

EACH research agenda

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Special thanks to Alex Rattee, Vesa Hautala, Dominic Roser, and all our contributors.

Research question highlights

How much money are Christians morally allowed to keep for themselves?

— About 700 million people in the world are living on the equivalent of less than \$2 per day. Reliable ways to help the global poor with donations are available, and the average Western Christians are richer than ever. How much money are Christians in rich countries morally justified in keeping for themselves?

Do Christians need to care about future people?

— Climate change and different forms of environmental destruction have for some time already raised questions about the impact of current actions on future generations. Increasing discussion of longtermism in academia and mainstream media is drawing attention to moral duties to future people. What does Christian ethics have to say about moral duties to future people and what are the implications for Christian practical ethics?

In what ways does advanced AI matter in Christian ethics?

— Many experts believe artificial intelligence will achieve human-level performance in most or all tasks within this century. What implications would human-level AI have for Christian ethics?

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Part I. Are Christianity and the principles of effectiveness broadly compatible?

1. Does Jesus's example count as evidence against effective altruism?

It's not obviously clear that Jesus taught or lived by the principles of effectiveness. If Jesus is the perfect moral example then we might expect Jesus to have lived by them if the principles of effectiveness are important. How ought the Christian arguing for effective altruism best account for this? There are seemingly three approaches that can be taken:

- Suggest that whilst Jesus did not live in perfect accordance with the principles of effectiveness this does not count against effective altruism.
- Suggest that Jesus did in fact live in perfect accordance with the principles of effectiveness but that we are not in a good position to always see this.
- Accept the force of the criticism and so formulate a new version of effective altruism which is compatible with Jesus's example.

Note that a successful response needn't show that Jesus's example provides no evidence against effective altruism but just that it does not provide conclusive evidence against it.

1.1 Omniscience and moral perfection

Are there plausible theories of the incarnation where Jesus lacked access, or, justifiably chose not to access, the necessary guiding principles to enable him to follow the principles of effectiveness?

Existing work: Alex Rattee, [Was Jesus an Effective Altruist? \(Part. 2\)](#), 2018

1.2 Were the principles of effectiveness not relevant/appropriate in Jesus's historical context?

Are there contextual and historical reasons which account for why Jesus did not obviously teach and live out the principles of effectiveness in his ministry? Recent developments in the social sciences, technology and globalism mean that the principles of effectiveness are in some domains much more pertinent than they may have been in Jesus' time where the options one had open to them were heavily constrained. Might this be used to partly justify Jesus' lack of engagement with effective altruism?

Potential ideas for responses:

- In the context of first-century Jewish Palestine, Jesus had to appeal to people in their current moral worldviews. EA is best communicated when there is agreement on things like principles of rationality, and against the historic backdrops of utilitarian theory and economics. But Jesus had to win followers in a very different context, which means that being maximally effective might not look like what we expect.
- Teaching general consequentialism may have been counterproductive. Teaching consequentialism may lead people to feel more justified to do big actions because of 'ends

justify the means' reasoning. Whereas heuristics like 'don't kill' can't be so easily used to justify bold actions.

1.3 Was Jesus optimising over the long-run instead?

It's harder to identify when people are doing actions where the optimality only becomes apparent over long time horizons. If Jesus was doing this then we may not realise that he really was following the principles of effectiveness. Plausible long-run goals that Jesus may have had include:

- Starting the global church
- The Atonement
- Instituting important life rhythms for Christians i.e. rest, retreat and prayer

Existing work: Alex Rattee, [Was Jesus an Effective Altruist?](#), 2017

1.4 Was Jesus optimising over many different values?

It might be appropriate for Christians to be pluralists about value and so believe that many different things are intrinsically valuable. It's harder to identify when an action is optimal if there are a plurality of value bringing variables. Whilst Jesus' actions may not be optimal if one was looking to optimise for hedonism, perhaps Jesus's actions were optimal when one considers the full set of things which are intrinsically valuable.

Existing work: Alex Rattee, [Was Jesus an Effective Altruist?](#), 2017

2. Bible

2.1 On first glance supportive passages/themes

Perhaps the most distinctive and controversial characteristic of effective altruism is its emphasis on optimising. It is therefore important for Christians sympathetic to EA to understand which verses support optimisation.

2.1.1 *Parable of the Minas/Parable of the Talents*

The Parable of the Minas (Luke 19) and Parable of the Talents (Matt 25) are the biblical passages which seem to give the clearest instruction on how we ought to steward the resources that God has entrusted us with. They seem to provide some evidence for the optimising mindset central to the principles of effectiveness.

Existing work: Alex Rattee, [The Parable of the Talents](#), 2019

2.1.2 *Parable of the shrewd manager (Luke 16:1-13)*

Existing work: Vesa Hautala, [The Parable of the Unjust Steward](#), 2020

2.1.3 *The Great Commandment to love with all one's mind*

Effective altruism places a heavy emphasis on using our mental abilities to figure out the best ways to do good. The Great Commandment includes the mind.

Existing work: Stefan Höschele, [Love with all your mind](#), 2019

2.1.4 *'Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.'* (Matt 10:16)

Existing work: Vesa Hautala, ["Shrewd as snakes and innocent as doves". Matthew 10:16 and Effective Altruism](#), 2022.

2.1.5 *"That your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best" (Phil. 1:9-10)*

This passage seems to be speaking about knowledge and insight enabling Christians to discern what is best. Do the kinds of knowledge and insight referred to here have overlap with "reason and evidence" as used in EA?

2.1.6 *Paul's "becoming all things to all people" in order to save some (1 Cor 9:19-23)*

This passage seems to portray a mentality of seeking to find the necessary means to achieve the desired consequences. Does this extend so far as to be relevant to Effective Altruism?

2.1.7 *Locating potentially supportive passages/themes in the Deuterocanonical books*

2.2. On first glance difficult passages/themes

For Christians sympathetic to effective altruism who take the Bible as authoritative it is important to understand the proof texts that seem to count against the compatibility of the two worldviews. It is important to see if there are plausible harmonisations for these texts.

2.2.1 *The breaking of the alabaster jar*

The accounts of the anointing of Jesus in Matthew 26, Mark 14, and John 12 seems to count against applying the principles of effectiveness. Jesus defends the lady against the rebuke of others that the perfume could have been sold and the proceeds been given to the poor. What ought the Christian sympathetic to EA make of this passage? Are there considerations which make the passages count less strongly against the principles of effectiveness?

Existing work:

Alex Rattee, [Alabaster Jars & Optimising](#), 2017

Mike Morell, [An exception that proves the rule](#), 2019

2.2.2 *Parable of the lost sheep*

The parable seems to put the welfare of one above the welfare of 99, which looks contradictory to impartial consequentialism.

2.2.3 Locating potentially difficult passages/themes in the Deuterocanonical books

3. History of Christianity

3.1 Are there recognisably EA-like individuals or ideas in the history of Christianity?

Existing work:

Dominic Roser, John Wesley: The Use of Money [part 1](#) and [part 2](#), 2017

Vesa Hautala, Francis at the Factory Farm, 2023

Nicolas Laing, [The Protester, Priest and Politician: Effective Altruists before their time](#), 2024

3.2. Locating passages similar to 2.1 and 2.2 in historical theological writings

Part II. Specific themes

1. Influencing the world

1.1 Work

1.1.1 Theology of work and EA

EA promotes a very particular vision of work that puts social impact front and centre, followed by personal fit (which includes job satisfaction). This is different from prevailing views of work that do not place major emphasis on impact, at least not in the way EA defines and calculates it, and which emphasise passion as a key consideration in career choice. Christianity has its own theologically grounded views on work that may differ from prevailing secular views. Is there overlap between Effective Altruism and Christianity?

Focus on work as a way to benefit others seems to be a common theme with Christian and EA approaches to work. Differences may include Christians viewing work from a more deontological or virtue-oriented perspective as something ordained by God and/or as a way to spiritual growth.

1.1.2 What standing does the concept of a 'calling' have within Christianity?

Discussion of callings is common within existing Christian advice on thinking about careers. What is the biblical standing of the notion and how is it best understood? How would the concept interact with the ideas of 80,000 Hours that careers should be chosen on a calculated view of where one can have the biggest impact?

1.2 Giving

1.2.1 How much should a Christian keep for themselves?

If Christianity does encourage using significant amounts of a well-off person's wealth for altruistic causes, this is a clear synergy with EA. From a Christian perspective, EA can help Christians fulfil this aspect of their faith.

What is the best model for how Christians should consider the claims on their finances? Should all adopt some form of the Wesleyan 'capping' approach, or is something less demanding permissible? What ought Christians think about the demandingness objection?

Existing work:

David Wohlever Sánchez, [How much should Christians give?](#), 2016

Andy Chrismer, [The Book of Acts and Global Poverty](#), 2017

Dominic Roser, [Demandingness, Grace, and Excited Altruism](#), 2018

1.2.2 How should we consider the tithe?

The 10% tithe is often the first thing that comes to mind when Christians think about giving. What, if any, significance should the Christian sympathetic to EA place on it?

Existing work:

Dominic Roser, [Should I Tithe?](#), 2017

Vesa Hautala, [An In-Depth Look at Tithing](#), 2024

1.2.3 Is it permissible to be public about our giving?

The beginning of Matthew 6 seems to imply that we ought to not be public about our giving. However, it is clear that communicating it can encourage others to be more generous by changing societal norms around generosity. How ought we approach communicating about our giving?

Existing work: Jakub Synowiec, [Should we sound a trumpet when we give to the poor?](#), 2018

1.2.4 Should we give priority to Christian charities?

Christians often want to donate to Christian charities, either in the sense that they are run by Christians or that the work they are doing explicitly involves a Christian message. Why is this the case? Is it permissible (or perhaps even required) to support a Christian organisation even if it is demonstrably less effective than its secular peers?

Existing work: Alex Rattee, [Should we only give to Christian organisations?](#), 2019

1.3 Other forms of making a difference, including advocacy

1.3.1 Prophetic voice and EA

Historical support for abolitionism in certain Christian groups is an example of using a “prophetic voice” to proclaim a moral stance that was unconventional at the time in a way that was compelling (at least to some). Could this be replicated? This mostly relates to advocacy from an EA perspective, but perhaps also to neglectedness.

In the OT prophets, there is a strong angle of justice, which is less emphasised in consequentialist EA thinking. Is there a tension between Christianity and EA in this respect?

Existing work: Nicolas Laing: [The Protester, Priest and Politician: Effective Altruists before their time](#), 2024

2. Cause areas

2.1 Longtermism

2.1.1 The longtermist paradigm

Longtermism is the view that the primary determinant of the value of the actions we take today is the effect of those actions on the very long-term future. It's a view that is very popular within the effective altruism community. Are there reasons for Christians to diverge from the EA community view on the topic?

Existing work:

Dominic Roser, [How much should Christian EAs care about the far future? \(Part I\)](#), 2019

Dominic Roser, [How much should Christian EAs care about the far future? \(Part II\)](#), 2019

Andres Morales, [A Christian case against longtermism](#), 2022

2.1.2 Existential Risks

The mitigation of existential risks is one of the main projects within those who have prioritised long-termism. Even if there are good reasons for Christians to take longtermism seriously, are there reasons for Christians to view the importance of reducing existential risks differently from the rest of the community? For example, does the fact that the Bible describes there being human beings at the end times imply that an extinction event will not take place?

Existing work: David Wohlever Sánchez, [Christianity & Existential Risk](#), 2017

2.1.3 *Even if longtermism were true, would there be a division of labour which means that Christians aren't responsible for the long-term?*

Might there be a division of labour between God and his creatures meaning that the humans do not have responsibility for every domain of global and intertemporal value maximisation? For

example, perhaps humans are not responsible for thinking about avoiding improbable extinction risks, even if they are responsible for thinking about poverty alleviation.

Existing work:

Dominic Roser, [How much should Christian EAs care about the far future? \(Part I\)](#), 2019

Dominic Roser, [How much should Christian EAs care about the far future? \(Part II\)](#), 2019

2.2 Animal welfare

2.2.1 What moral status do animals have on Christianity?

Does the fact that the Bible references humans in particular as being made in the image of God imply that humans have a higher moral status? If so, how is this higher moral status cashed out in moral decision making? What importance does the rest of scripture place on animal welfare? How should we weigh one unit of animal suffering compared to one unit of human suffering?

Existing work:

Vesa Hautala, [Should Christians be concerned about animal welfare? \(Part 1\)](#), 2020

Vesa Hautala, [Should Christians be concerned about animal welfare? \(Part 2\)](#), 2020

Vesa Hautala, [Should Christians be concerned about animal welfare? \(Part 3\)](#), 2021

Vesa Hautala, [Should Christians be concerned about animal welfare? \(Part 4\)](#), 2022

2.2.2 Christianity and wild animal suffering

Does Christianity have any implications for wild animal suffering as a cause area?

Existing work: Dustin Crummet, [Human dominion and wild animal suffering](#), 2021

2.2.3 Are there differences between Christian animal ethics and EA?

Could considerations like duties towards animals stemming from the dominion commandment, the value of animal individuals as unique creations of God, or dignity animals may have as God's creatures lead to differences between Christian animal ethics and the Effective Altruism approach?

Existing work: Vesa Hautala, [Is the EA approach to animal welfare misguided? Reflections on David Clough's article in The Good It Promises, the Harm It Does](#), 2023

2.3 AI risk

2.3.1 Does Christianity have anything specific to say about AI and AI risk?

Existing work: Vesa Hautala, [AI risk and Christian beliefs](#), 2021

2.3.2. Christianity and artificial sentience (from the perspective of moral value of AI)

In a Christian worldview, is artificial sentience possible, and would such beings have moral value? Questions about the moral value of advanced AI entities are significant if a large number of them will exist in the future.

2.3.3 Christianity and possibility of human-level or superhuman AI

Does Christianity have something to say about the possibility or likelihood of human-level or superhuman intelligence?

Existing work: Vesa Hautala, [AI risk and Christian beliefs](#), 2021

3. Christian causes

3.1 How should we weigh our efforts between classic EA causes, evangelism and the local church?

Christians seem to be pulled in more directions than secular EAs as they may think that evangelism and their local church create claims on their resources. How ought Christians navigate these competing claims?

3.2 Evangelism

Secular EA obviously does not think that increasing the number of Christians is valuable, however many denominations within Christianity consider evangelism to be extremely important.

Existing work: Mike Morell, [Perspectives on effective evangelism](#), 2019

3.2.1 Should we apply the principles of effectiveness to evangelism?

For those who consider evangelism a priority, should they apply the principles of effectiveness to it as effective altruism encourages for other cause areas such as suffering alleviation, or is there special reason to not do so in this domain?

3.2.2 Does the nature of heaven/hell mean that evangelism swamps other cause areas in terms of importance?

If heaven or hell are infinite in length and/or involve moments of infinite value then maximizing consequentialism seems to imply that getting more people into heaven and reducing the number of people going to hell will be of supreme importance compared to other cause areas. How should we consider this argument for the importance of evangelism? What ought we make of the fact that scripture seems to encourage non-evangelistic causes?

3.3 Church

3.3.1 Should a Christian financially support their local church?

It seems unlikely that the local church that an individual Christian attends will be one of the most effective organisations at making the world better. Should Christians therefore not give to their local church? Are there scriptural/philosophical arguments that Christians ought to on the basis of

reciprocity? Are there significant personal psychological benefits from giving to your local church which justifies giving?

Existing work:

Joe Tulloch, [Should Christian EAs give money to their local church?](#), 2018

Joe Tulloch, [A local-church-centred approach to Christian effective altruism](#), 2019

Alex Rattee, [Against duty-based arguments for giving to the local church](#), 2019

3.3.3 Expected value of spiritual growth

Is it possible to estimate the value of spiritual growth in such a way that it could be compared with for example the value of saving lives or providing financial help for people in abject poverty? If yes, how valuable is it?

Some psychological effects related to spiritual growth are quantifiable. This includes the effect spiritual growth could have on a person's mental wellbeing. However, spiritual growth also involves things like "righteousness" and "justice" that are not purely subjective and not purely psychological but involve a value component and social component, as well as metaphysical aspects like closeness to God

Can the extent of spiritual growth be quantified? Should it be? Positive answers to these questions seem to be preconditions to estimating the value of spiritual growth.

This is a topic where theological predispositions have a large effect on conclusions. Different theologies have different ideas about what spiritual growth and the ideal spiritual life are like, and about how to achieve those.

4. Moral foundations

4.1 Partiality

Though it isn't a core tenet of effective altruism, an impartialist view of the world is prominent within the community and helps drive some of the movement's conclusions. What view should a Christian take of impartiality? Are some forms of partiality permissible in the Christian worldview, or perhaps even required?

Existing work:

David Lawrence, [A Christian effective altruist approach to partiality](#), 2019

Dominic Roser, [Four steps for toning down partiality](#), 2019

4.1.1 Partiality to other Christians

There seems to be some biblical warrant for the view that Christians ought to prioritise the welfare needs of the Christian community over non-Christians. Should Christians have this view? If so is

this because of genuine special obligations to other Christians or instead is it instrumentally justification because it leads to all things considered better outcomes.

Existing work: Corey Vernot, [Should We Give Christians Priority?](#), 2017

4.1.2 Partiality to those we have close relationships with

Christians sometimes argue that charity should include a relationship between the donor and recipient. This contrasts with the approach of effective altruism which directs people to help those who need it the most regardless of their relationship.

Existing work:

David Lawrence, [Christianity, relationships and making an impact](#), 2018

Dominic Roser, [Ten Arguments Against Relationship-Constrained Charity](#), 2017

4.1.3 Partiality to those geographically nearby

Some Christians think we have a greater obligation to help those geographically near, e.g., those living in their own neighbourhood, than those living further away. This contrasts with the effective altruist emphasis on impartiality and the resulting preference for donating overseas where the need is usually greater.

Existing work: Jakub Synowiec, [The Good Samaritan & Geographic Distance](#), 2016

4.2 Other

4.2.2 Does the Christian conception of 'welfare' differ from the secular one?

Christian conceptions of welfare presumably include spiritual elements which are lacking in secular worldviews. Different definitions of welfare are relevant to effective altruism because of the "tentative impartial welfarism" of EA (See MacAskill, *The Definition of Effective Altruism*, p. 14¹) A definition of welfare that includes spiritual elements could conceivably lead Christians to optimise for different things in their altruistic efforts compared to secular altruists.

4.2.3 Is there a Christian population ethic?

Population ethics is relatively new as a defined area of ethics. It is underexplored from a Christian perspective. Population ethics is very relevant to effective altruism given the interest EAs have for pursuing the best future for humanity, a task that implies answering questions about optimal population sizes and comparisons of welfare between subpopulations. Marriage and procreation are the topics related to population ethics that have received the most attention from Christians. How much of the Christian discussion that exists on this topic is relevant?

¹ William MacAskill, "The Definition of Effective Altruism". In: *Effective Altruism: Philosophical Issues*. Edited by Hilary Greaves and Theron Pummer, Oxford University Press (2019). DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198841364.003.0001

4.2.4 Christianity and moral uncertainty

Popular presentations of Christian morality often tend to focus on certainty rather than uncertainty. What does Christianity have to say about situations where one is uncertain about what is right and about the way to ascertain whether something is right? Moral uncertainty has been explored by philosophers connected to the EA movement especially from the perspective of how to take it into account when trying to “do the most good”.

4.2.5 Supererogation, Christian ethics, and EA

Going beyond the call of duty seems to be a common ethical concept, but it is strictly speaking missing in utilitarianism. How is supererogation viewed in Christian ethics and how do these views relate to EA?

Existing work: [Robert MacSwain, ‘Are Effective Altruists Saints? Effective Altruism, Moral Sainthood, and Human Holiness’](#), in *Effective Altruism and Religion: Synergies, Tensions, Dialogue*, eds. Dominic Roser, Stefan Riedener, and Markus Huppenbauer (Nomos, 2022), 211–233.

4.2.6 The value of justice and other non-hedonic goods

Christian value systems seem to place value on things such as justice that are not reducible to pleasure. The EA movement generally operates along utilitarian principles which places welfare as the only or at least most central value. Definitions of welfare differ, so a view incorporating what I have called “non-hedonic” goods may be plausible, but differs from the most widely held utilitarian definitions of welfare (hedonistic and preferentialist).

This topic is also interesting with regards to prioritarianism, a form of consequentialism that instead of maximising total welfare places extra weight on improving the welfare of those who are worst off.

4.3 Different moral and axiological systems, Christianity, and EA

4.3.1 Are Christianity and maximizing consequentialism compatible?

The majority of EAs identify their moral framework as consequentialist, including people who are the philosophical leaders of the movement. Many Christian ethicists have been critical of consequentialism, while others are more supportive.

4.3.2 Christianity and utilitarianism

Utilitarianism as a form of consequentialism has several characteristics that make it especially challenging to Christian ethics, but its early proponents were mostly Christians. Utilitarianism is also the most important consequentialist theory with regards to EA, with about 70% of EAs identifying as utilitarian and another 10% as other consequentialist.

Existing work:

Vesa Hautala and Dominic Roser, *Utilitarianism and Christian Theology*, in *St. Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology*, forthcoming

Vesa Hautala, [Utilitarianism and Christianity part I](#), 2022

Vesa Hautala, [Utilitarianism and Christianity part II](#), 2022

4.3.3 Christian virtue ethics and EA

Virtue ethics is a prominent ethical theory within Christianity. What is the relationship between Christian virtue ethics and EA?

Existing work: Justin Oakley, [Virtue ethics and Effective Altruism](#), 2015 (presentation at EAG Melbourne, not a Christian perspective)

4.3.4 What is “good”?

Does the definition of goodness differ between Christian ethics and effective altruism, or are the two compatible? Is the good singular or plural? Are different kinds of good or different manifestations of good fungible?

Existing work:

Samuel Dupret, [Christians should think about the ‘good’ in ‘doing the most good’](#), 2022

(From a perspective that does not discuss EA):

4.3.5 From a Christian point of view, can “good” be measured, and if so, how?

Are there aspects in the Christians conception of goodness that cannot be measured? How to measure spiritual values?

Existing work: Samuel Dupret, [Christians should think about the ‘good’ in ‘doing the most good’](#), 2022

4.3.6 What does a framework for assessing impact look like that takes spiritual realities seriously?

4.4 Questions of applied ethics

4.4.1 Should decreasing the number of abortions be a priority?

Abortion is seen by many Christians as a gravely immoral act of ending an innocent life. From a secular consequentialist perspective, views on abortion are mixed. Most people seem to consider a world with fewer abortions better even if they do not think abortion is morally blameworthy.

4.4.2 What should Christians make of transhumanism?

Transhumanism is a “social and philosophical movement devoted to promoting the research and development of robust human-enhancement technologies. Such technologies would augment or increase human sensory reception, emotive ability, or cognitive capacity as well as radically improve human health and extend human life spans” ([Encyclopedia Britannica](#))

Existing work:

[Vesa Hautala, Should we transcend humanity? Part I](#), 2022

5. Decision making

5.1 What is the role of prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit in discerning which actions to take?

Many Christians think that Christians ought to make their decisions by seeking direct revelation from God through prayer about the course of action to take. How ought we think about relying on direct revelation from God in decision making? Is prayer a reliable source of divine revelation? If prayer isn't a wholly reliable vehicle for understanding God's will how should it be factored in, if at all, to our decision procedure?

Existing work: Josh Parikh, [How should Christian effective altruists use prayer in decision-making?](#), 2019

5.2 What is the role of reason in discerning which actions to take?

Different Christian denominations have taken different views on the role of reason in Christian life. What centrality should Christians give to reason and evidence in their decision making? What impact has the fall had on our cognitive abilities and how should we factor that in?

Existing work:

Josh Parikh, [Is effective altruism too cold and calculating?](#), 2018

Josh Parikh, [How should Christian effective altruists use prayer in decision-making?](#), 2019

5.3 Influence of Christianity on decision theory

Do Christian scriptures and tradition present (implicitly or explicitly) a particular kind of decision theory? Are there areas of Christian teaching that make more/most sense within the confines of a certain decision theory? A particular question is the relationship of Christianity and expected value theory of decision making.

5.4 Christian epistemology (with regards to EA)

Does Christianity or certain forms of Christianity imply an epistemology that is meaningfully different from standard EA epistemology (if there is one)?

5.5 Christian perspective on moral uncertainty

In what way does Christianity allow for uncertainty about what is right?

6. Other

6.1 Are there differences between different forms of Christianity in how compatible they are with EA?

For targeting outreach efforts, it would be useful to know if particular groups of Christians are especially receptive or non-receptive to EA. Different emphases and approaches might work for different groups of Christians.

Conservative forms of Christianity pose particular questions. There is a possible synergy in that Christians from these groups would presumably be more prone to take Bible passages about poverty etc. in a literal or strict sense. Some of these Christians might see promotion or distribution of contraceptives practised by some development organisations as problematic, but this is not a common EA cause to my knowledge.

Existing work: Vesa Hautala, [How receptive different Christian groups are to EA?](#), 2023

6.2 Do differences in theology influence Christians' ability to be unified in their (effective) altruistic efforts?

Christians have widely diverging theological and moral views. Does this make it hard for them to cooperate in altruistic efforts, specifically within effective altruism? This could be for example because different Christians have different conceptions of what “good” or “welfare” is or different side constraints to what kinds of actions can be undertaken while pursuing it.

6.3 Asceticism and EA

Is there overlap between sacrificial tones of EA and the tradition of Christian asceticism? Could Christianity provide models for handling sacrificial aspects of an ethical system in a sustainable way?

6.4 Radical generosity in Christianity and EA

Could Christianity offer inspiration and experience with incorporating radical generosity into a practical way of life? How to (and whether to) connect radical generosity in Christian tradition and EA?

6.5 In Christian ethics, is there a moral imperative to make charity efficient?

Existing work: Alex Rattee, [Christian Effective Altruism: An Initial Case](#), 2017

6.6 What are the best ways to reach out to Christians about EA?

Subquestions: best ways to reach out to Christians about donations, best ways to reach out about careers.

6.7 How should we think about the death of a Christian?

If Christians go to heaven then how should we think about the death of a Christian? Is it good for the Christian to die as that allows them to go to heaven? What happens between death and

judgement day, is the Christian conscious during that period? If not then presumably an early death does not buy one a longer period of bliss.

Part III. Empirical questions

1. Church

- 1.1. *Should churches use their resources according to EA principles—in an impartial and maximising manner?*

Should churches use an impact-oriented, maximizing approach in their work? What would this look like? This could be asked more narrowly about charity spending of churches instead of their overall resource allocation.

- 1.2. *What would impartial impact maximisation by churches be like?*

- “Churches” is a very wide category, it would be beneficial to zoom in on a particular church or churches and try to figure out what generalises
- Establishing the current state of the use of resources by churches compared to the ideal of impartial impact maximisation

- 1.3. *How could churches be influenced to use their (charity) resources more effectively?*

Christian churches wield significant amounts of wealth and often use it for charitable projects. Are there ways Christian EAs could influence their churches’ use of money that would result in a positive outcome and be worth the time invested compared to other altruistic activities they could spend their time on? Are there moral side constraints to such influencing? Should it be attempted?

2. Christian Charity

- 2.1. *How impactful is Christian charity?*

Large amounts of money and work are spent on Christian charitable efforts each year. What is the absolute impact of Christian charity? A different but related question is how cost-effective Christian charity tends to be.

- 2.2. *How could Christian charity be made more impactful?*

Assuming Christian charity is not as impactful as it could be, what would need to change so that it would be more effective? What are the bottlenecks? Who are the key people and organisations?

3. Work

- 3.1. *Are there specifically Christian impactful careers?*

Are there impactful careers where Christians have an advantage or ones that are available only for Christians? (For example, careers in Christian NGOs or churches.)

3.2. *What are the best ways to reach out to Christians about impactful careers?*

It is possible the general EA outreach strategies or materials about impactful careers are not optimal for a Christian audience.

4. Christians in the EA movement

4.1. *Are there problems faced specifically by Christians in the EA movement? What are these?*

4.2. *What are the Christian demographics in EA like?*

Existing work:

Vesa Hautala, [How receptive different Christian groups are to EA?](#) 2023

JD Bauman, [EA for Christians Annual Survey results](#), 2022

JD Bauman, [An update on the make-up of the EA for Christians community](#), 2019

Mike Morell, [How large is the community of Christians involved in effective altruism?](#) 2018

5. Evangelism

5.1. *What models of missionary work are most cost-effective?*

Within theological constraints of mission work; different theologies will lead to different evaluations of what is 'proper' mission work

6. History

6.1. *What are the most impactful specifically Christian actions in history?*

- Specifically Christian actions defined: actions that were significantly influenced by Christianity
 - either committed by Christians and their faith played a role in committing the action
 - or committed in a context where Christianity played an important role in that the action was committed or in shaping the action
- What can be learned from them for the present?
- Possible examples: actions relating to abolitionism, anti-vivisection, developing hospitals as an institution, or the US civil rights movement

7. What Christians think about EA and EA-related topics

- 7.1. *What does the non-EA Christian audience perceive as the greatest problems with EA?*
- 7.2. *What do Christians think about the risks of AI*
- 7.3. *What do Christians think about animal welfare*
- 7.4. *What do Christians think about x-risk*
- 7.5. *What do Christians think about GCR*

For 7.2–7.5, are there belief-action gaps?

- 7.6. *What do Christians think are the most pressing problems in the world?*
 - How is this reflected in their careers and giving?
 - Are there belief-action gaps?
- 7.7. *What are the best ways to reach out to Christians about EA?*