

## Teacher Resource Bank

GCE Religious Studies

Unit D (RSS04) *Religion, Philosophy and Science*

June 2009 Examination Candidate Exemplar Work:

- Candidate B



## 2009 (June) Unit D Religion, Philosophy and Science

### Example of Candidate's Work from the Examination

#### Candidate B

- 1 (a) 'Miracles are described as events of religious significance.' Explain the meaning of this statement.

(30 marks)

AO1

#### Candidate Response

1a)	<p>Miracles being described as events of religious significance is a statement many Christian philosophers would agree on. It was Swinburne who most plausibly said that, arguing that for an event to be considered a miracle it not only had to break natural law, but had to have some religious dimensions. He argued that, <sup>for example, God knocking a</sup> child's toy <del>car or making a leaf fall to the ground</del> <del>natural pull to the ground</del> could not be considered a miracle as <del>there</del> no deeper meaning existed in that. However Jesus' resurrection or Jesus' walking on water would be, as there is religious significance behind it.</p> <p>St. Thomas Aquinas would agree with the above statement, as he classed God's interaction with the world in three categories: God's direct intervention in the world, and primary</p>
[	<p>and secondary action (i.e. God acting through humans). <del>He is</del></p> <p>However, David Hume, a fierce atheist would challenge this belief. Miracles to Hume do not have to be events of religious significance, rather just transgressions 'of natural law by the will of a particular deity or interposition of some supernatural agent.' Indeed, Hume then attempts to dismiss the whole idea of miracles at all with particular regards to religion, <del>but</del> arguing that those who saw religious significance in miracles were either hallucinating, barbaric or biased.</p>
[	<p>It was Holland who proposed the view that 'miracles are just coincidences interpreted religiously', <del>He agrees with Swinburne's view on one level</del> thus both agreeing with Swinburne's view and arguing against it simultaneously. The notion that 'miracles are events of religious significance' holds true on one level, for Holland, but only because they are <del>INTERPRETED</del> that way. A person's prayer may <del>even</del> be granted the next day, and a person may attribute God the cause. According to Holland this is not the case - it is merely coincidence.</p> <p><del>He</del> <sup>Some scientists have</sup> argued, also, that terming something a miracle (like Jesus walking on water) may be premature, as one day there may be a reasonable scientific explanation for it - the God of the Gaps theory.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">"Summation of K. Ps" 14</p>

**Commentary**

AO1 (30 marks)

The candidate is clearly aware of the material needed to answer the question and quotes scholarship with some accuracy. There is a reasonable use of appropriate examples to accompany the commentary. The answer is very brief and lacking in development. In addition, time has been taken up with writing about Hume which, in this context, is not relevant to the question.

**Level 3 (14 marks)**

(b) Discuss how far miracles make it reasonable to believe in God.

(15 marks)

AO2

**Candidate Response**

1b) Miracles point to a God that is involved and interfering in the world, though many philosophers would challenge that belief. ~~When~~ The problem of evil indicates the most serious threat to 'how far miracles make it reasonable to believe in God'. Why, if God is ~~able~~ ~~to~~ raise his son from the dead, does he allow other terrible things to happen? ~~It~~ ~~is~~ ~~not~~ ~~clear~~ ~~that~~ ~~if~~ ~~it~~ ~~is~~ ~~a~~ ~~benign~~ ~~God~~ ~~that~~ ~~allows~~ ~~6~~ ~~million~~ ~~Jews~~ ~~to~~ ~~die~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~Holocaust~~ ~~whilst~~ ~~not~~ ~~saving~~ ~~their~~ ~~sinful~~ ~~ancestors~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~past~~? Is it a benign God that allows terrible things such as 9/11 to take place without interfering? ~~Wiles~~ would certainly argue that a God such as this ~~certainly~~ is certainly not worthy of worship, to which Christians may respond by pointing towards the fact humans have free will. But this is something God has undermined in the past, by interfering in the destinies of the Israelites, so why not again?   
 ~~Others~~ ~~would~~ ~~point~~ ~~out~~ ~~that~~ ~~miracles~~ ~~are~~ ~~merely~~ ~~other~~ ~~examples~~ ~~of~~ ~~God~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~religions~~

~~Gaps~~ ~~plugging~~ ~~God~~ ~~in~~ ~~because~~ ~~there~~ ~~is~~ ~~no~~ ~~other~~ ~~explanation~~, though may be ~~one~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~as~~ science advances over the coming years.

Religious believers would argue that it is reasonable to believe in God because of miracles, because of perhaps, substantial evidence (eye-witness, Biblical accounts etc.) and the notion that, as violations of natural law, these ~~are~~ ~~if~~ ~~transgressions~~ ~~can~~ ~~only~~ ~~be~~ ~~accountable~~ ~~to~~ ~~God~~

~~rather~~ ~~comped~~ ~~but~~ ~~for~~ ~~AO2~~ ~~shown~~

**Commentary**

AO2 15 marks

This is a clear presentation of arguments about the challenge that miracles pose for those who believe in God. The candidate has made some attempt to assess or weigh up the arguments and has come to a conclusion which is supported by some of the reasoning. To reach the higher levels, more comment on the arguments would be necessary.

**Level 5 (11 marks)**

2 (a) Examine ways in which religious believers explain the origin of life on Earth. (30 marks) AO1

Candidate Response

2a) Religious believers find their Biblical stories account of life's creation increasingly contradicting with accepted, scientific views. With modern science offering new answers, their beliefs are either forced to combine with new thinking, or must stick to the status quo.

According to the Bible's Genesis account, God created the world and all its inhabitants in six days, leaving humans ~~especially~~ until the sixth day. Humans, made in God's image, were created just so and did not undergo any ~~or~~ evolutionary ~~processes~~ progress. Fundamentalist Christians would wholeheartedly, fervently accept this belief, believing that the Bible is the infallible word of God and is totally true. Their belief in the Bible's word would lead many to reject the Darwinian, modern theories of creation. Many Fundamentalist Christians may also be ~~Ultra~~ Young Earth Creationists, coupling with their (extremist) views. Young Earth Creationists believe the world is between ~~50,000~~ 6,000 to 10,000 years old (based on ~~the~~ the ages in the Bible) and the fossils that might point towards evolution were caused by Noah's Flood. The Bible, to both groups, is incontrovertible, and Genesis is the true account.

Conservative Christians would generally accept the word of the Bible where it contradicts with science, but would still accept modern thought. ~~The Bible~~ Genesis. Many would believe in Genesis, but ~~more~~ like Old Earth Creationists, would resort to science to fill in the gaps. ~~The~~ ~~opinion~~ The six days in the Bible could stand for gaps lasting billions of years, allowing for fossils to be explained. Progressive Creationists take a similar view, believing God lit the blue touch paper, and intervened sporadically to place new objects and species (like humans) on the Earth. Conservative Christians ~~liberal~~ believe the Bible is the word of God, but it was written by men and thus contains some fallacies. ~~maybe not really~~

Liberal Christians would take a drastically different view to Fundamentalist Christians about the origin of life, believing in evolution as an explanation and further taking the view that where science conflicts with their religion, science is generally correct. ~~with the Bible written at a time when man had little scientific knowledge of the world, it would be foolish to believe their~~ Biochemists they also pointed towards intelligent design and "irreducible complexity" ~~arguments~~ that would certainly support a religious viewpoint. ~~The~~ Religious viewpoints on the origin of life seem to widely vary from total acceptance of Genesis to the opposite - total acceptance in evolution.

2c) Faith traditions

**Commentary**

AO1 30 marks

The candidate has identified a range of religious views and is clearly capable of describing them accurately. In the time available, the answer is fairly thorough. Each religious group is correctly described and the candidate has covered most of the information available.

**Level 6 (25 marks)**

**(b) Assess the view that evolutionary theory conflicts with belief in a creator. (15 marks)**

**AO2**

**Candidate Response**

2b) Evolutionary posed many problems for believers in God - for the first time there was a theory for ~~religion~~ life on earth that relied not on God, but on man and itself. A grueling, relentless survival of the fittest where man was not made in God's image with the purpose of reaching heaven, man was made to survive.

Evolutionary theory ~~test~~ argues that man evolved from tiny, single-cell organisms to the complex species we are today. Through natural selection and ~~then~~ gradually adapting to our surroundings and reproducing, thus surviving, man created itself, essentially, over ~~the~~ millions of years. Such a belief, however, ~~doesn't~~ directly conflict with the notion of a creator. What began ~~is~~ still unknown, and there are still gaps (punctuated equilibrium) that are unexplained in the evolutionary ladder. Both evolution could have begun with a creator, and ~~the~~ punctuated the gaps and evolutionary jumps could have been forced by a creator. If one were to believe in ~~the~~ God and be a Christian, and then choose to believe in evolution rather than the Genesis accounts, it would be perfectly compatible. God could've 'In the blue touch paper.'

However, evolutionary theory does directly contradict Genesis accounts, posing a problem to Christians - if Genesis is false, is the rest of the Bible false too?

~~Correct~~ Evolutionary theory, overall, ~~is~~ is ~~not~~ compatible with

KS "P. 5's 'f' 1"

\* accounts when it contradicts stronger evidence.

## **Commentary**

AO2 15 marks

The candidate shows a clear grasp of the issues and has presented the arguments on both sides. Comment and analysis is mostly implied in the answer. Higher marks would be available where the analysis is more explicit i.e. where the candidate explains why a point of view is justified. Some of the language shows a degree of maturity and confidence.

**Level 5 (11 marks)**