**Religion, Peace and Justice Model Answers - 2012 Paper Ethics 2**

1. What is meant by the term ‘Just War’? (1 mark)

* **A war that is morally right to fight.**
* **A war can be morally justified.**
* *Examiners will not accept any of the Just War condition as an answer.*

1. Give two examples of social injustice. (2 marks)

* Any 2 examples people being treated unfairly because of race, gender, social class or religion. **Racism and Sexism are acceptable answers – could give specific examples like the Holocaust or the Apartheid.**
* *This answer must refer to the ‘social’ element of the question.*

1. What do Christians believe about pacifism? (3 marks)

* **Some Christians follow a non-violent approach because of specific Biblical teachings such as Jesus preaching ‘Turn the other cheek’ meaning not to retaliate when faced with violence. The New Testament often refers to the use of love rather than using force or violence such as’ Love your enemies’. However there are some Christians who believe absolute pacifism is not effective in modern times and sometimes violence is needed to solve an issue.**
* *To achieve 3 marks – students could provide 3 separate correct statements about pacifism or there could be a statement (1 mark), with development (2 marks) and expansion/exemplification (3 marks)*

1. Explain **why working towards** **social justice is important** for some Christians. (6 marks)

* **Christians believe working towards social justice is important because everyone is equal before God and no one should have to suffer from discrimination such as poverty, racism and oppression by government. Many Christians believe it important to encourage a society in which all are treated fairly with compassion and this can only be achieved if social justice succeeds. There are several Biblical teachings which promote working towards social justice such as ‘Love your neighbour…this is the greatest commandment’ meaning everyone deserves to be treated with respect and fairness. Jesus taught the importance of social justice and equality by attacking the hypocrisy of the Pharisee who ignored the suffering of the people and by encouraging forgiveness and compassion. Many Christians believe it is important to work towards social justice because it is duty given from God and all actions will be noted by God. The quote ‘even a sparrow that falls dead to the ground is noticed by God’ suggests any small injustice God is aware of and it is purpose of humanity to reach the Kingdom of God by acting with love and mercy. A modern development in the Christian church is Liberation Theology and it is concerned with issues of equality for all, based on Jesus’ teaching that he had been sent ‘…to release the oppressed’. Christians believe it is important to work towards social justice because it is a God given duty.**
* *Students cannot move into level 3 without addressing the issue of ‘why’ it is important to work towards social justice.*

1. ‘Capital punishment can never be justified’ (12 marks)

**Discuss this statement. You should include different, supported points of view and a personal viewpoint. You must refer to Christianity in your answer.**

* **Capital punishment is the death penalty and the issue in this discussion is whether it is ever justifiable to punish a criminal by ending their life. There are many different perspectives on punishment and whether a punishment should fit crime. In support of the statement capital punishment can never be justified there is the saying ‘two wrongs do not make a right’. Some Christians may take the stance of no crime justifies the taking of a human life since there is no room for reformation or forgiveness. Capital punishment denies the criminal the opportunity to reform or redeem themselves. There are other aims of punishment, one being making punishment a deterrent and some will argue capital punishment is not an effective deterrent as horrendous crimes are still committed.**
* **Christians agree there must be justice and people should pay for the crimes they commit and the various perspectives stem from different sections of the Bible. For example in the Old Testament there is the teaching of an ‘eye for an eye’ which suggest for some crimes most notably murder the only fitting punishment is death. There are many reasons why people believe capital punishment can be justified because it satisfies a need for retribution and a desire for ‘justice’ on the part of the victims and their families. Some may argue it is an effective deterrent and so serves to protect the rest of society. Other reasons which may justify the need for capital punishment is that the state should not be obliged to pay for the upkeep of certain criminals and that capital punishment is therefore a cost-effective option.**
* **There are many Christian who will support the statement capital punishment can never be justified because of the emphasis Jesus placed upon forgiveness and compassion. In the Bible Jesus states ‘those without sin cast the first stone’ meaning no-one is completely innocent and free from sin and people should consider this when judging others. Only God has the right to make a judgement since only he has complete knowledge of the person and the circumstances. Some Christians may find it hypocritical to accept capital punishment because in one of the Ten Commandments is ‘do not kill’ and yet when you condemn a criminal to death you are going against God’s rule. Capital punishment shuts the door to forgiveness and does not allow for second chances or allowing the criminal to repent and learn to become a better citizen and give back to the community.**
* **In conclusion to this discussion there are many perspectives to consider and there are certain conditions which must be accounted for. Your ethical standpoint is dependent on various aspects upbringing, environment, morality and religion. I believe it is difficult to justify capital punishment because you are ultimately taking life. I am not sure death is a fitting punishment for some people and things like restorative justice should be used where criminals must face their victims and their families and learn lessons in this way.**