

Theme 1- Issues of Life and Death - The World

- † The origin of the universe and relationship between Christian and non-religious views
- † Christian and non-religious beliefs about dominion, stewardship, environmental responsibility, sustainability and the work of Christian Aid to promote global citizenship.

Key Concepts

Afterlife	Life after death; belief existence continues after death	Euthanasia	'Mercy killing'; allowing the death of someone suffering from a terminal illness
Environmental Responsibility	Duty of humans to respect, care for and preserve the natural environment	Evolution	Process by which different creatures are believed to have developed from earlier, less complex forms
Abortion	When a pregnancy is ended so there is no birth	Soul	Spiritual aspect of a being that connects someone with God
Quality of Life	Extent to which life is meaningful	Sanctity of Life	Belief that life is precious or sacred

Key Sources of Authority

- Origins of the universe in Genesis 1 and 2
- Psalms 8:6 refers to humans being 'rulers' over creation
- Charles Darwin 'Blind Evolution' / Richard Dawkins 'Planned Evolution'
- Stephen Hawking's views on the Big Bang

Key Quotes

- 'You are not a God that has pleasure in wickedness' Psalm 5:4
- 'In the beginning God created heaven and earth' Genesis 1:1
- 'In the image of God, He created him, male and female He created them' Genesis 1:27

Different Christian and non-religious beliefs about the origin of the universe

There are many different beliefs about the origin of the universe. Accounts of **God's creation** of the universe in seven days can be found in **Genesis**. Some Christians believe these stories **literally** e.g. **Creationists**. Some Christians take a **non-literal** view and believe the **creation stories** should be interpreted and are not factually true.

Beliefs about the Big Bang and evolution

Hawking argues that at the birth of the universe the cosmos must have emerged from a singularity, **the Big Bang**, and that the universe is expanding. Some Christians and many non-religious believers believe in the **Big Bang theory**. Some Christians believe that **God** caused the **Big Bang** which started the universe and then life **evolved** over many years. **Charles Darwin** wrote about the **theory of evolution**, describing how living creatures have **evolved** through a process of gradual change. **'Blind'** evolution considers there is no goal while **'planned'** evolution considers that **God** planned evolution and that it is the direct working of **God in creation**.

Christian and non-religious beliefs about dominion, stewardship, environmental responsibility, sustainability and global citizenship

Christians believe humans are expected to look after and be **'stewards'** of the world **God** has **created**. Some Christians believe this includes having dominion or 'rulers' of creation as in **Psalms 8**. **Humanists** believe it is a **moral duty** to care for the planet and create organisations to campaign for a better world. **Christian Aid** promotes **global citizenship** by campaigning, running education programmes and fundraising for long and short-term projects.

Exam Practice

- What is meant by environmental responsibility? (2)
- Describe Christian attitudes to environmental responsibility. (5)

Key Connections

- Each area of study will connect with other areas in Christianity and other philosophical and ethical issues.
- Consider how beliefs about the origin of the universe relate to the **origin of human life**. (Theme 1)
- Consider how beliefs about the origin of the universe relate to **Creation**. (Theme 1)