

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2011

GCE Religious Studies
6RS02_1G
The Study of Christianity and
the Christian Church

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AREA 1G - Christianity

Introduction

General Comments

The Investigations Paper of June 2011 demonstrated a high level of scholarship evident across all areas of study and many responses demonstrated the engagement that candidates had with their area of investigation. The enthusiasm for and knowledge of the chosen topic was clearly conveyed in many responses that were truly academic in their approach. Candidates were very well prepared for the examination and it was evident that Centres used their specialist resources and interests to encourage candidates to research in depth a particular area of study. It is important to stress again that the 'Investigations' unit has a definite academic purpose. The aim is to involve candidates as active participants pursuing open-ended enquiries with an emphasis on independent learning. Questions were designed to be inclusive of all possible approaches to various topics and all valid answers were considered.

Whilst most centres had entered their candidates for the correct option there were still a few entries for particular areas of study where consideration regarding entry for a different area of study may have been beneficial to the candidate. It is important to ensure candidates know which areas of their investigation is the best fit for the question they answer on the paper. There was evidence of candidates choosing a different question on the paper to the question they had clearly prepared for before the examination.

Candidates were not penalised if correct entries were not made or a cross was put in a box that did not match the answer. Examiners were encouraged to mark positively. Centres should ensure that candidates are entered for the option that matches their area of study and that candidates are clear about which question they have been prepared for on the paper.

Variation in achievement was related to the two assessment objectives. These objectives should receive prominent attention in the process of the investigation. Each question consistently referred to the assessment objectives with the trigger word 'Examine' for AO1 and 'Comment on' for AO2. These dictated the structure of the question and helped candidates to plan their answers. It would be advisable for candidates to pay regular attention to the level descriptors for these assessment objectives as a way of monitoring their development and progress during their investigations. The phrase 'with reference to the topic you have investigated' will always appear in the question to ensure that the generic question can be answered with material from any appropriate investigation. The mark scheme itself is generic to all questions. In preparation for this examination candidates may find it useful to write up their investigation under exam timed conditions to a variety of different possible questions. They might build up a number of different essay plans to different possible questions. The important point in these activities is to enable candidates to develop their management of material such as how to best structure their content to answer the specific question. However, success can be undermined by writing up a rote-

learnt answer which was not adapted to the question set or by answering a question that has been written for a topic they have not studied.

6RS02 reports features work produced by the candidates in the actual examination for candidates in Area 1A, 1B and 1C where possible. Areas 1D, 1E, 1F and 1G have smaller entries and the style of report is briefer for these areas of study.

Area 1G The Study of Christianity and the Christian Church

Question 1 Development of the Church up to and Including the Reformation

Many candidates are very well versed in Church History and the most popular topics included a study of early church History and the establishment of the Creeds, the Crusades, Calvin, Luther and Gregorian Reform. There were some very good examples demonstrating strong knowledge of the topic studied. The most popular topic was the study of Calvin or Luther's ideas. Most candidates paid close attention to the question and used the material they had investigated effectively. They were confident with their knowledge of Christian Theology and were able to draw out the significance of the material they were using. However, some candidates missed opportunities for independent comment on their material. Achievement can be depressed if candidates offer AO1 material that is not commented on.

Question 2 The Modern Period

There were some interesting studies on Black Theology and Liberation Theology; as also studies on social justice through the perspective of the Rights of Women. The studies on Black Theology and Liberation Theology were well informed and at the higher end candidates addressed the question. Some weaker responses spoke about the nature of Jesus as a model for Black Theology and opportunities to contrast this contribution with other theologies were missed as there is a case for considering the influence on and place for this theology in mainstream Christianity. The majority of responses to this question used a range of material that was well suited for this unit.

Question 3 CHRISTIAN BELIEF AND PRACTICE

There were a variety of responses to this question; some candidates discussed homosexuality and sexual ethics and others discussed Bonhoeffer as an exemplar of Christian belief and practice. The range of topics studied for this unit appears to be narrow. The best answers were full of contemporary scholarship.

It is worth noting that some topics share generic ideas across a number of different areas and it is vital that candidates know the distinctive features of their investigation for example the material on homosexuality could also be used to address Area 1C Question 1. A feature of Area 1G would be the emphasis on Christian Theology and whilst candidates are free to choose their material the answer must show specific knowledge of Christianity and the Christian Church. Responses which expound ethical theory at the expense of Christian theology will not meet fully the distinctive demands of this unit.

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