

# THE CHURCH

## INTRODUCTION

The theologian Professor Dennis Hollinger (1948-) has taken both evidential and cumulative case apologetics, combined them and narrowed them down to arrive at a different form of apologetics, which draws upon the Church as evidence for God's existence.

He argues that the existence of God can be demonstrated by studying the Christian Church. He states that by studying the Church we can find five different dimensions in support of this.

These are:

- The narrative dimension – the Christian narrative – in particular the Gospel – is the one that gives the best meaning and direction for our lives.
- The cognitive dimension – the Christian faith isn't just an abstract concept. Rather, it has a real impact on Christian's lives and therefore, demonstrates something of God.
- The symbolic dimension – through the symbolism of the Church eternal truths are revealed, for example the Eucharist.
- The life experience dimension – God is evidenced by the outworking of Christians.
- The moral behaviour dimension – Christianity offers the best way to understand human behaviour, evil and suffering.

These five dimensions all demonstrate the character and workings of God and provide evidence for his existence.

## TASK

1. Summarise Hollinger's views in your own words.
2. Do you consider Hollinger's views to be valid in supporting the idea that God exists? Why or why not? Explain your answer.
3. Which do you think is the most persuasive of the modern arguments?
  - Evidential?
  - Cumulative Case?
  - Church?

Explain your answer.