

Examiners' Report  
June 2014

GCE Religious Studies 6RS04 1D

## Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications come from 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](http://www.edexcel.com) or [www.btec.co.uk](http://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](http://www.edexcel.com/contactus).



### Giving you insight to inform next steps

ResultsPlus is Pearson's free online service giving instant and detailed analysis of your students' exam results.

- See students' scores for every exam question.
- Understand how your students' performance compares with class and national averages.
- Identify potential topics, skills and types of question where students may need to develop their learning further.

For more information on ResultsPlus, or to log in, visit [www.edexcel.com/resultsplus](http://www.edexcel.com/resultsplus). Your exams officer will be able to set up your ResultsPlus account in minutes via Edexcel Online.

### 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](http://www.pearson.com/uk).

June 2014

Publications Code UA039909

All the material in this publication is copyright  
© Pearson Education Ltd 2014

# Introduction

## Introduction

1. The question in AO1 says, 'Examine the argument and/or interpretation in the passage.'

All the level descriptors in the mark scheme for AO1 and AO2 begin with reference to the passage. There are many techniques which candidates used to demonstrate their understanding of the passage and examiners were alerted to this range in order to credit various methodologies. The essential point is that whatever approach was adopted the passage must be central and pivotal.

Some candidates presented a basic summary of the whole article, in this case Preston, with only passing reference to the passage in the question. Where material was applicable, candidates were credited but in some cases the passage received only scant attention. In many other cases candidates used the passage as the focal point, analysing it further with reference to the overall article and this method, used correctly, may be seen as an example of good practice.

2. Candidates have improved in answering all the range of demands within AO2:

- Do you agree with the idea(s) expressed?
- Justify your point of view
- Discuss its implications for understanding religion and human experience.

In some cases candidates failed to address one or more of these requirements and presented partial answers and this was reflected on their level of achievement.

3. A feature of good practice was that most candidates made effective use of the synoptic requirements of this paper. In AO1 levels 3, 4 & 5 of the Mark Scheme there is reference to crediting answers that demonstrate the application of different elements of their course of study in this paper.

4. The question was divided into parts (a) and (b): AO1 and AO2 respectively. This was done to help candidates answer the whole question rather than bypassing elements within an assessment objective. Over the years most candidates have followed through the structure of the question but some have conflated these two parts and this has often affected the standard of the work where relevant material in AO2 has been omitted. Exceptionally, a few using this holistic approach have succeeded and produced good quality answers. There was some evidence that the quality of work was higher in AO1 compared to AO2.

5. A number of candidates developed commendable styles of writing including a commanding and confident tone with ownership of the text.

## **Question1**

Good practice and areas for improvement

AO1 characteristics of good quality:

- well-informed answers focused on the passage
- comprehensive understanding of the passage
- reference to the article as a whole or to related ideas and managed effectively in order to demonstrate an understanding of the passage
- structured answers in a coherent manner.
- effective use of scholarship.

AO2 characteristics of good quality:

- effective use of argument and sustained debate
- material related to other anthology sources and to relevant material in the other three units
- explicit attention to the implications for an understanding religion and human experience.

AO1 work that requires improvement:

- not focused on the passage in an explicit and systematic manner
- basic and too short in the analysis of key points and ideas
- a generic account of the whole article or a general account of related teachings at the expense of a focus on the passage in the question
- scattered references to the names of scholars but without further analysis of their work.

AO2 work that requires improvement:

- largely unsupported by evidence or argument
- limited explicit focus on the implications demands of the question.
- poor paragraphing techniques that restricted the quality of evaluation.

Observations from the content of the answers:

- a few candidates presented well-rounded expositions of Preston's passage
- some presented helpful contextual material with relevant information on Niebuhr
- some candidates selected a few parts of the passage for comment, coupled with a superficial summary of the whole article
- there was evidence of some candidates going off at a tangent without relating their material back to the passage
- some candidates paid little attention to Preston's summary of the five characteristic attitudes towards human culture
- others quite correctly paid careful attention to the significance of the fifth type of Christ transforming culture
- there was effective use of selected contributors such as Bonhoeffer and Fletcher and

movements such as Liberation Theology

- synoptic material included reference to selected ethical theories and case studies
- in AO2 some candidates argued their support for one or more of attitudes selected by Preston.

The following examples show good practice.

The candidate kept closely to the passage and presented a sound analysis of the key ideas and issues. There were interesting theological points, drawing on the contributions of seminal thinkers. The candidate presented a fine range of relevant material.

The debate in AO2 was well-structured and focused on the demands of the question.

(a) The central argument that Preston is making in the passage is that there are five distinct ways of classifying Christianity, and that throughout history Christianity has manifested itself, at some point, in every one of these variations. Preston concludes by arguing that in modern times 'Christ transforming culture' seems to be the form in which Christianity has manifested. Before remarking on the implications of this statement I will examine all five typologies in some greater detail.

Firstly, Christ against culture, is when Christianity was in direct contradiction to culture. This is where Christians preachers preach that the path of the righteous to salvation is corrupted by culture, and the best way to avoid its corrupting influence is to cut yourself off from culture and society. Further on is

In the article, Preston refers to these types of communities as the 'Religious'; people like monks and nuns, who take vows of chastity and purity - seeking to isolate themselves from any perceived negative influence of culture.

Secondly, the Christ of culture - where Christianity is seen more like the greatest achievement of culture. Human culture is seen as a vital part of being human, and Christ is seen as the purest form of human culture - an exemplar, a shining light - or as Jesus himself phrased it; 'I am the light of the world'. This view emphasises that Christians should embrace culture, rather than staying away from it (as opposed to the first typology of Christ against culture). An example of this might be in 21st century France, where even those who are non-religious or ~~atheists~~ still describe themselves as Catholic - because Christ is seen as part of culture rather than separated from it.

Now onto the more sophisticated typologies. Christ and culture in paradox asserts that the differences

between Christ and culture can never be synthesised, there can never be any lasting synthesis. The heavenly or spiritual realm of Christ is made distinct from the contingent, material world which we occupy. Man cannot separate himself from culture in this life, and should not even attempt to do so. For every man has an 'outer man' that lives in the earthly realm and an 'inner man' which occupies the spiritual realm. Both aspects of an individual exist in paradox—you cannot establish a heavenly community on Earth (like the Religious thought they were doing) because the 'outer man' is fallible and corrupt following the Fall. Ultimately, the 'inner man' will achieve salvation via the strong doctrine of grace, so the actions of man in the earthly realm are essentially irrelevant. This view was particularly popular in medieval times, the institutionalised Catholic Church supported this view.

Christ above culture is an attempt to synthesise Christ and culture. Christ is

seen as being vertically superior, rather than horizontally equivalent to culture. St. Thomas Aquinas held this view, and maintained that a Christ of culture view failed to recognise the transcendence and other-worldliness of Christ. Instead Aquinas claimed 'faith goes where reason cannot', it is superior to human culture. This viewpoint also leads to the conclusion of absolutism and the authority of the sovereign state, because God is seen as instituting certain organisations which control culture. This was perfectly exemplified in traditional Christendom and the absolute power and authority of the Catholic Church, through most of the dark ages and medieval period. St. Paul was also a proponent of this viewpoint 'let every man be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God and those that exist have been instituted by God'. The 'triumphalist church' is the ultimate divinely instituted authority, so the idea is that every man should recognise the authority of the

churches.

To relate this to a wider context, this fits in well with the debate in moral philosophy, & between liberal and conservative churches, known as reason vs. revelation. The Christ above culture view is frequently adopted by conservative Christians, for it places emphasis on respect for divinely instituted authority, and proposes a kind of static social conservatism, where the teachings of the church are seen to be absolute commands (enforced by God) which all men on Earth should follow. The link to revelation (the revealed word of God through scripture) is explained by the fact that institutionalised religions (until recently the Catholic church) draw their teachings and moral tenets from Holy books. The Catholic church drew its moral teachings from the Bible (revelation) and wished for this moral tenets to be absolute moral laws which everybody would follow. This idea is well illustrated in the thinking of Rudolph Carnap, when speaking of moral laws from

The Catholic church remained; 'they (moral commands as revealed through scripture) come direct from heaven and are eternally valid for human conduct'.

Perhaps the most famous example of a conservative Christian thinker who sided with absolutism and revelation was St. Paul. Here are a few ~~parts~~<sup>extracts</sup> from the letters he wrote to early Christian churches; 'neither the fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor drunkards nor extortioners shall inherit the Kingdom of God', and 'the acts of a sinful nature are obvious; sexual immorality, impurity, witchcraft, hatred, jealousy, anger, selfishness, envy, drunkenness and orgies'. He placed a lot of emphasis on submission and the duties of the inferior party to the superior party 'Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right'.

We can contrast this with the Christ the transformer of virtue typology, which is typically favoured by liberal

Christians, and is exemplified in the life and teachings of ~~the~~ Jesus Christ. Jesus did not think it the place of the Church to encourage static social conformism, he thought that it was to encourage change in the name of agape love. Joseph Packer and J.A.T. Robinson ~~also~~ contrast the teachings of Jesus with those of the Pharisees, to provide an example of old vs. new morality. Jesus represents liberal Christianity, reason as opposed to revelation, and Christ as the transformer of culture. When confronted about his followers working on the Sabbath he said; 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath', ~~to~~ challenging the legalistic, absolutist interpretation of the law. He always sought to place people above the law; when he witnessed an adulterous woman on trial with a potential death sentence (by stoning) he said 'those of you who are without sin shall cast the first stone'. Here Jesus invokes compassionate use of reason, encouraging people to transform culture

until it becomes more congruous with the unconditional love of God. Rather than condemning people, like St Paul, he stood up for the outcasts in society; 'it is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick; I have not come to call the righteous, but the sinners to repentance'. So, to summarise, if you accept the Christ the transformer of culture viewpoint (as Preston says is most applicable to the modern world at the end of his extract) it leads to situationism, rather than absolutism.

This is best illustrated in a quote by Jesus on the nature of the Decalogue (Ten commandments); 'a new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another'.

(b) In my view, the most pertinent and relevant typologies have been the two I ~~did~~ discussed in the most detail during the first section of my essay; Christ above culture and Christ the transformer of culture. These are the

lines along which the whole Christian community is divided. The implications for Christianity are huge, and in modern times Christians have become more polarised than ever. The first camp is the conservative strain of Christianity, who represent the Christ above culture typology, and embrace revelation, absolutism and church authority. The second camp is the liberal strain of Christianity, who represent the Christ transforming culture typology, and embrace human reason, situationism, and the role of the church as a catalyst for societal change, rather than social conformism.

An example of one of the many social issues where this divide becomes visible, is with regard to the moral debate over homosexuality. The response of the conservative camp is to refer to revelation, like the passage in Leviticus; 'if a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, they have committed an abomination! They claim that homosexual behaviour is a moral sin and that gay marriage

is in fundamental violation of God's intentions for humanity. If we look at some conservative denominations; the Southern Baptists, Church of the Nazarene, the Lutheran Church - Wisconsin Synod ~~and~~ and the Catholic Church (being the largest by far) - they all oppose homosexual sex and homosexual marriage on the grounds that it cannot be reconciled with Biblical teachings. I'll refer again here to St. Paul 'nor homosexuals shall inherit the Kingdom of God'. These denominations all believe that the social and ethical dimensions of a religion (to reference Nirvan Smart) are best represented by Christ above culture - the triumphalist church will get people on the path to salvation, and in their view homosexuality is a deviation from the path to salvation.

The response of the liberal strain of Christianity is quite different. If we look at some denominations; like the American Baptists, United Methodist Church or the United Church of Christ,

They all use human reason to judge homosexuality. They might point to evidence like natural biological variation, and the Kinsey scale of sexual orientation (Alfred Kinsey) to conclude that God would be accepting of loving homosexual relationships. They do not refer to scripture to decide a stance on this issue, instead they ~~interpret~~ interpret the words of Jesus to mean that they should judge the moral issue of homosexuality situationally, be looking at the facts of the case. These denominations all believe that the social and ethical dimensions of a religion are best represented by Christ transforming culture. They try to mirror the unconditional love of God by being unconditionally loving towards homosexuals. The path to salvation is open to all, and only the teachings of Jesus Christ in revelation are relevant to the situation. Jesus said 'love thy neighbors as thyself' and called for a 'creative recklessness' to bring about agape love - hence liberal Christians attempt to transform culture towards the model embodied in

Christ.

The implications for human experience are equally huge. If you are a homosexual living in an area dominated by conservative Christianity, you are discriminated against. For example, in Sudan, Uganda, and Mauritania the sentence for homosexuality is death. On the other hand if you are a homosexual individual living in an area dominated by liberal Christianity, you are welcomed and treated equally, for example in Canada, Norway and the UK gay marriage is legal. ~~The~~ The USA is a great case study for this. States like Vermont, New Hampshire and Massachusetts are dominated by the United Church of Christ, and gay marriage is legal in all of these states. States like Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi are dominated by the Southern Baptists and gay marriage is banned, and homosexuality is very taboo.

To ~~conclude~~ conclude, I do agree with Preston that the typology most relevant to modern times is Christ the Transformer of Culture. The internet and other technological developments have made culture more liberal. This has fundamentally shifted the social dimension of all religions, ~~not~~ and in turn this has influenced the doctrinal dimension. With the election of Pope Francis I, it is obvious that Christianity is becoming more liberal and embracing the ethic of Jesus rather than that of St. Paul, Christians are more likely to try and transform culture than control it. Christianity is being reborn, the 'protean phenomena' did once again 'there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus'.



The candidate structured the answer around the five positions of Preston. The candidate had the ability to highlight the key emphases in Preston's passage.

In AO2 the discussion ranged around the significance of the fifth position in the passage. AO2 was relatively succinct but it touched on the important parts of AO2.

1 a) The overarching theme of the passage is that Christian ethics is dependent upon the relationship of the church and society. 5 different stances are put forward that suggest different relationships between the church and the community that have occurred over history. The author suggests that the re-appearance of these positions between Christ and culture subsequently means that they have proven themselves to be valuable positions. This ~~view~~ view means there is no allowance for any of the 5 positions to be 'wrong' when in actuality they may provide a more negative relationship between church and society as a whole.

(namely the 4<sup>th</sup> position). The excerpt ends with the assertion that the fifth position of 'Christ transforming culture' is the most beneficial for Christianity, although this is ~~debateable~~ debateable.

The first position that is offered of Christ against culture may have negative implications for Christian ethics. The other worldliness of Christ suggests his level of ethics ~~is~~ is unattainable for much of Christianity. If Christ is God on earth then humanity will always

struggle to live up to the same standards and therefore may cause some Christians to feel that they are inevitably going to fall short of these standards, and so what is the purpose of trying? For others it may be an incentive to get closer to God and live by Jesus' ethics as much as possible. The passage, other than highlighting the fifth position as a good one for the modern world, does not comment on the flaws of ~~the~~ Niebuhr's five positions. There are Biblical passages that support the view of the first stone being an accurate one. For example "If someone slaps you on the right cheek turn to them the other cheek also." (Matthew 5:39) This is an unnatural stance for many people, exemplifying that Jesus' ethics is in fact greater than humanity, affirming the "other-worldly pretensions."

The second position is that Christ may influence society slightly but not change it drastically. This position is flawed too. This suggests that society is already exceedingly bad and therefore the gospels require little change. This seems unlikely considering doctrines of original sin that state that humanity will inherently fall short of God. The ~~the~~ alternative scenario is that in a 'Christ of culture' society little change is evoked. This too seems unlikely as on a personal level coming to Christ often causes dramatic

change with people changing their whole lifestyle because of it.

The third position distinguishes between God being king within church and stem in the public sphere. This is a position adopted historically during Tudor reigns and is arguably a relationship that is encouraged by the ruling classes and monarchs as it is a method by which to control the public by. ~~Max~~ Max supports this view by calling religions the "opium of the masses" and claiming that religion is merely a method of maintaining public order. Within traditional theology for God to be God he must be transcendent. The stemers portrayed conflicts with this view.

The fourth position is the position that Dietrich Bonhoeffer argued against. He felt that public life and the church should remain separate. When the church seeks influence over the whole of society disaster can ensue. This is exemplified by the Concordat between the German church and the Nazi regime of the 1930's/1940's in Germany. It resulted in the church losing its focus and being covered by politics. This resulted in the removal of the old testament and its replacement with 'Mein Kampf'. This is the position taken in Russia today. Many high profile members of government are also members of the church or are with close ties to the church and this has resulted

=

in what ~~many~~ <sup>many</sup> argue as un-Christian laws such as those that restrict the rights of homosexuals.

Prester argues that the fifth position is the best for a modern day church, to influence but not control society. One might argue that this is the position adopted in the UK where the Church of England has an elevated position being able to influence politics in the House of Lords for example but where democracy remains ~~triumphant~~ <sup>triumphant</sup>.

Overall, the passage states that there are many different positions that can be adopted between church and society. The author describes them as equally ~~plausible~~ 'plausible' but does highlight the fact these positions were adopted during different 'social orders' to that which is experienced today. The agreement of the passage is that the 5 different stances have been applicable over history, the fifth of Members attitudes, "Christ transferring <sup>culture</sup> ~~culture~~" is the most reasonable to be pursued by the church today.

1 b) Prester's position of the fifth attitude being the most suitable for a modern day church is agreeable. It suggests a desire for Christianity to influence and encourage society with Christianity. This ties in with Bible teachings of "~~people~~ go and baptize all <sup>nations</sup> ~~people~~ in the name of the father son and holy spirit" but it also implies the church should not be too pushy or

dominant. This is vital in the 21<sup>st</sup> century where in most ~~countries~~ <sup>nations</sup>, multi-culturalism is present and therefore there is a need for cohesion ~~above~~ <sup>above</sup> all else. If the position of Christ above culture was adopted in the modern day, it is likely to be unsuccessful, atheism is becoming increasingly popular and people would not want to be controlled by a church. The fact that the church is comprised of so many denominations would cause tension too, which church would be the church to have control over public life? the most popular in each nation or the most popular overall. There are over 2 billion catholic people worldwide and so if this faith attitude was adopted it may result in the reformation of Papal authority on a global scale. This position would have negative effects on human religious experience too. Instead of people coming to Christ on their own and developing a relationship with God, which Kierkegaard suggests is the most important thing. Religion would become institutionalised and people would attend church and be Christian out of a sense of duty, resulting in what Ninian Smart describes as an 'empty shell' where rituals are practised due to habit. ❏

The five positions do not allow for a scenario in which the church aims to be entirely separated from society. All of the attitudes provide an example of the church at the very least trying to influence society.

Bonhoeffer when writing on 'religiously Christianity' wanted a church that was focused on deity God's will, not focused on going control in public realms.

The failure of the birth policies is exemplified by the Catholic church's rejection of contraception that led to the increase in rates of infections of AIDS especially in Catholic dominated countries.

~~ultimately~~, which Procter does not go in to detail as to why the birth attitude is best, on closer inspection the remaining few ~~are~~ are clearly placed. Moreover birth policies is the most beneficial for human experience as it allows Christians to be led on the individuals own ~~own~~ accord and it allows for a diverse society to coexist harmoniously where religious pluralism <sup>can</sup> occur, with Christianity not regarded as greater than other ~~other~~ religions in secular <sup>affairs</sup> ~~affairs~~.



## **Paper Summary**

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are encouraged to:

- develop their interest in an academic study of religion
- develop study skills that reflect these academic demands such as a thorough study of the texts, the ability to analyse complex ideas and to manage their material in order to answer the question in an explicit manner
- adopt a critical approach which reflects on their prior learning in the other RS units
- engage with the implications of their studies.

## **Grade Boundaries**

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

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

Ofqual



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government



Pearson Education Limited. Registered company number 872828  
with its registered office at Edinburgh Gate, Harlow, Essex CM20 2JE