



General Certificate of Education

Religious Studies (2060)

RST3C **either** The History of Christianity in
 the 20th century
or Religion and Art

Report on the Examination

2010 examination - June series

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Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

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General Comments

This was the first sitting of the new specification, and in general the quality of work shown in the scripts marked was of a very pleasing and good A2 standard. There was a very even split between centres offering the Church History option and those who chose to answer the Religion and Art option. In the main it was clear that candidates had been well prepared for the exam and the subject knowledge demonstrated, on both options, was good. The AO1 questions demonstrated good subject knowledge and it was pleasing to note that, for the most part, candidates wrote to the question asked, rather than adopting general pre-prepared 'one size fits all' approach.

The better AO2 answers showed that candidates could demonstrate the criticality demanded for the upper levels of AO2 and Levels 6 & 7 were not uncommon. Weaker candidates took refuge in a rather binary 'on the one hand / on the other hand' approach and this resulted in some candidates failing to produce a conclusion which *followed on from reasoned consideration* of varying viewpoints, this had the effect of suppressing their AO2 answers to the top of Level 4.

Section A: History of Christianity 'The Christian Church in the 20th Century'.

Question 1 *Feminist theology*

Part 01

In general this question produced some excellent answers which addressed the question set and showed good knowledge of the development of Feminist Theology in the 20th century. There was clear examination of key developments and good reference to the key people and their ideas. Most candidates covered all the key points expected by the mark scheme. A few candidates traced the development of the content of feminist theology and did so to a very high standard. Lower scoring answers failed to be as precise in their examination and some failed to read or note the reference to 20th century in the question, and thus gave a rather general exposition of the historical development of feminist theology. A very small number of candidates failed to relate their answers to theology in any way and produced responses which concentrated on feminism rather than feminist theology.

Part 02

In part 02, responses showed clear differentiation between candidates. Good candidates were clear about the effects and limitation thereon of feminist theology in the areas of liturgy, ministry and empowerment. One centre in particular produced some excellent responses in relation to the effects of feminist theology within the Roman Catholic Church. Weaker candidates produced answers which either showed considerable confusion e.g. between Roman Catholic and Anglican ordination, or a rather pedestrian assessment and binary approach towards question set. The key to scoring the upper levels is to be focused, and support answers with clear exemplification from which some clear analysis and reasoning arise.

Question 2 *The Roman Catholic Church in second part of 20th century*

Part 03

The question focused on the factors which led to the calling of the Second Vatican Council, rather than the effects of the Council on the Roman Catholic Church. There were many very good answers and some which were excellent. Candidates who hit the top levels in response to this question were those who highlighted and developed in depth the key points demanded in the mark scheme and there were some excellent references to the progressive events of the Pontificate of Pius XII with clear and accurate reference made to developments in biblical studies and the developing liturgical movement prior to the calling of the Second Vatican Council. Weaker answers however, tended to cover two or three basic points in a rather superficial way. Most mentioned the constraints upon the Roman Catholic Church in the light of the legacy of Vatican I and the more immediate desire for *aggiornamento* with the accession of John XXIII, but few covered any of the movements and developments prior to John XXIII's accession and the calling of the Second Vatican Council with any clear focus or depth.

Part 04

A range of competences was demonstrated in response to this question. Candidates who knew the material well were able to offer good evaluations in response to the question posed. These candidates made clear reference to the earlier progressive attitudes and developments evident in the Roman Catholic Church, e.g. in biblical studies, and the liturgy, and the writings of de Lubec and Congar; and contrasted these with what were seen as particularly progressive attitudes instigated at or after Vatican II, especially the moves towards ecumenism, the move towards collegiality within the structure of the Roman Catholic Church and Catholic social teachings. Weaker answers were typified by rather general responses which failed to take into account the earlier developments prior to Vatican II.

Question 3 *New forms of Christian Fundamentalism*

Part 05

There were some good answers to this question, but no really excellent responses such as had been seen in the earlier questions. The key to answering the question was the analysis of a variety of ideas. One centre looked almost exclusively at the development of the political Christian Right in the UK, and did so in some considerable depth and answers here tended to reach Level 5 with ease. Almost every candidate focused on the reactions to liberalism and there were some answers which made clear and accurate reference to the influence of the growth of fundamentalism in other parts of the world and its effects on the development of fundamentalist groups within the UK. However, surprisingly few mentioned the development of fundamentalist groups within the UK as a reaction to developments in science and/or biblical scholarship. These were areas which could have been developed further. Similarly very little reference was made to the ease with which fundamentalist ideas can now be disseminated by the use of modern media or the appeal of fundamentalist ideas of salvation and eschatology. The mark scheme allowed for a variety of responses to the question. Those who were able to think widely and offer analysis of a variety of ideas rather than just trace a rather pedestrian development of the rise of fundamentalist groups were those who were rewarded by the upper range of levels and marks.

Part 06

Answers in this section were often limited by the content of the AO1 section. The focus in the majority of answers tended to be on the perceived moral laxity in society over key issues and this was evaluated with varying degrees of success. Surprisingly few went much beyond this or examined ways in which fundamentalist ideas are an antithesis to other areas of the modern age. Only a handful of answers offered any form of evaluation considering the fundamentalist certainty of biblical inerrancy and an even smaller number entered in debate focusing on the validity of fundamentalism in an age of scientific discovery.

Question 4 *Black-led churches in the United Kingdom today***Part 07**

There were very few candidates who wrote in response to this question. The AO1 part of this asked candidates to examine *both* the theology *and* the distinctive styles of worship of black-led churches in the UK. Few candidates actually addressed both parts satisfactorily. It was clear from the limited number of responses seen that candidates focused rather more on the styles of worship rather than addressing both issues – both aspects needed to be addressed for top levels (Levels 6 & 7) to be awarded, with the result that, even those who wrote clearly and at length on distinctive styles of worship but failed to consider theology, failed to get beyond the top of Level 5 and many fell some way below this. In the main, candidates had a good knowledge of the distinctiveness of styles of worship in a general sense, correctly emphasising the centrality of scripture, the spontaneity of worship and the strong emphasis on gospel songs etc., but weaker answers failed to progress much beyond these last two points. However, there were one or two who offered comprehensive answers and highlighted the distinctiveness of rites of passage, baptism and funerals particularly well. The distinctiveness of theology was rather less focused and in notable by its absence in many responses to the question, which had the effect of suppressing several candidates' marks to the top of Level 5.

Part 08

In contrast to the partial answers seen in part 07, the answers to this part of the question were more focused. Most responses were good and although there was some vagueness about what counted as 'mainstream Christianity', there was a clear attempt to provide a balanced assessment. Many highlighted the fact that black gospel music was recognised as part of modern mainstream Christian music and there were several references to the popularity of this music in worship other than that found in black-led churches. More perceptive candidates made successful attempts to show how religious broadcasting and local ecumenical projects had facilitated the integration of black-led churches into the wider culture of Christianity within the UK.

Section B Religion and Art

Question 5 *Iconography in the Orthodox Church*

Part 09

There were few responses to this question and those which were offered showed a very clear division. There were some excellent answers which dealt with the need for the defence of icons in the light of the iconoclasm of 8th century, and then went onto examine in depth the teachings of John of Damascus with some particularly clear references to what John of Damascus had said both about the nature and use of icons by use of accurate quotations and reference to key theological ideas about incarnation and revelation. References to what was said by the 7th Ecumenical Council often concentrated on a reiteration of what John of Damascus had said, this was valid to a point but the best candidates went beyond this and examined the defence of icons from the position of tradition as expressed in the decrees of the 7th Ecumenical Council.

There were some answers which scored full marks or very nearly full marks in this part and these were typified by candidates who wrote a structured and clear account and were able to substantiate their answers with excellent knowledge, use of quotations, proficient use of specialist vocabulary and some considerable depth of understanding about the theology of icons. Weaker candidates often progressed little further than a general account of John of Damascus' defence of icons in the light of the charges brought by the iconoclasts, and few were able to say much of any significance about the 7th Ecumenical Council.

Part 10

Not surprisingly, the response to the AO2 element of the question (part 10) mirrored that of the AO1 (part 09). There were some excellent answers which offered depth and analysis. For example contrasting the sacred status and function of icons with that of more general works of religious art, and many made clear reference to fact that icons are painted to a convention and thus the icon writer did not have the same freedom of expression as other religious artists might, or the importance of icons within liturgical space and the liturgy itself. There were also some interesting links between other aspects of the course of study which demonstrated a high level of understanding about the nature and purpose of religious art. The top answers made clear reference to the arguments and views of scholars such as Bishop Kallistos Ware, Ouspensky and Baggley, which were evaluated with considerable skill and precision. Weak answers lacked such depth and often resorted to a very binary approach to the evaluation. Focus of these answers tended to be on icons as aids to prayer versus icons as depictions of religious scenes and/or people.

Question 6 *Protestant art of the Reformation*

Part 11

This proved to be a popular choice of question and those candidates who tackled it generally did very well. The key points about the themes of Protestant art were dealt with clearly and accurately and in many cases were supported by clear exemplification from key artists of the Protestant Reformation. The top answers began their analysis by highlighting the different attitudes amongst reformers towards the use of religious art and then selected key themes depicted in Protestant Reformation art and related these to the wider context of teachings of the Protestant Reformation. There were many excellent references to the works of Lucas Cranach which went beyond those named in the specification. One centre demonstrated excellent (even encyclopaedic) knowledge of Cranach's works – his several illustrations of Law and Grace (Old Law and New Law), Cranach's illustrations for Luther's German Bible and his illustrations for

Melanchthon's polemical pamphlet 'Passional Christi und Anti Christi', and a detailed discussion of Cranach's Wittenberg Altarpiece – as examples which covered the range of themes found in Protestant art. The best answers did not merely record the ideas expressed in Protestant religious art but made clear connections between the art and the key theological ideas prevalent in the Reformation.

Part 12

There were some excellent responses to this question and some went beyond what was expected by the mark scheme to include an application of Reformation art to the contemporary church. It was clear that candidates were prepared to take a wide view of the term 'significance' in the question and those who did, produced answers which were of the highest standard, many of which resulted in a mature and balanced evaluation and related their argument to a broader context.

Question 7 *Catholic Art of the Counter Reformation*

Part 13

There were very few candidates who wrote in response to this question. The question required candidates to know what the Council of Trent actually said about the nature and purpose of religious art, and only a few were able to do this with any accuracy. Many answers were too general and confined themselves to a basic catalogue of some of the more popular works of Counter Reformation art. Even where answers showed good knowledge of the works of key artists e.g. Caravaggio, or Bernini, there was still a propensity to describe the works of art rather than examine how they related to, or fulfilled the requirements of, the teachings of the Council of Trent about religious art. This was a question where, for a variety of reasons, candidates sadly listed works of art rather than examined them in the light of what the Council of Trent had said about both the nature and the purpose of Catholic religious art.

Part 14

Unsurprisingly, this part of the question was also weak. The key problem for many candidates arose from confusion over what constituted 'devotional' art, and in consequence many answers were largely unfocused. Arguments against the primary purpose being devotional hit many of the points indicated in the mark scheme, and there were several persuasive arguments about the primary purpose being that of propaganda or an expression of power. However the lack of clarity over the term 'devotional' meant that in all but a few cases there was little constructive counter argument or evaluation.

Question 8 *Pre-Raphaelite religious art*

Part 15

This proved to be the most popular question in this option. There were no really weak answers and many showed considerable depth and this indicated that candidates had been well prepared for this part of the specification. The question asked for an examination of Holman Hunt's use of symbolism with reference to either *The Shadow of Death* or *The Light of The World* – it came as no surprise to see that *The Light of the World* was the more popular choice, though only by a narrow margin. The top level candidates, particularly those from one centre, began their answers by unpacking the term symbolism and made a clear distinction between allegorical, and typological symbolism both of which are found in Holman Hunt's religious works. Some candidates also quoted Holman Hunt himself, referring to and analysing the term 'symbolic realism' which Holman Hunt had used to describe his style of painting. The top

answers then examined the particular type of symbolism within their chosen painting, and made clear reference to theological ideas expressed and where appropriate the relevant biblical texts. The distinction between the good answers and the weaker ones resulted from the way in which the more able candidates could relate the symbolism used in the paintings to clear theological ideas, rather than merely decoding the symbolism in a list-like and pedestrian way. Some centres had clearly been taught about the different versions of these paintings and the ways in which these subtle differences – e.g. the addition of the crescent symbol on the lantern in the final (St. Paul's) version of *The Light of the World* – could be interpreted and understood.

Part 16

There was a fair spread of quality in answers to this part of the question, though there were very few, if any, poor answers. Weaker answers tended to focus on and repeat much of the material used in part 15 as justification for agreeing with the statement, yet offered little, if anything, of substance in counter argument. Top level answers however, not only provided effective analysis and counter argument but also referred to Holman Hunt's intentions and the notes written to accompany the paintings as justification for agreement with the statement, and many broadened their answers to include reference to and analysis of Holman Hunt's other religious paintings named on the specification (and those which were not). There were several answers which made reference to, and good use of, other notable works by Holman Hunt, e.g. *The Hireling* and *The Druids*; such an approach contributed to some excellent evaluations and where this happened centres should be congratulated on their preparation of candidates.