



Christian Bioethics: *Where is Jesus in all this?*

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VISIT:

<https://sites.google.com/a/syd.catholic.edu.au/christian-bioethics-sor/>



•Christian Bioethics

Item 1

Ethics: How did we get here?

Item 2

Is there a distinctive Christian approach to ethics?

Item 3

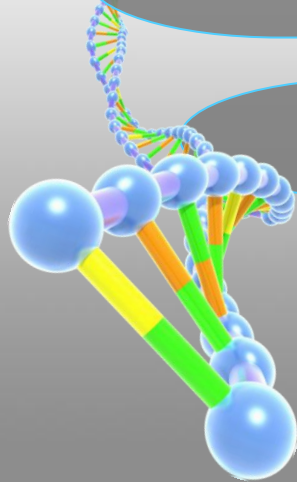
What are some of the bioethical issues with which we are dealing?

Item 4

How do different Christian denominations approach these issues?

Item 5

What about the HSC? How do we answer a question on these issues in an exam?



How did we get to this point in our human history?

- There are three main philosophical ideas that underpin our approach to dealing with ethical issues

Aristotelianism

Kantianism

Utilitarianism



Aristotelianism



Human moral action should be oriented toward that which allows human beings to flourish, to fulfill their purpose.

For Aristotle (384-322BC), human beings achieve happiness when they live by certain virtues, habitual ways of acting which together make up a way of life conducive to happiness.

Aristotelianism



Aristotelianism

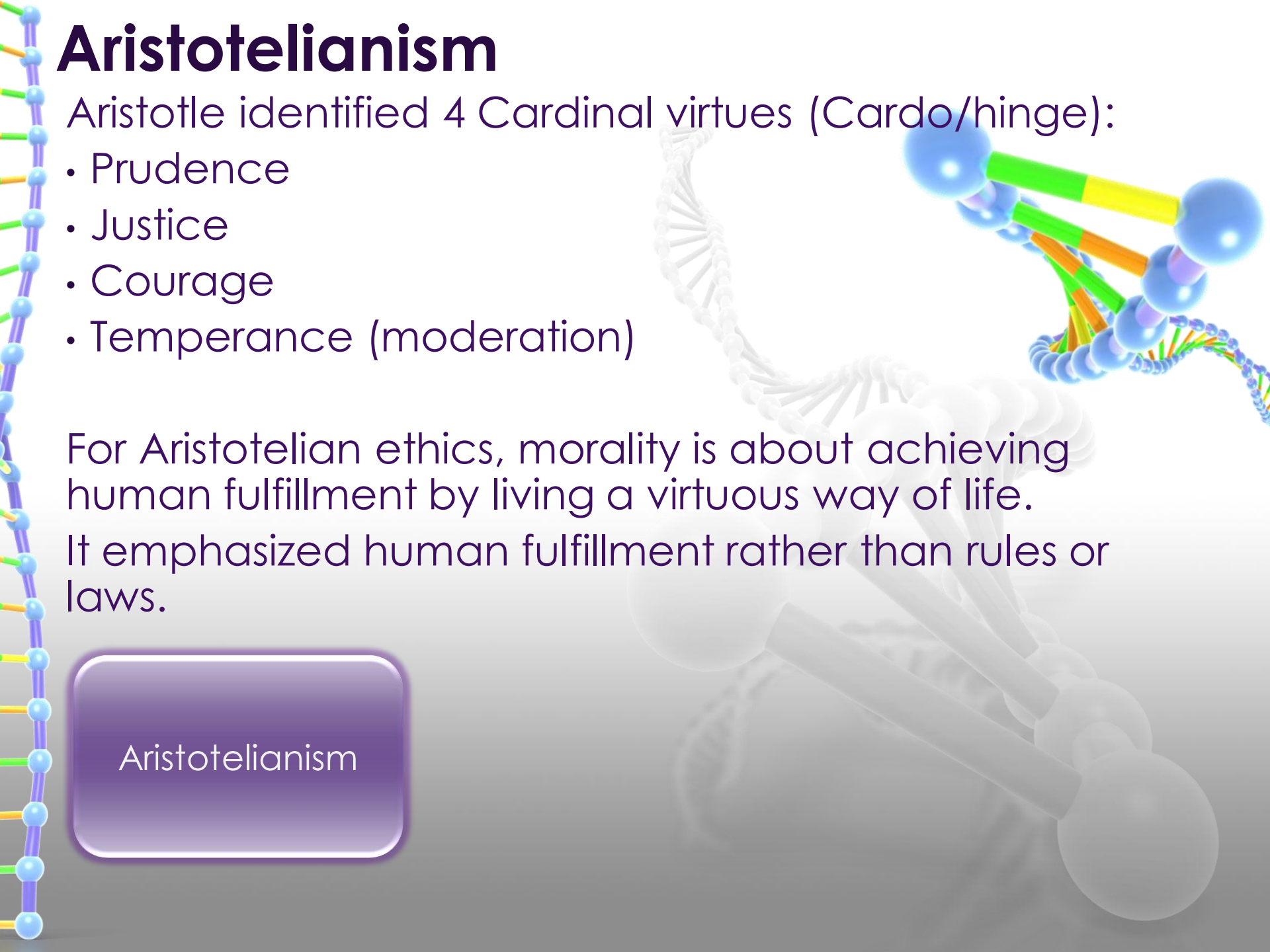
Aristotle identified 4 Cardinal virtues (Cardo/hinge):

- Prudence
- Justice
- Courage
- Temperance (moderation)

For Aristotelian ethics, morality is about achieving human fulfillment by living a virtuous way of life.

It emphasized human fulfillment rather than rules or laws.

Aristotelianism



Aristotelianism

During the medieval period, St Thomas Aquinas (c.1225-74), the great theologian and philosopher, adapted Aristotle's ethical system. He developed an understanding that Christian life should be life lived by virtues. He then gave us Christian Theological virtues:

- Faith
- Hope
- Charity

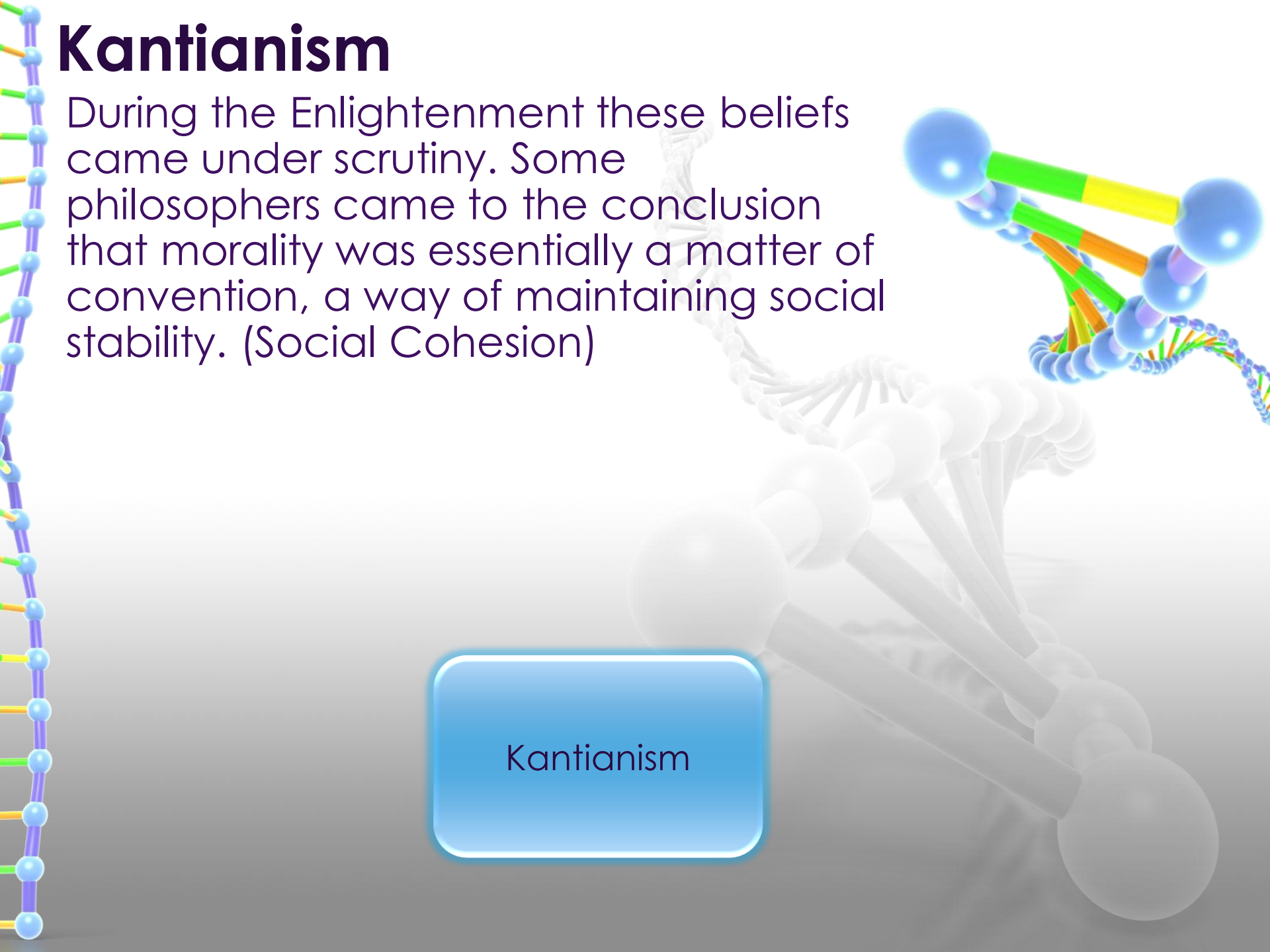
For St Thomas Aquinas, human life was lived in the context of a divinely created order; all aspects of nature were part of the order of creation, and the moral life consisted of living out this order for the glory of God and the fulfillment of the person. The point of morality was to fulfill the purpose of human life created by God.

Kantianism

During the Enlightenment these beliefs came under scrutiny. Some philosophers came to the conclusion that morality was essentially a matter of convention, a way of maintaining social stability. (Social Cohesion)



Kantianism

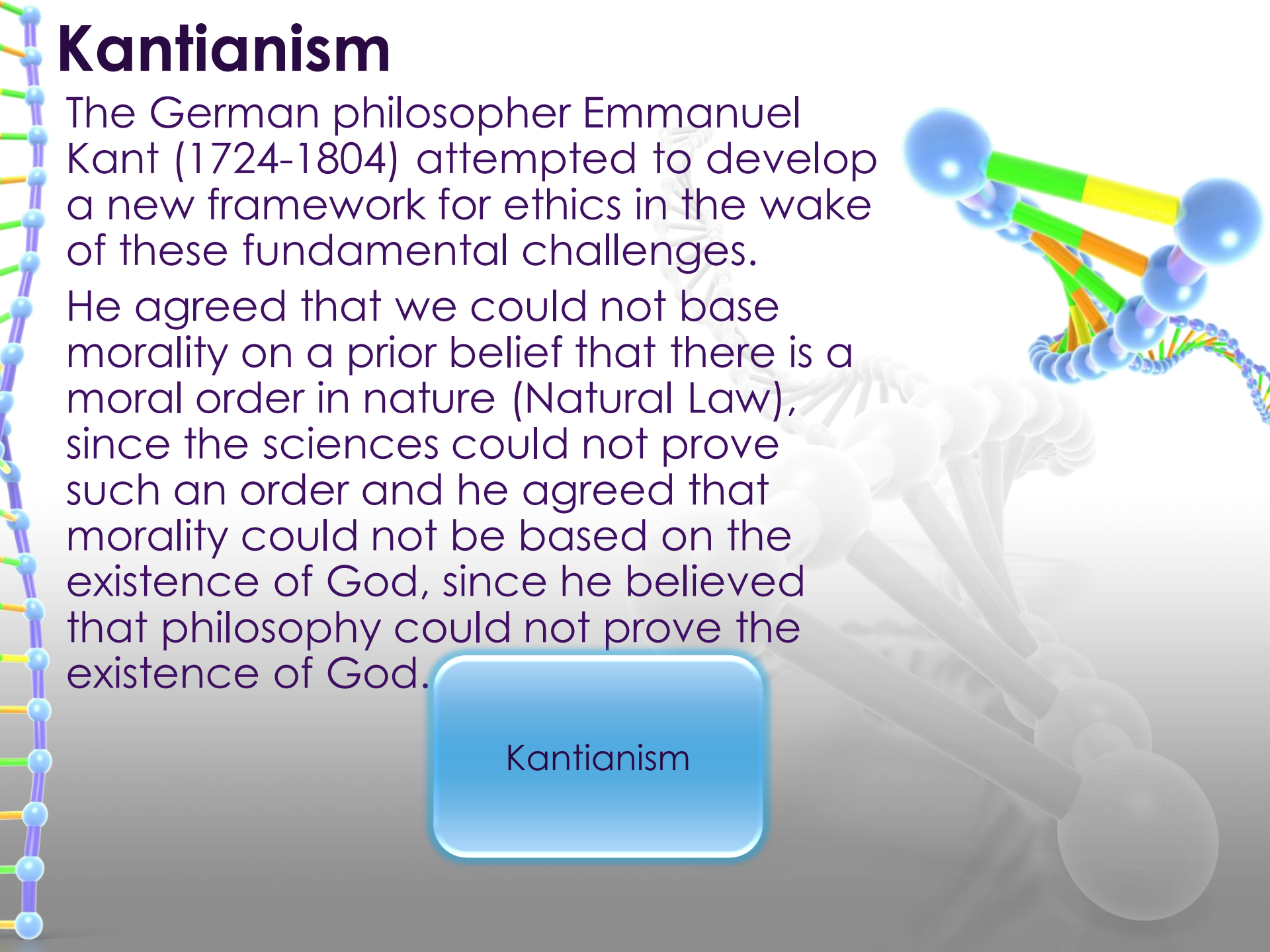


Kantianism

The German philosopher Emmanuel Kant (1724-1804) attempted to develop a new framework for ethics in the wake of these fundamental challenges.

He agreed that we could not base morality on a prior belief that there is a moral order in nature (Natural Law), since the sciences could not prove such an order and he agreed that morality could not be based on the existence of God, since he believed that philosophy could not prove the existence of God.

Kantianism



Kantianism

Kant believed that morality was a great deal more than mere convention or simply a matter of fulfilling desires.

His concern was to find values that could provide a universal foundation for ethics in an age where traditional philosophical and religious views of life were no longer universally accepted.



Kantianism



Kantianism

These values were freedom and reason. Freedom and reason were the two characteristics of human beings that gave them a noble status of moral beings (Characteristics shared by God, if He existed, in which Kant believed).

Our premise is that we are free. We sense our freedom through our experience of moral obligation; I experience a call on me to act rightly, a call that I can resist and refuse. If this is so, then I am free in the most fundamental moral sense of the v

Kantianism

Kantianism

We are free to act as we wish, but reason tells us that if anyone else acts in the same way, he or she is free also. What if the actions of free people are incompatible? What if my free wish is to rob someone else's house and his wish is to rob mine? We can see that this results in a contradiction.

Kant developed a dictum: In all your actions, whether in relation to others or yourself, treat every person as an end and never purely a means to an end.

(Does this sound familiar?)

For Kant, the fundamental goal of ethics is not achieving happiness, but respecting the reason and freedom of people. This is human dignity.

Utilitarianism

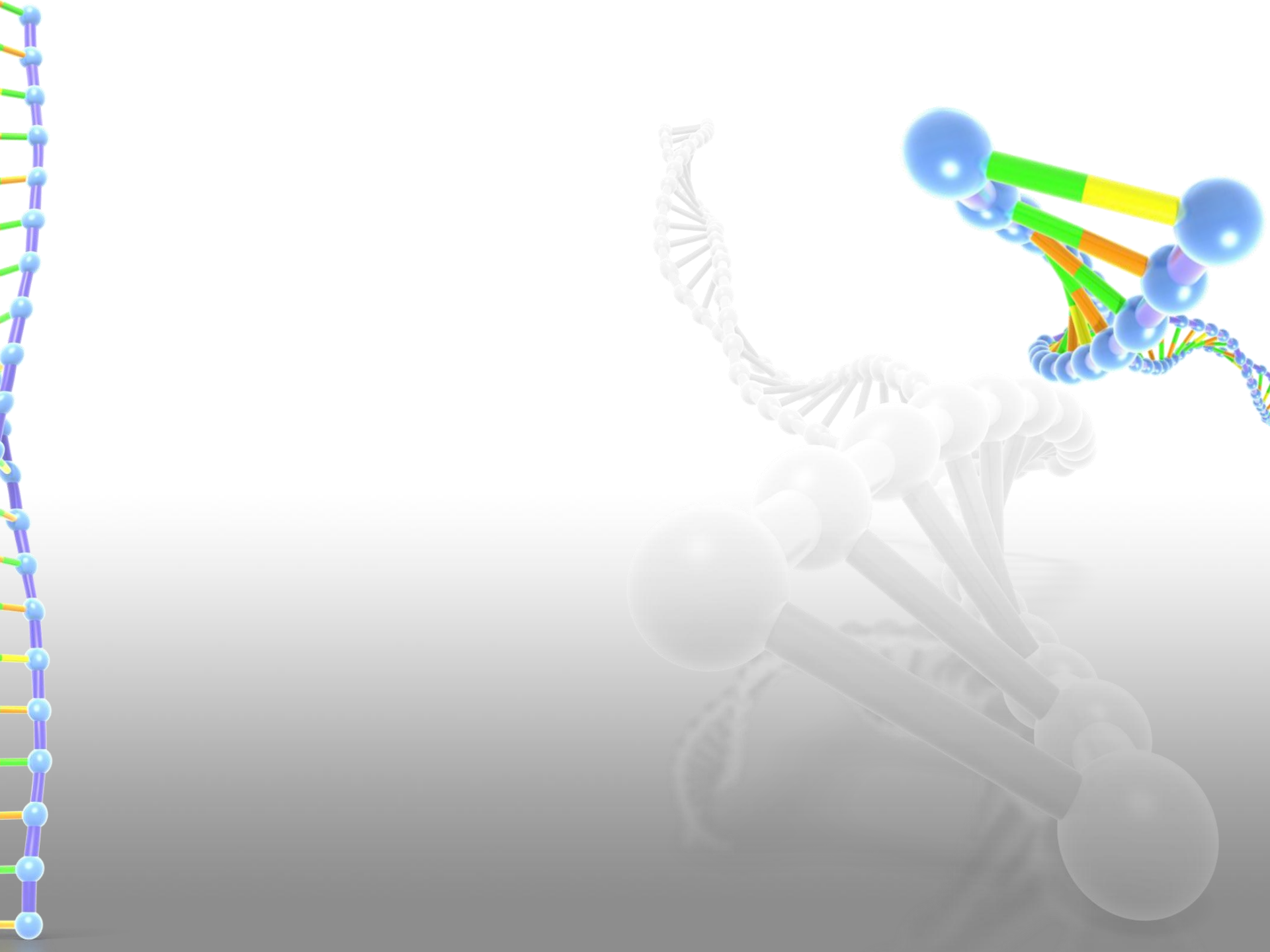
During the 18th and 19th Centuries a very different ethical theory was developed, primarily in England. Its focus was oriented toward the achievement of happiness as the prime purpose of ethics. The utilitarians agreed with Aristotle that the purpose of ethics was happiness, but the way in which this happiness could be achieved was understood very differently.

The fundamental moral disposition is benevolence, wishing well to other human beings and other sentient beings (higher animals) and acting well on their behalf.

Let us consider a hypothetical situation:



Utilitarianism



We live in an ethical plural society

What does this mean?



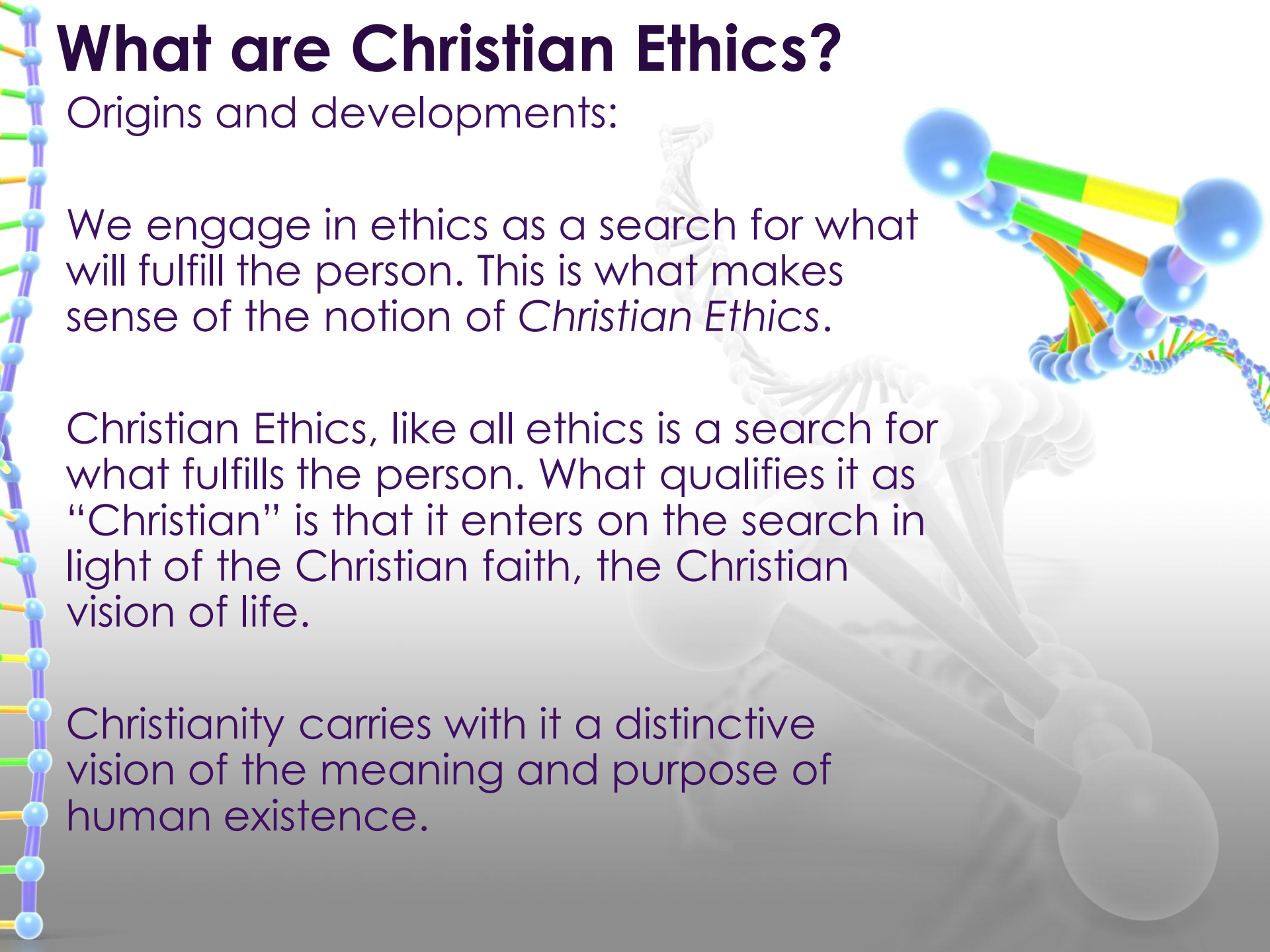
What are Christian Ethics?

Origins and developments:

We engage in ethics as a search for what will fulfill the person. This is what makes sense of the notion of *Christian Ethics*.

Christian Ethics, like all ethics is a search for what fulfills the person. What qualifies it as “Christian” is that it enters on the search in light of the Christian faith, the Christian vision of life.

Christianity carries with it a distinctive vision of the meaning and purpose of human existence.

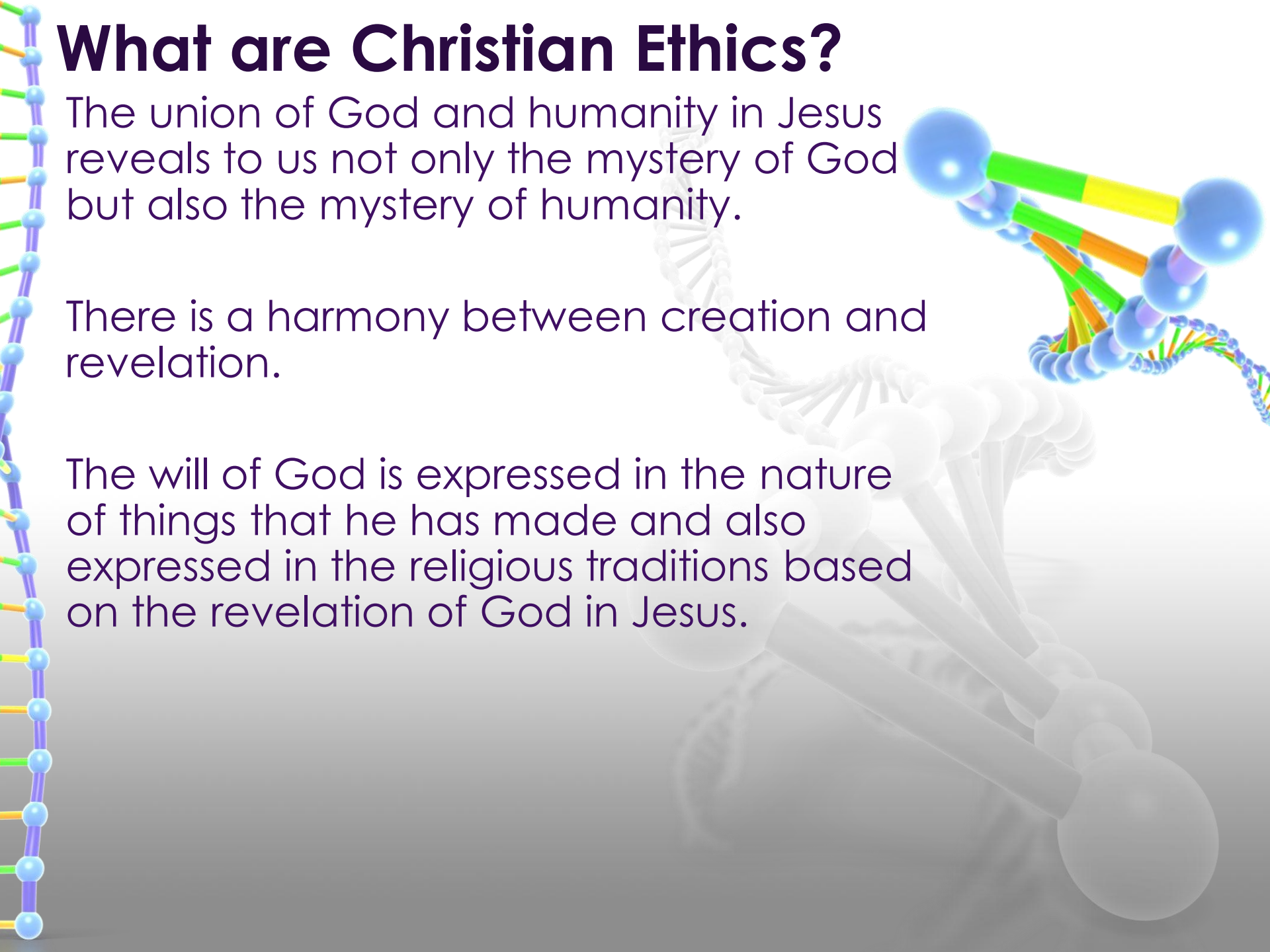


What are Christian Ethics?

The union of God and humanity in Jesus reveals to us not only the mystery of God but also the mystery of humanity.

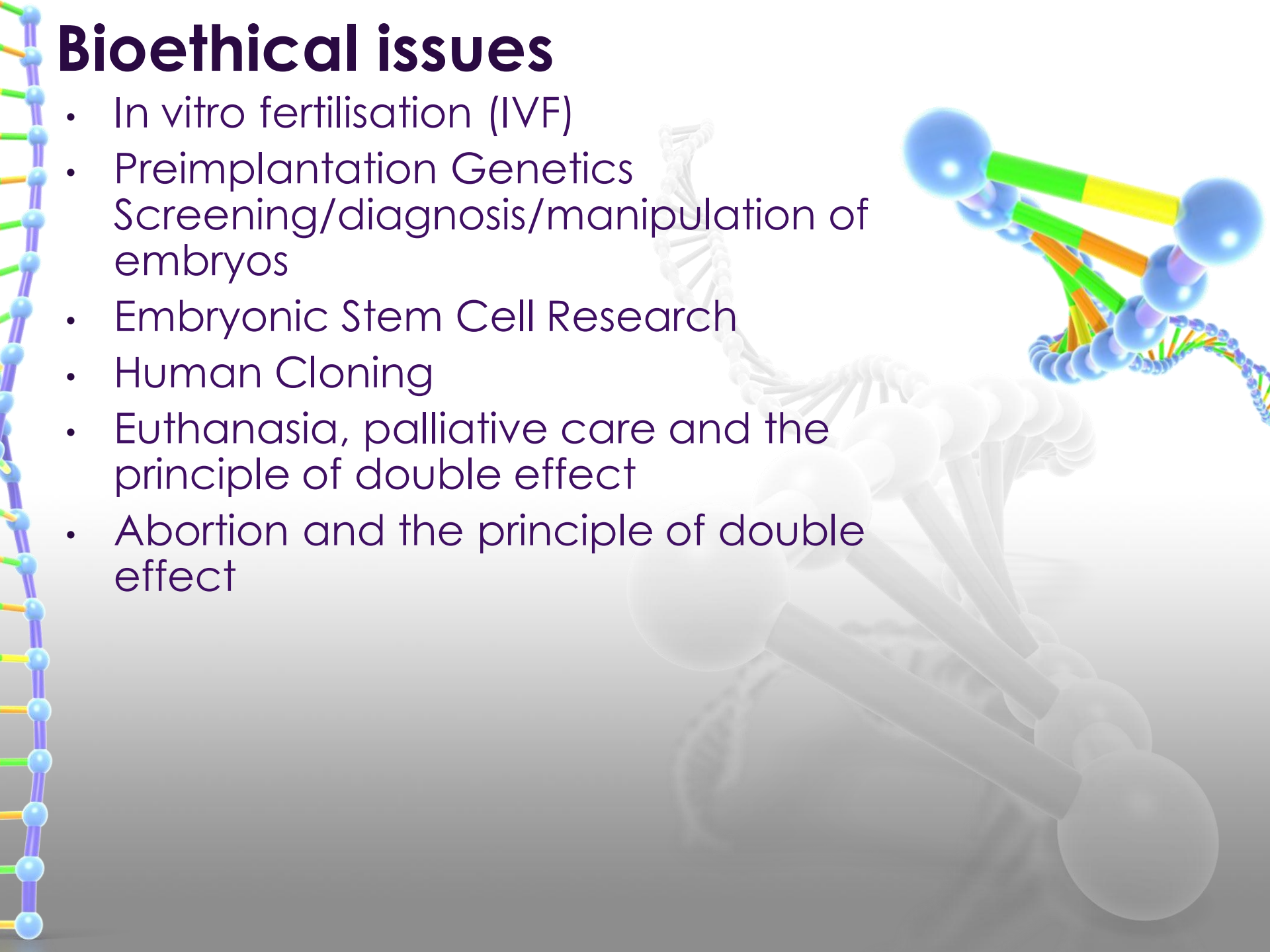
There is a harmony between creation and revelation.

The will of God is expressed in the nature of things that he has made and also expressed in the religious traditions based on the revelation of God in Jesus.



Bioethical issues

- In vitro fertilisation (IVF)
- Preimplantation Genetics Screening/diagnosis/manipulation of embryos
- Embryonic Stem Cell Research
- Human Cloning
- Euthanasia, palliative care and the principle of double effect
- Abortion and the principle of double effect



Bioethical issues

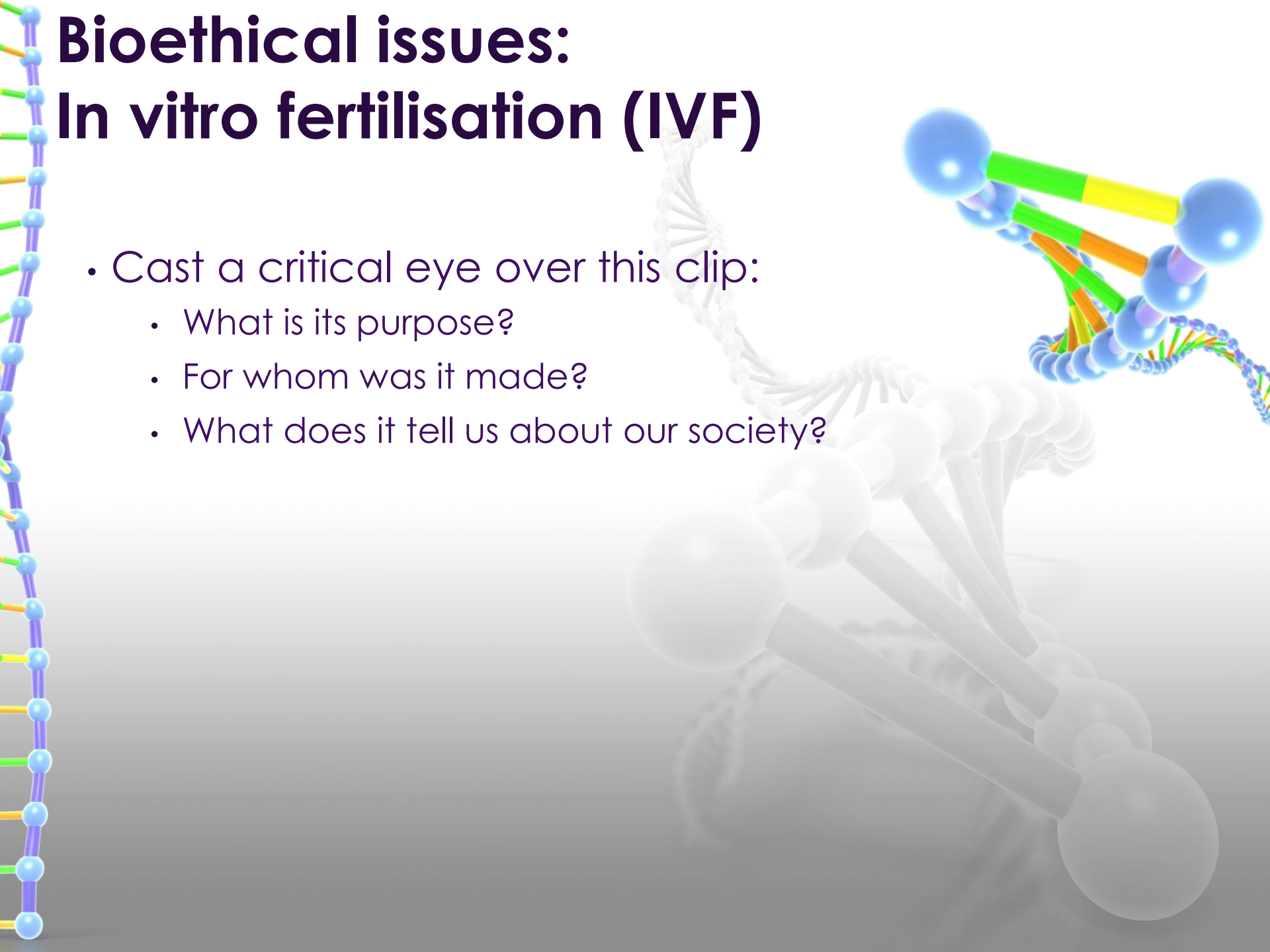
Issues

Areas of health sciences that are the subject of published, peer-reviewed bioethical analysis include:

- Abortion
- Animal rights
- Artificial insemination
- Artificial life
- Artificial womb
- Assisted suicide
- Biocentrism
- Biopiracy
- Biorisk
- Blood transfusion
- Body modification
- Brain-computer interface
- Chimeras
- Circumcision
- Cloning
- Confidentiality (medical records)
- Consent
- Contraception (birth control)
- Cryonics
- Disability
- Eugenics
- Euthanasia (human, non-human animal)
- Exorcism
- Faith Healing
- Feeding tube
- Gene theft
- Gene therapy
- Genetically modified food
- Genetically modified organism
- Genomics
- Great Ape Project
- Human cloning
- Human enhancement
- Human experimentation in the United States
- Human genetic engineering
- Iatrogenesis
- Infertility treatments
- Life extension
- Life support
- Lobotomy
- Medicalization
- Medical malpractice
- Medical research
- Medical torture
- Mediation
- Moral obligation
- Moral status of animals
- Nanomedicine
- Nazi human experimentation
- Organ donation
- Organ transplant
- Pain management
- Parthenogenesis
- Patients' Bill of Rights
- Placebo
- Political abuse of psychiatry
- Population control
- Prescription drugs (prices in the US)
- Procreative beneficence
- Professional ethics
- Psychosurgery
- Quality of Life (Healthcare)
- Quaternary prevention
- Recreational drug use
- Reproductive rights
- Reprogenetics
- Sex reassignment therapy
- Sperm and eggs (donation)
- Spiritual drug use
- Stem cell research
- Suicide
- Surrogacy
- Three-parent babies
- Transsexuality
- Transhumanism
- Transplant trade
- Vaccination controversy
- Xenotransfusion
- Xenotransplantation
- Yoga

Bioethical issues: In vitro fertilisation (IVF)

- Cast a critical eye over this clip:
 - What is its purpose?
 - For whom was it made?
 - What does it tell us about our society?



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GeigYib39Rs>



Bioethical issues: In vitro fertilisation (IVF)

- Why is there a need for IVF?



In vitro fertilisation (IVF)

PROS - IVF

- Government (partially) funds it
- Helps couples & individuals who may not be able to have children naturally
- It helps our national birth rate
- Australia has a high rate of success with IVF

What other pros can you add?

CONS - IVF

- It ignores the real reasons there is a reduction in fertility in our society
- There haven't been any longitudinal studies on IVF:
 - Incidence of cancer
 - Incidence of disability
 - Propensity for Mental illness etc.
- The use of donor eggs, sperm and even embryos and its effect on the child, family and community
- What do we do with surplus embryos: freeze? Destroy? Experiment with?

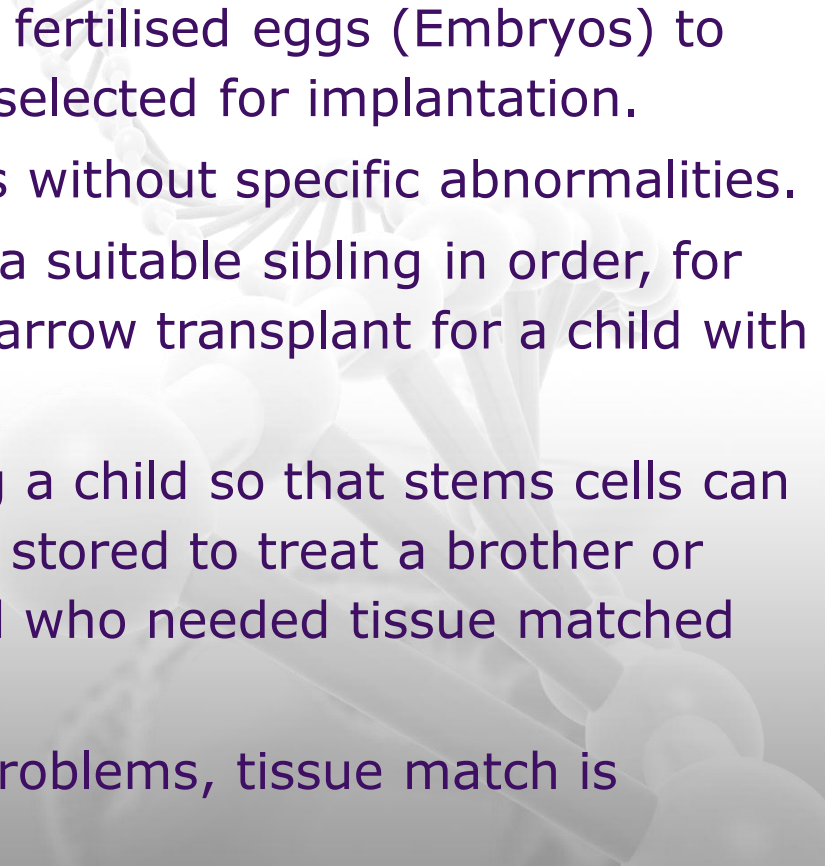
What other cons are there?



Figure: ICSI (the injection of a single sperm into an oocyte).

Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis

- PGD

- At present PGD involves testing fertilised eggs (Embryos) to ensure that the 'best' eggs are selected for implantation.
 - 'Best' tends to mean those eggs without specific abnormalities.
 - P.G.D. is already used to select a suitable sibling in order, for instance, to carry out a bone marrow transplant for a child with bone marrow cancer.
 - Some parents are now choosing a child so that stem cells can be taken from the placenta and stored to treat a brother or sister with a severe disease and who needed tissue matched stem cells.
 - Because of potential rejection problems, tissue match is important....
- 

Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis

- PGD

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjL2XoNIO54>



Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis

- PGD

- What are the implications of PGD for society?



Embryonic Stem Cell Research

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3FyEpKfPkNg>



Christian Ethical Teaching Sources across denominations/variants:

Scripture

- There is a belief in some sectors of society that religion should/must stay out of politics and science.
- Science is often presented as the panacea for all our troubles/problems. Science can ignore the social reasons for these problems. Religion can be seen as having no relevance to these issues.
- Religion has a purpose. Our Judo-Christian heritage tells us...

Christian Ethical Teaching Sources across denominations/variants:

Scripture

Man uniquely is created in God's image (Genesis 1:26f). For Augustine the image is in man's reason and intellect.

Alternatively, the creation of male and female (verse 27) suggests man is in the image of God, a loving triune family, when he lives as part of a loving family, sharing and returning God's love.

Go forth and procreate/multiply (Verse 28)

Decalogue Exodus 20:1-17, Deuteronomy 5:6-21.

Christian Ethical Teaching Sources across denominations/variants: Scripture

Jesus in Mark 5: Healing. What is the difference between Curing and Healing? Eg HIV in Southern Africa. How does the compassion of Jesus emphasize each person's dignity in the sight of God?

Catholic Teachings:

***Dignitas Personae*, 2008, Catholic Teaching on Bioethics, from
Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF)**

[Donum vitae](#) 1987 (Previous instruction on Bioethics)

The Encyclicals [Veritatis splendor](#) and [Evangelium vitae](#) of John Paul II

HSC Exam Questions

- 2011

Question 2 — Christianity (20 marks)

Some religions emphasise justice, while others emphasise compassion.

How does the statement reflect the diversity of expression within the Christian tradition?

Question 2 — Christianity

Answers could include:

Responses to Christian ethical teachings vary both within and between Christian denominations. Some variants rely strongly on the use of authority (eg the teaching *Magisterium* in the Catholic tradition; and the Bible, or ‘Bible only’ (*sola scriptura*), in some Protestant denominations), others place a reliance on natural law, while others develop their ethical positions from both. Hence, a range of different ethical responses that focus more directly on either justice or compassion is a logical outcome of the varying theologies of the variants.

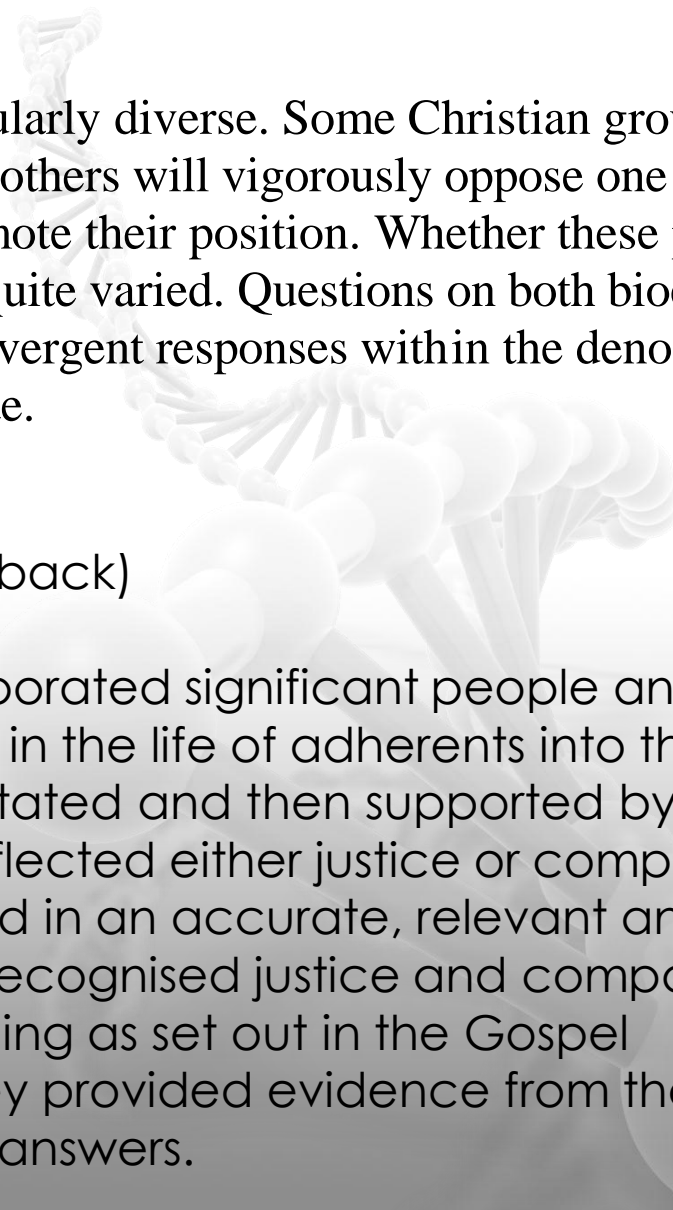
The Catholic tradition's strong links with Thomistic natural law (developed by Thomas Aquinas), together with its hierarchical teaching authority, provide a clear 'justice' focused foundation for its teachings on sexual ethics, with much of historical Catholic teaching stemming from the linking of sexual morality with reproduction. The non-reproductive aspect of some sexual orientations (eg homosexuality, contraception) defines their ethical status. Some Christian traditions with a strong focus on autonomy and the practice of compassion may expound more liberal interpretations of sexual ethics in areas including premarital sex, homosexual relationships and contraception. Some sexual ethics issues can produce a range of responses that, arguably, can be seen as both compassionate and just, regardless of one's view of their acceptability.

Christian responses to bioethics can be particularly diverse. Some Christian groups support both euthanasia and stem cell research, while others will vigorously oppose one or both of these and engage in political lobbying to promote their position. Whether these positions reflect a justice or compassion orientation is quite varied. Questions on both bioethics and environmental ethics have produced strong divergent responses within the denominations themselves; for example, the carbon tax debate.

More broadly, the very strong involvement of Christian churches in aged care, care for the mentally ill, hospitals, refugees, the homeless, street youth etc, underlines their foundational commitment to compassion. In particular, the Salvation Army as a denomination places its focus on charitable work, while the Catholic Church, with its strong foundations on teaching authority and justice, also has a very extensive social outreach approach.

Significant people/ideas: The contribution of significant people/ideas to Christianity is particularly diverse, with some being motivated by issues of justice (eg St Augustine, Pope Pius XII and Oscar Romero), while others were moved strongly by compassion (eg William Booth and Pope John XXIII).

Significant practices: Marriage practices strongly exemplify the diversity of expressions in Christianity. Some traditions adopt positions that are sacramental, while others have a contractual focus or endorse same-sex marriage. Traditions that put an emphasis on the vows that are made in the marriage ceremony could be seen to focus on the importance of justice in the partnership. Other traditions that put an emphasis on love and support in a marriage could be seen to focus on the issue of compassion.



Christian responses to bioethics can be particularly diverse. Some Christian groups support both euthanasia and stem cell research, while others will vigorously oppose one or both of these and engage in political lobbying to promote their position. Whether these positions reflect a justice or compassion orientation is quite varied. Questions on both bioethics and environmental ethics have produced strong divergent responses within the denominations themselves; for example, the carbon tax debate.

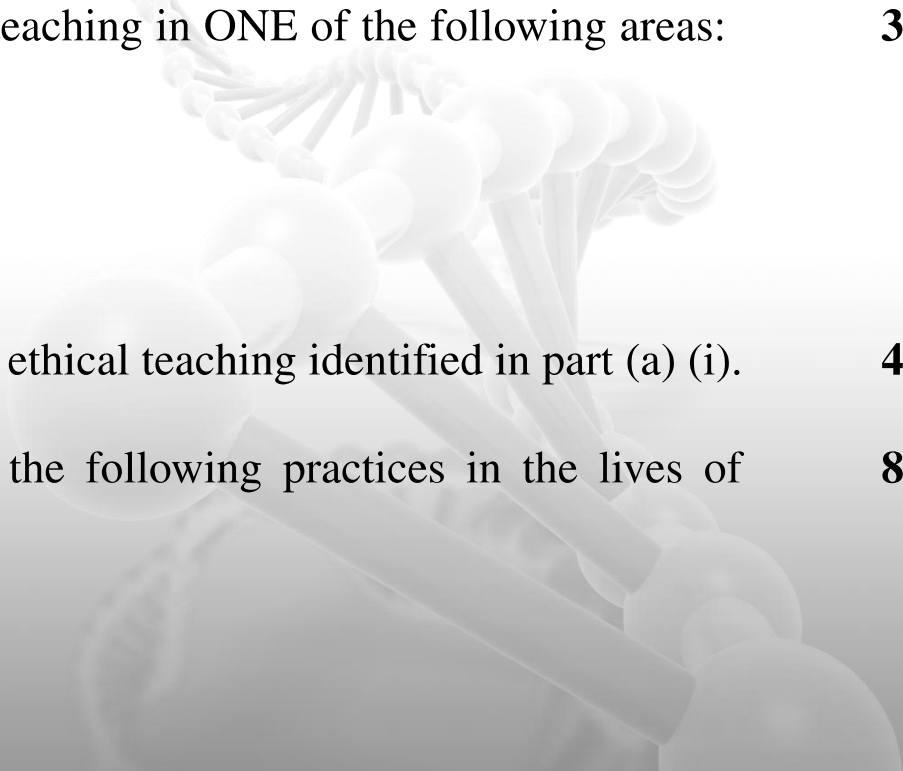
Question 2: Christianity (Marking Feedback)

In better responses, candidates incorporated significant people and ideas, ethics and significant practices in the life of adherents into their answer. Their judgement was clearly stated and then supported by examples of how Christian diversity reflected either justice or compassion or both. The information was presented in an accurate, relevant and cohesive manner. These candidates recognised justice and compassion as central elements of Christian teaching as set out in the Gospel accounts and the writings of Paul. They provided evidence from these sources as citations in support of their answers.

HSC Exam Questions

• 2010

Question 2 — Christianity (15 marks)

- (a) (i) Outline ONE Christian ethical teaching in ONE of the following areas: **3**
- Bioethics
 - Environmental ethics
 - Sexual ethics.
- (ii) Describe TWO examples of the ethical teaching identified in part (a) (i). **4**
- (b) Evaluate the significance of ONE of the following practices in the lives of adherents. **8**
- Baptism
 - Marriage ceremony
 - Saturday/Sunday worship
- 

• 2010

Question 2 — Christianity (20 marks)

By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

John 13:35

New King James version

Acknowledgement: "Scripture taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved."

With reference to the quotation, evaluate the influence of Christianity in the life of adherents and the Christian community.

Question 2: Christianity (Marking Feedback)

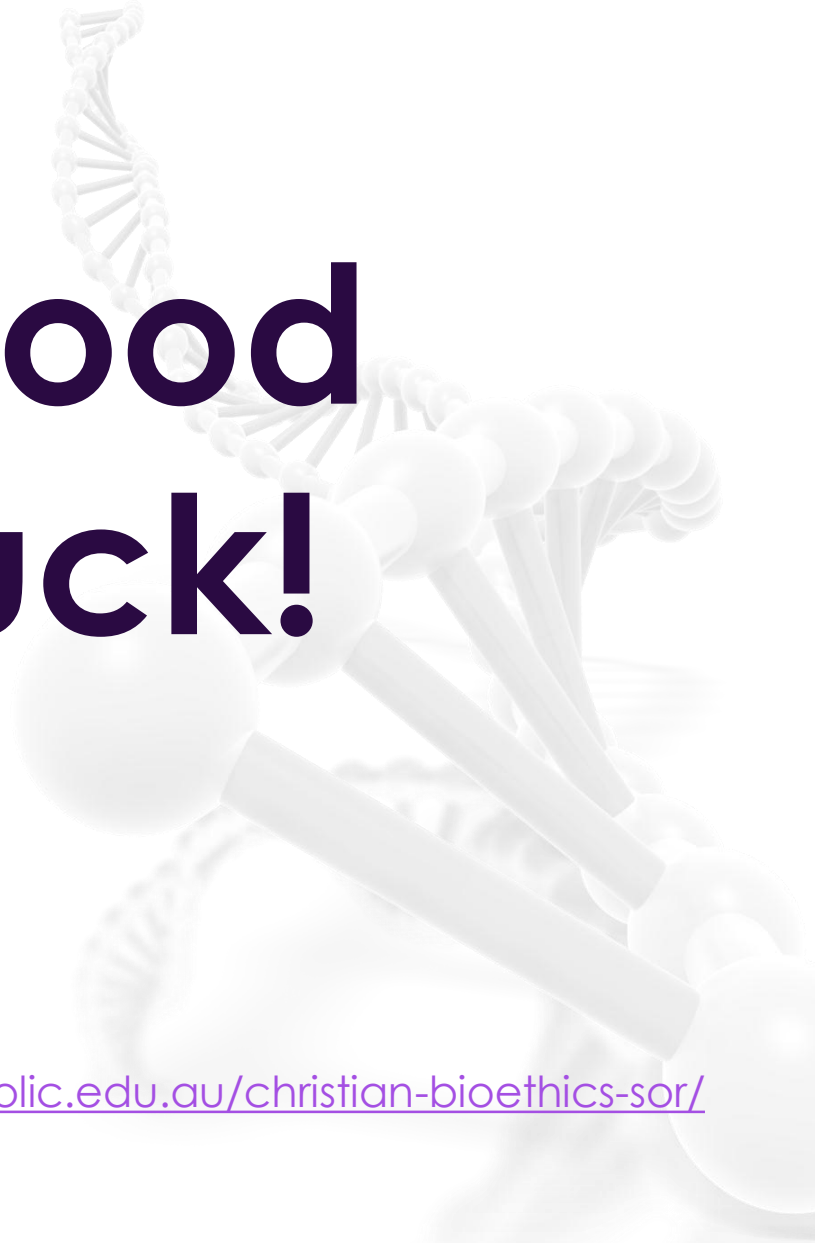
General comments

In higher range responses, candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of Christianity as a living religious tradition that connected directly with the life of adherents. These responses were well thought out and clearly articulated. They made clear links to the key elements of Christianity.

Reference to the quote was well integrated throughout the response. They were supported by relevant examples, made strong links back to the quote using excellent detail and explicit reference to sacred texts, beliefs and the ethical teachings of Christianity. Well-informed judgements were made about the importance of Christianity and its influence on the life of adherents.



**Good
Luck!**



<https://sites.google.com/a/syd.catholic.edu.au/christian-bioethics-sor/>