



Teacher Resource Bank

GCE Religious Studies

Unit RST4B Section A Religious Fundamentalism

June 2011 Examination Candidate Exemplar Work



2011 (June) Unit RST4B Section A Religious Fundamentalism

Example of Candidate's Work from the Examination

Grade B

- 01 Examine the development of fundamentalism as a reaction against science and secularism. (45 marks) AO1

Candidate Response

A religious fundamentalist is a person who seeks to maintain the core beliefs of their religion often to a very strict standard. In the case of the Southern Baptists and the Taliban their fundamentalist groups formed as a reaction to events around them. I will examine these.

The word fundamentalist comes from the publication of a series of essays called the fundamentals released between 1910 and 1915. The Southern Baptists were formed during the American civil war as north and south divided on slavery issues. The Southern Baptists were famously involved in the Scopes trial where a teacher was taken to court for teaching evolution in school. The SB rallied around this event and had large scale protests. This was really a key development point for the SB. The SB were very against evolution as it said we came from a lower order of beings and were not made in God's image. They believe that every word in the bible is the inherent work of God and so they had a strong reaction to Darwin's theory of evolution. The science of the time led to the industrial revolution which in turn allowed the intellectual revolution. As people became more educated they began to question things more. They even began to question the truth of the bible and started to examine it in a scientific way in light of new scientific evidence. This led to a development in the Southern Baptists, it gave them an enemy to oppose, it gave them a cause to fight for. Their fundamentalist beliefs meant to them that all of the bible was literally true and so it developed into an organisation that opposed anything that said otherwise. New scientific developments are still developing the SB now. The age of the earth is continually being measured and brought closer to the actual date each time. As more people are becoming atheists or agnostic the SB are becoming more absolute and firm in their beliefs that biblical texts are literal and true. It appears that as each new scientific development occurs the SB became more determined to oppose it.

Secularism has never been a major issue for the Southern Baptists as they have the separation of the church and state. It was however a serious issue for the Taliban. The Taliban are a Muslim fundamentalist group who formed a theocratic government until their leader Saddam Hussein was removed near the start of the war still going on today. The soviets were at one point in control of Afghanistan after being called in to assist the current government to maintain power. They formed a secular government and introduced a more modern lifestyle with cinemas and tv's readily available. They made it possible for women to receive the same education as men and any women could become a doctor or lawyer. The changes they made were seen by some as unIslamic as it provided distractions from Allah. Women could also wear western fashions, paint their nails or wear make-up which was seen to encourage adultery. All of these things are the kind of things the Taliban disliked but it was not the Taliban who removed the soviets. It was the mujahideen who removed them after years of fighting. It was during the time of splintered Mujahadeen and tribal ruler that the Taliban started to act to help people and gain support. Much of their force was mujahideen who had fought the soviets. Just a bit over six years after they formed the Taliban they had taken the capital Kabul. The Taliban did not fight the secular government but they did develop in reaction to it. If the secular government were not in place the mujahideen would not have formed to fight them and the Taliban would not have formed to fight the various warlords that came to power after. The Taliban would also have had much less fighting power if the mujahideen who fought the soviets had not been around.

In conclusion the Southern Baptists developed in reaction to science among other things such as liberalism, and the Taliban developed in reaction to secularism as well as political issues.

Commentary

The two movements chosen are appropriate examples to answer the question effectively.

The second paragraph discusses the Southern Baptists in relation to science. The mark scheme allows a focus on “fundamentalism as a reaction to science and secularism” so the lack of detail about the development of the SBs is allowable. The discussion of the importance of the Scopes trial demonstrates a reasonable understanding. The mention of the “intellectual revolution” and its effect on biblical interpretation includes key facts, but fails to develop them well enough to demonstrate reasonable understanding. The final four sentences include some evidence, but without a clear focus on what it is being used to demonstrate.

The third paragraph discusses the Taliban in relation to secularism. Factual inaccuracies apart, the scope of the discussion is limited by a narrow understanding of “secularism”. The candidate focuses on the effects of a secular regime (media, universal education, women’s dress) rather than the ideologies secularism promotes. The only clear instances of ideological reaction is that media and education were “unIslamic as it provided distractions from Allah”, and the Taliban “disliked” them. There is some recognition of the complexity of the relationship between the secular Soviet regime, and the development of the Taliban, but without clear exemplification.

As a whole, the answer includes key ideas and facts, and demonstrates variable levels of understanding. The movements chosen lend themselves well to answering the question, and some evidence is used to illustrate the SB’s reaction to science and the Taliban’s reaction to secularism. It does answer the question, but just lacks the level of detail and coherence that would constitute “a satisfactory treatment”.

Level 4, 28 marks

02 'Religious fundamentalism is relevant only in societies that place a heavy emphasis on science.' Assess this claim. (30 marks) AO2

Candidate Response

The fundamentalist Christian group the Southern Baptist believe that the bible should be interpreted literally. As science has developed there is mounting evidence to show that this is not true. Religious fundamentalist oppose this. In societies with little or no emphasis on science would religious fundamentalists have any relevance.

Southern Baptist to this day are trying to remove evolution from schools in the Southern States of America. They want children to be taught intelligent design instead. This is not to be taught as religion as that is not allowed in American public schools but as scientific fact. Intelligent design assesses nature, animals and the whole universe to show how it must have come from a creator. This gives real meaning to a fundamentalist group because if everyone believed the bible as a literal account there would be no need for fundamentalist as everyone would essentially be one. It is only in reaction to science among other issues that American fundamentalism was formed. Fundamentalism is very relevant in societies with a heavy emphasis on science because many aspects of science will clash with religious views of the world. Evolution is a regularly debated example but the big bang theory is equally good. As long as science advances are made fundamentalism will be relevant as they will probably oppose it.

Fundamentalists do more than just disagree with Darwin though. Fundamentalists using religious texts or teaching often weigh in on moral issues such as abortion, euthanasia and homosexuality. A notorious anti-homosexuality fundamentalist group is the Westborough Baptist Church. They often picket the funerals of soldiers with offensive signs such as 'God hates fags' this is also the name of their website. These people give a clear example of the relevance of fundamentalism in issues not relating to science. They do live in a country with an emphasis on science but their relevance comes from their stance on the morality of homosexuality.

The Taliban are another example of a fundamentalist group whose relevance does not come from science. Afghanistan is not a country with a heavy emphasis on science and the Taliban were extremely relevant there as they were the government. The Taliban relevance came from their desire to create a theocratic government. The fact that they were fundamentalist was relevant to their ruler as their strict version of Shariah law became the law. Under their law beatings were an acceptable punishment for many crimes and dismemberment was also acceptable.

It seems to me that some fundamentalist groups would have no relevance in society if not for science, this is not the case for all however as some are concerned more with moral, ethical or political issues.

Commentary

Despite some clumsiness of language, this is a well-focused response to the issue which applies critical analysis to the proposition. The second paragraph moves from the specifics (SBs and evolution) to the general ("Fundamentalism is very relevant in societies with a heavy emphasis on science because many aspects of science will clash with religious views"). The third paragraph moves the focus on to the relevance of moral conservatism. In the fourth paragraph, the argument is developed with reference to the Taliban, where the relevance of fundamentalism is not related to science at all. The conclusion draws these threads together as an appropriate evaluation. The use of evidence is patchy and the reasoning in the argument is implicit rather than explicit, so this is only just "a well focused response".

Level 6, 24 marks.

Grade A

- 01 Examine the development of fundamentalism as a reaction against science and secularism. (45 marks) AO1

Candidate Response

In the last century, religious fundamentalism has increased in every religion, all over the world, which has caused people such as Lieban to state that fundamentalism is now the norm and moderate religion is the phenomenon that needs explaining. The explanation of the development of fundamentalism is a result of the combination of various factors, particularly a backlash against science and secularism.

Science is seen to be a very important factor within society that has contributed to the devalue of religion so it does seem strange that the rise of science could have caused an extreme fundamentalism reaction to occur globally. However a very significant aspect of the development of fundamentalism is because of a reaction to science. This is because they feel that science is replacing religion as the ultimate guide and authority in society, and considering a characteristic of all religious fundamentalists is the belief that their religion is absolute, it is no wonder science has caused such a huge religious fundamental reaction as science is now viewed as absolute. This means that as society places more of a value on science, religion is constantly devalued, which can cause frustration and anger in religious people and this anger could lead to isolation, which is an important factor in the development of fundamentalism. Although this does appear to be the result of social issues rather than science, it is important to remember science is causing these issues in society and making fundamentalists feel irrelevant and confused at the fact their religion is losing authority, something which they are desperate to claim back because, as Curtis Lee Laws, the publisher who helped coin the term 'fundamentalist' in 1920 said fundamentalists are the people 'willing' to do royal battle for the 'fundamentals'. The fundamentals being the details of the 1909-1915 pamphlets in America that were published by protestants that stated religion had become too modern. Fundamentalism has therefore developed because of science because science is what is advancing society and making these rapid changes that fundamentals oppose so much as they undermine the divine scriptures that they believe to be absolute.

It is also worth taking into consideration what science means. Religion is often thought of as being over-exaggerated and unrealistic by today's standards because the meaning of science teaches us different values. For example, science is rational and logical and states nothing can be proven to be true if it cannot be tested empirically, therefore science concludes that as we cannot see, feel, smell, touch or hear God, God must not exist. Imagine this from a religious perspective. When this is taken into consideration, the development of fundamentalism as a reaction to science is obvious. It angers them that God is declared non-existent, especially as Bruce Lawrence noted that fundamentalist are those who are 'not accepting of criticism or reduction', meaning they are opposed to their critics and those forces who reduce the value of religion, which is of course, science. Because of this science has provoked religious fundamentalists to act because by being rational it writes off religion as something that is little more than a myth, something which Karen Armstrong noted as extremely significant in terms of the development of fundamentalism because in the premodern world, a myth was a primitive form of psychology and science was known as logos and according to Armstrong, both were needed in society but as the myth became discredited, religion had to be rethought as science was taking over. This meant religion was compromised in order to make way for the rise of science, something which left religious people unsure of how to express their faith, which is why the development of fundamentalism is due to science, as Armstrong suggested that being fundamental was the only way to keep religion alive.

Bruce Lawrence implied that Islamic fundamentalism was 'not modernist but not anti modern' and this is why the development of fundamentalism is a reaction against science because the modern era is full of scientific advancements but this advancements also helps fuel fundamentalism. For example, in the case of the Taliban, they take full advantage of science to develop weapons in aid of their cause, which has not only developed as a reaction against science but as a reaction against secularism as well.

Secularism is the term used to describe the process of government and religion becoming two separate institutions. Munby stated that the main characteristics of secularism are a tolerant society that is pluralistic and has no official images. When this is considered, fundamentalism has clearly developed as a reaction against secularism because, just like science, secularism stands for everything religious fundamentalists are not. Being intolerant of others beliefs, being completely absolute and having distinctive features are basic characteristics of religious fundamentalists, so it is no wonder they are developing as a reaction to secular society.

Society has become increasingly secular over the last century but as early as 1820, the Christian fundamentalist group, The Exclusive Brethren was born because of secularism, reinforcing how fundamentalism has developed as a reaction against it. The founder of the movement, a church of Ireland Priest John Danby, stated that the church had become too involved in secular society and had become so perverted it had become diametrically opposed to the reasons that it was instituted. This shows how a large fundamentalist movement of today developed due to secularism and this can be related to the Exclusive Brethren today because not only do they consider it a sin to come into contact with the secular world but they campaign to get MP's with their values into government, which implies that they are a reaction against secularism as they desperately try to push religion onto a secular government.

The idea that fundamentalism is a reaction against secularism can be seen through the work of Muslim writer, Rahman. He is not a fundamentalist and be noted how as society became more secular, everyone took secularism for granted and it was presumed that as secularism continued to rise, religion would fall, and the only religious aspects in society would be those who worshipped privately behind closed doors. This is a similar stance to the Secularisation Thesis, a theory that stated that religion would disappear as society became secular, which is clearly wrong. The Secularisation Thesis failed to take into consideration that fundamentalism would develop as a result of secular society and Rahman said that from the 1970's onwards, secularism forced religious people to become fundamental as a result of it devaluing religion. As everyone had come to reject the Secularisation Thesis by the end of the 20th century, it is obvious fundamentalism developed due to the secularism.

As secularism is the separation of religion and politics, fundamentalism was bound to react against it and develop into an unignorable force because of their emphasis on religious laws, which is outlined by Lieman. Lieman said that Religious laws are one of the three dimensions of what it means to be a fundamentalist as they admire their authority and they aim to expand on their detail and enforce them. This is supported by Bruce Lawrence who stated that fundamentalism want their beliefs to be 'publically enforced and legally recognised' which highlights why secularism has caused such a reaction because it makes these aims impossible. The Taliban regime only needs to be examined to see what religion means to fundamentalists in terms of politics. The Taliban were the government and fundamentalists want to achieve this.

In conclusion, the development of fundamentalism can be seen in terms of a reaction against science and secularism because they both represent everything fundamentalism is not. The rational and logical elements of science, combined with its denial of religion that has greatly undermined it has caused fundamentalism to develop because they want to fight against the thing that is replacing their absolute religion. On the other hand, secularism denies religion the ultimate authority, to rule, and makes it impossible for religion to be truly absolute in society, hence a reaction against it as it encourages them to fight and do 'royal battle' to have influence once more, something which secularism, as well as science, deny.

Commentary

This response focuses on fundamentalism as a *reaction* to science and secularism, rather than tracing *the development of* fundamentalism, which is an approach allowed by the mark scheme.

The discussion of fundamentalism and science is concerned with the rise of science-led values and ideologies which provoke fundamentalist responses. In many ways this is a sophisticated approach, and shows a clear understanding. The information is almost all accurate and relevant, but there are few examples and little by way of specific detail: the candidate tends to use quotations from scholars in preference to specific exemplification to support points made.

The examination of fundamentalism as a response to secularism is underpinned by a clear understanding of secularism, and with effective use of writings and ideas associated with the analysis of secularism. There are some specific examples in this section, notably the development of the Exclusive Brethren used to illustrate the point that developing secular values provoke a fundamentalist reaction. Nevertheless, this section is less effective than the science section because it demonstrates a less thorough understanding of the ways that fundamentalisms arise out of the conflict between secular values and religious ideologies.

This response is close to the borderline between “a satisfactory treatment” and “a thorough treatment”. The lack of examples and specific evidence suggests Level 5, but when credit is given for the clear understanding and the use of scholarly opinion, this just constitutes “a thorough treatment”.

Level 6, 36 marks

02 'Religious fundamentalism is relevant only in societies that place a heavy emphasis on science.' Assess this claim. (30 marks) AO2

Candidate Response

Science is a significant factor that has caused the rise of fundamentalism so societies that place a heavy emphasis on science are going to feel the threat of fundamentalism, which implies that religious fundamentalism is only relevant in these societies. However, as other factors cause fundamentalism it is important to consider that this claim could be incorrect.

To an extent, this claim is true. Science has clearly provoked fundamentalism and its rise has led to the devaluation of religion, which would suggest societies in which there is a heavy emphasis on science is more likely to push religion out and force the religious people within their society to become fundamental. An example that illustrates this is that the two main targets of terrorist attacks in the last decade have been Britain and America, which are of course the September 11th attack in New York in 2001 and the July 7th bombings in London in 2005. I do not believe that these are a coincidence because Britain and America are scientifically developed and full of the technological advancements that science has achieved. Fundamentalism is relevant in America and Britain because of the threat it poses and this is because of the heavy emphasis based on science in both countries. Because of this, I believe this claim is correct as it certainly explains the high alert and defence that occurred after Barack Obama announced that America had killed Bin Laden in May 2011 as the reason Bin Laden attacked was the advancements that science had given the United States.

However, the relevance of fundamentalism in society is a lot more complex than this. Science is a massive factor, I will not deny that, but many other aspects make religious fundamentalism relevant. Not only do the western liberal modern values, that highlight the acceptance of homosexuality and sex before marriage, anger fundamentalists but secular society has caused fundamentalism to develop, which means that secularism and modern views that are emphasised in societies is where religious fundamentalism is relevant because these factors fuel fundamentalism. And I believe that it gives a more realistic reason for why fundamentalism is so relevant in Britain and America compared to science because together these views cause more upset amongst fundamentalists and also isolate religious people within their society, which can result in fundamentalism, making it extremely relevant, even when science isn't considered.

Also, it is important to note that fundamentalism is more common in poorer societies, places where there is not enough advancements for a heavy emphasis to be placed on science. This is reinforced by how religious fundamentalism plays on people who have very little according to James Wolgenstien, which is backed up by evidence that proves that religion is important to over 90% of people in poor countries but only 42% of people in rich countries. This means that this claim is wrong because poorer societies do not have a heavy emphasis on science and the economic situation that makes dependant on religion for hope and the possibility of the reward of the afterlife is what makes religious fundamentalism relevant, not a heavy emphasis on science. This is reinforced by how the Taliban became a relevant force in Afghanistan by being the only group who were able to offer a positive way forward after a war with communist Russia. The hope they gave to a suffering population made way for the fundamental Taliban regime of 1996-2001 and that offer of a better future made fundamentalism relevant not only in Afghanistan, but all over the world as well.

In conclusion, I believe that this claim does have a certain amount of truth behind it as there is no denying that science is a significant factor in the backlash the world is experiencing from religious fundamentalism, so in this respect I could agree that societies that reinforce science are the only places where fundamentalism is relevant but overall I have to disagree with this claim because of the other factors that are making religious fundamentalism relevant in all societies, even where science is not developed and emphasised. The economic reasons seem to make it a lot more relevant in those poor societies and this relevance is felt all over the world. Overall, I just believe that the relevance of fundamentalism is too complex to only be relevant in societies that place heavy emphasis on science so I disagree with this claim.

Commentary

The term “relevant” is not further defined, and this leads to a little lack of clarity as the essay develops. The second paragraph starts with the view that fundamentalism arises in scientific societies, but then shows how Islamic fundamentalism from outside poses a terrorist threat particularly to scientific societies. The candidate then moves on to a discussion of how western moral values anger fundamentalists and at this point the focus shifts back to the idea that fundamentalism is generated within western society. The discussion of the prevalence of fundamentalism in economically deprived societies completes the circular shift of focus from “relevant = generates fundamentalism “ to “relevant = impact of fundamentalism” and back again.

Nevertheless, this response is focused on the question, and there is some clear critical analysis, especially in the use of economic factors to challenge the proposition. The final evaluation is supported by reasoned argument, summarised well in the final paragraph.

This is certainly at least a satisfactory response. Despite the slight blurring of focus, the quality of critical analysis and the well structured final paragraph of evaluation are just enough to lift it to a “well focused response”..

Level 6, 24 marks

Grade A*

- 01 **Examine the development of fundamentalism as a reaction against science and secularism.** (45 marks) AO1

Candidate Response

Hartman states that 'without modernisation and secularism, there would be no fundamentalism', modernity relies on scientific discovery, and thus Hartman's claim shows fundamentalism to be a reaction against both secularism and science.

Although fundamentalism itself wasn't established until the 20th century it seems reasonable to trace its roots to the start of protestantism – the reformation. The reformation itself was essentially a reaction to the corruption and secular influences of catholicism at the time. Following this, the 17th century and 18th century were to be centuries of 'reason' and 'enlightenment' – they were essentially times of great scientific discovery that encouraged people to challenge 'religious truths' and form their own interpretations. Thus even in the very early stages of its development, fundamentalism was a reaction against science and secular interpretations.

With the 19th century came the concept of Higher Biblical Criticism (HBC) which encouraged interpretation of the Bible as though it was any other piece of literature. This new, secular, concept threatened the authority of the Bible, as it suggested some events were impossible and not historically accurate, e.g. the virgin birth and the 10 plagues. It also suggested that the Pentateuch was written and redacted by up to 9 different sources – challenging the traditional Judeo Christian belief that it was written entirely by Moses. This shows secularism to have been a key factor in the development of fundamentalism.

Furthermore, in the early 20th century the triggers to the publication of 'the fundamentals: a testimony of the truth' (Lyman and Mitzen) were predominantly scientific. Freud's theories on religion played a large part in triggering fundamentalism as he denounced religion as 'neurosis' caused by repressed trauma in the brain. In his refusal to see any element of the divine in religious belief, Christians felt a need to defend their religion, hence moving closer to the publication of the fundamentals. Another scientific trigger was Darwin's theory of evolution, the popularity of this scientific belief that had replaced the belief that God had created 'man in his own image', threatened Christianity and thus gave rise to fundamentalism.

The social Gospel was another major trigger to the development of fundamentalism. Its aims were to convert immigrants in America to Christianity, to abolish child labour and to raise standards of education. Although the movement started as a collaboration between conservative (those who would become fundamentalists) and liberal Christians, when the liberals began to put the morals of Christianity above specific religious belief the conservatives turned towards what was about to become fundamentalism. Whilst the conservative Christians had wanted to defeat Satan, the liberal Christians had done it purely as good deeds, and when they began promoting pluralism (the belief that there is more than one way to salvation) and accepting some new scientific theories, the conservative Christians were appalled by the scientific and secular influences. This was the final step towards the publication of 'the fundamentals' that included the 5 dogmas – the virgin birth, the inerrancy of scripture, Christ's atonement for human sin on the cross, the reality of the signs and Christ's bodily resurrection. In this way conservative Christians made a stand against science and secularism to protect their religion, becoming fundamentalist.

In response to the now widely accepted 'theory of evolution' fundamentalists enforced 'anti-evolution' laws (prohibiting teaching evolution) in several American states, including Kentucky and Tennessee. This shows fundamentalism to be a reaction against science. However, when Scopes was put on trial for teaching evolution in a school in 1925, his trial became a contest between religion and science. Scopes lawyer, Darrow, won the case, leaving fundamentalists humiliated by the scientific victory. Armstrong comments 'by the end of the 3rd decade of the 20th century secularism seemed to be winning the day'. This puts into context the fact that science and secularism went hand in hand and were both seen as forces that fundamentalism had to overcome. At this time, due to their defeat, science and secularism played a part in subduing fundamentalism, as fundamentalists went into retreat, no longer evangelising, and instead awaiting their salvation through rapture (the premillennialist belief that they could literally be lifted up before the parousia to be saved from a 7 year tribulation – war on earth).

The 60's was another period in which fundamentalists were seen to react against secular society. The 60's introduced a permissive culture, and drugs and androgynous clothing became the norm. Not only was this seen as outrageous because God had specifically created two genders (and so they should dress accordingly), but the 60's also introduced the sexual revolution. The condonement of abortion went against the commandment 'do not murder', the concept of free love was seen as 'adultery' and the introduction of contraception was against God's reading 'go forth and multiply' – needless to say this secular permissiveness drove many people back to the fundamentalism that had suffered the humiliation of the Scopes trial thus showing secularism to play a vital part in the resurgence of fundamentalism.

Furthermore the belief in secular humanism was a major contribution to the growth and development of fundamentalism. Secular humanism placed man at the centre of the universe, not God (as believed by fundamentalists). This belief was outrageous to fundamentalists at the time and Tim Lathaye pronounced it 'anti-God, anti-morality, anti-selfrestraint (and) anti-America', furthermore he commented 'secular humanism will destroy America unless Christians are prepared to become much more assertive in the defence of morality and decency'. The resurgence of fundamentalism that followed is a clear indication of fundamentalism being a reaction against secularism, as fundamentalists fought back at the 'Godless society' with tv evangelism and fundamentalist universities – e.g. Liberty Baptist college. This contributed hugely to the growth of fundamentalism, as Swaggert (a tele-evangelist) claimed to be saving 1,000,000 souls a week on air, and the fact that Liberty Baptist college had academic accreditation, meant that it attracted people from non-fundamentalist backgrounds because of its high standards of morality. All this was of course a direct response to secular culture.

This also initiated Jerry Falwells 'moral majority' in 1979, a political party made up of moral conservative Christians. This shows secularism to have triggered the development into a politically active movement that it had never seen before. However, it also led to some major compromises as the Moral Majority had to include all moral conservative Christians – not just fundamentalists and not even only protestants. Thus the movement was compromised by its new political nature.

Even into today's world, fundamentalism continues to fight against secularism and science. As recently as the late 80's Randall Terry actively campaigned against abortion, protesting publicly with 2 groups of 'rescuers' outside an abortion clinic prohibiting those who worked there from getting in. This shows secularism and science to drive fundamentalism towards more extreme action. It is definitely fair to say that secularism and science have played major roles in the development of fundamentalism. With their progression there have been less gaps in human knowledge and thus the 'God of the gaps' that Winston refers to has had fewer 'gaps' to fill and has been edged out of society. This has led to the origins and sustenance of fundamentalism, as they continue to defend the God that they believe in so strongly. Armstrong defines fundamentalism as 'essentially a revolt against secular society'. A secular society relies on science above God, and so I think as long as secularism and science exist fundamentalism will prevail to fight against it.

Commentary

This is without question a thorough treatment of the topic. An abundance of accurate and relevant information is used with good effect to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the topic, with focused exemplification of most points. Key figures, dates and events are included with sufficient explanation and development to show their significance.

The structure is coherent and traces the development of Christian fundamentalism from its historic roots in the reformation through to the present day, focusing in appropriate detail on key events and movements. There is some vagueness about whether developments were predominantly scientific or secular (e.g., the enlightenment; Higher Criticism), but also a clear recognition that the two are related to one another ("science and secularism went hand in hand"; "a secular society relies on science above God"). The section on the Social Gospel is accurate but does not clearly indicate how it relates as a *scientific or as a secular* influence to the development of fundamentalism.

Scholarly opinion is used effectively and with understanding to illuminate key points. The writing is fluent and confident, and specialist vocabulary is used accurately.

Although this essay does not touch on fundamentalism outside Christianity, the Level Descriptors allow credit for "depth or breadth", and this is an example of an essay that treats the topic with a narrow focus on one faith, but in considerable depth.

This is clearly a top level essay. The imprecision about the distinction between science and secularism in some places prevents it receiving full marks.

Level 7, 42 marks

02 'Religious fundamentalism is relevant only in societies that place a heavy emphasis on science.' Assess this claim. (30 marks) AO2

Candidate Response

Fundamentalism is of course very much evident in societies that place emphasis on science. However, the majority of societies in today's world do rely on science and, so fundamentalism seems to exist everywhere. In terms of being 'relevant' – this is a different question altogether. Fundamentalism cannot exist without exerting any power over those in society who surround it. Does this mean that it is irrelevant?

Perhaps one would say that fundamentalism only really becomes relevant when it actively fights against an element in secular society. Its disapproval of science is often evident, for example, Randall Terry's anti-abortion campaign in the late 70's, in which he actively stopped workers at an abortion clinic getting to work. This shows fundamentalism to be relevant in a society of science as it is something that cannot be ignored – a campaign of this nature needs to be addressed.

However, sometimes a fundamentalists movements disapproval of science is only evident if the movements withdrawal from society and within the movement itself. The Exclusive Brethren (E.B) for example shuns all secular media – and would reject scientific discoveries such as television or radio. Because of their exclusive nature, this rejection of science has no influence on the rest of society – along with shunning all secular publications the E.B avoid contact with non-members of the group due to their doctrine of separation (to avoid wicked influences) – and therefore it could be argued that they have no relevance to the society that has a heavy emphasis on science.

It is also important to consider the fact that fundamentalists do not only react against science. A lot of the time it is not so much science as secularism of which they disapprove. The Amish disapprove of society as a whole (due to both scientific and secular influences) to the extent that they withdraw entirely from it and have nothing to do with it. Thus they have no relevance to society. However, other fundamentalists show their reactions against secularism more clearly – fundamentalist Baptists in America used evangelism through media to fight against secular humanism (belief that man not God is at centre of universe) in the 20th century. This, in turn, shows fundamentalism having a huge influence on a society that places importance on science, as the movement gained many followers. Furthermore, this shows fundamentalism even using scientific discoveries – television, radio etc to protect against science and secularism. This seems somewhat hypocritical but does show fundamentalists having a massive influence over society and thus showing their relevance.

So, are fundamentalists only relevant in societies that place a heavy emphasis on science? The question is a difficult one – on the one hand science is often a concept that leads fundamentalists to react (e.g. evolution replacing creationism) however, the way in which the fundamentalists fight is not always 'of relevance to society' e.g. if they withdraw from society like E.B or the Amish. Furthermore, science is not the only thing that fundamentalists fight / react against – modernisation as a whole is often denounced and avoided by fundamentalist movements (E.B. and their 'doctrine of separation') on the other hand it could be argued that modernisation is a direct result of science – scientific discovery has led to the present day and thus fundamentalism is more a reaction against science than anything else.

The relevance of a group of fundamentalists depends entirely on the group itself. Whilst Wahhabi Islam tries to enforce Shariah law wherever possible – having huge relevance in society – the Amish have nothing to do with society – and thus are of no 'relevance'. I would also argue that movements that are of relevance to society are not necessarily only relevant because of their reaction to science. In essence fundamentalists fight to keep traditional views of God alive – they 'go back to basics' in terms of their religion (Harris) and this involves

rejecting secularism, as well as political and scientific issues and changes. They will fight against anything that diminishes the role God has to play, because all fundamentalists are united on the importance of their God. They will react against anything that threatens God's authority – Hofstadter maintains that fundamentalists have a 'desire to strike out at everything secular – HBC, evolution and critical interpretation of any kind'. This shows that it is not just science against which fundamentalists will take a stand but anything that threatens God – their relevance depends on how they manifest this reaction and this depends on the movement.

Commentary

This response focuses first on a critical analysis of the term "relevant", leading into a clear exemplified discussion of fundamentalists influencing scientific society (relevant) and rejecting scientific society (irrelevant). It then shifts to address a second polarity, that fundamentalists may react to scientific society, or to secular society.

The candidate then refocuses on the question and considers the view that fundamentalism reacts against modernity, arguing that modernisation is a product of science. There follows the perceptive analysis that "movements that are of relevance to society are not necessarily only relevant because of their reaction to science" leading to a wholly appropriate evaluation fully supported by the reasoning.

The writing is appropriate in form and style and the argument is coherently organised, using specialist vocabulary, scholars and evidence with confidence. It ticks all the boxes as a "very well-focused response".

Level 7, 30 marks