

**Christianity is not a theory or speculation, but a life and a living process.**

**Assess to what extent this quote reflects the core teachings of Christianity as a living religious tradition**

Christianity is a "living" religious tradition that is dynamic that links directly with the life of adherents. For Christian believers, Christianity is not just a "theory or speculation", as it provides a perspective for the human view of reality and deals with daily living as well as with the ultimate source, meaning and goal of life, which is to both build the kingdom of God on Earth, and to gain salvation. Paul of Tarsus played a significant role in the development and expression of early Christianity, and without his involvement, it's unlikely that it would be the major world religion that it is today. Through his New Testament letters which directly reference and allude to the Old Testament, he supported the statement that Christianity is more than just a theory or speculation, but a "living process". The ethical teachings derived from the religious texts with the world and his people. It's from these ethical teachings that Christian adherents develop the are based on beliefs about God's relationship belief and understanding that Christianity is more than just theory or speculation, and believe the Christian sacred text, the Bible to be a true representation and recount of the life and teachings of God. Baptism is a major Christian practice that plays an important role in welcoming new adherents into the Christian tradition. Whilst there is differences between denominations, the process of baptism is to symbolise the believer's identification with Jesus Christ and his burial and resurrection. These concepts are mirrored in the core teachings of Christianity that are the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes and Jesus' Commandment of Love, otherwise known as the 'Golden Rule'.

Christians believe that salvation is the deliverance from sin and it's consequences. To be freed from sin, and to approach holiness, Christians follow ethics derived from the Bible. Christian teachings are based on God's relationship with the world and his people - primarily viewing God as the creator, and we his servants whose duty is to build his kingdom on Earth, a 'living process' that an adherent must devote their life to. Bioethics is the study of ethical and moral implications of biological discoveries and advances, particularly regarding genetic engineering and research. "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die" (John 11:25) is Jesus referring to life in resurrection. He suggests that even a man who is buried, if he is believer in God will live again, in Heaven where he will experience eternal life. This concept, derived directly from Christian scriptures is proof that in the perspective of a Christian adherent, Christianity and all its teachings are more than just "theory or speculation". This concept of the importance of salvation to Christians is mirrored in a writing from Paul, "God our Saviour who wants all people to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2:3-4). It can be interpreted that a loving God, whom Christians believe in, wants everyone to be saved, if they come to him. This concept perfectly mirrors bioethical teachings, and highlight the importance of "life" in Christianity. Baptism is key to attaining salvation, primarily for Catholics who believe it is not just symbolic, but rather a necessary experience for an infant to be spiritually reborn and freed from sin. **"No one can enter the Kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit" (John 3:5)** mirrors the importance of Baptism for

Christians. When Jesus states this, he suggests that faith in him is what is truly needed for salvation. This supports the statement that Christianity is a living process, as to have faith in Jesus requires a lifetime of self sacrifice and charity.

Revelation is the supernatural truth of God as the Creator for Christians. Revelation is key to Christianity, in supporting that it is more than just a "theory or speculation," and rather a religion that encompasses all aspects of an adherents life. At the heart of Christians ethics is the conviction that the firm basis for knowing the true, the good, and the right is divine revelation. Christianity is not a life system that simply operates on the basis of speculative reason or pragmatic expediency. This is reflected in the Christian practice of Baptism, in the passage "**Don't you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death?**" (Romans 6:3). It suggests that through Baptism, Christians become dead to sin in order that they, like Jesus, may be resurrected into a new life in Jesus Christ. This concept of divine revelation through Baptism supports the belief that Christianity is more than just a theory or speculation, but rather a living process. Jesus' commandment of Love, or the 'Golden Rule', supports the truth of God for all Christians "**Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself**" (22:37-39). The Golden Rule exists to show the simplicity of God's teachings for Christians. Choosing the most loving option, and loving "**thy neighbour as thyself**" are simple, core teachings of Christianity that are core to the daily "life" of all Christians, highlighting how the Christian tradition, is truly living and dynamic. Similarly, Paul's epistles formed the sacred texts of Christianity, and are a primary source for beliefs. His letters were the earliest writings about Christianity, and were his life-defining work, making it difficult to overestimate his importance in Christianity's development as a world religion. The importance and endurance of his writings persisted past his death, supporting the concept of Christianity as a living religious tradition, that has been developed for centuries. The concept of revelation in Christian adherents reflects on Christianity as a living religious tradition, that requires its followers to devote their lives to accept and understand God's divine revelation.

The nature of God and the Trinity is principal evidence that Christianity is far greater than theory or speculation. To Christians, there is only one God, who is three persons - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, that combine to be the trinity. This links to the concept of Christianity as a living tradition, as the Holy Trinity have high importance in the living process of all adherents, as it is referenced every time they pray, through the sign of the Cross. Paul of Tarsus reflects this understanding in his epistle, "**For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.**" (1 Corinthians 11:26), highlighting the relationship between Jesus and God. This supports the concept of Christianity being a way of "living and a living process" as this section is referenced consistently throughout mass, during communion. In a similar way, water plays a symbolic role in baptism as it represents the death of the old sinful self and rebirth into a new life as an adherent of Jesus Christ, representing Jesus' death and burial. Completing the process of baptism is symbolic of the believer's identification with Jesus Christ and his death, burial and resurrection, key concepts in a Christians understanding of the nature of God and the Trinity. Psalms are one of the most widely read and the most highly treasured

book in the Bible. "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:13-14) considers the miraculous development of the unborn child, from the conception and birth, right into manhood and old age. The psalmist suggests that God deserves both praise and worship, for the miracle of his own conception and development, supporting the belief that being born in itself is an act of God. The nature of God is explored here, and it becomes apparent that a Christian who was crafted in the shape of God must dedicate his life in service to his Creator. The nature of God and the Trinity supports the provided statement in suggesting that Christianity is more than just "theory or speculation" and that Christianity is a living, dynamic, religious tradition.

Christianity is a constantly changing, developing religion. Bioethics, Baptism and Paul of Tarsus all combine to both shape the day-to-day lives of adherents, but also to aid in a followers attempt to spread the teachings of Jesus and build the kingdom of God on Earth. Jesus is a part of the Holy Trinity, but is also a source for Christian ethics, teachings and guidance on all modern day concerns. It's because of this, and all the reasons presented, that Christianity is living religious tradition.