

## Religion and the Environment

**Global warming** – also known as climate change, is the increase in temperature of the Earth's atmosphere. The causes of global warming include the burning of fossil fuels, some scientists believe that it is caused by the natural rise in temperature.

Effects – in polar regions the ice melts and the sea level rises, in hotter areas causes draught which leads to famine, increases in extreme weather, animals and plants die if they cannot adapt.

**Pollution** – this is the contamination of the environment, there are different forms of pollution including: waste, land, air and water.

**Natural resources** – these are naturally occurring materials such as wind, waves etc. These are good alternatives to using some of the non-renewable sources.

Christian teachings on stewardship and attitudes to the environment – Christians believe in "creation" the idea that the Earth and everything in it was created by God – and therefore they should look after the Earth.

Stewardship – God gave humans stewardship over the world – they must look after it for future generations

Authority or dominion – God gave humans dominion over the Earth which means they have a position of power and responsibility to care for God's creation

Responsibility – humans have a God-given responsibility to care for the world and environment for future generations

**The Bible teaches Christians that they should:**

Take care of the environment because it is a gift from God

Share the resources of the world more equally because Jesus taught others to love and help each other

Conserve the Earth's natural resources for future generations, and reduce pollution, and care for animals and plant life because they were created by God.

Muslim teachings on stewardship – Muslims believe Allah created the world and gave it to mankind as a gift. They believe they have a duty of stewardship to care for the world.

**Muslim teachings**

Allah put humans in charge of his creation so Muslims should respect this gift,

Adam, the first human, was made as a Khalifah or caretaker of the Earth. All humans have been given this responsibility

The balance of the Earth must be maintained. Allah created everything to have unity and all is dependent on everything else in the world

All Muslims are part of the ummah and should look after the world for future generations making sure natural resources are shared equally

Animals are part of Allah's creation and so they should be treated with respect

On the day of judgement Allah will judge everyone on how they have lived their lives, including whether they have taken care of the world.

Islam teaches that all Muslims should look after the world and share natural resources they can do this by:

Supporting environmental organisations and charities, recycling and reducing energy use, planting trees, avoiding waste and pollution.

Medical treatment for infertility – types of medical treatment include artificial insemination by the husband/partner, IVF, artificial insemination by a donor, egg donation, embryo donation, surrogacy. There are a number of issues with infertility treatments – they are expensive, no guarantees that it will work, fertility drugs have side effects, should children know their biological parents?

Christian attitudes to fertility treatments – Christians are divided in their views over medical treatment for infertility.

Some may accept it is God's plan for them not to have children

Some may choose to adopt children

Some may direct their parental skills in a different way through a school, charity or Church work

Some may choose to explore fertility treatments

**Christian AGAINST fertility treatment** – No-one has the right to have children if it is not God's will, treatments where fertilisation takes place outside the womb involve masturbation which is a sin, where embryos are created usually those not used are destroyed, many are against treatments where donated sperm or eggs are used because this is seen as adultery.

**Christian FOR fertility treatment** – It allows infertile couple to have children, it depends on the situation and may be more acceptable for married childless couples, God gave humans the knowledge to create children artificially

Muslim attitudes to fertility treatment – Muslims are expected to have children because it is what Allah wants. Therefore there are some types of treatment that are acceptable because:

Infertility is seen as a disease so it is okay to try and find a cure, childbirth and childrearing are important family commitments, having children brings couples closer, the role and status of a Muslim woman in society and the family involves her ability to have children.

Muslim attitudes AGAINST infertility treatments – some Muslims believe that if Allah does not want a couple to have a baby they should accept it, Most Muslims disagree with using donor sperm or eggs, All Muslims believe that surrogacy is wrong.

Muslim attitudes FOR – IVF and artificial insemination by the husband are permitted

Transplant surgery – this is where body parts from one person, dead or alive, are used to replace body parts in someone else.

ADVANTAGES – people and their loved ones have the opportunity to help others after their death because organs are used which would otherwise be wasted. It also offers relief to those who receive transplants and their loved ones.

ETHICAL problems – It is expensive and limited form of treatment, How do you decide who receives the transplant?

**Christian attitudes to transplant surgery** – most Christians have no moral problems with donating organs because it is seen as a charitable act, however some are opposed to it.

Reasons why Christians agree with transplant surgery – for some it raises no problems for the afterlife because the body is not needed, organ donation is a loving and charitable act, it is a way of showing gratitude to God

Reasons why Christians might disagree because – it goes against sanctity of life, it interferes with God's plan, Some people should not get organs if they need them because of alcohol or drugs.

### **Muslim attitudes**

For – saves the lives of others, ok with live donations

Against – The body should be buried intact, goes against the sanctity of life