

CHRISTIANITY – BIOETHICS

HSC STUDIES OF RELIGION

FOCUS DAY

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Note: Material provided here to enhance study of the New South Wales
HSC Studies of Religion Course (1 & 2 Unit).
It should not be inferred that they are necessarily reflective of the views of the
Catholic Education Office, Sydney.



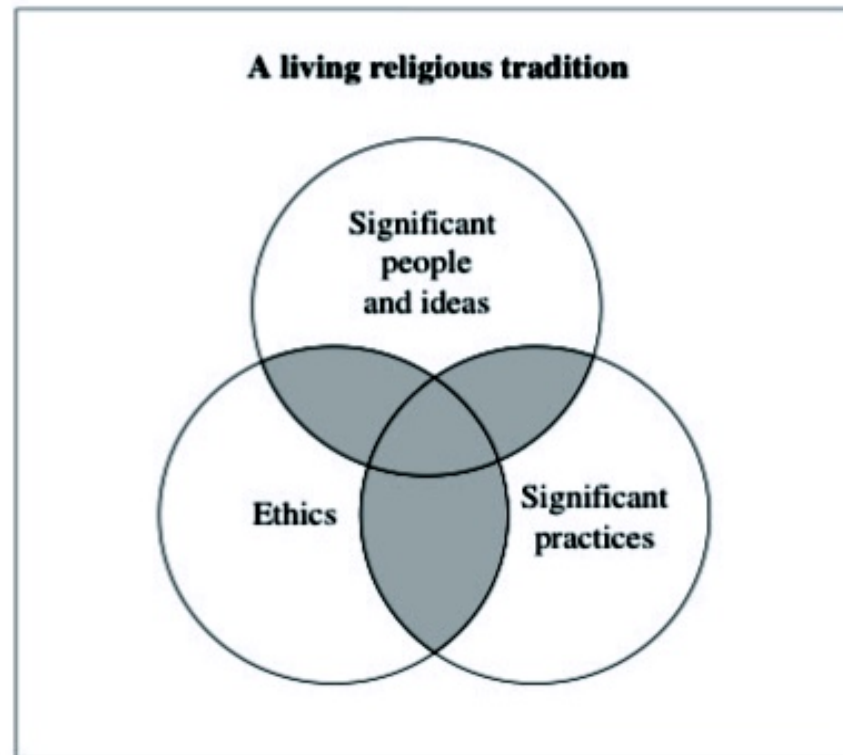
LEARNING INTENTION

- Define ethics & bioethics and clarify the distinctive nature of 'Christian Bioethics'.
- Identify 'Key Teachings' in Christianity that underpin 'Christian Bioethics'.
- Explore a small sample of Bioethical issues, within the Christian context.
- Discuss techniques that may assist in the development of a good response to HSC questions on 'Christianity – Bioethics'. (This will be woven into the presentation)
- *Please note every attempt has been made to acknowledge and cite the work of others used in this presentation. Should you use their work in your exam responses, please refer to the author / organisation accordingly.*



CONTEXT

HSC STUDIES OF RELIGION



In your study of religious traditions you have focused on three different, interrelated aspects, as shown in the diagram.



DEFINITION

- **If you are going to write about it, you need to know about it!**
- **Define it when you first use it!**



SCHOOLS OF ETHICS

TASK:

What is Ethics?



DEFINITION

- **What is 'Ethics'?**

"Moral principles that govern a person's behaviour or the conducting of an activity."

EG. "Medical ethics also enter into the question"

OR

"The branch of knowledge that deals with moral principles."

EG. "Neither metaphysics nor ethics is the home of religion."

<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/ethics>



DEFINITION

- **What is 'Ethics'?**

"Ethics is the explicit, philosophical and/or religious reflection on moral beliefs and practices. Its purpose is to clarify what is right and wrong and what human beings should freely do or refrain from doing."

Morrissey. J., Taylor. A., Bailey. G., Mudge. P., Rule. P., Edghill. N. (2010). LIVING RELIGION (Fourth Edition). Pearson Australia. Melbourne. Page 260.



SCHOOLS OF ETHICS

TASK:

What is Bioethics?



DEFINITION

- **What is 'Bioethics'?**

"Bioethics is a widely used term within the scientific, medical, legal, philosophical and theological communities. Literally the word means "the ethics of life" (bios being the Greek word for life). It can be defined as the critical examination of the moral dimension of decision-making in health related contexts (the traditional medico moral) and in contexts involving the biological sciences in so far of the treatment of the generation, improvement, prolongation and termination of human life" (cf S. Gorovitz, cited in Shannon and DiGiacomo, An Introduction to Bioethics, p.3).

Queensland Bioethics Centre. <http://bne.catholic.net.au/gbc/index.php>

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DEFINITION

- **What is 'Bioethics'?**

"It is usually referred to as being interdisciplinary. A large number of disciplines feed in the data which we have to consider in order to make appropriate judgments for human conduct.

Bioethics is not a self enclosed, autonomous set of ethical principles. It is rather the application of general ethical principles (the ones which stand, implicitly or explicitly, behind all your moral decisions) to a specific area. What distinguishes bioethics is its subject matter the life sciences and health care not its ethics."

Queensland Bioethics Centre. <http://bne.catholic.net.au/qbc/index.php>

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DEFINITION

What is Bioethics?

“An area of applied ethics relating to moral decisions and behaviour in the life sciences and incorporating but not limited to medical ethics, which is commonly considered to be a subspecialty of bioethics.”

(Oxford Concise Colour Medical Dictionary (2010) Oxford University Press. New York. P82)



SCHOOLS OF ETHICS

TASK:

What is meant by Christian Ethics and Christian Bioethics?



DEFINITION

- **What is Christian Ethics & 'Bioethics'?**
- **"One definition of Christian Ethics: Ethics which considers the specific situation, gathers the facts and uses the principles (commands and doctrine) and values to be found in Christianity."**
- (Rev. Phil Edwards University of Bolton – UK.
- **Rev Phil Edwards (2008) Christian Ethics Session 1: What is Christian ethics?**
<https://www.bolton.ac.uk/Chaplaincy/Documents/Ethics/Session1.pdf>



DEFINITION

- **What is Christian Ethics & 'Bioethics'?**
- **"One definition of Christian BIOEthics: BIOEthics which considers the specific situation, the moral dimension of decision-making in health related contexts, gathers the facts and uses the principles (commands and doctrine) and values to be found in Christianity."**
- (Adapted from Rev. Phil Edwards University of Bolton – UK. & Queensland Bioethics Centre)
- Queensland Bioethics Centre. <http://bne.catholic.net.au/qbc/index.php>
- Rev Phil Edwards (2008) Christian Ethics Session 1: What is Christian ethics? <https://www.bolton.ac.uk/Chaplaincy/Documents/Ethics/Session1.pdf>



SCHOOLS OF ETHICS

Schools of ethics in Western philosophy can be divided, very roughly, into three sorts.

The first, drawing on the work of Aristotle, holds that the virtues (such as justice, charity, & generosity) are dispositions to act in ways that benefit both the person possessing them and that person's society.

<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/ethics>

St. Thomas Aquinas was influenced by the work of Aristotle. Natural Law emerges from this.



SCHOOLS OF ETHICS

NATURAL LAW – SCRIPTURAL BASIS

“They show that the demands of the law are written in their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even defend them.” (Romans 2:15)



SCHOOLS OF ETHICS

Aristotle identified 4 Cardinal virtues

- **Prudence**
- **Justice**
- **Courage**
- **Temperance (moderation)**

Cited from: Wayne Wheatley's presentation on Christian Ethics in 2012. Go to <http://www.ceosyd.catholic.edu.au/Parents/Religion/RE/Documents/20120627-pres-SORChristianBioethics.pdf>



SCHOOLS OF ETHICS

During the medieval period, St Thomas Aquinas (c.1225-74), the great theologian and philosopher, adapted Aristotle's ethical system. He developed an understanding that Christian life should be life lived by virtues. He then gave us Christian Theological virtues:

- ***Faith***
- ***Hope***
- ***Charity***

Cited from: Wayne Wheatley's presentation on Christian Ethics in 2012. Go to <http://www.ceosyd.catholic.edu.au/Parents/Religion/RE/Documents/20120627-pres-SORChristianBioethics.pdf>

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SCHOOLS OF ETHICS

St. Thomas Aquinas was influenced by the work of Aristotle.

For St Thomas Aquinas, human life was lived in the context of a divinely created order; all aspects of nature were part of the order of creation, and the moral life consisted of living out this order for the glory of God and the fulfilment of the person. The point of morality was to fulfil the purpose of human life created by God.

Cited from: Wayne Wheatley's presentation on Christian Ethics in 2012. Go to <http://www.ceosyd.catholic.edu.au/Parents/Religion/RE/Documents/20120627-pres-SORChristianBioethics.pdf>



SCHOOLS OF ETHICS

Schools of ethics in Western philosophy can be divided, very roughly, into three sorts.

The second, is 'Deontology' defended particularly by Kant, makes the concept of duty central to morality: humans are bound, from a knowledge of their duty as rational beings, to obey the categorical imperative to respect other rational beings.

<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/ethics>

It is sometimes described as "duty-based" or "obligation-based" ethics, because Deontologists believe that ethical rules bind people to their duty. The term "deontology" derives from the Greek "deon" meaning "obligation" or "duty", and "logos" meaning "speaking" or "study", and was first used in this way in 1930, in the book *"Five Types of Ethical Theory"* by C. D. Broad (1887 - 1971).

See: http://www.philosophybasics.com/branch_deontology.html



SCHOOLS OF ETHICS

Schools of ethics in Western philosophy can be divided, very roughly, into three sorts.

Thirdly, Utilitarianism asserts that the guiding principle of conduct should be the greatest happiness or benefit of the greatest number.

<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/ethics>



SCHOOLS OF ETHICS

TASK:

How would you apply:

Aristotle / Aquinas / Natural Law

Kantianism / Deontology

Utilitarianism

**To the Bioethical question regarding
Bioethical Issues (eg. IVF, Euthanasia)?**



[Library Materials](#) > [Bioethics Research Databases](#) > [EthxWeb](#) > [Bibliographies on Bioethics Topics](#)

Bibliographies on Bioethics Topics

To view the 100 most recent bibliographic citations in our EthxWeb database (date range is 1974 – 2009) for quick bibliographies on the following bioethics topics, please choose a link below. You may also be interested in our new pages being developed around [bioethics topics](#) that go beyond EthxWeb to explore the best reputable sources curating knowledge in the field of bioethics. View [latest posts by bioethics blogs](#) to explore new, trending topics and discussions.

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| • Behavioral Research | • Human Experimentation | • Right to Health Care |
| • Bioethics | • In Vitro Fertilization | • Scientific Misconduct |
| • Bioethics Commissions | • Informed Consent (in treatment) | • Sociobiology |
| • Bioethics Education and Programs | • Informed Consent (in research) | • Stem Cell Research |
| • Bioethics History | • Involuntary Civil Commitment | • Sterilization |
| • Biotechnology | • Law and Bioethics | • Telemedicine |
| • Blood Transfusion | • Media and Bioethics | • Terminal Care |
| • Brain Death | • Medical Ethics | • Torture and Genocide |
| • Chemical and Biological Warfare | • Medical Tourism | • Transgenic Animals |
| • Cloning | • Mental Health Therapies | • Treatment Refusal |
| • Codes of Ethics | • Nanotechnology | • Truth Disclosure |
| • Confidentiality | • Neuroethics | • Value of Life |
| • Contraception | • Nursing Ethics | • Veterinary Ethics |
| • Death and Dying | • Organ Allocation | • Xenotransplantation |
| • Dental Ethics | • Organ Donation | |
| | • Organ Transplantation | |



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Nanoethics](#)

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Transplantation](#)

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SOME OTHER THOUGHTS

Dr. Peter Vardy

International scholar of Religion & Philosophy
Vice-Principal, Heythrop College,
University of London

Makes the following points about
Ethics, Bioethics and Christianity.

Please note his thoughts are focused on Christianity in general and may not be reflective of the Catholic perspective. It is offered here, as Studies of Religion students need to be across the whole of Christianity, which includes the Catholic perspective.

See: Vardy, Peter. 2011. BIOETHICS, SEXUAL ETHICS AND ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS CONSIDERED USING A CHRISTIAN FRAMEWORK. From: <http://oxleylearning.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/10/files/2012/05/Christian-Ethics-Powerpoints.pptx>

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Understanding differences...

- There are three MAIN bases for ethics in Christianity:
 - 1) BIBLICAL ETHICS. This sees the basis for ethics being what is commanded by God in the Bible. PROBLEMS INCLUDE:
 - Hermeneutics and Biblical criticism
 - Modern issues such as IVF, genetic engineering, etc.
 - 2) NATURAL LAW. Certain actions go against the common nature we all share and are, therefore, 'intrinsically evil'. PROBLEMS:
 - Defining human nature
 - Absolute rules are laid down which do not depend on context
 - 3) A SITUATIONAL AND CONTEXTUAL APPROACH. This claims that Jesus came to lay down two central commands: Love of God and love of neighbour. What is right depends on context. PROBLEMS:
 - This denies any absolute moral rules as everything is contextual
 - All ethics become relative to 'love' and this is not easy to define.

- See: Vardy. Peter. 2011. BIOETHICS, SEXUAL ETHICS AND ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS CONSIDERED USING A CHRISTIAN FRAMEWORK.
From: <http://oxleylearning.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/10/files/2012/05/Christian-Ethics-Powerpoints.pptx>

1) Biblical Ethics

- Biblical ethics are text based – as are ethics in Islam and in Orthodox Judaism.
 - The main difficulty is in deciding which text to use (obviously Christians will say the Bible, Muslims the Qu'ran and Jews the Torah and Talmud) but then deciding how the text is to be interpreted.
 - Those who base ethics on a text often hold that there is no aspect of the text that is culturally relative – but this seems difficult to maintain in the light of contemporary scholarship.
 - Most Christians accept the findings of Biblical criticism and, therefore, understand that texts are often compilations.
 - Also few texts directly apply to modern issues so there will be legitimate differences regarding how the text is to be applied.
-
- See: Vardy. Peter. 2011. BIOETHICS, SEXUAL ETHICS AND ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS CONSIDERED USING A CHRISTIAN FRAMEWORK.
From: <http://oxleylearning.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/10/files/2012/05/Christian-Ethics-Powerpoints.pptx>

2) Natural Law

- **Natural Law, based on Aristotle's philosophy, is the basis for ethics in Catholic Christianity. God creates human beings with a common human nature and actions that go against this nature are 'intrinsically evil'.**
- **The major problem is deciding on how human nature is to be defined. St. Thomas Aquinas used Aristotle's philosophy but our understanding of what it means to be human has moved on since then.**
- **Also natural law tends to allow little room for context or situation – although it does have the great advantage of providing absolute moral rules.**
- **See: Vardy. Peter. 2011. BIOETHICS, SEXUAL ETHICS AND ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS CONSIDERED USING A CHRISTIAN FRAMEWORK.
From: <http://oxleylearning.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/10/files/2012/05/Christian-Ethics-Powerpoints.pptx>**

Virtue Ethics

- **Virtue ethics is the other side of Natural Law – it emphasises the importance of cultivating the virtues rather than dealing with ‘the ethics of dilemmas’ such as abortion or euthanasia.**
- **Virtue ethics is also grounded in Aristotle’s philosophy and the idea of ‘becoming fully human’ – it maintains that by cultivating the virtues this can bring all human beings closer to realising their full potential.**
- **However whilst Virtue ethics makes a positive contribution to ethical debate it does not add a great deal to the specific issues addressed in these slides.**
- **See: Vardy. Peter. 2011. BIOETHICS, SEXUAL ETHICS AND ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS CONSIDERED USING A CHRISTIAN FRAMEWORK.
From: <http://oxleylearning.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/10/files/2012/05/Christian-Ethics-Powerpoints.pptx>**

3) Situation ethics

- Contextual or Situational ethics holds that what is right or wrong depends on the context.
- Often LOVE is regarded as the only absolute and one needs to work out the loving thing to do in the complex situation in which one finds oneself.
 - In Christianity, ‘What would Jesus have done’ can be one way of expressing this.
- However the love that is demanded here is agape, non-preferential love, and this is difficult to achieve. It also undermines any ethical absolutes since so much depends on the context.
- Joseph Fletcher put this view forward in ‘Situation Ethics’ (1966) and it can leave supporters adrift on a sea of uncertainty with no firm guidelines – however it can be argued to be more flexible than Natural Law.
- See: Vardy. Peter. 2011. BIOETHICS, SEXUAL ETHICS AND ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS CONSIDERED USING A CHRISTIAN FRAMEWORK. From:
- <http://oxleylearning.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/10/files/2012/05/Christian-Ethics-Powerpoints.pptx>

BIOETHICS

- Increasingly IVF and IVM will become common.
- Once these are accepted, then PGD (pre-implantation genetic diagnosis) is not far behind – indeed it is already present.
- This is genetic selection of embryos and, of course, involves discarding surplus embryos.
- The first issue is whether an embryo is a person. Here, again, there is no agreement:
 - Today Catholics hold that from the moment of conception it MAY be a person so killing embryos runs the risk of homicide.
 - Many Protestants consider an embryo to be a potential person but not a full person until some later stage.
- See: Vardy. Peter. 2011. BIOETHICS, SEXUAL ETHICS AND ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS CONSIDERED USING A CHRISTIAN FRAMEWORK.
From: <http://oxleylearning.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/10/files/2012/05/Christian-Ethics-Powerpoints.pptx>

Bioethics - 2

- When a person is formed is the first issue... The second is what ethical theory should be adopted. This will affect IVF, embryonic stem cell research and abortion:
 - THE BIBLE has no direct teaching on bioethics so this means interpreting a text and there can be a variety of views on this.
 - NATURAL LAW will hold that certain actions are ‘intrinsically evil’ because they go against our common human nature. So when a person is formed then killing an embryo will always be wrong. The creation of multiple embryos which will not be implanted would also be wrong as would abortion.
 - SITUATION ETHICS will ask whether love is served – if a couple cannot have a child naturally then the loving thing to do may well be to make this possible. If a girl has been gang raped, then an abortion may be the loving thing to do.
- See: Vardy. Peter. 2011. BIOETHICS, SEXUAL ETHICS AND ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS CONSIDERED USING A CHRISTIAN FRAMEWORK.
From: <http://oxleylearning.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/10/files/2012/05/Christian-Ethics-Powerpoints.pptx>

New stem cell technology

- **The whole debate on the ethics of stem cell research has changed in the last four years.**
- **Previously the choice was between adult and embryonic stem cells. It was not possible to create totipotent or pluripotent cells from adults.**
 - This has changed as it is now possible to create pluripotent cells from adult cells. So the need for embryonic stem cells has largely disappeared.
 - No Christians have a problem with the use of adult stem cells and these hold great promise.
- See: Vardy. Peter. 2011. BIOETHICS, SEXUAL ETHICS AND ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS CONSIDERED USING A CHRISTIAN FRAMEWORK.
From: <http://oxleylearning.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/10/files/2012/05/Christian-Ethics-Powerpoints.pptx>

KEY TEACHINGS IN CHRISTIANITY & BIOETHICS

- *It can be argued that all Christian variants would, at least broadly, hold to these teachings:*
- God is Creator of all and Lord of the World
- Made in the Image & Likeness of God
- Sanctity of Life
- Integrity & Dignity of the Person/Human Dignity
- Love of God
- Love of Neighbour
- Freedom / Free Will
- Honesty And Truth
- Conscience
- Stewardship



KEY TEACHINGS IN CHRISTIANITY & BIOETHICS

- God is Creator of all and Lord of the World
- **“God looked at *everything he had made, and found it very good. Evening came, and morning followed—the sixth day.*”**
(Genesis 1:31)
- Note that in this passage God created everything. We are not God! Also note that what God creates is good. From this we derive the notion of Natural Law, that Natural Law (of God) is written intrinsically into our soul and hearts.
(Romans 2:15) *In Bioethics, how does this impact on the life of adherents?*



KEY TEACHINGS IN CHRISTIANITY & BIOETHICS

- Made in the Image & Likeness of God
- Sanctity of Life
- **“God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female, he created them.”** (Genesis 1:27)
- Note that in this passage, God creates us, we didn't create ourselves! Our God is a creator God. If we are made in the image and likeness of God, what responsibility do we have to the body given us by God? Life is sacred and therefore must be protected / safeguarded. The Teaching of Stewardship applies here. *In Bioethics, how does this impact on the life of adherents?*



KEY TEACHINGS IN CHRISTIANITY & BIOETHICS

- Integrity & Dignity of the Person/Human Dignity
(See USCCB For More Details)

<http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/life-and-dignity-of-the-human-person.cfm>

Luke 10:25-37

The good Samaritan recognized the dignity in the other and cared for his life.

“He answered, “The one who treated him with mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”” (Luke 10:37)

Treating one another with love, mercy, compassion and forgiveness are some ways we honour the dignity of the Human Person. The Good Samaritan reminds us of the Christian Principle “Do No Harm!” Note the link to the Beatitudes: “Blessed are the merciful.” (Matthew 5:7) *In Bioethics, how does this impact on the life of adherents?*



KEY TEACHINGS IN CHRISTIANITY & BIOETHICS

- Integrity & Dignity of the Person/Human Dignity
(See USCCB For More Details)

<http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/life-and-dignity-of-the-human-person.cfm>

John 4:1-42

Jesus broke with societal and religious customs to honour the dignity of the Samaritan woman.

“Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”

Note that Jesus honours the dignity of the Samaritan women by speaking to her with respect and offering her something the world cannot give. *In Bioethics, how does this impact on the life of adherents?*



KEY TEACHINGS IN CHRISTIANITY & BIOETHICS

- Integrity & Dignity of the Person/Human Dignity (See USCCB For More Details)

<http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/life-and-dignity-of-the-human-person.cfm>

Romans 12: 9-18

Love one another, contribute to the needs of others, live peaceably with all.

“Let love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honour.” (Romans 12:9-10)

Paul answers the age old question: “Am I my Brothers / Sisters keeper? To an extent, yes! *In Bioethics, how does this impact on the life of adherents?*”



KEY TEACHINGS IN CHRISTIANITY & BIOETHICS

- Love of God / Love of Neighbour
- The Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12):
- **“Do to others whatever you would have them do to you. This is the law and the prophets.” (Matthew 7:12)**
- From the Christian perspective, “The Golden Rule” is where the principle of “Do No Harm!” is derived from. *In Bioethics, how does this impact on the life of adherents?*



KEY TEACHINGS IN CHRISTIANITY & BIOETHICS

- Love of God / Love of Neighbour
- The Great Commandment (John 13:34-35)
- **“I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35)**
- Love is the equalizer. To have love of neighbour also means that you would not wish them any harm. *In Bioethics, how does this impact on the life of adherents?*



KEY TEACHINGS IN CHRISTIANITY & BIOETHICS

- The Golden Rule and the Great Commandment are related 'Gospel Injunctions'. To Love a person by implication means not doing harm. The love you have for another is a reflection of how you want to be treated.
- In Bioethics, love is often used as the reason for something to occur. Think Euthanasia. Does the Golden Rule and the Great Commandment give us the ability to make such a decision? Even if it did, would it be consistent with other Key Christian Teachings such as Sanctity of Life and Human Dignity? *In Bioethics, how does this impact on the life of adherents?*



KEY TEACHINGS IN CHRISTIANITY & BIOETHICS

- Freedom / Free Will
- **“For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed you from the law of sin and death.” (Romans 8:2)**
- **“So if a son frees you, then you will truly be free.” (John 8:36)**
- Both of these passages connect to the Easter events. We are freed from sin through the person of Jesus Christ. God created us free in Genesis 1 & 2. How we exercise free will has implications for the life of the adherent and Bioethics. *In Bioethics, how does this impact on the life of adherents?*



KEY TEACHINGS IN CHRISTIANITY & BIOETHICS

- Honesty And Truth
- **“If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:31-32)**
- “The truth will set you free” according to the Gospel of John. The Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues in the USA (www.bioethics.gov) have released a paper about specific recommendations for the management of incidental and secondary findings in clinical, research and direct-to-consumer settings.
(See more at: <http://bioethics.gov/node/3183#sthash.4kww0jQp.dpuf>)
- *In Bioethics is honesty the best policy?
How does this effect the life of the adherent?*



KEY TEACHINGS IN CHRISTIANITY & BIOETHICS

- Conscience
- **“Paul looked intently at the Sanhedrin and said, “My brothers, I have conducted myself with a perfectly clear conscience before God to this day.”” (Acts 23:1)**
- **“They show that the demands of the law are written in their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even defend them.” (Romans 2:15)**



KEY TEACHINGS IN CHRISTIANITY & BIOETHICS

- Conscience
- **“But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.”
(Matthew 6:6)**
- **“Withdrawing a second time, he prayed again, “My Father, if it is not possible that this cup pass without my drinking it, your will be done!”
(Matthew 26:42)**



KEY TEACHINGS IN CHRISTIANITY & BIOETHICS

- Conscience
- It is not difficult to find a scriptural basis for Conscience. Even Jesus praying in the Garden appears to wrestle with his Conscience, clear that he must do the will of the Father.
- In Christianity, Conscience has primacy, *but it must be an informed Conscience*. Informed of the positives and the negatives, what is taught about the issue and being able to be comfortable in the presence of God with the decision. Conscience in all Christian variants is not intended to be an “opt-out” option, a wild card in the game of life. It is derived from two Latin words: Con = With and Scientia = Knowledge. It is therefore making a decision with full knowledge of all of the issues.
- *In Bioethics, how does this impact on the life of adherents?*



KEY TEACHINGS IN CHRISTIANITY & BIOETHICS

- Stewardship
- "Then God said: Let us make human beings in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the tame animals, all the wild animals, and all the creatures that crawl on the earth." (Genesis 1:26)
- We have an obligation, even from the beginning of the creation, to be good stewards of the creation, entrusted to us by God. This includes ourselves, and other human beings, all living and non-living things. *It also reminds us that we are to an extent my 'Brothers' / Sisters' Keeper! In Bioethics, how does this impact on the life of adherents?*



KEY TEACHINGS IN CHRISTIANITY & BIOETHICS (RECAP)

- God is Creator of all and Lord of the World
- Made in the Image & Likeness of God
- Sanctity of Life
- Integrity & Dignity of the Person/Human Dignity
- Love of God
- Love of Neighbour
- Freedom / Free Will
- Honesty And Truth
- Conscience
- Stewardship



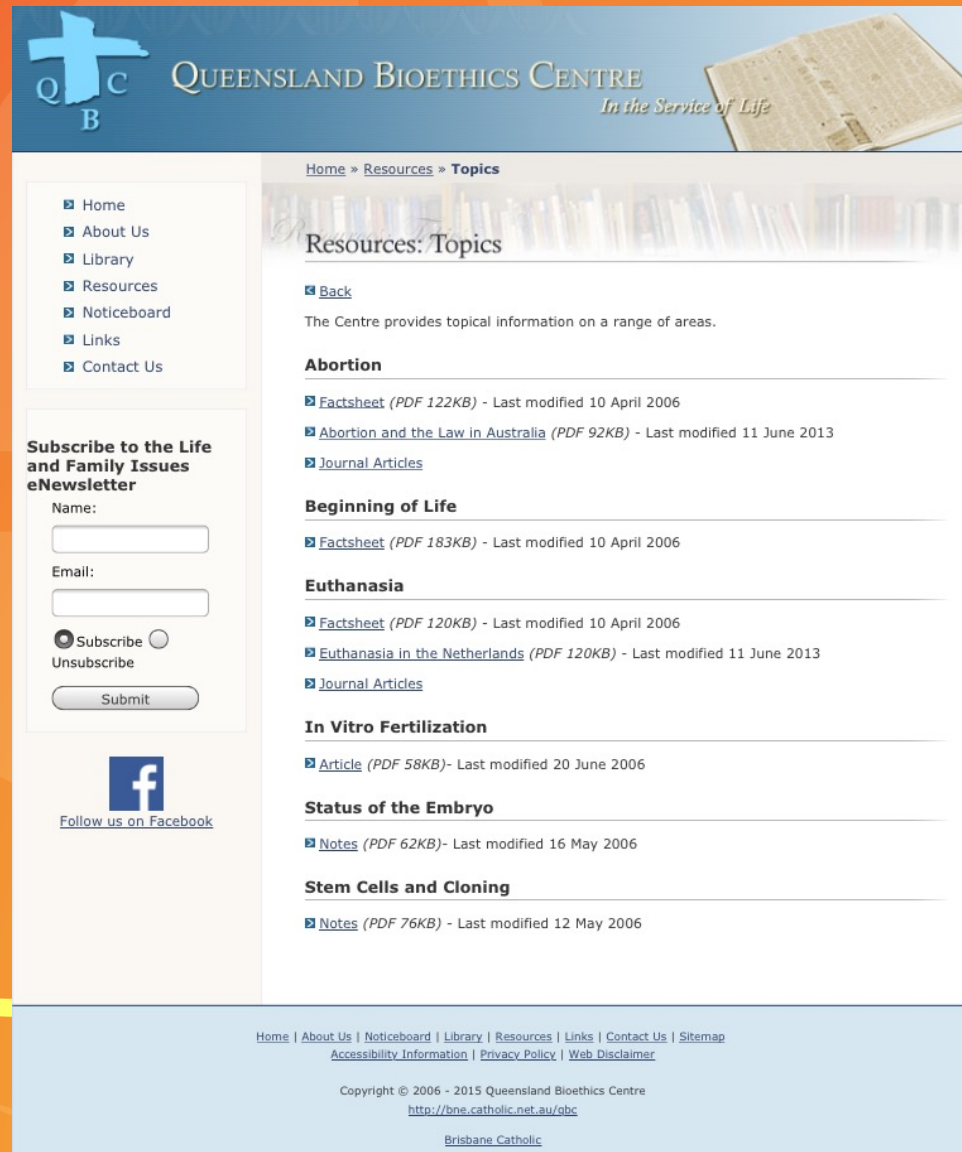
OTHER SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

- **10 Commandments (Decalogue)**
Exodus 20:1-17 & Deuteronomy 5:4-21
- **Beatitudes**
Matthew 5:1-12
- *In Bioethics, how does this impact on the life of adherents?*



CHRISTIANITY - BIOETHICS

The Queensland Bioethics Centre is part of the Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane. It has resources on Bioethical issues from the Catholic perspective. These can be downloaded as PDF files.
www.bne.catholic.net.au/qbc



The screenshot shows the website of the Queensland Bioethics Centre. The header features a logo with a cross and the letters Q, B, and C, followed by the text "QUEENSLAND BIOETHICS CENTRE" and the tagline "In the Service of Life". Below the header, there is a navigation menu on the left with links to Home, About Us, Library, Resources, Noticeboard, Links, and Contact Us. A section for "Subscribe to the Life and Family Issues eNewsletter" includes a form for Name and Email, with "Subscribe" selected. Below this is a Facebook link. The main content area is titled "Resources: Topics" and lists several topics with links to PDF files and their last modified dates: Abortion, Beginning of Life, Euthanasia, In Vitro Fertilization, Status of the Embryo, and Stem Cells and Cloning. The footer contains a sitemap, accessibility information, privacy policy, and web disclaimer, along with copyright information for 2006-2015.

QUEENSLAND BIOETHICS CENTRE
In the Service of Life

Home » Resources » Topics

Resources: Topics

[Back](#)

The Centre provides topical information on a range of areas.

Abortion

- [Factsheet \(PDF 122KB\)](#) - Last modified 10 April 2006
- [Abortion and the Law in Australia \(PDF 92KB\)](#) - Last modified 11 June 2013
- [Journal Articles](#)

Beginning of Life

- [Factsheet \(PDF 183KB\)](#) - Last modified 10 April 2006

Euthanasia

- [Factsheet \(PDF 120KB\)](#) - Last modified 10 April 2006
- [Euthanasia in the Netherlands \(PDF 120KB\)](#) - Last modified 11 June 2013
- [Journal Articles](#)

In Vitro Fertilization

- [Article \(PDF 58KB\)](#) - Last modified 20 June 2006

Status of the Embryo

- [Notes \(PDF 62KB\)](#) - Last modified 16 May 2006

Stem Cells and Cloning

- [Notes \(PDF 76KB\)](#) - Last modified 12 May 2006

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<http://bne.catholic.net.au/qbc>
Brisbane Catholic



CHRISTIANITY-BIOETHICS

Have at least 3 'Big Ticket' issues that you can take into the exam and tie to Key Teachings of Christianity, show the differences between the variants and how they effect the life of the adherent.

*Abortion *Beginning of Life *Euthanasia
*In Vitro Fertilization *Status of the Embryo
*Stem Cells and Cloning. You can get information from the Queensland Bioethics Centre, as a starting point.

http://bne.catholic.net.au/qbc/resources_topics.php



CHRISTIANITY - BIOETHICS

The Interchurch Bioethics Council New Zealand is comprised of Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches. It has resources on Bioethical issues that reflect the thinking of these Churches.
www.interchurchbioethics.org.nz

InterChurch Bioethics Council
Exploring the spiritual, ethical and cultural dimensions of biotechnology in Aotearoa New Zealand

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Resources

ICBC Reports and Study Guides

The Interchurch Bioethics Council has produced a number of resources on climate change, euthanasia, GM organisms, transgenics and biotechnology to encourage church members and the community to think about and discuss the ethical, theological, spiritual and cultural issues in the use of biotechnology.

Real Urgent and Personal: A Christian approach to global climate change. (PDF)
Report contains material suitable for group or individual study. (2008)

Where Do We Stand? (PDF)
A resource and study guide for church and community groups on the lifting of the moratorium on genetically modified organisms in New Zealand. (2003)

Making Good Decisions in Biotechnology: Stem Cell Research Cloning and Genetic information. (PDF)
A study guide for church groups.

Euthanasia: Unethical Intervention or Death with Dignity? (PDF)
A study resource prepared by ICBC. Includes study questions and bibliography for further reading.

Transgenics (DOC)
A paper from the perspective of the Interchurch Bioethics Council ICBC paper looking at the transfer of human genes into other organisms

Christian Spirituality and Bioethics: A Narrative Approach Based on the Metaphor of Journey
MTheol Thesis – Graham O'Brien (2007)

It's Life, Jim, but not as we know it
Editorial by Graham O'Brien on the J. Craig Venter Institute's announcement of the creation of the first self-replicating synthetic bacterial cell.

The Euthanasia Debate...Why now? (Summary of Seminar)
Summary by Helen Bichan of the seminar "The Euthanasia Debate...Why now?" held at Te Papa on April 8, 2011.

ICBC Administrator | July 4, 2010 2:31 pm

Subscribe

SEARCH
Search for:

RECENT POSTS

- Bioethics Survey
- Welcome to the Interchurch Bioethics Council



RELIGIOUS STRUCTURES-CATHOLIC

Central structures with various structures within them i.e. Pope, Cardinals, Bishops, Priest, Deacons, Laity

Jesus gives authority to teach to his Apostles “you are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church”.

The Magisterium – The Bishops of the Church as a collective group is the highest teaching authority in the Catholic Church. Vatican II represents a meeting of the Magisterium.

Natural Law, Scripture, Tradition, Faith and Reason become the cornerstone of its Moral, Social, Ethical Teaching.

Papal encyclicals eg. Veritatis Splendour and Humanae Vitae, The Catechism of the Catholic Church, Council Documents, Pastoral Letters, etc are some of the ways in which teaching is conveyed.

The Catholic Church also practices the principle of subsidiarity.



RELIGIOUS STRUCTURES-ANGLICAN

Similar structures to the Catholic Church but a looser communion.

Structures include: Bishops, Priest, Deacons, Laity

Jesus gives authority to teach to his Apostles “you are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church”.

The Magisterium – The Bishops of the Church in Australia meeting in Synod as a collective group. Lambeth conference in England significant gathering of Anglican Bishops and Laity. is the highest teaching authority in the Anglican Church. Vatican II represents a meeting of the Magisterium.

Natural Law, Scripture, Tradition (to an extent), Faith and Reason become the cornerstone of its Moral, Social, Ethical Teaching.

Anglican Church, synod Documents, pastoral letters, etc., are some of the ways in which teaching is conveyed.

The Anglican Church also practices the principle of autonomy.



RELIGIOUS STRUCTURES-PROTESTANT

Other Churches

Salvation Army and Uniting Church are organised at a state level, with officers / moderators having responsibility for a geographic area.

Baptist churches have authority delegated to local parish level.

Ethical issues are discussed and debated in Churches / Variants. How it is lived out is the impact on the life of the adherents.

Sources of authority: scriptures, tradition (to an extent in protestant variants) and inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

In all Christian churches, including the Catholic Church, the role of Conscience is sacred.



ETHICS – UNITING CHURCH

“The Uniting Church values intellectual scholarship and reflection. We use a variety of scholarly methods for understanding the Bible and relating it to everyday issues of life. This is required by our fundamental statement of belief: the Basis of Union.

We see all members of the church as having capacity for theological reflection and personal decision-making about morality. Some church members would prefer that we gave them a set of rules, but most appreciate our approach.

What are our sources of ethics? Our understanding of ethics is informed by Scripture, Christian tradition and reason. It also takes account of experience.”

Rev. Dr. Ann Wansbrough. 2002. Ethics. Uniting Care NSW.ACT

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ETHICS – UNITING CHURCH

“On most issues, it is widely accepted in the Uniting Church that we should begin from our understanding of the nature of God. We understand God as a God of grace, forgiveness, mercy, love and compassion, a God who created and sustains the whole of creation and the whole of humankind. We see internationally recognized human rights as consistent with the Christian tradition since God is concerned with the wellbeing of all human beings. We refer to the ten commandments (Exodus 20) but see ethics as more complicated than obedience to the commandments. Also, the ten commandments are not an adequate expression of the range of ethical issues that we face in contemporary society. One can obey the ten commandments, and still fail to be ethical. For example, they say nothing about care for the environment, or about work or business or professional ethics. Jesus Christ pointed to the two great commandments: to love God with heart, mind, soul and strength, and to love one’s neighbour as oneself (Luke 11: 25-28).”

Rev. Dr. Ann Wansbrough. 2002. Ethics. Uniting Care NSW.ACT

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ETHICS – UNITING CHURCH

“We support basic standards of human behaviour such as honesty, integrity, responsibility towards our fellow human beings and the environment, community, compassion, care for people in need, peace, nonviolent methods of conflict resolution, equality, non-discrimination, respect for the rule of law, and so on. We see the family as important. We make strong stands on social justice issues. We think that the way people use power is important, and have instituted decision-making processes that encourage greater participation.”

Rev. Dr. Ann Wansbrough. 2002. Ethics. Uniting Care NSW.ACT
catholic education office **sydney**



ETHICS – UNITING CHURCH

“In some areas of ethics mentioned in the HSC syllabus we would be in general agreement with the other Christian churches. But we recognize areas of moral debate that some other church deny: questions about abortion, euthanasia, homosexuality, and sexual relationships. Family takes many different forms in Australian society. Questions of bioethics are complex and cannot be dismissed with a simple rule about not interfering with nature. Our recognition of debate about such moral issues probably follows from several characteristics of our church, especially the fact that our councils include women and men, lay people as well as clergy.”

Rev. Dr. Ann Wansbrough. 2002. Ethics, Uniting Care NSW.ACT
catholic education office sydney



ETHICS – UNITING CHURCH

“In general, we adopt an ethical system based on principles rather than rules. In the area of social ethics, the use of general principles is accepted by many churches. In the UCA, we recognize that the use of general principles is also helpful in the area of personal ethics.”

Rev. Dr. Ann Wansbrough. 2002. Ethics. Uniting Care NSW.ACT



ETHICS – UNITING CHURCH

“In much of our work we combine the following elements:

- What do the people in the situation say about it (or what is happening to the earth?) eg what are outworkers telling us about the way they are treated by the people they supply with garments made in their homes?
- What ideology supports injustice (eg., to workers, or supports war, or supports environmental damage)? What is wrong with this ideology (ideological critique)?
- Human rights analysis, structural or social analysis, policy analysis.”

Rev. Dr. Ann Wansbrough. 2002. Ethics. Uniting Care NSW.ACT

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ETHICS – UNITING CHURCH

“In much of our work we combine the following elements:

- Theological critique – self suspicion. How does ideology misuse theology. How has theology been distorted by ideology. What do we really believe about God and therefore about what is appropriate in this situation?
- Middle axioms – general directions, principles to guide action, criteria for evaluating public policy eg., on industrial relations, environment, war.
- Action. No point in discussion if it is not translated into advocacy, change, etc.
- Praxis – theology, thinking and action being integrated so that they each influence the other. Ethics is about living.”

Rev. Dr. Ann Wansbrough. 2002. Ethics. Uniting Care NSW.ACT



Christian Bioethics Compared

Christian Bioethics

Life & Death	Catholic	Orthodox	Lutheran	Reformed/ Presbyterian	Methodist/ Wesleyan	Anglican
Abortion	Opposed. (Pope)	Opposed. (GOAA)	Strongly discouraged. "An option only of last resort." (ELCA)	PCUSA - discouraged but accepted; dialogue encouraged	Discouraged, but allowed in some cases. (UMC) Opposed. "We believe that abortion is the taking of human life." (WC)	CofE - opposed
Removal of Life Support	Where there is no prospect of recovery / or it results in over treatment that is burdensome to the patient. There is human dignity, even in a 'vegetative' state. (Qld Bioethics Centre) http://bne.catholic.net.au/qbc/briefings_view.php?id=31&t=a US Conference of Catholic Bishops http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/end-of-life/euthanasia/upload/Human-Dignity-in-the-Vegetative-State.pdf	Accepted. (GOAA)	Accepted. (ELCA)		Accepted. (WC)	
Euthanasia	Opposed. (Pope)	Opposed. (GOAA)	Opposed. "Deliberately destroying life created in the image of God is contrary to our Christian conscience... we also recognize that responsible health care professionals struggle to choose the lesser evil in ambiguous borderline situations." (ELCA)		Opposed. (WC)	CofE - opposed

Adapted from: <http://www.religionfacts.com/compare/christian-denominations-ethics>

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WITHDRAWAL OF LIFE-SUPPORT

- This link will take you to an excellent article from the Medical Journal of Australia (2005). It canvases a range of Religious Leaders, including the current Catholic Archbishop of Sydney, Archbishop Fisher.
- It also asks a prominent Anglican Theologian Rev. Dr Andrew J B Cameron, Lecturer in Christian Thought at Moore Theological College, Sydney.
- The article also seeks the view of Jewish, Hindu, Islamic and Buddhist leaders.
- You will find the article at:
https://www.mja.com.au/system/files/issues/183_11_051205/ank10614_fm.pdf



Anorexia Nervosa and DBS

- What about Anorexia Nervosa and Deep Brain Stimulation? (Of Nucleus Accumbens (part of the Ventral Striatum directly implicated in reward processing) recently reported by Oxford University
- **“The idea that DBS could be used to alter a desire for food is therefore actually a very complicated proposition. It could be that the intervention makes explicit an otherwise implicit desire (wanting), thereby rendering it accessible to the patient. In a sense, on this understanding, DBS might be understood to reveal to the patient what she ‘really’ wants. Whether the patient rationally endorses this desire at a higher order level will be of great significance to whether the intervention works to promote their autonomy or frustrate it.”**
- Hannah Maslen, Et.Al. 2015 Anorexia Nervosa and Deep Brain Stimulation: Philosophical Analysis of Potential Mechanisms in Practical Ethics. Oxford University.
- <http://blog.practicaethics.ox.ac.uk/2015/06/anorexia-nervosa-and-deep-brain-stimulation-philosophical-analysis-of-potential-mechanisms/>



Anorexia Nervosa and DBS

- What about Anorexia Nervosa and Deep Brain Stimulation?
- **“They worry that DBS may have the consequence of increasing body weight without changing body image, and that ‘a “psychological hell” for the patient may result from this’. Whilst such an outcome has not yet been reported, the manipulation of first-order desires without attending to the patient’s evaluation of thinness presents a risk of psychological harm.”**
- Hannah Maslen, Et.Al. 2015 Anorexia Nervosa and Deep Brain Stimulation: Philosophical Analysis of Potential Mechanisms in Practical Ethics. Oxford University.
- <http://blog.practicaethics.ox.ac.uk/2015/06/anorexia-nervosa-and-deep-brain-stimulation-philosophical-analysis-of-potential-mechanisms/>



Anorexia Nervosa and DBS

- What about Anorexia Nervosa and Deep Brain Stimulation?
- Issues:
- Sanctity of Life.
- Integrity and Dignity of Human Person.
- Conscience.
- Freedom.
- In whose interest is DBS?
- What are the side effects?
- Could it cause internal conflict and psychological harm to a person who is already fragile?
- Can it be justified using any principle of Bioethics?
- Hannah Maslen, Et.Al. 2015 **Anorexia Nervosa and Deep Brain Stimulation: Philosophical Analysis of Potential Mechanisms in Practical Ethics.** Oxford University.
- <http://blog.practicaethics.ox.ac.uk/2015/06/anorexia-nervosa-and-deep-brain-stimulation-philosophical-analysis-of-potential-mechanisms/>



CHRISTIANITY – BIOETHICS

Remember:

Define the word & topic.

Highlight the appropriate teaching(s) from Christianity.

Explore the issue (be across at least 3 Bioethical issues)

Link the issue to the teaching(s).

Underpin the issue and the teaching with a scriptural reference (preferably New Testament).



CHRISTIANITY – BIOETHICS

Remember:

In preparing at least 3 Bioethical issues, consult a wide range of resources, some of which can be found in these slides. Remember in Studies of Religion, your answer needs to reflect the whole of Christianity, not just that of one variant.



CHRISTIANITY – BIOETHICS

Good luck and best wishes for your exams!

