



MACHAKOS UNIVERSITY
University Examinations 2019/2020
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
SPECIAL/SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION FOR FOURTH YEAR SECOND
SEMESTER EXAMINATION FOR BACHELOR OF EDUCATION(ARTS)

ARE 400: CONTEMPORARY TRENDS IN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

DATE:

TIME:

INSTRUCTIONS: ANSWER QUESTION ONE AND ANY OTHER TWO QUESTIONS

1) Define the following terms

i) Theology(2 marks)

ii) Christian Theology(3 marks)

iii) Immediate state(3 marks)

iv) Positivism(2 marks)

1b) Elaborate the benefits of studying Christian theology to theologians(10 marks)

1c) Articulate the components of humanity(10 marks)

2. Discuss four social and cultural forces which leads to contemporary theologies(20 marks)

3. Give an account of positivism as a social cultural force which lead to contemporary theology(10 marks)

4. Elaborate the main characteristics of contemporary theologies(20 marks)

5. Give a detailed assessment of Feminism and Feminist theology(20 marks)

MARKING GUIDE: ARE 400

1. Requirement is definition and elaboration and where possible an example of each of the terms

)Theology

Theology is the systematic study of the nature of the divine and, more broadly, of religious belief. It is taught as an academic discipline, typically in universities and seminaries. It occupies itself with the unique content of analyzing the supernatural, but also especially with epistemology, and asks and seeks to answer the question of revelation. Revelation pertains to the acceptance of God, gods, or deities, as not only transcendent or above the natural world, but also willing and able to interact with the natural world and, in particular, to reveal themselves to humankind

ii) Christian Theology

the theology of Christian belief and practice. Such study concentrates primarily upon the texts of the Old Testament and of the New Testament, as well as on Christian tradition. Christian theologians use biblical exegesis, rational analysis and argument.

iii) Immediate state

The question then arises: where exactly does the disembodied soul "go" at death? Theologians refer to this subject as the intermediate state. The Old Testament speaks of a place called *sheol* where the spirits of the dead reside. In the New Testament, *hades*, the classical Greek realm of the dead, takes the place of *sheol*. In particular, Jesus teaches in Luke 16:19–31 (Lazarus and Dives) that *hades* consists of two separate "sections", one for the righteous and one

for the unrighteous. His teaching is consistent with intertestamental Jewish thought on the subject.

iv) Positivism

a philosophical theory stating that certain ("positive") knowledge is based on natural phenomena and their properties and relations. Thus, information derived from sensory experience, interpreted through reason and logic, forms the exclusive source of all certain knowledge. Positivism holds that valid knowledge (certitude or truth) is found only in this *a posteriori* knowledge.

Verified data (positive facts) received from the senses are known as empirical evidence; thus positivism is based on empiricism.

Positivism also holds that society, like the physical world, operates according to general laws. Introspective and intuitive knowledge is rejected, as are metaphysics and theology because metaphysical and theological claims cannot be verified by sense experience. Although the positivist approach has been a recurrent theme in the history of western thought, the modern approach was formulated by the philosopher Auguste Comte in the early 19th century. Comte argued that, much as the physical world operates according to gravity and other absolute laws, so does society, and further developed positivism into a *Religion of Humanity*.

b) benefits of studying Christian theology

Theologians may undertake the study of Christian theology for a variety of reasons, such as in order to:

help them better understand Christian tenets

make comparisons between Christianity and other traditions

defend Christianity against objections and criticism

facilitate reforms in the Christian church

c) components of humanity

Soul

The semantic domain of Biblical soul is based on the Hebrew word *nepes*, which presumably means "breath" or "breathing being". This word never means an immortal soul or an incorporeal part of the human being that can survive death of the body as the spirit of dead. This word usually designates the person as a whole or its physical life. In the Septuagint *nepes* is mostly translated as *psyche* (ψυχή) and, exceptionally, in the Book of Joshua as *empneon* (ἐμπνεον), that is "breathing being".

The New Testament follows the terminology of the Septuagint, and thus uses the word *psyche* with the Hebrew semantic domain and not the Greek, that is an invisible power (or ever more, for Platonists, immortal and immaterial) that gives life and motion to the body and is responsible for its attributes.

In Patristic thought, towards the end of the 2nd century *psyche* was understood in more a Greek than a Hebrew way, and it was contrasted with the body. In the 3rd century, with the influence of Origen, there was the establishing of the doctrine of the inherent immortality of the soul and its divine nature. Origen also taught the transmigration of the souls and their pre-existence, but these views were officially rejected in 553 in the Fifth Ecumenical Council. Inherent immortality of the soul was accepted among western and eastern theologians throughout the middle ages, and after the Reformation, as evidenced by the Westminster Confession.

Spirit

The spirit (Hebrew *ruach*, Greek πνεῦμα, *pneuma*, which can also mean "breath") is likewise an immaterial component. It is often used interchangeably with "soul", *psyche*, although trichotomists believe that the spirit is distinct from the soul.

"When Paul speaks of the *pneuma* of man he does not mean some higher principle within him or some special intellectual or spiritual faculty of his, but simply his self, and the only question is whether the self is regarded in some particular aspect when it is called *pneuma*. In the first place, it apparently is regarded in the same way as when it is called *psyche*— viz. as the self that lives in man's attitude, in the orientation of his will."

Body, Flesh

The body (Greek σῶμα *soma*) is the corporeal or physical aspect of a human being. Christians have traditionally believed that the body will be resurrected at the end of the age.

Flesh (Greek σὰρξ, *sarx*) is usually considered synonymous with "body", referring to the corporeal aspect of a human being. The apostle Paul contrasts flesh and spirit in Romans 7–8.

Origin of humanity

The Bible teaches in the book of Genesis the humans were created by God. Some Christians believe that this must have involved a miraculous creative act, while others are comfortable with the idea that God worked through the evolutionary process.

The book of Genesis also teaches that human beings, male and female, were created in the image of God. The exact meaning of this has been debated throughout church history.

2. Give a social and cultural force, elaborate on it and give examples in each of the four .one should earn five marks.

-Positivism

-Marxism

-secularism

-existentialism

-3.a) Define positivism elaborate it.give various examples.at least 5 points each 2 marks

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b) Discuss liberation theology at least 5 points each point. 2 marks

Liberation theology was the political praxis of Latin American theologians, such as Gustavo Gutiérrez of Peru, Leonardo Boff of Brazil, Juan Luis Segundo of Uruguay and Jon Sobrino of Spain, who made popular the phrase the "Preferential option for the poor". Consisting of a synthesis of Christian theology and Marxist socioeconomic analyses, liberation theology stresses social concern for the poor and advocates for liberation for oppressed peoples. In addition to being a theological matter, liberation theology was often tied to concrete political practice.

While liberation theology was most influential in Latin America, it has also been developed in other parts of the world such as black theology in the United States and South Africa, Palestinian liberation theology, Dalit theology in India and Minjung theology in South Korea.

4. Give at least 7 characteristics of contemporary theology and their elaboration and examples. Each point 3 marks.

-based on internal authority

-aims at social construction for a better world

-must be credible and relevant

-theological controversy is about language and not the truth

-truth can be known only through changing symbols and forms

-true rel. is the way of Christ and not doctrines

5. Give definition and detailed points about feminism and feminist theology about 7 points each 3 marks.

Feminist theology is a movement found in several religions, including Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism, and New Thought, to reconsider the traditions, practices, scriptures, and theologies of those religions from a feminist perspective.

Some of the goals of feminist theology include increasing the role of women among the clergy and religious authorities, reinterpreting male-dominated imagery and language about God

It determines women's place in relation to career and motherhood, and studying images of women in the religion's sacred texts and matriarchal religion.

It has a concern with theologies written by men for men in a modern perspective to then dismantle what it had created over the years, patriarchal systems that oppress women.

After Saving's work was published, many scholars took up her ideas and elaborated upon them, building the feminist theology movement further.

determine alternative biblical /religious texts that support feminist ideology, and to then claim the theology that adheres to such standards, through reclamation, abolishment, and or revision.

” Grenz and Olson also mention, while all feminists agree there is a flaw in the system, there is disagreement over how far outside of the Bible and the Christian tradition women are willing to go to seek support for their ideals. This concept is also important when feminist theology is relating to other religions or spiritual connections outside of Christianity

