



Examiners' Report

June 2023

GCE Religious Studies 9RS0 4B

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June 2023

Publications Code 9RS0_4B_2306_ER

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Introduction

There were many undoubtedly worthy answers, which often exhibited a good understanding of Christian beliefs, praxis and theology.

The overall standard suggests that candidates and centres are generally confident with the demands and intent of the specification. Many responses reflected an appropriate use of resources, succeeding in candidates across the ability range having confidence to approach this paper in a positive manner. Candidates who displayed the ability to assess and evaluate invariably did well. Some of the better responses were usually from candidates who wrote less, but had planned carefully and set out their argument at the beginning of their answer.

It was noticeable that consideration by candidates of the precise wording of the question varied significantly especially for Question (Q)03 and Q04. Some candidates lost focus on the issue with which they were supposed to be engaging, such as 'clarify' (Q03(a)), 'assess' (Q03(b)) or 'evaluate' (Q04).

It was pleasing to note that many candidates used appropriate technical vocabulary correctly and effectively. The references to scholars were generally pleasing: however, some responses appeared randomly to name scholars that brought little or even no input to the argumentation and discussion being offered.

The majority of candidates demonstrated sound knowledge and understanding throughout their responses.

Question 1

This question was answered well by the majority of candidates. Detailed knowledge and understanding was evident because a range of material was offered including the understanding of God as Creator through *ex nihilo*, emanation, artistic, aesthetic and architectural features etc.

Weaker answers (although few in number) focussed on the Genesis story of creation and some even offered a paraphrase of the Six Days of Creation; or focussed on only one feature (usually *ex nihilo*).

God as the creator is one of the key beliefs in Christianity. Many Christians believe God created the world ex ~~hilo~~ nihilo, which means from nothing, and this shows the extent of God's omnipotent nature. God creating the world from nothing shows his loving nature and demonstrates that he wanted to create the world out of his kindness and loving nature. Another Christian belief is that God created the world using pre-existing matter, order of chaos. This is a very common view however, as it goes against God's loving nature and suggests God didn't create the world out of his loving nature. Emanation is another belief in God as a creator, it is the idea that God's ~~own~~ creativity was ~~to~~ spilling over and he created the world from this. Christians also believe God created the world almost like an artist, making it beautiful. This is so humans are able to appreciate God's design. This belief however, indicates that God created the world from pre-existing matter. It could mean that God created the world from ex-nihilo or from matter, but ^{by} comparing him to an artist, what artist creates out of nothing?



This is a confident response that engages well with the relevant material.

The attention to detail in terms of the various features of the Christian belief in God as Creator is handled very well.

The range of material is detailed and directly addresses the question as set.

Deservedly, this candidate achieves full marks available for this question.

Total: 8 marks

Level 3



Structure your answer clearly, for maximum impact.

1 Explore key features of the Christian belief in God as Creator.

(8)

Christian belief is founded upon the idea of God as the Creator. It is the foundational belief that God, as an omnipotent, immutable being began everything.

~~Christians believe~~ Some Christians take a literal interpretation of the bible that God created everything in 6 days. Others see the genesis story as metaphorical but arguably still praise God as the creator.

Science often has a problem explaining the origin of matter. For Christians, everything emanated from God. He created the universe ex nihilo (meaning out of nothing). This therefore means ~~that~~ He is the source of all life and creation.

It is part of God's nature, and what we, as humans, can deduce that God is the cause and origin of all matter and created everything.



The material offered is good but brief and lacking detail and thus underdeveloped.

There is some relevant technical vocabulary. The candidate might have done more with the evident knowledge and understanding clearly present.

Total: 6 marks

Level 3



Define key terms carefully and precisely.

Develop each point clearly.

Question 2

Some very well-informed candidates brought in earlier developments of thought on the Trinity and linked them to later scholars.

Many candidates concentrated on Barth, and/or Rahner. Some brought in Moltmann. Others concentrated on particular themes of modern thought eg from Hick, and discussed the strengths, as the question demanded.

Less-able candidates had difficulty with the 'assess' aspect by not going into enough depth and assessment, rather than descriptive narrative.

Some also found the concept in the question difficult, only restating that the Trinity is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, without linking to modern views. Others focussed heavily on the ways that belief in the Trinity is shown through worship, limiting the marks they could achieve.

Candidates should be aware that the command word 'assess' also involves identifying and breaking down. They should explore the key elements of a position/concept such as the assumptions or justifications that support it, as well as inquiring into the implications of it.

To 'assess' can also include why a position is important or not important and is not just a listing of strengths and/or weaknesses.

2 Assess the strengths of **one** modern view of the Trinity.

(12)

In this essay, the strength of Barth's of the Trinity is explored as he offers a modern way to understand the Trinity via modes rather than persons. Barth's view will be criticised, and ultimately shown to be unnecessary for people's understanding of the Trinity.

Barth states that we can only know God and the Trinity via what is revealed in history. He does not accept natural theology or believing it to be all down to interpretations, and as humans are fallible, it's in turn not a reliable source of revelation. Barth goes against the norm of stating the Trinity is 3 persons forming 1 God-head. This he argues manages to avoid the problems not only of anthropomorphising God by calling the aspects of the Trinity 'persons', but also avoids partialism. As in the post-enlightenment world we see the word 'person' as implying self-consciousness, so referring to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as persons in turn, makes

them also seem like individual entities. This leads you down the partialism heresy, where you are ~~reducing~~^{dividing} God down into different parts, such as St Patrick when he uses the analogy of the shamrock. So Barth's strength is that he avoids ^{partialism} heresy, in this sense, (as pronounced by the 4th Lateran Council in 1215) but Moltmann counteracts ~~this~~^{this} arguing he's opening up to anti-trinitarian debates. By using the phrase 'mode' Barth is reducing our understanding of the Trinity entirely, it's already a complex and mystical theory so by adding new words that we do not fully comprehend is by no means helpful at knowing the mystery further. And 'mode' doesn't necessarily imply the hypostatic union of the son and father, or even accept the Chalcedonian definition with one 'ousia' and 3 'hypostasis'. So Barth, in turn, doesn't succeed at a modern approach.

However, Barth's idea of modes could just be being misunderstood due to problems in translation, as a German

the actual word used could mean either 'modes' or 'ways', and 'ways' may not be able to fall into Moltmann's critique. Barth realises that Augustine's use of persons was primarily as a compromise to satisfy the East and try to prevent further schisms. So now that the schism is ^{most likely} fully established and never being changed, this means the compromise is no longer necessary. But ultimately, when it comes to the trinity as it is such an academic and confusing concept we should just leave the terminology as 'persons'. When we accept the general understanding as it has been for hundreds of years, then this is also where we accept the mystical nature and now we can never truly know the trinity. Changing to 'modes', will have very little impact, and would most likely be completely unnecessary especially when the trinity in and of itself is what's important to believers. They make the sign of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, not the 3 persons showing that there's overall no reason for change.

// Therefore, in conclusion, Barth's modern view of the trinity is ~~unnecessary~~ and ~~to complicated for~~ ^(Total for Question 2 = 12 marks) no reason. We accept Augustine's 3 persons and this works, in turn, **TOTAL FOR SECTION A = 20 MARKS** showing that we do not need to change to modes.



This is an excellent response to the topic, achieving full marks.

The introduction sets the context effectively, indicating engagement with Barth.

The focus on 'strength' is evident from the beginning and subsequently throughout the answer, with some effective 'assessing' evident.

Total:12 marks

Level 3

2 Assess the strengths of one modern view of the Trinity.

→ ~~many people think~~ ~~the Trinity~~
→ ~~is shown in the Bible~~ (12)

~~Karl Rahner puts forward a modern view of the Trinity~~
~~Karl Rahner puts forward a modern view of the Trinity~~
~~with focus on the immanent Trinity (mystery)~~
~~Karl Rahner puts forward a modern view of the Trinity~~
~~with rejection of the Trinity as 3 persons, as emphasised~~
~~by Augustine and the Athanasian Creed, and instead he~~
~~puts forward the idea of the Trinity as three modes.~~

~~One~~

Karl Rahner puts forward a modern view of the Trinity and puts emphasis on the economic Trinity and immanent Trinity. Rahner does this through his focus on the human experience of the Trinity, which allows us to more closely understand the Trinity and the nature of God. This is emphasised through Rahner's idea of the immanent Trinity, the idea that God would only reveal himself as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit if that's what he truly was. Therefore, this allows us to understand God through revelation, and see instances where ~~the~~ ^{the} Trinity has been revealed. This is a significant strength of his view as it allows for people to understand ~~the~~ and explain why there is no explicit reference to the Trinity in the Bible, because it's through revelation and experience that we see the Trinity and the role it plays.

However, this is criticized and overall dismissed as a ~~too~~ ~~to~~ strong theory on the Trinity, as it limits the Trinity to just human experience, which ~~doesn't~~ ~~also~~ suggests that the Trinity did not exist before humans if that's the only way it can be observed and understood. It limits the Trinity to human understanding and is not reliable in understanding the nature and role of the Trinity outside human experience and understanding. In attempt to view the Trinity as no longer a paradox, it does allow for humans to understand the Trinity, however, it is argued that there are elements of God that are to be ~~kept~~ kept a mystery, so trying to conform the Trinity to our understanding is theologically and biblically wrong. We as humans should accept our limitations of knowledge of God and the Trinity and accept it as divine mystery. Therefore, although ~~many~~ Rahner attempts to make the Trinity comprehensible and easy to understand, it undermines the divinity of the Trinity and its role before human experience.

~~It~~ Rahner also puts forward the economic trinity with emphasis on salvation. The economic trinity ~~is~~ relates to the economy of salvation which allows us to understand and grasp the concept through

The saving death of Jesus which saved humanity and in return gave the gift of faith and humans ability to choose faith and turn to God. This shows the distinct roles within the Trinity and how it is presented through salvation, which brings importance to peoples lives to this day as they are able to understand and accept such a concept and understand the need for the Trinity and its role.

However, this is criticised as it creates the problem of which part of the Trinity has more importance and commits the issue of tritheism, that the Trinity have distinctive roles and the question can be asked whether Jesus ~~is~~^{is} the incarnation of God in creation played a more significant role, or whether they are all equal. Rahner ~~struggles~~ fails to address this and therefore the traditional concept of the Trinity as agreed at various Ecumenical councils of being of the same substance and equal importance is questioned and not strictly adhered to by Rahner.

It can be argued that Rahner's modern view of the Trinity allows for an easy way to understand and see the role of the Trinity and make up for lack of reference to it in scripture. However, Rahner does fail to uphold its divine aspect ^{and equality of its roles.} (Total for Question 2 = 12 marks)



This is an excellent example of a script earning full marks in this question.

It has some excellent Rahner material and it uses scholarship well. It is well organised and structured, covering a wide range of material and assessing it carefully.

Total: 12 marks

Level 3



Structure your answer clearly for maximum impact.

2 Assess the strengths of one modern view of the Trinity.

(12)

One modern view of the Trinity is that the trinity was created by God to ~~share~~ share his message through himself as father, son and Holy Spirit. The trinity is based off the idea of recognising God in three different forms. One strength of the trinity is that it helps us to understand God's message. For example, Jesus taught many of God's attributes such as love and compassion. These were messages God wanted to relay back to humanity, and so used Jesus to spread his word which is a strength of the trinity. Another strength of the trinity is that it allows us to be closer to God, and understand him better. Jesus the son of God ~~to~~ came down to earth to be around and live amongst humans. This allows us as humans to have a closer relationship with God as he is no longer at an epistemic distance from us. By Jesus coming to earth and being fully involved with humans allows

us to fully consolidate a ~~relations~~
personal relationship with him.
~~Another~~ Another strength of the
Trinity is that although the bible does
not specifically mention its concept,
the scriptures within the bible
bear witness to the idea that God
should be understood as three persons
giving the Trinity some form of validity
and that the concept of the Trinity is
still relevant in modern ~~Christianity~~
Christianity.



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This candidate takes a brief and generic (and confessional) approach in contrast with the previous two exemplars.

It has some relevant material but needs development and it is a little simplistic in its presentation.

A lack of the use of 'scholars' weakens the answer overall.

It needs more direct reasoning and judgement to reach into Level 3 but is at the top of Level 2.

Total: 8 marks

Level 2



Remember to note the intent of the question and any key words.

Focus your answer on these.

Question 3

Q03(a)

Many candidates were able to untangle the complexities of this passage and identify that Hick was arguing for a broader sense of the term 'atonement'. He also focussed on salvation and dismissed the theories of penal substitution etc in order to offer Jesus as a moral exemplar. More-able candidates grasped Hick's view on repentance being necessary with others and not just God.

Answers from less-able candidates did not understand that Hick was identifying traditional approaches to atonement (transactional etc) and thus presented Hick as claiming these theories were valid and reflected his own views. Many responses at this level simply regurgitated the extract, without offering a comment on the material itself.

Q03(b)

The focus on 'value' enabled candidates to demonstrate the ability to engage with the implications of Barth's understanding of atonement and its substitutionary context. Whilst many offered Rahner as an evaluation of Barth's being weak, many responses used Hick's moral exemplar approach as a counter-argument and thus managed to link without repeating material used in Q03(a). This question allowed for a degree of differentiation to be determined.

Weak responses merely offered descriptive narrative and gave little focus on the terms 'value' and 'understanding'.

SECTION B

Answer ALL questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

Read the following passage before answering the questions.

The question that has to be asked is whether... repentance, apology, reparation and penance – can be carried over unchanged into our relationship with God... Repentance, and apology as an expression of repentance, still apply; the sinner should truly and deeply repent and ask God's forgiveness... I suggest that when we have offered reparation-plus-penance to the human beings whom we have injured, there is no further reparation-plus-penance to be made solely for God's benefit. In doing all we can to repair matters with our wronged neighbour we are doing what genuine repentance requires. For God cannot be benefitted, and thus recompensed and atoned to... In relation to God the truly penitent person... can only accept forgiveness as a free gift of grace, undeserved and unearned. It may well be Jesus' life and teaching that prompt someone to do this. But it is not... appropriate to express that fact by depicting his death as an atoning sacrifice that benefits God and so enables God to forgive humanity.

(Source: extract adapted from 'The Metaphor of God Incarnate', Hick, J., Edexcel Anthology)

3 (a) Clarify the ideas about Hick's views illustrated in this passage.

You must refer to the passage in your response.

(10)

In the above passage, theologian John Hick criticises concepts aligned with various atonement theories while simultaneously advocating for the validity of his own 'moral example' theory.

Notable in this extract, is the mentioning of the idea that 'God benefits' in various atonement theories. In the satisfaction atonement theory, God is supposedly benefited or satisfied by the debt of sin being paid in

Christ's death. Hick's later mentioning of such subtleties as "enabling God to forgive humanity" is a way of criticising such a theory by questioning how the omnipotent being would've been prohibited ~~from~~ by anything prior to Jesus' crucifixion, and how an omnibenevolent being wouldn't have been able to forgive independently.

This then links to Hick's mentioning of the "free gift of grace". Here he is referring to Reformed idea around grace and God's unconditional love. In this way, Hick further criticises opposing atonement theories by highlighting theological and biblical ideas around God's unconditional "undeserved and unearned" love. Models like Aquinas' sacrifice model and Barth's penal substitution model, create a transactional system (with Barth drawing on his legal background for inspiration) that opposes God's omnibenevolence.

Hick also furthers his own ideas in

These critiques, notably in stating that it's not "appropriate" to depict Christ's death as an "atoning sacrifice". Here, Hicke links to Barth's emphasis (as in reformist traditions) on linking to early church ideas, specifically the Chalcedonian concept of the hypostatic union. Barth ~~is~~ argues that Jesus must be both full God and full human to effectively be the "judge/judged in our place", therefore allowing his death to be the "atoning sacrifice". Nonetheless, Hicke ~~is~~ ~~member~~ states that this is inappropriate links to his ~~total~~ demythologisation of Christ which directly opposes Barth's invocation of the hypostatic union.

Finally, Hicke introduces his own ~~own~~ theory of the "moral exemplar" when talking of Newitz's Jesus' life and teaching that prompt atonement. In demythologising Christ, Hicke instead of objectively dealing with original sin, he ~~advocates~~ ~~for~~ Jesus' death to serve to encourage us to follow his courageous and moral exemplar. This is encapsulated in mentioning of the "wronged neighbour" being the source of atonement in following Christ's teaching of "loving thy neighbour" being his theory for atonement.

(b) Analyse the value of Barth's understanding of atonement. ~~science~~

→ reason.

(20)

Karl Barth's penal substitution atonement theory is based upon his legal background and therefore attempts to deal with original sin and atonement in a judicial way. As a Reformist Jesuit protest, he gives sentence to Christ and the early church ideas of the hypostatic union. ~~Because, he encompasses~~

Barth's atonement theory of penal substitution states that humans require a sufficient substitute for our sins in order to atone and consequently reconcile with God. Barth argues that, in line with the Chalcedonian idea of the hypostatic union, Jesus' composition as one person with two natures (fully God and fully human) he was the only person of being the substitute. With being God he was capable of being obedient and the "judge", while his human nature allowed him to substitute and be the person "judged" in our place. While many argue that the sense of order within the supposed process is a

strength in that it illustrates God's just nature and his value of justice, many argue that it questions his omnipotence. Overall, the substitution theory is easily criticised through the introduction of the inconsistent ideal and outlining that a truly omniscient would never kill his own son or require punishment for the existence of sin. Likewise, the strict requires for the substitute outlined by Barth contradict God's omnipotence, as if he was truly all-powerful, he would simply override the process and ~~not~~ create a system of atonement independently. Many respond to this by saying that Jesus' death was necessary to ~~illustrate~~ his love for us, giving more meaning to the capability of atonement. Nonetheless, such criticism can be easily dismissed by outlining that the intelligent omnipotent designer could have thought of a better way that doesn't rely on the death of his son. Overall then, Barth's understanding of atonement has little value in that it contradicts the most commonly held and basic understandings about the nature of God.

Alternatively, some talk about the Anselmian satisfaction theory as being a more valuable understanding of atonement in comparison to Barth's. The satisfaction theory posits that the debt of sin was satisfied in the death of Christ. By ~~posing~~ focusing atonement on a necessity for satisfaction avoids issues surrounding God's omnipotence, however it still questions his omnibenevolence. Arguing that God found satisfaction in the torture of Jesus portrays him as a masochist, finding pleasure in someone else's pain, even his own son. Once again, it could be argued that such pain was a symbol of love, however this does not deal with the problematic derivation of satisfaction from such a pain. In within this comparison, Barth's model has comparatively more value.

Another atonement theory that can be used to assess the penal substitution theory's value is Jewish's scapegoat theory. This theory is similarly rooted early historically, building off of old Jewish traditions of the scapegoat. This was a tradition where

The community would spiritually place there sins on a goat who would be released into a forest to die. The death of the goat was there way of accounting for their sins for a period of time before the practice must be repeated. This theory similarly relies on Jesus' Godliness, positing that his nature as God meant that the period of atonement is not temporary but eternal. This is a rather strong theory, as it builds on early Jewish traditions, linking to Jesus' death being prophesied in the messianic prophecy with Jewish communities. This makes the sacrifice theory both logically and historically coherent. Nonetheless, linking to the original tradition, sacrifice theory does nothing to explain the brutality of Christ's death. The goat in the tradition was not tortured, as its death and not its suffering is important. Because of this, while effectively outlining a logical spiritual process that objectively deals with sin, it is at best equal in value to Barth's theory as it is somewhat incompatible with the actual events of Jesus' death.

Finally, John Hick's moral exemplar theory and his understanding of atonement is arguable the most valuable as it has the largest practical implication. While the other theories all hypothetically deal with sin objectively, they all contain incompatibilities with either the nature of God, or the circumstances of Jesus' death. Because their lack of validity in these departments, they lose practical value for everyday Christians. Alternatively, Hick's moral exemplar theory focuses on Jesus' death simply pointing us to his life and teachings and their value as a moral example. This puts an emphasis on following Jesus' teachings and creates a call to action, as opposed to the passive roles assumed by Christians in the opposing theories. Likewise, the focus on morality creates even more value in multicultural societies as unlike Barth's penal substitution (for example) Hick's theory is pluralist and applicable to everyone. In this way, Hick's theory empowers everyone to be a moral agent as opposed to only Christians. The main criticism of Hick's theory is that it does not objectively deal with sin, however it can be argued that

his focus on morality is more valuable than an objective solution as it encourages us to grow and become better people and better Christians. Here, his theory links to his soul making theology which posits that sin exists for moral and spiritual growth. In this way, John Hick's moral exemplar theory has the most value as it has practical applications for Christians today instead of placing them in a passive role within the process of redemption.



Q03(a)

This is a strong part Q03(a) response that demonstrates a clear understanding of Hick's position and 'clarifies' cogently and concisely Hick's views...a good example of doing what the question asks for.

The candidate does not 'waffle' but goes straight to the heart of the matter and achieves top marks.

Q03(b)

This is a confident and effective engagement with Barth's position on atonement and its value, or otherwise.

It offers some apposite analysis and uses Hick's moral exemplar theory in critiquing Barth.

This answer deservedly achieves full marks, even though there are some errors (eg Aquinas identified rather than Anselm).

Q03(a): 10 – Level 3

Q03(b): 20 marks – Level 5

Total: 30 marks



Do not be tempted to regurgitate the extract but do 'clarify' relevant aspects of the passage.

The question that has to be asked is whether... repentance, apology, reparation and penance – can be carried over unchanged into our relationship with God... Repentance, and apology as an expression of repentance, still apply; the sinner should truly and deeply repent and ask God's forgiveness... I suggest that when we have offered reparation-plus-penance to the human beings whom we have injured, there is no further reparation-plus-penance to be made solely for God's benefit. In doing all we can to repair matters with our wronged neighbour we are doing what genuine repentance requires. For God cannot be benefitted, and thus recompensed and atoned to... In relation to God the truly penitent person... can only accept forgiveness as a free gift of grace, undeserved and unearned. It may well be Jesus' life and teaching that prompt someone to do this. But it is not... appropriate to express that fact by depicting his death as an atoning sacrifice that benefits God and so enables God to forgive humanity.

(Source: extract adapted from 'The Metaphor of God Incarnate', Hick, J., Edexcel Anthology)

3 (a) Clarify the ideas about Hick's views illustrated in this passage.

You must refer to the passage in your response.

(10)

Within the passage, Hick illustrates his ideas on atonement ~~as being~~ and how ~~the~~ his theology and thought goes against ~~them~~ ~~such as~~ all forms of atonement. He believes the concept of atonement to be unnecessary in ~~about~~ terms of performing ~~ing~~ a demonstration of good Christian faith through atonement. Hick denies the concept of "repentance, apology, reparation and penance" as being able to be "carried over unchanged into our relationship with God". Here Hick is explaining that no form of atonement is sufficient to satisfy God and match his divinity. Hick believes that God is drastically separate from the concept of human sin and emotion towards it. He states that "God cannot be benefitted, and thus recompensed and atoned to" - which further illuminates ~~to~~

his view of atonement as an inflexible concept which God is all-in-all not in need of.

Hick develops his ~~top~~^{view} of atonement further within the passage and explains that genuine reflection and repentance to those who we have injured, that is all that can be done in terms of bettering yourself and your relationship with God. Hick believes that ~~the~~ means to man connection ~~and ~~salvation~~ is ~~the~~ path~~ and concidence is the key to repairing our sins and morality in terms of God's expectations of mankind. Moreover, Hick explains that using Jesus as a moral exemplar for salvation ~~is~~ is appropriate in terms of his morality and means of repenting ~~for the~~ ~~sin~~ sins. Hick believes ~~we should focus as~~ Christians should focus on their being in relation to others and use the guidance of Jesus as support for their choices. He believes this to be the only form of repentance necessary and the concept of atoning to God directly as unnecessary.

(b) Analyse the value of Barth's understanding of atonement.

(20)

Barth's understanding of atonement is ~~sub~~ satisfactionist and in some cases substitutionary. Barth places emphasis on the importance of the ~~role~~ role of Jesus as a form of atonement as the divine sacrifice.

Barth believes ~~atone~~ that satisfactionist atonement to be necessary in order to ~~the~~ understand the basis of Christianity as a whole alongside the ~~the~~ significance of his sacrifice. Barth's view is ~~is~~ strong due to its biblical empirical evidence within scripture ~~at~~, present cohesively throughout the Bible all the way from the Garden of Eden to the Crucifixion itself. Barth ~~believes~~ His view of Jesus being a symbolic ~~is~~ due to his divinity is rooted through his view that as his unity ~~a~~ alongside God (being his creation) his ~~sacrifice~~ humbling and ~~a~~ almost humiliating sacrifice enables a ~~is~~ form of satisfaction ~~a~~ towards God due to his divine essence.

However, it can be argued by some such as Hick that the urgency for taking the act of Jesus' sacrifice as not only central ~~and~~ but the most significant aspect of Christianity is deeply flawed in his view. He believes that the value of Barth's view is weak due to

it hyperfixating on sin and repentance rather than looking towards Jesus as for example a moral exemplar. Hick further states that a view such as Barthes may lead to painting God in an egoistic and passionate light in desperate need of ~~atonement~~ atonement from his creating. Some may even argue that this anthropomorphises God to a human level and undermines the ~~to~~ divinity of Jesus as well as not capable of completing ~~the~~ atonement and salvation to it's maximum capability. The concept of atonement as a whole undermines Gods impossibility and supposed omnipotent nature.

Moreover, someone such as Luther would also argue against such ideas through his idea of "justification by faith alone" - meaning that concepts such as atonement are not necessary in order to reach fulfilment as a Christian practicing Christianity. ~~The~~ Post-enlightenment ideas from Hick ~~would~~ would support this view in the sense that ~~a~~ atonement ~~is~~ is an outdated concept rooted ~~with~~ within Roman Catholic concepts of guilt and penance. Hick believes that ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~repairing~~ repairing harm caused to others is as much ~~as~~ ~~is~~ ~~rep~~ repentance that is possibly needed in order to ~~a~~ please God. His ~~and~~ otherworldlyness ~~is~~ ~~becomes~~ becomes a paradox ~~is~~ ~~terms~~ ~~of~~ ~~atone~~ when atonement is used as a ~~a~~ method of repentance.

Precisely, ~~Barth however does not however argue that~~
a strength to Barth's argument is the idea that under
Hick's view of undermining the conception and atonement
as a whole undermines the legitimacy of God and
an ~~under~~ Christians ~~and~~ have faith ~~of~~ towards the
foundations of Christianity. Barth views atonement as a
necessary compensation for the sacrifice made by Jesus
and that due to his acts humanity is forever in
debt to God and his humiliation of becoming flesh
and adapting his being to the ~~of~~ a human level.



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Examiner Comments

Q03(a)

This uses the text and expands upon the key ideas of Hick's views. It needs to be developed further but it does cover quite a wide range of ideas.

Q03(b)

This remains focussed on the intent of the question. It deconstructs religious issues and makes reasoned judgements.

The response could have been developed further in terms of detail to reach the next level, but it is a clear and secure answer.

Q03(a): 7 marks - Level 3

Q03(b): 15 marks - Level 4

Total: 22 marks



Explain the terms clearly when needed to show your understanding.

Question 4

This question produced some excellent answers. It demonstrated effectively that Liberation theology impacted Christianity including, correctly, the emergence of Black and Feminist theology being two of the most salient features of that impact.

Many candidates offered detailed and engaged understanding of its emergence in South America with relevant scholars identified. The synoptic link was evident in most good answers.

Less-able candidates at this level gave brief descriptions concerning one or more of Liberation, Black or Feminist theology. Simplistic treatment of this question was a feature of responses at this level.

Candidates should remember that for this question their response needs to make the link either to Philosophy of Religion or Religion and Ethics. This should be an effective link, rather than only a passing reference.

4 Evaluate the impact Liberation theology has had on Christianity.

In your response to this question, you must include how developments in Christianity have been influenced by **one** of the following:

- Philosophy of Religion
- Religion and Ethics.

(30)

In this essay, the impact of liberation theology will be explored and shown to be large but this is when considered in terms of general liberation and black liberation theology.

Liberation theology is the ~~new~~ new movement in theology, mainly in South America following the mass amounts of dictatorships, coups, cartels and overall oppression of the poor. Gutierrez argues that when one reads the Bible and looks into church doctrine they can understand how God has always helped the oppressed and poor. In Exodus, God led to his people being freed from slavery, through the actions of Moses, and this ultimately shows how Christians should have a 'preferential option for the poor'. People are all made in God's image, we are

ensouled and are given free will, this shows how in God's eyes we are all equally made, synoptically linking to the design argument as God designed humans specifically as the pinnacle of creation. This then means we all deserve equal respect from one another, so if someone is in a position which is unfavourable and they are being treated as inferior, it is our duty as Christians to help them. This impacts Christianity because it calls out the large mainstream institutions for trying to be a-political. This stance of being 'removed' from politics is impossible in this modern era, and with all the power the Churches as institutions hold they should be trying to make a difference. But they do not, apart from an encyclical doctrine from time to time. The Church does not involve itself in the matters of its people. And Liberation Theology massively questions this disposition because an all-loving God would try to save all of his creation, which he specifically created for us if we

accept the strong anthropic principle. So by calling the church out for its in-action; liberation theologians ~~bring~~ highlight the fact that the church needs to act and it has the power to do so. However, many do agree with the concept of being a-political, emphasising that once the church aligns with one political stance it aligns itself against all others. And to prevent biases forming the institution is not allowed to favour ~~the~~ anyone and can only preach the principle of love, in hopes of that leading to a positive outcome. Many argue that this is just a cut-out of the church though, as once it states an opinion it cannot be retracted and ~~then~~ of the church as an institution really acted as intercessors for God they would do more.

This leads on to the main concept of liberation theology, which argues for 'praxis over doxa'. Meaning action over belief. liberation theology favours acting to physically help those oppressed to be released from slavery rather than

being prevented by their belief system. If the theistic God fought to save the Israelites, and even sent Jesus to save all of humanity from the slavery and bondage of sin, then why would he not favour liberation theology. But sometimes this liberation can fall into violence, which many Christians do not agree with and even lead to a pope renouncing liberation theology and declaring it dangerous. ~~But~~ However, we can override this claim and argue that on the odd occasion ~~that~~ violence is necessary action and it is just action. To save an entire society of people oppressed and enslaved by a cruel leader unafraid to kill anyone who calls out against them, is a just cause for violence. Echoing Augustine, we can see that for him if the violent action is in defence (just cause) and you do not act out of proportion or kill indiscriminately, then action whether it be violent ~~or~~ not, is needed. But for pacifists this is by no means the way to act, as Liberation theology

can only have a negative impact on the Church forcing it to go back to a time similar to the crusades, where anyone supposed to be oppressed ~~is~~ is then violently attacked. Yes in the case of South America, liberation theology makes a lot of rational sense but in the grand scheme of the world this ~~can~~ could cause mass societal breakdown. Especially since liberation theology is heavily inspired by marxist, and freeing the proletariat from the hands of the evil bourgeoisie who rule over them and take away their meritocracy. But ~~for~~ while liberation theology may pick out elements of marxist it agrees with, such as the mass uprising to form a free state, it doesn't agree with all elements. Specifically instances where Marx calls 'religion the opiate of the masses', as once we find liberation in South America then people may search for liberation elsewhere. If that is religious liberation, this could turn into, as previously stated, a crusades where religious battle

for supremacy, and as liberation theology is rooted by Christianity the religion it'll believe is the liberator is the one of Christ and all others are oppressed by false faiths. Yes, this may be over-exaggerating, but it's making the point that liberation and violence can lead down a very slippery slope and at what point is someone going to stop it.

~~Another~~ Another form of liberation theology is black liberation theology and this is one which focuses on the civil rights movement, where Cone argues for equality and liberation. Once again Cone echoes the same bible passages as Gutierrez, quoting Exodus and showing God to be the one who cares for the oppressed and poor people of society. And when we look at America under the segregating Jim Crow laws, we can see a society in dire need of liberation and equality. Cone argues that God is black, and this is a

very radical statement, but he's arguing God is ontologically black in the sense that he is in solidarity with black americans and wants them to be saved and liberated. Of course, Cone does not mean that God is literally black but instead says it to emphasise his point, that God continues to help those who suffer. However many people will complain at this point as it can be argued that theology shouldn't be labelled. As soon as we add attributes and labels then theology can only be accessed by a certain group of people, and whilst this isn't the sentiment behind Cone's ideas it could lead to further segregation where God becomes inaccessible to, i.e. say, white people. As soon as you add layers to theology it becomes hyper-political and a force to be used in politics rather than something to be carefully understood outside of a human context. But a positive about black liberation theology is that it manages to escape the 'violence' accusations that

normal liberation theology experiences. People such as Martin Luther King, expressed peaceful protest and there's ultimately many less negative connotations. But this could just be because of the difference in problems in both cases, for liberation theology in South America violence is almost inherent, Oscar Romero was shot in the middle of mass for holding a radio show which went against the cartels. But however, black theology despite all of it's positives is arguably losing relevance especially since no longer do we fight against segregation and it's instead much more about changing peoples ideological beliefs rather than their actions, in turn showing how it has a little impact now.

In conclusion, liberation theology has had an impact on the Church but this ultimately could be a negative impact. And it's overall more positive version in black theology

~~is no longer as relevant and therefore has little impact as well.~~

(Total for Question 4 = 30 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION C = 30 MARKS

TOTAL FOR PAPER = 80 MARKS



This is an example of a very good and substantial response to the question.

The answer is well-structured, developed and argued: it offers a close focus that is maintained throughout on the intent and demands of the question itself.

There is a:

- wide range and variety of material
- clear structure
- convincing link made with Ethics

The candidate marshalls their material well, making accurate AO2 judgements throughout.

Some critical analysis augments the quality of the candidate's answer and thus they have achieved full marks.

Total: 30 marks

A clear structure to the longer essays is very useful.

It helps to signpost the link section to the examiner, so that it is clear what other component has been studied and is linked to the topic.

4 Evaluate the impact Liberation theology has had on Christianity.

In your response to this question, you must include how developments in Christianity have been influenced by **one** of the following:

- Philosophy of Religion
- Religion and Ethics.

(30)

Gustav Gutierrez studied Marxism, a sociology against capitalism, and once back in Latin America realised the reality of sinful structures on society. The poor conditions and ~~the~~ ^{wealth} imbalance, greed, and death incurred by capitalism seemed analogous to the Fall. It is clear in Jesus' teachings that Christianity needs to show love to the outcasts and Gutierrez ~~is~~ ^{transformed} Marxism ~~and~~ Christianity into a new theology, to promote action against ~~the~~ ^{capitalism}.

This has caused heated debate amongst Christian leaders and institutions due to the role Christianity should play in response to the 'sinful structures' which oppress people. Liberation theology is similar to ~~the~~ ^{the theme} of Jesus liberating humans from sin. But one impact it has had on Christianity is debate over whether Christianity should focus on orthodoxy (tradition and scripture) or orthopraxis. Marx taught praxis which was that radical action was needed for social change. ^{Christian} leaders now ask themselves whether they should continue to focus on doctrinal

differences, such as transubstantiation, or whether they should actually be a political group.

Many churches are against this. ~~The~~ ^{At its} most strict, the ~~Catholic~~ Catholic and Orthodox churches see that it is almost heretical to become a political power to fight capitalism. This is such a new movement and it completely undermines the last 2000 years of focus on God and worship. Furthermore, Catholic churches may not give rise to ^{feminist} liberation theologies as it may mean they'd need to change their stance on the apostolic succession, a holy tradition, since it cuts off women's access to authoritative positions.

In comparison some churches are for liberation theology. Pope Francis actually ^(not explicitly however) implied that he favoured ~~the~~ Gutierrez' phrase 'a preferential option for the poor' - St Francis of Assisi was completely for the simple poor life and Pope Francis lived in a small basic Hostel near the Vatican reflecting God's preferential option to the poor (as revealed in Jesus' ministry) and the voluntary poverty that

liberation theologians advocated. Luis Segundo taught that "God can be ~~best~~ ^{explicitly} known in the cries of the poor and the oppressed" - he reflects that to be poor, you are actually closer to God. This is provision as a simple focussed worship and life devoted to God is what he favours over greed. Clearly then, liberation theology has ~~unveiled~~ unveiled a key debate in Christianity, nevertheless an important one.

Another reason why the church should be against capitalism and take praxis is because poverty leads to ^{premature} death. This violates the primary precept of ^{Aquinas} natural moral law theory - to protect the innocent. This theory teaches that we can know the god through nature - money worship and greed are clearly the opposite to ~~protecting~~ preserving life and an ordered society. Since natural moral law is the key ethical theory that the Catholic Church uses, there is no doubt that the church should take praxis!

God also ~~said~~ ~~to command~~ in the ten commandments in Exodus said that idolatry is wrong. Some

Liberation theologians quote that man is now worshipping money ^{like it's} ~~over~~ God which is clearly immoral and will not get them into the afterlife. ^{Rich} Megachurch leaders such as Robert Tilton (Bominio) will not be rewarded for this! ~~As~~ ^{Jesus said} the author of Mark wrote that it is harder for a rich man to get into heaven than a camel to fit through an eye. Clearly capitalism and greed violate ~~key~~ Christian teachings of love and action. ~~God's~~

This theology arguably has had too much of an impact on Christianity and this is bad since Marx was actually antireligious - he said that religion was the "opium of the masses" and actually benefited capitalism. ~~Support~~ This could be seen when the Catholic Church took indulgences to pay out of purgatory of again megachurches.

However it seems wrong to use an antireligious teaching for the basis of theology. This liberation theology has had a

bad impact on the religion and it's teachings since it is causing divide over this - also disrupting ecumenism! Disagreement.

Some ^{Christians} disagree that liberation theology should be accepted because it undermines Jesus' life, message and nature. He is ~~the~~ God Incarnate - God in human form, down-to-earth - and this is the foundation of Christianity. His aim was to save humanity yet liberation theology has had a negative, reductionist effect on his role - he is reduced to a social reformer. This takes away from the important doctrines in Christianity including roles such as the priest in the church as in person Christ - it is feared that Christ's importance will be undermined and reduced.

~~In contrast~~ ~~sets~~

How Christian aid is a key example of a charity putting this theology into ~~age~~ action and fighting against sinful structures. ~~the~~

Their mission is both praxis but also evangelising. This disproves the previous point, as here liberation theology acts as a way to spread the Gospel (as Jesus commanded - "go forth and make disciples of all nations") but also actions such as foodbanks demonstrate the agape love that liberation theology advocates. This is not a new idea - ~~situation~~ love is the basis of Christianity - "love your neighbour" - but this love is demanding and just so needs to be put into action.

Overall

liberation theology has had a positive impact on Christianity as the belief is a force for good, love is better valued through praxis, ~~the~~ and Jesus' teachings are clear. This is convincing for believers and better than Christianity standing aside and doing nothing for the sufferers. However it cannot be denied that to an extreme, it

would become a political reform group, undermining all religions and the end of their religious belief - it could be reduced. There needs to be a threshold between action and scripture.



This essay is a fine example of a script that was awarded the full marks.

It includes a wide range of knowledge and specialist language and terminology is selected and used well throughout.

It makes careful coherent and reasoned judgements of the full range of elements of the question and regularly considers the question.

It is focussed throughout and provides convincing conclusions that are justified by the candidate.

The link (Natural Moral Law) with Ethics is handled well and is related to the question carefully.

Total: 30 marks

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Take time and care to consider the precise demands of the question by engaging with the relevant command words such as 'assess', 'clarify', 'analyse' and 'evaluate'
- Make use of scholars to support the argument being made and do not aimlessly drop their names into the answer
- Try to come to a judgement or take a position, especially in the conclusion
- Ensure effective time management, so as not to run out of time before completing Q04 and consequently lose the potential to earn 30 marks
- Select relevant examples to support the points being made, without drifting into anecdotal narrative

Grade boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html>

