



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

Pearson Edexcel GCE
In Religious Studies (6RS04)
Paper 1D Implications – Christianity

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2017 Report on 6RS04

With some thoughts on the Anthology in the new Spec.

Introduction:

There were a significant proportion of scripts that were truly excellent. Examiners had opportunities to read outstanding scripts showing independent thought. Credit should be given to candidates and their teachers who have prepared the thoroughly, fostered a love of the subject and nurtured degrees of insightfulness. Candidates used a variety of methods in their answers to these textual questions. Some concentrated almost entirely on the selected passage, analysing each part and referring to their wider knowledge. Others set the passage within the context of the overall article illustrating key points from the passage itself. Whatever method is used the fundamental requirement is an examination of the passage. These principles will apply to the anthology passages used in the new Spec in the compulsory questions taken from the Anthology. (See conclusion below for more on this topic of Anthologies in the new Spec.)

1D Christianity

There were only a small number of entries for Christianity. The best responses identified key areas in the passage selected, and amplified those issues. In contrast, some focused on different passages in the Wainwright article or Preston. In the more accurately focused answers candidates developed notions of 'higher universe' and the realm of the noumenon. These also saw some responses extrapolate upon the wisdom of 'acting accordingly' by following divine law/a moral code and some used their study of Kant well here. Some responses developed the idea of being able to experience this higher universe, either via an analysis of religious experience or belief in life after death. Some candidates made good reference to the views of other faiths regarding these issues and explained how Christianity differed via Jesus being the route to this communion with God and explained the role of Jesus in the Trinity, some with reference to the work of Barth or other modern scholars, and in atonement. Some responses dealt ably with the issues of meaning in religious language and some tied this to the specific challenges of Christianity in relation to the Trinity or particularism in relation to Jesus and salvation.

Weaker responses gave a superficial summary of the whole of Wainwright's article without referring to this specific extract, or simply summarised this extract with no development or reference to other topics of study. The weakest responses dealt primarily with Preston's article and issues of ethical systems to live by, notably in relation to views on homosexuality but without making these relevant to this extract. Where relevant points were made, this material was creditworthy but it seemed that some candidates would have preferred an alternative extract and wrote their prepared essay regardless. Unfortunately, this meant they were unable to score very highly if they did not make that material relevant to this extract; some managed this in places.

There were few very strong attempts to consider implications for human experience or religion which was disappointing. Some candidates assessed

whether the view of Christianity was accurate by discussing alternative views of the Trinity in some groups which was a sound approach. Other responses considered the impact of the view that Christianity was a specific version of a generic conception in relation to missionary work, inter-faith dialogue and multi-faith society which was done well by some. There were some good discussions of the implications of religious language being meaningful/less and the implications for this but few tackled this aspect which could have been a good furrow to plough in relation to implications for religion and human experience if linked to other areas of language. Similarly, with notions of validating reports of religious experience and being able to underpin the veracity of religions.

Overall, there were rather too many very weak answers which did not focus on ideas in the selected extract.