**Religion and Science Past Paper**

A) **What is meant by the term 'stewardship'**
Looking after something for someone else

b) **State 2 ways in which human beings are damaging the environment**

* Carbon Dioxide pollution
* Deforestation

C) **Give three reasons that Christians might support being eco-friendly**

* God made the world so it would be disrespectful to God to damage the world
* God has given humans a command to 'take care' of the world and Christians should follow this
* God has created everything in the world and according to Genesis 2 it was made for Adam so humans should be grateful for what God has made for them

D)  **Explain Christian attitudes towards the treatment of animals**

Christians have several different views on the treatment of animals, most of which derive from their interpretation of Genesis. One school of thought is that humans can treat animals as they wish because humans are the most important beings on earth. These Christians, who follow the idea of dominion, think this because not only did God breathe life into Adam, therefore separating him from all the other animals by giving him a soul, God also gave humans the command to 'rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air', thus setting humans above all other animals. Because of this dominance in the hierarchy of nature, humans can therefore treat animals as they please.

However not all Christians adhere to this understanding. Especially in the 21st century Christians have come to see that they should be stewards of the Earth, respecting the animals God has made in the creation story. Also they cite the fact that after creating him. God set Adam in the Garden of Eden and instructed Adam to tend to the Garden. This is important to Christian understanding of how to treat animals as they have a specific command from God to look after and care for the animals which God has made for human beings.

Christians will exemplify this concept of stewardship through supporting groups such as RSPCA who prevent cruelty to animals. However most churches, such as the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church, are not out and out against animal testing. The believe that such testing might offer a benefit to humanity, such as the curing of a disease. However these Churches demand that if animals must be used in medical tests any suffering has to be kept to a minimum, allowing Christians to still adhere to the notion that animals are to be cared for rather than harmed.

**E) 'The human race is more important than the environment'***Discuss this statement. You should include different supported points of view and a personal viewpoint. You must refer to Christianity in your answer.*

This statement is significant because it suggests that humans have the right to do what they want to the environment without fear of being punished because they are more important than the world they live in. This suggests that humans in the present day are free to treat the world as they please regardless to impact caused. However one has to wonder what this might mean for the future of the human race as contemporary human damage to the environment may seriously harm the very environment the human race is reliant upon for survival.

My own view on this is that whilst I do consider humans to be important, I think that they have a duty to care for the environment. It is self-defeatist for humans to think they can do what they want as and any damage done to the environment now will create a negative legacy for the following generations of humans. So if humans consider themselves important they have to realise that they have a duty of care to the environment to ensure they have an environment to live in! Therefore it would seem the environment and humans are equally important.

A group of Christians, who follow the ideas of stewardship, would agree with me as they would see that the world they live in is not solely theirs but given to them by God who expects us to care for his world as stated in the Adam and Eve creation story. God specifically commands Adam to ‘care for the Garden of Eden’ and all the animals within. This does not mean that humans are less important than the environment but specifically states that because humans are more important they therefore have a duty of care to the environment.

However this view is rejected by groups within Christianity for 2 reasons. Whilst some argue that because of the ideas of dominion, not only are humans in charge of the environment, we are also not required to look after it, as God told male and female humans to ‘rule over the fish of the sea and birds of the air’ in Genesis 1 rather than tend for it, as stated in Genesis 2. And some see the decline of the environment as a positive! Referring to the quote 'for the old earth and the old heaven had passed away, and I saw the new heaven and new earth', some Christians see the decline of the environment as a sign that the world is coming to an end, a key signal for some as a sign of the parousia and the return of Christ.

Some Christians may even use Darwin's theory of evolution and claim that, as human beings are the most evolved animal, we are therefore more important than the environment around us which must change to suit our needs. However, as with most things, there are 2 ways of interpreting Darwin' theory and importantly it can be claimed that humans are not more important because in fact they, like every other living thing on the planet, originate from the same point of origin. Therefore human beings are not more important than their environment as they are all equal as, in the eyes of science, we all come from a single point of origin, a single celled organism, and therefore the concept of hierarchy becomes redundant.