

# Using One Media Event in 5 Subthemes

The Royal Wedding of Prince Harry to Meghan Markle:

- 100,000 turned out for the day
- Biggest UK TV event so far of 2018
- Peak viewing of 16 million
- Double the FA cup final
- 29 million in the USA
- 1.9 Billion worldwide are estimated to have watched.
- If we include exposure to Royal Wedding on all medial channels -half of the planet?

## 1. Themes 2A (Is God Male) and 3C Feminist Theology

You can ask students one thing Meghan Markle at her wedding of which feminist theologians might approve? And: One thing that MM did at her wedding of which feminist theology might not approve. This can lead to discussions about 'obedience' in the vows, Meghan's solo entry into St. George's chapel, her being 'given away' by Prince Charles and her white veil being lifted by Prince Harry.

## 2. Theme 2F Key Moral Principles

You can discuss Bishop Michael Curry's sermon: What is the character of God according to Bishop Michael Curry? What scripture from the spec does he refer to? How does he define love? You can connect this to the SPEC: 'God's love as a potential model for all Christian behavior'

## 3. Theme 3D Secularism

You can discuss: oes the Royal Wedding support or weaken the thesis that Britain is a secular country. Some points that may come up:

- Religion at life transitions cf. secular rituals
- Value of love as self-sacrificing (agape) resonates with culture
- Christian 'poetry' holds a high place in our traditions
- The focus on celebrity and fashion is secular in nature

## 4. Theme 4F

You can discuss how a liberation theologian might react to the sermon. Some points that might come up:

- Reference to Dr. Martin Luther King
- Application of love to social justice and economic oppression
- Dislike for wealth on display
- Social inclusion at the ceremony
- Social exclusion at the ceremony

Can be used to  
Introduce and teach  
'Religious Life:  
Key Moral Principles'  
This is all about the spec:  
'God's love as a potential  
model for Christian  
behaviour.' Luke 10: 25-28  
is in the sermon.

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## Royal wedding 2018: Bishop Michael Curry's speech in full

🕒 1 hour ago



Royal Wedding 2018: Prince Harry and Meghan Markle

Watch Bishop Curry's 14-minute sermon in full



**Bishop Michael Curry - the first black presiding bishop of the US Episcopal Church - gave a rousing sermon at the royal wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle.**

**Here is his speech in full:**

"And now in the name of our loving, liberating and life-giving God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

"From the Song of Solomon, in the Bible: Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is strong as death, passion fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, a raging flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it.

"The late Dr Martin Luther King Jr once said, and I quote: 'We must discover the power of love, the redemptive power of love. And when we do that, we will make of this old world a new world, for love is the only way.'

"There's power in love. Don't underestimate it. Don't even over-sentimentalise it. There's power, power in love.

- **Who is Bishop Michael Curry?**
- **Royal wedding in pictures**
- **Look of love: Harry lifts the veil**

"If you don't believe me, think about a time when you first fell in love. The whole world seemed to centre around you and your beloved.

"Oh there's power, power in love. Not just in its romantic forms, but any form, any shape of love. There's a certain sense in which when you are loved, and you know it, when someone cares for you, and you know it, when you love and you show it - it actually feels right.

"There is something right about it. And there's a reason for it. The reason has to do with the source. We were made by a power of love, and our lives were meant - and are meant - to be lived in that love. That's why we are here.

"Ultimately, the source of love is God himself: the source of all of our lives. There's an old medieval poem that says: 'Where true love is found, God himself is there'.

"The New Testament says it this way: 'Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God, and those who love are born of God and know God. Those who do not love do not know God.' Why? 'For God is love.'

"There's power in love. There's power in love to help and heal when nothing else can.

"There's power in love to lift up and liberate when nothing else will.

"There's power in love to show us the way to live.

"Set me as a seal on your heart... a seal on your arm, for love is as strong as death.

"But love is not only about a young couple. Now the power of love is demonstrated by the fact that we're all here. Two young people fell in love, and we all showed up.

"But it's not just for and about a young couple, who we rejoice with. It's more than that.

"Jesus of Nazareth on one occasion was asked by a lawyer to sum up the essence of the teachings of Moses, and he went back and he reached back into the Hebrew scriptures, to Deuteronomy and Leviticus, and Jesus said: 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind and all your strength. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbour as yourself.'

"And then in Matthew's version, he added, he said: 'On these two, love of God and love of neighbour, hang all the law, all the prophets, everything that Moses wrote, everything in the holy prophets, everything in the scriptures, everything that God has been trying to tell the world... love God, love your neighbours, and while you're at it, love yourself.'

"Someone once said that Jesus began the most revolutionary movement in human history.

"A movement grounded in the unconditional love of God for the world - and a movement mandating people to live that love, and in so doing to change not only their lives but the very life of the world itself.

"I'm talking about power. Real power. Power to change the world.

"If you don't believe me, well, there were some old slaves in America's Antebellum South who explained the dynamic power of love and why it has the power to transform.

"They explained it this way. They sang a spiritual, even in the midst of their captivity. It's one that says 'There is a balm in Gilead...' a healing balm, something that can make things right.

"'There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole, there is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.'

"And one of the stanzas actually explains why. They said: 'If you cannot preach like Peter, and you cannot pray like Paul, you just tell the love of Jesus, how he died to save us all.'"

"Oh, that's the balm in Gilead! This way of love, it is the way of life. They got it. He died to save us all.

"He didn't die for anything he could get out of it. Jesus did not get an honorary doctorate for dying. He didn't... he wasn't getting anything out of it. He gave up his life, he sacrificed his life, for the good of others, for the good of the other, for the wellbeing of the world... for us.

"That's what love is. Love is not selfish and self-centred. Love can be sacrificial, and in so doing, becomes redemptive. And that way of unselfish, sacrificial, redemptive love changes lives, and it can change this world.

"If you don't believe me, just stop and imagine. Think and imagine a world where love is the way."

"Imagine our homes and families where love is the way. Imagine neighbourhoods and communities where love is the way.

"Imagine governments and nations where love is the way. Imagine business and commerce where this love is the way.

"Imagine this tired old world where love is the way. When love is the way - unselfish, sacrificial, redemptive.

"When love is the way, then no child will go to bed hungry in this world ever again.

"When love is the way, we will let justice roll down like a mighty stream and righteousness like an ever-flowing brook.

"When love is the way, poverty will become history. When love is the way, the earth will be a sanctuary.

"When love is the way, we will lay down our swords and shields, down by the riverside, to study war no more.

"When love is the way, there's plenty good room - plenty good room - for all of God's children.

"Because when love is the way, we actually treat each other, well... like we are actually family.

"When love is the way, we know that God is the source of us all, and we are brothers and sisters, children of God.

"My brothers and sisters, that's a new heaven, a new earth, a new world, a new human family.

"And let me tell you something, old Solomon was right in the Old Testament: that's fire.

"Pierre Teilhard de Chardin - and with this I will sit down, we gotta get you all married - French Jesuit Pierre Teilhard de Chardin was arguably one of the great minds, great spirits of the 20th century.

"Jesuit, Roman Catholic priest, scientist, a scholar, a mystic.

"In some of his writings, he said, from his scientific background as well as his theological one, in some of his writings he said - as others have - that the discovery, or invention, or harnessing of fire was one of the great scientific and technological discoveries in all of human history.

"Fire to a great extent made human civilisation possible. Fire made it possible to cook food and to provide sanitary ways of eating which reduced the spread of disease in its time.

"Fire made it possible to heat warm environments and thereby made human migration around the world a possibility, even into colder climates.

"Fire made it possible - there was no Bronze Age without fire, no Iron Age without fire, no Industrial Revolution without fire.

"The advances of fire and technology are greatly dependent on the human ability and capacity to take fire and use it for human good.

"Anybody get here in a car today? An automobile? Nod your heads if you did - I know there were some carriages. But those of us who came in cars, fire - the controlled, harnessed fire - made that possible.

"I know that the Bible says, and I believe it, that Jesus walked on the water. But I have to tell you, I did not walk across the Atlantic Ocean to get here.

"Controlled fire in that plane got me here. Fire makes it possible for us to text and tweet and email and Instagram and Facebook and socially be dysfunctional with each other.

"Fire makes all of that possible, and de Chardin said fire was one of the greatest discoveries in all of human history.

"And he then went on to say that if humanity ever harnesses the energy of fire again, if humanity ever captures the energy of love - it will be the second time in history that we have discovered fire.

"Dr King was right: we must discover love - the redemptive power of love. And when we do that, we will make of this old world, a new world.

"My brother, my sister, God love you, God bless you, and may God hold us all in those almighty hands of love."

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## Related Topics

**Royal Wedding 2018: Prince Harry and Meghan Markle**

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Acts of Faith Perspective

# Here's why people hate Joel Osteen

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By Kate Bowler  
August 29, 2017

Twitter is *loathing* Houston's megawatt-smile, mega-pastor Joel Osteen right now. What gives?

The question over whether Osteen's 38,000-member Lakewood Church has sufficiently aided in the disaster relief effort in the wake of Hurricane Harvey has, once again, made America's prince of the prosperity gospel into an object of social media contempt.

With his yachts and jets and endlessly-smiling mouth offering promises of “[Your Best Life Now](#)” (that's the name of his best-selling book), Osteen was already a subject of contempt among Americans, in general.

But in the past few days he has been lambasted as being, at best, sluggish in providing emergency aid to those suffering from the disaster and, at worst, a hypocrite who cares more about people's wealth than welfare. In fairness, the city of Houston has more megachurches than any other metropolitan area in the country, with dozens of big-church celebrities to thrust into the spotlight at a time like this. So what is it about America's grinning preacher that everyone hates so much?

I've been studying the American prosperity gospel for more than a decade, and I have come to the stunning conclusion that Joel Osteen seems to be a pretty nice guy. He is the cheery advertisement for the 606,000-square-foot Lakewood Church and, with the gorgeous Victoria by his side, tours the country in packed-out arenas to bring “A Night of Hope” — a religion-lite, inspirational speech set to music. And, for those who don't mind waiting a few minutes after the service, he will shake your hand and tolerate your comment about how his hair looks even better in real life. It does.

But there are three main reasons long after this controversy passes, Joel Osteen will still be the preacher America loves to hate — and perhaps for Christians more than others.

**Number 1.** Joel Osteen represents the Christian 1 percent. From aerial views of his jaw-dropping mansion to the cut of his navy suits, he always looks like a man with a good reason to be smiling. He is a wealthy man who unapologetically preaches that God has blessed him, with the added bonus that God can bless anyone else, too. The promise of the prosperity gospel is that it has found a formula that guarantees that God always blesses the righteous with health, wealth and happiness. For that reason, churchgoers love to see their preachers thrive as living embodiments of their own message. But the inequality that makes Osteen an inspiration is also what makes him an uncomfortable representation of the deep chasms in the land of opportunity between the haves and the have-nots. When the floodwaters rise, no one wants to see him float by on his yacht, as evidenced by the Christian satire website the Babylon Bee's shot Tuesday at Osteen: “Joel Osteen Sails Luxury Yacht Through Flooded Houston To Pass Out Copies Of ‘Your Best Life Now.’ ”



**Number 2.** There is a lingering controversy around prosperity megachurches and their charitable giving. When a church that places enormous theological weight on tithes and offerings is not a leader in charitable giving, the most obvious question is about who is the primary beneficiary of the prosperity gospel? The everyman or the man at the front?

**Number 3.** For many Christians, in particular, the prosperity gospel has an unpopular answer to the problem of evil in the world. Its central claim — “Everyone can be prosperous!”—contains its own conundrum. How do you explain the persistence of suffering? It might be easier to say to someone undergoing a divorce that there is something redemptive about the lessons they learned, but what about a child with cancer? This week, the prosperity gospel came face-to-face with its own theological limits. It was unable to answer the lingering questions around what theologians call “natural evil.” There is a natural curiosity about how someone like Osteen will react in the face of indiscriminate disaster. Is God separating the sheep from the goats? Will only the houses of the ungodly be flooded? The prosperity gospel has never found a robust way to address tragedy when their own theology touts that “Everything Happens for a Reason.”

The good news is that the prosperity gospel, as a movement, is still young. It still has time to be ready when the next natural disaster strikes and people want to be assured that their religious giants are offering more than their thoughts and prayers.

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## Insights from scholars on Accommodation

Broadly speaking there are 2 different approaches to accommodation

### 1) Accommodation without scientific and historical errors

John Calvin hasn't been the only Christian to speak about accommodation without errors of science or history. The passage below is from Conservative Evangelical Christian thinker Norman Geisler.<sup>1</sup> He speaks about two views of accommodation theory:

... accommodation theory can refer to either of two views, one acceptable and one objectionable to evangelical Christians. It can refer to God's accommodation of his revelation to our finite circumstances to communicate with us, as in Scripture or the incarnation of Christ. Negative critics of the Bible believe that Jesus accommodated himself to the erroneous views of the Jews of his day in their view of Scripture as inspired and infallible. Orthodox scholars reject this form of accommodation.

Legitimate accommodation can be more accurately called "adaptation." God, because of infinitude, adapts himself to our finite understanding in order to reveal himself. However, the God who is truth never accommodates himself to human error. ... For God cannot err (Heb. 6:18). God uses anthropomorphisms (a true expression of who God is that is couched in human terms) to speak to us, but he does not use myths. He sometimes gives us only part of the truth but that partial truth is never error (1 Cor. 13:12). He reveals himself progressively, but never erroneously. He does not always tell us all, but all that he tells us is true.

State in your own words why Geisler believes that accommodation never involves historical and scientific errors.

<sup>1</sup> Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 1998)

## 2. Accommodation with scientific and historical errors

Not all Christians agree with the view above. Reformed theologian Peter Enns presents a different view of accommodation:

Scripture is a collection of a variety of writings that necessarily and unashamedly reflects the worlds in which those writings were produced. The implication of this metaphor is that an understanding of those historical settings can and should affect interpretive conclusions. This process, I believe, is what is presumed when we are dealing with a God who, in Christ, seems to be quite ready and willing to walk among us rather than keep his distance.<sup>2</sup>

This is what it means for God to speak at a certain time and place—he enters *their* world. He speaks and acts in ways that make sense to *them*. This is surely what it means for God to reveal himself to people—he accommodates, condescends, meets them where they are. The phrase *word of God* does not imply disconnectedness to its environment. In fact, if we can learn a lesson from the incarnation of God in Christ, it demands the exact opposite. And if God was willing and ready to adopt an ancient way of thinking, we truly hold a very low view of Scripture indeed if we make that into a point of embarrassment. We will not understand the Bible if we push aside or explain away its cultural setting, even if that setting disturbs us. We should, rather, learn to be thankful that God came to them just as he did more fully in Bethlehem many, many centuries later. We must resist the notion that for God to enculturate himself is somehow beneath him. This is precisely how he shows his love to the world he made.<sup>3</sup>

To be understood, he condescends to the conventions and conditions of those to whom he is revealing himself. The word of God cannot be kept safe from the rough-and-tumble drama of human history. For the Bible to be the word of God implies the exact opposite.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, the great British Evangelical thinker C. S. Lewis extols this second type of accommodation:

The human qualities of the raw materials show through. Naïvety, error, contradiction, even (as in the cursing Psalms) wickedness are not removed. The total result is not “the Word of

<sup>2</sup> Peter Enns in *Five Views on Biblical Inerrancy* (Counterpoints: Bible and Theology) (Grand Rapids, Mi.: Zondervan. Kindle Edition., 115.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament*, (Grand Rapids Mi.: Baker, 2005, p. 56

<sup>4</sup> Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation*, 109.

God” in the sense that every passage, in itself, gives impeccable science or history. It [the Bible] carries the Word of God; and we (under grace, with attention to tradition and to interpreters wiser than ourselves, and with the use of such intelligence and learning as we may have) receive that word from it not by using it as an encyclopedia or an encyclical but by steeping ourselves in its tone or temper and so learning its overall message...<sup>5</sup>

Now, put this second kind of accommodation into your own words:

<sup>5</sup>C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (San Diego: Harcourt, 1986), 111–12.

## **A Priest Rejects Feminist Charge that the Church is Patriarchal**

### ***Lines of argument that can be used for one side in a question about Christianity and Patriarchy***

This past year I was in a dialogue with a Catholic Priest about the Eduqas Specification. He rejects feminist theology on the grounds listed below. Though I disagree with his overall point of view, I list his points here as any of these can be used by students as lines of arguments to counter the claim that the church is irredeemably patriarchal:

- I've just had an essay from a boy on the ordination of women saying the contribution of women has been ignored in the Church. There is certainly truth in that, but paradoxically, to make that point seems to be to commit it. What about St Hilda and the Synod of Whitby? - I always point out that that is probably the most important Synod in English history.
- Or Catherine of Siena telling the pope to return to Rome?
- Medieval abbesses turn out to have been pretty powerful at times.
- There is a case to be made for saying that the Protestant Reformation, by getting rid of monasteries, undermined women's roles and "reduced" them to the position of being wives and mothers.
- The Enlightenment with its emphasis on reason (and its unreasonable assumption that women were less reasonable) made the problem worse by marginalising women for being unreasonable.
- Mary's role is significant. We just celebrated the feast of the founders of the Servite order, founded in the 13th Century as servants of the Blessed Virgin Mary – all the founders were male (although the family includes women too). The idea that Mary is a model for all - men as well - is not a new or marginal idea. However, although Mary is universal in some sense, she is not the only model. Von Balthasar traces a range of profiles from the NT on how to be a Christian: Marian, Petrine, Pauline, Johannine, while more modern writers have created very useable models themselves.
- Sometimes the complaint is made that Mary is a bad role model for women because she is about humility and obedience. But she is not about humility and obedience because she is a woman (and so "should" be docile). Rather Mary is about humility and obedience because Christ is about humility and obedience (Phil. 2.5-8). The point being that through humility and obedience, one becomes properly powerful (Phil. 2.9-11). And since Mary followed Christ in humility and obedience more closely than any other saint, she is the most powerful of all the saints (which is why Catholics desire her prayers more than those of any other saint, including powerful office holders like St Peter).

- Of these, St Therese of Lisieux is the outstanding example ("the greatest saint of modern times" as Pope St Pius X called her). Where would we be without St Teresa of Avila?
- So while there is a problem with the Church's attitude to women (John Paul II apologised for it) there is also a paradox involved ignoring the contribution of women while complaining about it!
- What I am saying is this: there are serious problems with the Church's treatment of women, but the solutions are inherent in the revelation and tradition itself, and to ignore these solutions and the contributions women have made is to risk a very paradoxical form of misogyny.