key points.

Bullet point her work / contributions to Feminist Theology.

Types of Feminist Theology

Complete the overview on A3 paper exploring the different types of Feminist Theology.

Which image do you like the most? Why?



Read the information about John Cone below and highlight the key points.

BLACK THEOLOGY. African Americans have a long, rich history of spiritually based advocacy for social change. African Americans read their religious texts through their experience. Consequently, there is a long tradition of interpreting the Christian gospel in ways that reflect God's involvement in the struggles of oppressed peoples. This tradition is documented in several places, most notably in the life and work of David Walker (1785-1830), particularly in the classic *Walker's Appeal in Four Articles* (1829); Frederick Douglass (1817-1895); and Howard Thurman (1900-1981), particularly his classic text *Jesus and the Disinherited* (1949).

Black Theology as it is largely understood in the early twenty-first century refers to the movement initiated by James Cone (b. 1938) at Union Theological Seminary in New York and later taken up by his students and a successive generation of thinkers. It is a contextual liberation theology that draws its strength and focus from the historic African American struggle for freedom in North America as it was primarily, although not exclusively, manifested in and through the black church. In this sense it must not be thought of as in anyway an exhaustive or definitive account of African American religious reflection, reflection on African American religious or Christian experience or African American theology. Black Theology is therefore one among a variety of orientations to African American thought on Christian experience in particular and religious experience in general. "Most of us in this school of black theology have contended that we belong to a radical, but honourable and widely recognized, tradition in the African American community. Moreover, we believe that this orientation, while not the only one, has been the most distinctive, persistent, and valuable part of the religious heritage of African Americans in the United States" (Cone, 2001, p. 147).



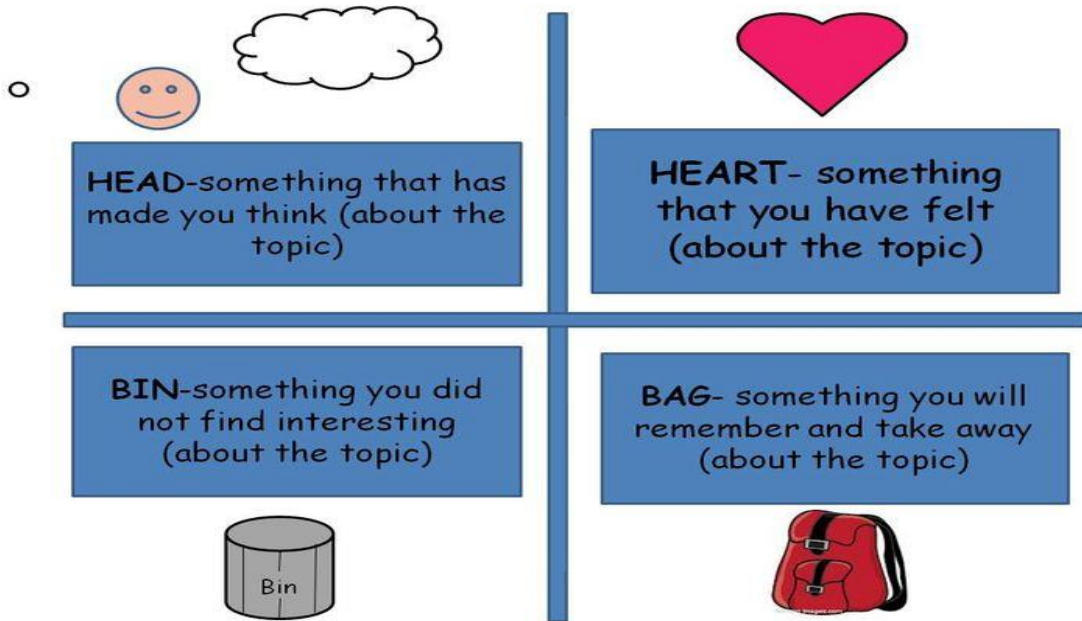
Design an overview on these three people and the influences they have had on their areas:

- Sallie McFague
- Gustavo Gutierrez
- John Cone

Are there any criticisms which could be made of their areas?

Plenary

Draw this in your books and fill in each section thinking about your progress this lesson.



Homework

Complete the following exam style questions.

1. Explore the ideas of Feminist Theology (8 marks)
2. Assess the difference that Black Theology made. (12 marks)
3. "For Gutierrez, salvation was not so much about membership of an institutional church, but about knowing God, either in a direct or indirect way; "Persons already partially accept communion with God, although they do explicitly confess Christ as their Lord, insofar as they are moved by grace, sometimes secretly renounce their selfishness and seek to create authentic fellowship among human beings." In effect, he argued that salvation is about the relationship of human beings both with God and with one another."
 - a) Clarify the ideas presented in this passage about Liberation Theology (10 marks)
 - b) Analyse the strengths and weaknesses of Gutierrez's Liberation Theology (20 marks)

PRACTICE EXAM QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO TRY USING YOUR KNOWLEDGE SO FAR.

SECTION A

Answer **ALL** questions. Write your answers in the space provided.

1. Explore the challenges that Science makes to religion. (8)

2. Assess the arguments put forward by Dawkins and Collins. (9)

3. Assess the strengths of the design argument for the existence of God. (12)

A large rectangular area with a double-line border, containing 20 horizontal lines for writing.

Section C

4. Evaluate the impact that Feminist Theology has had in the Church and its views of women. (30 marks)

In your response to this question, you must include how developments in Christianity have been influenced by one of the following:

- Philosophy of religion
- Religion and Ethics
- New Testament studies

A large rectangular area with a double-line border, containing 25 horizontal lines for writing.

A large rectangular area with a double-line border, containing 20 horizontal lines for writing.

Result:

Student response:

Grade:

Teacher comment:

Student targets:

Social and historical Lesson 6
developments

Lesson Topic Evangelism and its influence

Outcomes

To have understood and looked at what Evangelism is

To be able to explain what the nature of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in the US is like and its influence

To understand how migration has been a factor in the spread of different forms of Christian worship notably the African Christian diaspora.

Key Terms

Pentecostal -a Christian movement that emphasises baptism in the Holy Spirit

Diaspora - dispersal or spread of people from their original homeland

Pentecost - the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles

Bell activity



What do you think is happening in these pictures?

Are there any questions you would ask?



Main activity 1



What is happening in this picture?

Watch these two clips and as you do note down some thoughts as to why this style of Church is so popular

Read the information about the context and rise of the Pentecostal / Evangelical Church. Highlight any key points in the information

History of Pentecostalism

Historically Pentecostalism grew out of African-American churches which retained many stylistic elements that still resonate with the developing world (and with the contemporary West too). These were things such as an emphasis on the interconnection of body, mind and spirit, which it displayed in its highly physical worship, and in healing, speaking in tongues, and the acceptance of dreams and visions as valuable tools of spiritual insight.

Pentecostalism began among poor and disadvantaged people in the USA at the start of the Twentieth century.

Roots

Although the movement is a modern one (its foundation is usually taken to be the American Azusa Street revival in the first decade of the 20th century), its roots go back to the 18th century Wesleyan Holiness tradition, the 19th century Holiness movement and the late-Victorian Keswick

Higher Life movement.
 The Wesleyan Holiness movement was a reaction against the formality and ritualism of the traditional Christian churches of the time. It taught that Christians needed to be transformed by a personal experience of the truth of Christ which they could only get through the power of the Holy Spirit. Members of this Methodist tradition experienced baptism in the Holy Spirit (which was given that name in 1771 by John Fletcher). Baptism in the Spirit was an important feature of all the Holiness churches.

The difference between these earlier traditions and the Pentecostal movement was, on the surface, speaking in tongues as a physical sign of baptism in the Spirit. The theological conflict underlying this was that members of the Holiness tradition believed that the Pentecost story did not need to be interpreted absolutely literally in modern times, while the early Pentecostals were committed to seeing baptism in the Spirit as an absolute re-enactment of the day of Pentecost.

Context of Pentecostalism
 Politically and socially, Pentecostalism originated in churches filled with people who were poor and oppressed and it has never forgotten those roots. Its early leaders were working class Christians with a very similar life experience to the people they led. These factors give Pentecostalism great appeal in parts of the world where people continue to suffer from poverty and injustice. Pentecostalism approaches the predicaments of the poor very practically; churches work as 'mutual aid communities' to deal with poverty and sickness, and provide alternative solutions to problems that might otherwise be 'solved' with witchcraft or other superstitious practices.

Flexibility
 Pentecostalism, more than any other form of Christianity, is willing to fit in with local cultures and use local music and other cultural elements in worship, and sees the value of teaching the Christian message through religious ways of thinking and talking that are already familiar to local people.
 ... the great strength of the Pentecostal impulse [lies in] its power to combine, its aptitude for the language, the music, the cultural artefacts, the religious tropes... of the setting in which it lives.

What is Pentecost? What happened?
 Write down two things you know about Pentecost on your post-it note.
 Find some other people in the room to share your information with.

We will now read the Biblical account of Pentecost.
 As we do, be critical in what is happening and what it all means.

Main activity 2

In groups you will be given a sheet of A3 paper and some more information about the Pentecostal movement.

You are to do the following:

- ✓ Produce an overview on the new information you have been given
- ✓ Include any key terms and detail on the A3 overview as others in the class will be relying on you for this information
- ✓ When the overviews are complete we will stick them around the room and each group is to go around and make notes on the other information provided
- ✓ When all notes have been made you will have time to make notes on the information you did.

Think about this!

Now that you know what the Evangelical Movement is and where it came from, what effects do you think it has had on society especially in the United States?

Can you think of any examples?

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Plenary	Choose one of the tasks from the grid on the board.
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Homework 45 minutes	Read the article about why Christianity is popular amongst Black people. Make notes on the article noting down the reasons for Christianity being so popular.
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Philosophical issues Lesson 7
and questions

Lesson Topic	What is the impact of Black, Feminist and Liberation Theology
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Outcomes	To have recalled the key points about Black, Feminist and Liberation Theology To have used key skills to create a presentation and share information with the class on the impact of these three movements
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Starter	Let's recap on the three movements. In your post-it note write two things about each approach and place them on the board.
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Main activity 1	<p>Group work</p> <p>Each group has been given an article about a particular approach. The article highlights the impact that the approach has had on society/ Christianity.</p> <p>In groups of four you are to complete the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Create a summary of the impact that the type of theology has had✓ You must have the key points and be confident in speaking about these✓ Give a presentation to the class on the topic you have been given. <p>Each group will then present their findings to the class.</p>
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Plenary	Write one question that you can ask another group about their topic <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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BELOW ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF ANSWERS TO SOME EXAM QUESTIONS AND SOME EXAM TIPS FOR YOU:

SECTION B

There is however, a third form of suffering - active suffering, the suffering of love, a voluntary openness to the possibility of being affected by outside influences. If God were really incapable of suffering, he would also be incapable of loving as the God of Aristotle, who was loved by all, but could not love. Whoever is capable of love, is also capable of suffering, because he is open to the suffering that love brings with it, although he is always able to surmount that suffering because of love. God does not suffer, like his creature, because his being is incomplete. He loves from the fullness of his being and suffers because of his full and free love.

3a) Clarify the ideas illustrated in this passage about Moltmann's view on whether God suffers. You must refer to the passage in your response (10 marks)

AO1 will be used by candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding and specialist language and terminology when responding to the question.

Candidates may refer to the following.

- Moltmann advocates that God does suffer because 'whoever is capable of love is also capable of suffering' which contrasts with previous teaching that God cannot change or suffer.
- Moltmann denies God suffers passively but argues in the first few lines that God suffers through voluntarily opening himself to outside influences 'because of his full and free love'.
- God suffers as the Son who is abandoned and dies, or gives himself up, for God's love of humanity.
- He suffers as the Father who gives up and loses his Son out of God's love for humankind.
- He suffers in the Spirit who is the 'giving up', the Spirit of abandonment and self-giving love.
- The suffering of God is a Trinitarian event, both the Father and the Son suffer but experience suffering in different ways and the Spirit proceeds from this event which is precipitated by love

(b) Analyse the weaknesses of Moltmann's position.

AO1 will be used by candidates to underpin their analysis and evaluation. Candidates will be required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding using specialist language and terminology when responding to the question, and in meeting AO2 descriptors described below.

Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO1.

- Moltmann's view is weak because it confuses human and divine attributes.
- He suggests God freely chooses to be affected by suffering but this challenges the classical notion of God and the attribute of immutability.
- Moltmann's view is comforting though as it shows the lengths God would go to out of love for humanity.

AO2 requires candidates to develop their answers showing analytical and evaluative skills to address the question. Such responses will be underpinned by their use of knowledge and understanding.

Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO2.

- To speak of love involving suffering anthropomorphises God too much, therefore damaging the notion of God as transcendent and all powerful.
- It may not be convincing that for God to love it would have to involve suffering just because it does for humans.
- Moltmann's idea of God does make God accessible to humans on a more personal level that some may find easier to relate to than an unchanging, 'distant' God.
- The context of early 20th-century suffering and the challenges from protest atheism are answered by Moltmann because he points out God is 'vulnerable' too, he is not indifferent to or above such suffering, which is convincing to many.
- Moltmann's position stresses the differing experience of suffering on the cross of Father and Son and convincingly avoids patripassianism (the idea that Father and Son are identical).
- Moltmann's view that God can suffer or 'death comes upon God' can be taken on to infer that God has died, or is dead

so it is too controversial to be convincing.

Candidates who show achievement only against AO1 will not be able to gain marks beyond the top of Level 1.

Year 13 Revision Notes

Social and historical developments

Lesson 1

Title of topic: Science - challenges to Christian beliefs

What is the distinction between religion and science?

What events in Science have changed religious beliefs?

What challenges does Science pose for religion?

Key terms:

How confident are you?

Had a look



Nearly there



Nailed it!



What I still need to improve:

Social and historical developments

Lesson 2

Title of topic: Science - challenges to beliefs

What is Intelligent Design?

What arguments are given by Dawkins and Collins for / against religion?

What limitations does Science have?

How confident are you?

Had a look

Nearly there

Nailed it!

What do you need to improve?

Social and historical developments

Lesson 3

Title of topic: *Secularisation and the impact it is having*

What is Secularisation?

What are the arguments for secularisation having a positive / negative effect on society?

What was the thinking of Hitchens?

Key terms:

How confident are you?

Had a look

Nearly there

Nailed it!

What do you need to improve?

Social and historical developments

Lesson 4

Title of topic: *New Religious Movements and the disillusionment with religion*

What is a New Religious Movement?

What are the three categories of a New Religious Movement?

Key terms:

How confident are you?

Had a look Nearly there Nailed it!

What do you need to improve:

Social and historical developments

Lesson 5

Title of topic: Liberation Theology

What is Liberation Theology?

What is Feminist Theology?

What is Black Theology?

Sum up the thinking of Gutierrez, McFague and Cone

How confident are you?

Had a look

Nearly there

Nailed it!

What do you need to improve?

Social and historical developments

Lesson 6

Title of topic: Evangelicalism

What is Evangelicalism?

What are the roots of Evangelicalism?

Why is Christianity popular amongst black people?

What is Pentecost and how does it relate to Evangelicalism?

Key terms:

How confident are you?

Had a look

Nearly there

Nailed it!

What do you need to improve:

Social and historical developments

Lesson 7

Title of topic: *Impact of Black, Feminist and Liberation Theology*

What is the impact of Black Theology?

What is the impact of Feminist Theology?

What is the impact of Liberation Theology?

How confident are you?

Had a look

Nearly there

Nailed it!

What do you need to improve?
