



General Certificate of Education

## **Religious Studies (1061)**

RSS05 The History of Christianity

OR

Religion, Art and the Media

## **Report on the Examination**

*2009 examination - June series*

**This Report on the Examination uses the [new numbering system](#)**

Further copies of this Report are available to download from the AQA Website: [www.aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk)

Copyright © 2009 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

#### COPYRIGHT

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

## **RSS05 *The History of Christianity* OR *Religion, Art and the Media***

### **General comments**

There had been no entries for *The History of Christianity* option in the January assessment opportunity; therefore it was pleasing to note the entries for this option in the June examination. *The Religion, Art and the Media* option still accounted for the majority of entries for RSS05.

The quality of scripts was varied; there were a small number of very high scoring candidates who succeeded in accessing the highest levels of the mark scheme. Conversely, there were also a number of very poor scripts and it was clear that some candidates had not undertaken sufficient preparation for the examination, relying perhaps too much on their general knowledge rather than the material specified for study in the Specification. This was particularly true in some parts of the *Religion, Art and the Media* option.

Candidates who successfully managed to exegete the question usually performed well. However, there were several instances of candidates failing to read the question with sufficient care and consequently writing tangentially to the question asked, or else offering answers that were largely irrelevant and consequently scored very low marks indeed.

In relation to the AO2 objective, many candidates continued to perform at a level more appropriate to GCSE, writing in a very formulaic style which reflected little reasoning, clear analysis or evaluation of the issues arising.

## **Section A *The History of Christianity***

### **Question 1 (Topic 1 *The Celtic Church*)**

#### **Question 01**

A small number of candidates chose to address this question and those who did attempt it often resorted to talking about monasticism in very general terms in Question 01, rather than addressing the distinctive features of Celtic monasticism.

#### **Question 02**

In this question, those candidates who could refer to the key distinctive features of Celtic Christianity, such as no rigid structure and its emphasis on wonder of, and accord with, creation, were able to construct sound arguments which offered some good reasoning.

### **Question 2 (Topic 2 *The Protestant Reformation*)**

#### **Question 03**

This was the most popular question in this Section of the examination paper. The quality of responses varied widely; some candidates were very clear and examined and expounded the key issues of Calvin's religious teaching, making good use of reference to Calvin's teachings in *The Institutes*. There were also some excellent references to Calvin's teaching on predestination and to the role of Christ and the Church. At the other end of the scale were answers that showed little reference to Calvin; candidates were seemingly anticipating a question on Luther as many tried by various means to turn their answers towards Luther rather than to Calvin and, as a consequence, produced very weak responses.

#### **Question 04**

In Question 04, there were some good answers that attempted to evaluate the statement in the question but many lacked the depth and critical analysis necessary to access beyond Level 4 of the mark scheme.

#### **Question 3 (Topic 3 *The Catholic Reformation*)**

##### **Question 05**

This was either addressed very well or very poorly. Sound answers made clear reference to the pre-Council reforms and to the work of Pope Paul III, though some insisted that Paul VI was the Pope who oversaw the Council of Trent. Even in good answers very few candidates made any reference to the Regensburg Colloquy and to the end of attempted compromise with the Protestant faction. Weaker answers either started at too early a date or else focussed on the rise of Protestantism as the one and only reason for the calling of the Council.

##### **Question 06**

In Question 06, candidates produced some good answers and many could explain a variety of good reasons to disagree with the statement; few candidates were able to suggest more than cursory reasons in agreement with the statement in the question.

#### **Question 4 (Topic 4 *The rise of Methodism*)**

##### **Question 07**

Candidates produced a wide variety of answers in response to this question. Those candidates who knew and understood the structure of Methodism in the 18<sup>th</sup> century could explain accurately the key features of the organisation of Methodism. There were, however, other candidates who took the opportunity to regurgitate everything they knew about Methodism, rather than to address the focus of the question set.

##### **Question 08**

Whilst Question 07 was addressed well by many candidates, the same could not be said for Question 08. Here, answers were often very weak and rarely reached or accessed above Level 5. Very few, if any, candidates were able to put Methodism in the context of other religious developments and to suggest alternatives to the idea expressed in the question. Answers were often one-sided and frequently lacked depth and analysis.

## **Section B *Religion, Art and the Media***

### **Question 5 (Topics 1 and 2 *The nature and purpose of religious art*)**

#### **Question 09**

This was the most popular question in this option. Overall, there were some very good answers that addressed the question set. Key types of material were examined and exemplified, and a good range of material was examined. The better answers offered some explanation of what could or would **qualify** as religious art. There was a tendency amongst a small number of candidates, from within a small number of centres, to write what were clearly pre-prepared answers which used the same sequence of paragraphs and the same examples in illustration of points made. Whilst this worked to a degree with this question, centres should discourage candidates from adopting such an approach. The very best answers tended to cover a wide range of material and some considered modern forms of art, such as video art, and provided good exemplification of such works.

#### **Question 10**

In Question 10, candidates produced a wide variety of responses, though few addressed the terms of the question. The best answers were able to provide a range of arguments and a depth to their responses which were the result of some very good analysis and reasoning of alternative views and clear evaluation arising from that.

### **Question 6 (Topics 1 and 2 *The nature and purpose of religious art*)**

#### **Question 11**

Two common factors were evident in weaker answers to this question. First, many candidates failed to take note of the word 'one' in the question and wrote on the contribution of art to worship in several religions. Second, the weakest answers attempted to repeat much of the material already used in answer to Question 5. It became very clear that candidates who attempted both Question 5 and Question 6 usually produced weak answers to the latter question. It is important that candidates study the demands of the question carefully. Those candidates who could make clear and specific reference to the use of art in worship – to inspire a sense of the numinous or to delineate sacred space, for example, and could provide specific types or examples of art within the context of religious worship, usually achieved high marks. Those candidates who wrote in very general terms did not meet the demands of the question and were thus restricted in the marks they could achieve.

#### **Question 12**

There were some good answers produced to Question 12 and, it was not uncommon for candidates who had not addressed the focus of the question in Question 11, to achieve higher marks in this section. Candidates who scored well made good use of a range of ideas and opinion, including reference to historical or current situations to support their answers.

### **Question 7 (Topic 3 *Religion, art and popular culture*)**

#### **Question 13**

This was a very popular question, but one that was often not addressed successfully. Many candidates failed to read the question carefully. The vast majority of candidates produced an informed response about religion in humour rather than humour in religion as demanded by the question. Even with some considerable leeway agreed at the standardisation meeting, examiners found it difficult to award higher than Level 2 ('an informed answer that misses the point of the question') in many cases. This particular question was a clear example of the need

for candidates to prepare themselves adequately for the sort of questions that can be asked, **not** what they hope will be asked. The need to read the question carefully and understand the demands it makes is paramount. There were, however, some very good answers from those candidates who addressed the question; clear reference was made to the value of humour as a vehicle for learning, and there were some very good examples of the use of humour within faith communities and ironic humour in the Bible.

**Question 14**

Question 14 allowed those who misinterpreted Question 13 to redress the balance a little. Candidates who misread the demands of Question 13 were able to provide examples of the way in which humour is used in religion to promote religious teachings or ideas. There were some very good answers here which addressed **both** sides of the argument and provided some excellent critical evaluations of the statement.

**Question 8 (Topic 4 *Cyber religion and TV religion*)**

**Question 15**

This was a popular question which was almost universally addressed well. There were very clear references to a wide range of material related to religion on the Internet and these were, in the main, explained and exemplified well. There were a small number of weaker answers which tended to concentrate on ideas of 'virtual religion' and gave copious amounts of material about *St. Pixels* or *Second life* at the expense of ignoring key material. Some candidates demonstrated encyclopaedic knowledge of religious material that is available on the Internet and scored highly as a result.

**Question 16**

Question 16 was answered less well than Question 15. Here, a significant number of candidates concentrated on the word 'promote' in the statement and then argued at length about how the Internet could be a useful source of advertising for religion, rather than examining the wider meaning of the word intended by the question. There were, however, some very good answers which did examine the ways that the Internet challenged **and** promoted religion and / or religious belief and practice in a variety of ways and wrote well balanced and reasoned answers.