



Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback
Summer 2023

Pearson Edexcel GCE
In Religious Studies AS Level
Paper 4B: Christianity

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications are awarded by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk. Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk

Summer 2023

Publications Code 8RS0_4B_2306_ER

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2023

Introduction

The general understanding of this paper continues to improve year on year and so it was reassuring to note, that most centres have strengthened the preparation of their candidates to meet the criteria of this specification. The candidates who did well demonstrated a personal engagement with the concepts and were also able to develop their responses well. However, there were some candidates who, although they demonstrated knowledge, did not fully articulate this in order to show understanding.

It was encouraging to see that the majority of candidates attempted all the questions.

The questions on the paper this year were:

Q01: Explore key features about the role of prayer for Christians.

Q02: Assess the implications for Christians of their belief in God as Creator.

Q03: Assess the significance of Christian art as a form of creative expression for Christians.

Q04(a): Explore the role of the Bible as a source of authority.

Q04(b): Analyse the strengths of various models of interpretation that might be applied to the Bible.

Better responses were able to establish relevance and this in turn enabled examiners to identify why a particular point had been made. Good candidates clearly reflected on issues, rather than merely learning them, thus providing thoughtful insights. In doing so, they were able to offer effective arguments. Successful candidates were consistent throughout the paper in demonstrating sound knowledge and understanding such as

Question 1

This question was generally answered well by most candidates with a range of knowledge and understanding clearly evident about the key features of prayer. A range of relevant material was offered such as prayer being a central part of Christian life and faith; that prayer encompasses both privately and publicly the act of speaking/communicating with God; and different types of prayer such as petition, praise and intercession.

Weaker answers were brief, generic and lacking specific detail; some only offering various paraphrases of The Lord's Prayer.

Question 2

Most candidates were well informed and assessed aspects of creation *ex nihilo*, the implication of God as sustainer of his creation and better responses engaged with the counter arguments arising from the problem of evil undermining God's creation; the

implication of giving human beings freewill as an aspect of creation was explored by quite a few candidates.

Weaker answers generally offered a descriptive outline/paraphrase of the biblical account of creation.

Question 3

Solid answers offered clear understanding of the question and focused on 'significance'; many were able to demonstrate that expression within art is significant because it can play an essential part for many in Christian devotion; some were able to identify 'significance' in respect of doctrines/beliefs within Christianity, eg nativity/incarnation, crucifixion/atonement, resurrection/life after death etc.

Weaker responses offered merely descriptive material about works of art in particular Da Vinci's Last Supper being a popular example, or the Creation of Adam fresco painted in the Sistine Chapel by Michelangelo; simple descriptive material about the 'cross' or the 'Madonna and baby'.

Question 4a

This was a generally well answered question with the majority of candidates able to explore the role of the Bible as a source of authority.

Informed answers gave accurate and detailed knowledge of how the biblical canon emerged and became established; the role of inspiration and the extent to which the Bible can be regarded as the inspired word of God; various models of interpretation offered by better candidates such as literal, moral, allegorical, and anagogical etc.

Weak answers offered some general descriptive accounts of literalist interpretations especially the story of creation in Genesis and/or specific miracles being metaphors or even exaggerated accounts as well as outright lies etc.

Question 4b

Many of the answers were very well written demonstrating an understanding of the various ways of interpreting the bible as literal, conservative (bible contains the word of God) or metaphorical; some of the best responses gave detailed accounts of modern approaches e.g. feminist, liberationist etc. Counterclaims such as the need to demythologise (Bultmann) or understand the role of various genres used eg poetry, eschatological, historical, prophetic etc. The question of inerrancy was tackled by some at this level; good responses demonstrated sound K&U combined with appropriate use of theological

terminology. The material offered reflected good organisation and focused on the 'strengths' but also 'weaknesses' as part of their evaluation and analysis.

Weaker candidates offered limited responses that mainly focused on a literalist interpretation for example the Genesis story of creation.