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I feared that reading Judy Steel’s autobiography, *Mama Jude*, would be a miserable and painful experience. I was sure that this “seemingly ordinary woman from Adelaide” would, in fact, be an impossibly saintly woman whose goodness would fill me with guilt, rather than inspire me to faithfulness. So I was relieved to discover as I read that while Judy Steel is an exceptional woman who does remarkable things, when the story begins she is very ordinary. After working as a nurse for nearly forty years, she planned, like many other Australians, to fill her retirement years with leisure, hobbies and family declaring that “when I retired I was definitely *not* going to be a volunteer.”

Despite her resolve, there was an unconventional retirement plan in store for Steel that took her to Uganda. Steel writes of how this change of plans coincided with, and was largely caused by, a shift in her spiritual journey. Throughout her life she was, in her own words, a person who was “not overly religious” but who had “never stopped loving God.” However, through a series of life events, Steel came to believe that God was real, personal and demanded something more from her than a vague sense of him and comfortable compassion towards others. So, at the age of 56, Steel arrived at a slum in Kampala, Uganda and since then she has co-founded the Uganda Australia Christian Outreach (UACO), which has overseen the development of a primary health care clinic, youth group, widows’ support group, AIDS support group, adult literacy centre, micro-loan scheme and a centre for physiotherapy, counselling and family planning.

*Mama Jude* is uplifting in its reassurance that humans are capable of genuine goodness. Particularly inspiring is Edward Ssembatya, a Ugandan doctor. Judy Steel writes that in her time in Uganda she saw “the heights and depths of humanity”.

Some stories in this book are harrowing reminders of the desperate evil humans are capable of committing against one another. Other stories are reminders of the magnitude of suffering in Uganda, most notably that of eighty-eight year-old Anthony who cares for his six great-grandchildren because the intervening generations of his family have been wiped out by AIDS. Steel gives her readers the opportunity to feel the sorrow and injustice of the world without rushing to provide answers or to supply counter-balancing stories of hope.

She is refreshingly normal, a far cry from the inaccessible, ultra-holy narrator I dreaded. She gets frustrated, tired and disillusioned; she enjoys luxuries, misses her family, and questions God’s plans and purposes. In one beautifully human moment she discloses: “I still was unsure exactly what my path would be... To be honest, part of me yearned for an easier road to walk.” Steel does not seem like she is made from holier stuff than the rest of us, but rather that she has made a choice of reckless obedience to God, out of love for others. Her story is staggering precisely because she is so ordinary and because this story could, and perhaps should, be the story of more of our lives.

*(An article at publicchristianity.org by Kate Wilcox, edited by C Tucker)*

**Compare the story of Judy Steel’s life to the story of your life.**

Include:

* A description of the key ideas raised in this quote
* A discussion of the impact of God on Steel’s life and your life
* An evaluation of whether the ideas raised in the quote matter and a description of the evidence you have to support your conclusions.

**HOW TO STRUCTURE YOUR ESSAY**

You will need 5 paragraphs. Write the topics of your 5 paragraphs below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Paragraph **1** |  |
| Paragraph **2** |  |
| Paragraph **3** |  |
| Paragraph **4** |  |

**INTRODUCTION**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Argument  | State your main point in one sentence |  |
| Points in support | List the points you will use to support your argument (you should have 5 – one from each paragraph) | 1.2.3.4. |

**Use the same structure for each of your five paragraphs:**

**PARAGRAPH 1**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Topic sentence  | Explain the key idea of your paragraph |  |
| Explanation | -Key points - Evidence to support your point- any relevant definitions or explanations of key terms- judgment and criteria to support |  |
| Relate / link  | Relate the paragraph back to the question or link to the next paragraph -not always necessary |  |

**PARAGRAPH 2**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Topic sentence  | Explain the key idea of your paragraph |  |
| Explanation | -Key points - Evidence to support your point- any relevant definitions or explanations of key terms- judgment and criteria to support |  |
| Relate / link  | Relate the paragraph back to the question or link to the next paragraph -not always necessary |  |

**PARAGRAPH 3**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Topic sentence  | Explain the key idea of your paragraph |  |
| Explanation | -Key points - Evidence to support your point- any relevant definitions or explanations of key terms- judgment and criteria to support |  |
| Relate / link  | Relate the paragraph back to the question or link to the next paragraph -not always necessary |  |

**PARAGRAPH 4**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Topic sentence  | Explain the key idea of your paragraph |  |
| Explanation | -Key points - Evidence to support your point- any relevant definitions or explanations of key terms- judgment and criteria to support |  |
| Relate / link  | Relate the paragraph back to the question or link to the next paragraph -not always necessary |  |

**CONCLUSION**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Argument  | State your argument in one sentence |  |
| Points in support |  List the points you supported your argument with (you should have 5 – one from each paragraph) |  |
| Relate / link  | Relate the argument back to the question or make a final remark |  |

**SHORT ESSAY PLAN**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **INTRODUCTION** |  |
| Argument |  |
| Points in support | 1. |
|  | 2. |
|  | 3. |
|  | 4. |
|  | 5. |
| **PARAGRAPH 1** |  |
| Topic sentence |  |
| Explanation |  |
| Relate/Link |  |
| **PARAGRAPH 2** |  |
| Topic sentence |  |
| Explanation |  |
| Relate/Link |  |
| **PARAGRAPH 3** |  |
| Topic sentence |  |
| Explanation |  |
| Relate/Link |  |
| **PARAGRAPH 4** |  |
| Topic sentence |  |
| Explanation |  |
| Relate/Link |  |
| **CONCLUSION** |  |
| Argument |  |
| Points in support | 1. |
|  | 2. |
|  | 3. |
|  | 4. |
|  | 5. |
| Relate/link |  |

**Feedback**

 Name:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Issue** | **No attempt** | **Poor** | **Satisfactory** | **Good** | **Excellent** |
| FORM |
| Essay form |  |  |  |  |  |
| Use of paragraphs |  |  |  |  |  |
| Clarity of expression |  |  |  |  |  |
| Uses Christian terminology and concepts |  |  |  |  |  |
| Appropriate essay plan attached |  |  |  |  |  |
| SUBSTANCE |
| Use of a criteria (implicit or explicit) to make judgments/ quality of discussion |  |  |  |  |  |
| Relevance of information |  |  |  |  |  |
| Analyses a variety of viewpoints and ideas |  |  |  |  |  |

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| --- |
| **Marking Criteria**  |
| * Demonstrates excellent understanding of all aspects of the question
* Presents a balanced and detailed discussion about the quote
* Integrates relevant evidence and/or definitions and/or ideas and/or key concepts
* Presents a sustained, logical and well-structured answer using relevant terminology and concepts
 | 21–25 |
| * Demonstrates excellent understanding of most aspects of the question
* Presents a detailed discussion about the quote
* Uses relevant evidence and/or definitions and/or ideas and/or key concepts
* Presents a logical and well-structured answer using relevant terminology and concepts
 | 16–20 |
| * Addresses some aspects of the question
* Refers to the quote (explicitly or implicitly)
* Cites some relevant evidence and/or definitions and/or ideas and/or key concepts
* Presents a structured answer using relevant terminology and concepts
 | 11–15 |
| * Makes reference to key Christian concepts and/or ethical frameworks
* May make reference to the quote
* Makes limited reference to evidence and/or definitions and/or ideas and/or key concepts
* Uses some appropriate terminology and/or concepts
 | 6–10 |
| * Makes a general statement about Christianity
* May make limited reference to evidence and/or definitions and/or ideas and/or key concepts
* Makes limited reference to information/terms, which may not be correct/appropriate
 | 1–5 |