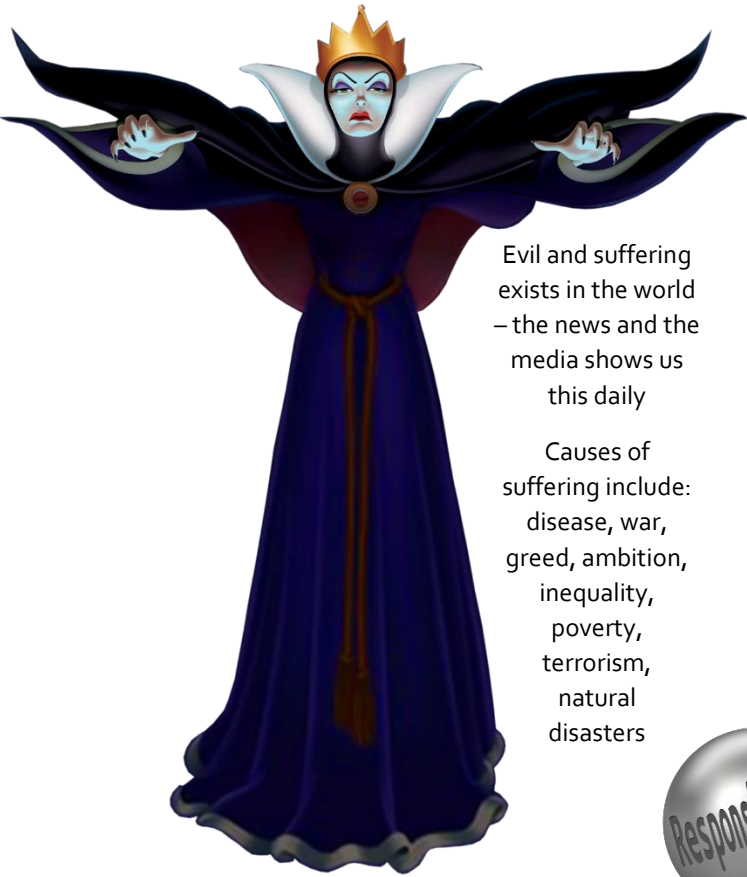


THE PROBLEM OF EVIL AND SUFFERING



Evil and suffering exists in the world – the news and the media shows us this daily

Causes of suffering include: disease, war, greed, ambition, inequality, poverty, terrorism, natural disasters

HELP AND SUPPORT

Evil causes human suffering. Good can relieve human suffering. All people believe that it is important to try to help those who are suffering.

Ways to alleviate suffering include medical care, training and education, prayer, fund-raising, counselling, rehabilitation programmes, disaster relief, building works, etc.

"We place human welfare and happiness at the centre of our ethical decision making."
(British Humanist Association)



CHRISTIANS

Suffering can be seen to be a test.

Suffering is a punishment for sin and Roman Catholics believe that it is a result of original sin.

Suffering is a part of God's plan – we might not understand it but we should know that God will never allow us to suffer beyond our ability to cope with it.

Suffering enables Christians to appreciate what is good in the world and allows them to grow close to Jesus, who suffered and died on the cross for the sins of humanity.

Stories from the Bible, e.g. Job, teach Christians that anyone can suffer and that persevering with suffering can strengthen faith in God.

SIN

GOD'S PLAN



HUMANISTS

A result of choice that humans have over their lives. Humans must take some responsibility in how their lives work out.

Some evils, e.g. war, famine and poverty are caused or made worse by human greed and foolishness.

Some evils, e.g. earthquakes, floods, etc. may have natural causes or happen by chance, just because the world is the way it is.

Often, those who suffer most are not to blame.

Humanists see the idea of 'Original Sin' as unjust and cruel. How can a new-born baby be sinful?

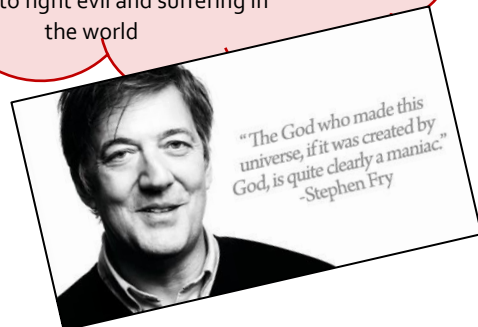
Not all humans are innately flawed and 'sinful' – it is up to humans to fight evil and suffering in the world



FEEL GOOD

DO GOOD

LIVE GOOD



SUFFERING

AAARGH!

Suffering: Pain or distress caused by injury, illness or loss. Suffering can be physical, emotional, psychological or spiritual.

THE PROBLEM

The presence of evil and suffering in the world created a number of problems.

God is believed to be omnibenevolent (all loving) omnipotent (all powerful) and omniscient (all knowing). Because of this, evil should not really exist, but it does. There are, therefore, a number of possibilities:

1. God is not powerful enough to stop evil
2. God does not know that evil is happening
3. God does not love us enough to want to stop the evil

None of these are very satisfactory conclusions, however Christians have their own solutions to the Problem of Evil and Suffering:

1. **Free will** was given to humans by God, therefore humans have to choose to do 'good' and avoid 'evil'
2. RC: as a result of **original sin**, humans find it easier to do wrong, but with the help of God they can choose to do good. Those who sin can atone and gain forgiveness for their sin through prayer and for Roman Catholics, confession and penance.
3. Some Christian denominations believe in predestination – the idea that God has already chosen who is to reach salvation. Predestination here is subtly different to fate, as it particularly focuses on the idea of salvation after life on earth and not on the decision that we make during our earthly lives



The Holocaust is often referred to by Jews as 'Shoah' or 'the catastrophe'. Hitler's 'Final Solution' put Jews into death camps, resulting in the deaths of over 10 million people in total. For some religious believers, this is a dilemma as how could a just, loving and righteous God allow this awful amount of suffering to happen?



WHY DOES GOD ALLOW EVIL AND SUFFERING?

CHRISTIAN RESPONSES

PREDESTINATION



Some believe that the world is governed by fate. Fate is a power or force that determines the future. The outcome is inevitable and unchangeable.

ARBEIT MACHT FREI

EVIL

HOLOCAUST