

Examiners' Report/  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

GCE Religious Studies 6RS02

Paper 1G

Study of Christianity

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## **AREA 1G Christianity**

### **Introduction**

#### GENERAL COMMENTS

The Investigations Paper continues to draw from an inspiring range of topics within a wide range of varied academic fields. The high standard of work evidenced in June 2013 was no exception to historical high standards as candidates demonstrated a very high level of independent student enquiry which clearly showed their engagement with their area of investigation. Their knowledge of a particular academic field was evidenced in the way they independently used and evaluated a wide range of source material. The enthusiasm for and knowledge of the chosen topic was clearly conveyed in many answers that were truly academic in their approach. Some Centres chose to focus on the same or similar topics for all their candidates, whereas other Centres permitted considerable choice for individual candidates. 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 students 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 area 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. In some of these cases the candidate was using material suitable for Question 1 to answer Question 3 (or vice versa) and not really grappling fully with the demands of the question. This practice does not always work to the best effect as the candidate might end up answering neither question as fully as possible. Candidates were not penalised if correct entries were not made or a cross was put in a box that did not match the answer or if no box was ticked at all. Examiners were encouraged to mark positively and to credit all valid material according to the mark scheme and question paper. 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. There is still evidence of Centres studying Papers 1B and 1F being entered for 1A. This might be an oversight regarding filling out the form – Centres must choose 6RS02 and then identify which of the seven papers from 1A to 1G is the specific entry.

Variation in achievement was related to the two assessment objectives. These objectives should receive prominent attention in the process of the investigation. Importantly there must be explicit attention to these objectives in the examination answer and also to the question that is intended to focus the answer. 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 but the answer itself is not necessarily generic as candidates are expected to use their material to answer the question. The purpose of the question is to challenge candidates to adapt their material so that at the highest levels they may demonstrate a coherent understanding of the task based on the selection of their material. Widely deployed evidence/arguments/sources were evident in well structured responses to the task whereby a clearly expressed viewpoint was supported by well-deployed evidence and reasoned argument. There was skilful deployment of religious language in many answers and the fluency of good essays showed command over the material; such command makes for high outcomes and rewards the amount of hard work done by the candidate.

Candidates at the lower end of achievement struggled with the demands of the question. In preparation for this examination some 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-learned 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. There was evidence of rote learned answers using the same structure and material inclusive of quotes; whilst much information was relevant to the topic and consequently was awarded in terms of AO1, there was a significant lack of engagement with the specific demands of the question and consequently marks for AO2 were low, with only generic evaluation provided. This approach is contrasted with another form where candidates were trained to answer the question; arguably, this is evidence of good practice but at the lower end some candidates thought it was sufficient to simply use the question stimulus at the end of each paragraph. The best answers were those which were guided by the statement as opposed to simply '*tagging it on*' to content that they were already anticipating what to write about. A balanced approach to the question that meets the highest levels of achievement according to both assessment objectives is obviously desirable and the generic question accommodates many possible routes to success whereby any valid approach to the question was credited.

## **Specific Comments – Area 1G – The Study of Christianity and the Christian Church**

### Question 1 DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHURCH UP TO AND INCLUDING THE REFORMATION

The majority of candidates did very well in this question and demonstrated detailed knowledge of the topic studied. Candidates are very well versed in Church History and diverse topics included studies of early Church History and the establishment of the Creeds, the Crusades, Calvin, Luther and Gregorian Reform. Other topics such as the Cathar movement, Monasticism (the desert Fathers) and the Anabaptist movement were investigated. 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. There was evidence of candidates who were following the same structure, used the same quotes and who missed opportunities for independent comment on their material. This approach to the Investigations Unit is to be discouraged as achievement can be depressed if candidates offer AO1 material that is not commented on. Candidates are not marked down for presenting similar material but they are expected to fulfil the demands of both assessment objectives.

### Question 2 THE MODERN PERIOD

There were some interesting studies on Thomas Merton, the Catholic Church in Ireland, 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. There was a tendency for weaker candidates to make sweeping statements 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. It was good to see that the majority of responses to this question used a range of material that was well suited for this unit.

### Question 3 CHRISTIAN BELIEFS AND PRACTICE

There were a variety of traditional responses to this question such as homosexuality and sexual ethics, or Bonhoeffer in the context of Nazism as an exemplar of Christian belief and practice. The range of topics studied for this unit remains lamentably narrow and an original topic on Christianity and sport that was introduced last year did not reappear. However, another new topic appeared this year on social justice that was very well executed. It is good to see the expertise that the best candidates have in their investigation and the best answers are full of contemporary scholarship.

There is not much evidence of mid-range answers for this unit and the following point is to be strongly made for weak candidates who might have fared better if they were entered for a different paper.

Issues that are noted each year continue to persist at the lower range of achievement; 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. Candidates who expound ethical theory at the expense of Christian theology are not meeting fully the distinctive demands of this unit.

## Exemplar

In relation to Christian belief and practice I will focus specifically on the topic of poverty and wealth. I will examine and comment on teachings from the Gospels of Mark and Luke and the book of Revelation and the Epistles. From a Catholic perspective I will look at the Catholic Social Teaching and from a contemporary perspective I will look at C.A.F.O.D. and Protestant Aid-charities which give an angle from both a protestant and Catholic perspective.

~~Also~~ As technology is being rapidly produced in this modern day society, many people are influenced by the media, ~~with which~~ such as radio broadcasts, advertisement, games shows such as 'The Chase' or 'Deal or No Deal' which glorify and exploit money as a great achievement. This leads modern society into temptation and encourages society to become obsessive with wealth. In Luke 12:15 Jesus warns against greed. John B. Cobb argued that 'economism

which ruled western society and throughout much of the east indirectly opposed Christian doctrine. He argued and invoked the teaching that 'men cannot serve both God and Mammon.' This derives from Luke 16:13. Mahoney states that Christians experiencing wealth can often feel 'uneasy and ~~not~~ troubled in conscience.' This teaching is supported in Mark 10:23. It opens up the question of whether poor Christians are more faithful than wealthy Christians.

In ~~the~~ Cosimo Perrotta is a focus of classic Christian views, Cosimo Perrotta describes the early Christian period in one which saw three great cultures: the Hebrew, the Christian and the Classical. These cultures all had different views on wealth. The Hebrew prized wealth whereas the Christian and the Classical either held them in contempt or preached indifference to them. Perrotta's views can be seen as Greco-Roman attitudes that would pass on and influence Christian culture.

Alan Kahan described ~~the~~ Platonic Plato's emphatic distaste for wealth. The Platonic view was that the soul was above the body and money was below both at Plato. Kahan argues

that this view is one that would go down in Christian moral tradition. However ~~we~~ there is much argument to suggest modern society views ~~wealth~~ wealth within their soul. Many Philosophers expanded on this view such as Aristotle who Kahan describes as giving a more influential view to modern society. The Aristotle distinguishes between the making of money to satisfy needs and the accumulation of money for its own sake. ~~The~~ Kahan argues this to be a Greek attitude and criticises ~~of~~ Greek attitudes of being ~~of~~ of ~~too~~ 'wanting ~~too~~ money too much'.

~~Cicero~~ Cicero adopted Greek attitudes and stated that 'farming... is the most worthy of a free man? This is metaphorical to suggest that wealth isn't a sin if you make money for the good of others. Kahan to some extent agrees with Cicero and states Roman attitudes of generosity 'Shouldn't be the cause of poverty?'

New testament scripture is ~~also~~ essential to view the ~~the~~ traditional biblical teachings of poverty and wealth and to examine to what extent ~~people~~ modern society stick to these teachings. In Mark 10:19 Manumon is personified as riches in opposition to God. Many Christians endure in their love for riches and on

be criticised as they claimed to worship God. This view <sup>of Christian practice</sup> ~~does not~~ to an extent seem to fit with teachings and modern society. Luke 12:34 ~~is~~ the parable of the sower on the mount outlined where Jesus tells his hearers to ~~not~~ <sup>give</sup> their earthly goods to the poor and they will be presented with a 'treasure in heaven that will never fail'. However many people in modern society view materialistic treasures as the ~~best~~ treasure and this creates a barrier between themselves and God. In Luke 12:16 - the parable of the rich fool. Jesus tells the rich man who has enough grain ~~to~~ that he wants to sit back and take life easy that 'the love of the farmer is not with him'. He is a fool because when he died he will leave ~~not~~ nothing. This ~~is~~ seems to be the attitude of many Christians ~~and~~ today who force retirement. This suggests that the modern day government who allow this ~~see~~ do not understand the teachings of Christianity and ~~their~~ ~~Christian~~ Christians who do this do not practice their beliefs.

In the Epistles Paul states that riches denote the character and activity to God and Christ - spiritual blessings of salvation. Although he sometimes refers to Corcos - Roman

moral teachings e.g. generosity with warnings of greed and pride seems to reflect the Cynic - Stoic moral teaching of the period - 'the love of ~~gold~~ riches is the root of all kinds of evil.' Paul described generosity as being the key to devotion to the church. In the ~~of~~ Epistles of James and John it is denounced that ~~was~~ 'if anyone loves the world, the love of the father is not with them?' The Epistles of James stands out for its condemnation of the oppressive rich.

The ~~book~~ book of Revelation bears earthly goods and commercial activity with great ambivalence. In revelation 3:17 Jesus is portrayed as the source and dispenser of all wealth. In contrast the revelation 21:18 is seen ~~as~~ as a critique to this view point as it gives Jerusalem a lavish materialistic description 'made of pure gold and decorated with every kind of precious stone?' This leads onto the modern argument and ~~this~~ criticism that the church is contradictory of its teachings. The Catholic Church alone is worth 3000 billion US dollars and the Vatican city is worth a 2.5% of this. ~~How~~ However many people will argue these figures

niches are used to provide a place of worship and help charitable organisations and help Christians who need it.

~~To view~~ In examination of Christian practice today it is important to examine Christian practice in a historical period such as the Patristic Era. In the Patristic ~~to~~ era Church fathers viewed property as ~~the~~ 'a great evil resulting in the fall of men'. ~~The~~ St. Augustine urged Christians to turn away from desire for their riches and success and argued the ~~accumulation~~ accumulation of wealth is not a worthy good for Christians. ~~The~~ The Clement of Alexandria supported this view and ~~counselled~~ counselled that property only be used for the good of the community. Another period to examine is the ~~the~~ Medieval era in Europe. At the beginning of the Medieval era Christian paternalistic ethic was ~~to~~ 'thoroughly entrenched in the culture of western Europe'. Individual pursuits such as greed, <sup>and</sup> avarice ~~&~~ the accumulation of wealth were condemned as unchristian. St. Aquinas argued that avarice was an ~~inordinate~~ inordinate desire for Christians. ~~The~~ ~~medieval~~ ~~the~~ Aquinas however accepted the making

of riches to maintain the 'Condition of life'?

This view has been criticised as it suggests that the nobility had more right to riches ~~to~~ and more money than the peasantry to maintain their condition of life, however it is successful in that <sup>maintainably</sup> the condition of life allows Christians to maintain necessary essentials.

The Medieval ~~era~~ <sup>era</sup> is one which saw a turn ~~of~~ and desire for riches for Christians and at one point the <sup>Christian</sup> Church owned 20-30% of land in Western Europe. This is criticised by many and ~~to~~ led to much reform.

From a Catholic perspective the Catholic Social teaching is one in which many Christians ~~and Catholics~~ <sup>and Catholics</sup> believed and practice more ~~moderately~~ <sup>moderately</sup>. The Catholic

Social Teaching is a body of doctrine developed by the Catholic Church and part of its ~~of~~ matter is poverty and wealth.

Its ~~base~~ <sup>foundations</sup> are said to have come from Pope Leo XII's encyclical letter 'Rerum Novarum' ~~with~~ <sup>in</sup> which advocated economic distribution ~~and~~ and condemned Capitalism and Socialism. However its roots are said to be traced back to Catholic thinkers such as Aquinas and Augustine. ~~And~~ also derived from biblical scripture!

Pope John Paul II stated that its roots are 'human dignity, solidarity and Subsidiarity'. These concerns echo elements of ~~the~~ Old Testament and New Testament teachings from Jesus ~~Christ~~ Christ such as 'whatever you have done for one of the least of these ~~brothers~~, you have ~~it~~ done for me'. The Catholic Social Teaching argued for the rights of human dignity for the poor. St. Ambrose stated 'the earth belongs ~~to~~ not to the rich but to everyone' and by giving you are 'paying part of your debt.' The ~~Cat~~ Catechesis Catechism of the Catholic Church taught that ~~the~~ 'love for the poor is ~~incomparable~~ <sup>incomparable</sup> with the immoderate love of the richest'.

~~This is an~~ The Catholic teaching presents and argument to suggest that the modern <sup>Christian</sup> society ~~should~~ adopt and practice their beliefs and teachings. This is shown in the example of the Charity C.A.F.O.D. - the Catholic association for overseas development. ~~The~~ C.A.F.O.D. workers state that the Catholic Social teaching is at the heart and of what we do and who we are! ~~The~~ C.A.F.O.D. helps poverty and wealth in many christian countries. Liverpool C.A.F.O.D. worker James Tyrrell

states that 'we do this with the help of Christian love! C.A.F.O.D. is inspired by 'Biblical, Scripture, the Catholic Social Teaching and the experiences and hopes of people in poverty'.

C.A.F.O.D. has here recently launched two campaigns. 'Thirst for Change' in 2011 and 'Hungry for Change' in 2012. This was no campaign to help the needs of those in poverty in third world countries and was supported by many Christians which can argue that Christians in modern society ~~are~~ are not out of touch with their belief and practice. C.A.F.O.D.

~~is~~ ~~recently~~ ~~is~~ currently supporting the 'What IF' campaign concerning the needs of those in third world countries. This is also supported by Christian Aid and Tearfund - who have the same moral concerns. In support of this C.A.F.O.D. is producing a weekly reflection based on the line of the Our Father - the Lords prayer - 'Give us our daily bread'.

Again, this is an argument to support that Modern Society ~~that~~ still takes their Christian belief and practice seriously as they reflect a modern organisation shows reflection of biblical scripture. Protestant Aid is a protestant charity which has with the motto 'Care and

Compassion since 1896.' This charity focus on ~~not~~ the ~~national~~ international needs but the national needs of those in poverty in northern Ireland. ~~Protestant~~ Protestant Aid welcomes <sup>and provides help to</sup> anyone and any family of any faith in financial struggle. This is another argument to suggest that Christian belief and practice fits with modern society.

However, ~~another~~ a further critique ~~to add~~ is ~~to~~ Gandhi. Who argued that Christians ~~do not~~ and Christian dominated countries do not fit with the belief that Christians can not worship both God and Mammon - Luke 16:13. Gandhi stated 'I like your Christ. I do not like your Christians. ~~your~~ Your Christians are so unlike your Christ.' Gandhi's view that Christians ~~a~~ doing in Christian culture seem to worship Mammon ~~and~~ as well as God - a view that is not possible in Christian belief is true to some extent. As many ~~Christians~~ <sup>in</sup> modern society claim they are Christians but worship ~~on~~ materialism. However Gandhi's view can be criticised as it speaks of all Christians and this can be seen as unfair as many ~~Christians~~ Christians completely worship God and drop their riches for God.

~~to~~ can it is logical to conclude that many modern society Christians are led into temptation ~~to~~ <sup>of</sup> such material ~~goods~~ goods that ~~are~~ surround ~~from~~ the modern culture. However modern culture presents certain expectations such as going to work and earning income for family and many Christians feel it is acceptable to reward themselves with a material good after long hard work, yet still pray, worship and thank Christ. This demonstrates that ~~modern~~ so Christian traditional beliefs and practices ~~are~~ ~~not~~ ~~still~~ ~~it~~ have been slightly altered in the minds of Christians. It can be supported that Christians who worship God and are thankful are not sinful in maintaining their riches - supported by Aquinas's theory to maintain the 'Condition of life'. Also Cicero's argument that presents wealth isn't a sin if you make money by working for the good of others suggests that Christians in modern society do fit with their beliefs and practices. It seems it is ~~those who~~ those Christians who ~~think~~ think in terms of ~~the~~ hierarchy and ignore the platonic view ~~of~~ that money is below the soul and the body who ~~do not~~ are out of touch.

with their claimed belief. And those who present these hierarchy as Money at the top and worship at the bottom are condemned as dechristian. Perhaps ~~however~~ however the ~~modern~~ modern society is blamed for this as the ~~last~~ production of materials to create great temptation and obsession to riches. It is those Christians who resist this temptation and stick to their ~~for~~ lords ~~and~~ prayer - 'lead us not into temptation' which are the ones ~~that~~ who can take their ~~modern~~ ~~&~~ belief and practice seriously ~~and~~ ~~and~~ at the same time as keeping in touch with modern society.

This is a comprehensive essay on social justice that answered the question with close attention to detail. The candidate showed a coherent understanding of the task and selected material from Christian sources to demonstrate emphasis and clarity of ideas.

#### Advice for candidates:

- Do not ignore the question; manage your material to focus on the demands of the question.
- Use appropriate sources and, if possible, include recent scholarship.
- Demonstrate how well you understand the topic by your selection of material.
- Do not forget to comment on your material. Show that you have thought about your research.
- Use your evidence to substantiate your argument.
- Comment on alternative views if you know them.
- Express your viewpoint clearly with academic humility.
- Practice writing under timed conditions as part of your preparation.
- Do not spend too long writing out your essay plan to the detriment of the essay itself.
- Spell key terms and key scholars correctly.

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