

Examiners' Report
June 2015

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 or 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.

ResultsPlus

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. 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.

June 2015

Publications Code UA042542

All the material in this publication is copyright
© Pearson Education Ltd 2015

Introduction

Important information about mark schemes:

Detailed mark schemes are available on the Religious Studies web site. Examiners at standardisation are reminded that the mark scheme contains:

(i) General Marking Guidance: This consists of eight bullet points including, 'Candidates must be rewarded for what they have shown they can do rather than penalised for omissions.'

(ii) Generic mark scheme: This divides each level across both AO1 and AO2 into three sub-levels – low, mid and high. Each concludes with a statement about quality of written communication.

(iii) Indicative level descriptors: These are meant to be indicative rather than definitional of content at each level. The introduction to the indicative level descriptors states:

'Examiners should be reminded that any legitimate approach to the clarification and discussion of the passage must be rewarded and there is no need for candidates to cover every idea mentioned in the extract.'

(iv) In addition, on pages 120-121 of the Spec there is an abbreviated guide of the level descriptors.

Introduction to the paper: Overall the standard was good with a few excellent scripts. Better quality answers made good use of scholarship together with well-chosen examples. Candidates at this level of success made the best use of the synoptic opportunities. Some deployed material on Bonhoeffer and a few on Liberation theology.

Lower levels of work demonstrated a more basic understanding of the passage with limited scholarship to support the claims being made. There were instances of unsatisfactory time management relating to the respective demands of the two assessment objectives. A few spent too long on AO1 with too little attention to AO2 and vice versa.

Question 1

Good practice and areas for improvement

AO1 characteristics of good quality:

- comprehensive understanding of the passage
- well-managed and coherent answers
- competent analysis of complex issues and problems such as the relationship between love and justice
- analysis of terms including types of justice
- effective extrapolation from the passage to draw on ethical theories including Situation Ethics, Utilitarianism and Deontology.

AO1 work that requires improvement:

- answers were not systematically focused on the passage in an explicit manner
- a simple comprehension task and typically short
- a generic account of the whole source from the anthology.

AO2 characteristics of good quality:

- impressive presentations with confident evaluations including comparisons between the early Church and Church teaching today effective selection and management of arguments and implications such as the demands of agape and the difficulties of extending this aim to wider scenarios in society an ability to discuss key ideas such as the Just War in the context of teachings on love sustained debate with views about the Parousia ethical dilemmas rooted in equality and justice, including three gene families, divorce and homosexuality.

AO2 work that requires improvement:

- basic points of view with limited use of argument and evidence
- isolated view-points without appropriate exemplary support
- tendency to avoid discussions about justice and the claim that 'love presupposes justice'.

The following scripts are examples of good practice.

The passage refers to an intrinsic Christian teaching, Agape. Agape is the Greek word for love and refers not to sentimentality or familial love but rather altruism, selflessly helping others. Swell defines agape "not as duty" but as ~~as~~ genuine kindness, and agape is discussed at various times in the Bible, for example when it instructs Christians to "love [their] neighbour" or that "we are all one in Christ" (Galatians 3:28) and therefore everyone should be treated with equal respect and dignity.

There are various ways to apply this agape as a solution to ethical dilemmas, for example Joseph Fletcher's situation ethics argues for a casuistry approach where you consider each problem individually without a set rule for every instance. However the passage discusses the difficulties that can come when you aren't showing agape to one person but to a multiple people, because then you have to also consider what is fair.

That agape is not systematic and cannot provide absolute guidance means

that you are supposed to love everyone equally but not everyone needs the same things, and therefore doing what is right for a group when the people in it differ can be problematic. Agape becomes more about the community needs rather than a primacy of the individual and it is harder to cater to a group than it is to an individual, but the difficulty of it doesn't diminish the value of the task and the reward of completing it and of truly showing agape to a collective group.

The unsystematic nature of agape is reflective of Jesus' approach to ethics in the Bible where he gave inexplicit and general teachings that had wider applicability. Unlike the Jewish laws which were direct, absolute, and detailed, Jesus' teachings are more transferable and require more consideration on behalf of the Christian, always keeping agape at the forefront of their minds.

The only issue Jesus directly addressed was divorce where it was claimed he condemned it as a sin and declared that only in instances of adultery was it acceptable. However some theologians are dubious as to

whether or not Jesus did truly give such as teaching, not only because it doesn't fit ~~the~~ his usual approach to ethics but also because the accounts within the Gospels differ over what exactly was said.

The passage also discusses justice and its relation to agape, giving the example of Aquinas' attempts to apply love to war with his Just War Theory despite the difficulty in considering fairness. The rudimentary aspects of Just War Theory include an expectation that war is the last resort and all other methods of resolving the dispute have proved futile. For example the Americans considered this concept of 'last resort' when dealing with Iran and the possibility that they would use nuclear weapons, since instead of going to war they enforced a trade embargo which was seemingly successful. It seems obvious that the concept of last resort therefore considers agape and what is fair to everyone.

Another crucial element of Just War Theory is the discrimination between

combatants and non-combatants (in bello rather than ad bellum). This refers to the expectation that enemy forces should only aim to harm opposing soldiers and should not harm civilians who are not involved in the fight. However the Doctrine of Double Effect does argue that killing some civilians is acceptable as long as the benefits outweigh the costs and it is not their deaths that have these positive consequences. These two examples therefore show how Aquinas tried to consider both sides when creating the concept of Just War; what is fair for everyone and not just what will allow the winning side the greatest chance of victory.

However some would argue that Aquinas had misinterpreted agape and was not doing what was right for everyone, for example pacifists argue that in no circumstances whatsoever is war justifiable, teachers take the Biblical teaching of "love everyone" as something absolute without exception, not even in the case of lex talionis (legitimate vengeance).

Therefore the relationship between love

and justice is a complex one and the passage further outlines this, elaborating that "love presupposes justice". Critical analysis suggests that justice must be present for love to exist because without justice love descends from agape to "sentimentality" where you're merely being nice, not enacting justice. Love can be more than justice but it cannot be without it.

Furthermore the passage also refers to the "love of God" which is inexhaustible and demanding. Jesus frequently criticised the Pharisees for following to the letter God's teachings but not following them in spirit, and stated "the exalted shall be humbled and the humbled will be exalted." This demanding love therefore criticises insular communities or communities that fail to live together harmoniously. The community is expected to both rejoice in and pass on God's message of love and forgiveness as demonstrated by Jesus' crucifixion, and failure to fulfill this purpose faces criticism.

b) That agape involves considering the needs of the community and not just the needs of the individual is important, and I agree with the indirect and generalisable nature of agape expressed in the Bible because of the positive implications it has for theists. For example they are more responsible for their own ethical decisions and have to truly consider agape to know what the right thing to do is. This therefore also lessens dependency on doctrine and encourages personal exploration of faith.

However I believe this can have negative implications for wider society on the whole since it may result in a clash between laws and Christians doing what they subjectively believe is the most loving thing to do. Although Paul claimed that love is the law and therefore there would be no clash, ultimately Jesus' love still supersedes it and the clash could still occur.

Yet the way agape reflects God's inexhaustible love would help to improve a theist's understanding of God and to strengthen their relationship with him.

since the command to "love your enemies" demonstrates God will love you no matter what you do and who you are His love is unrequited and infinite and you shouldn't doubt him. This infinite love will therefore strengthen the personal, I-Thou relationship Christians have with him.

The demanding nature of the love and the sharp criticism of the Church when it fails to fulfill its purpose can also have positive implications for wider society since it demands the Church shares its love, for example with missionaries or with foreign aid, a critical aspect of this being that it demonstrates physically God's love for everyone. Keith Ward states "God wills everyone to be saved", showing his support for universality, and therefore Christians are expected to help other people live in spiritual satiation in the present knowing they are within the kingdom of God. Christians also show this lack of insularity with the creation of foodbanks and credit unions.

However some may criticise the emphasis on agape and the way in which the Bible highlights how good people will be

rewarded in heaven because it suggests that Christianity is based on a rewards system and Christians aren't good for the value of good in itself. This therefore may have negative implications for people's understanding of religion because they do not understand the intrinsic worth of doing good.

However this is a misinterpretation of *agape* and Jesus directly criticises people for merely doing what they've told without truly believing in it, for example within the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. As well as this, even if Jesus didn't condemn focus on getting into heaven, would a religion encouraging people to be good for bad reasons be such a bad thing? Although a good motive is better the people you are helping don't know your motives, for example with the Rwandan genocide France stepped in to protect their business interests. However ultimately it is approximated that they saved over 15,000 lives whilst the rest of the world did nothing. Their bad motives were

better than no action at all.

Aquinas' attempt to apply agape with Just War Theory would also have negative implications for human experience because people could use the Theory to justify war because it fits the categories when they haven't really considered agape. The same can be said for the subjectivity of agape since anyone can do horrible things in the name of a loving cause. For example the Holy Spirit Army in Ugandan claim to be enacting agape by ~~enacting~~ ^{enforcing} the Ten Commandments, however in the completion of this quest have ~~because~~ become a terrorist group that rape and murder. 'Agape' and 'fairness' are easily twistable concepts.

However movements like this are clearly a misinterpretation of Biblical teachings and don't truly reflect agape. Just because people twist agape to suit their cause doesn't mean the whole concept is unjust, and many Christians have contemplated agape and been altruistic. God's love isn't tainted by the evil of humanity just as Jesus'

emphasis on agape allows us to make ethical decisions and hold love in our hearts, and can therefore enhance their understanding of God and reach an ultimate human experience since they can achieve present eschatology and ^{spiritual} spiritual satiation



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

From the very beginning the candidate focused on key topics in the passage, starting with agape. Ethical theories were examined and their complexities in relation to the passage. The candidate presented a close analysis of justice and the Just War. This was always adapted in line with the demands of the passage. This included for example attention to the claim that 'love presupposes justice'.

AO2 continued this sophisticated standard with an evaluation of implications and negative implications, including application to contemporary issues.

Preston, a religious philosopher, has guided our understanding of the purpose of the life of Jesus, in terms of his ethics and the role in shaping Christian individual responses in moral dilemmas, as well as in everyday life.

The crux of Preston's argument in the "Companion to Ethics" was that Christians should aim to follow in the life of Jesus, or his "radical" ethics, in order to live a purposeful life.

In this passage, Preston goes further to address the importance of "agape" love when it comes to living a life similar to Jesus', and including moral decision making - it must be noted that Preston is not wrong to assume that "agape involves being fair" due to the fact that, Fletcher, a Christian thinker, suggested that religious or not, people should seek to do the most loving thing, commonly known as situation ethics. In doing so, applying agape love to each situation meant that it was "pragmatic, relativist, personal and positive", which suggests that any action that benefits those involved, one may require it! However, as an implication of Christians living in this way, despite Jesus living in such a way, has moral implications, such as the justification of murder and rape. Nonetheless, Preston did acknowledge that "agape is not systematically worked out because it is not a systematic work on ethics". Thomas Hobbes criticised Preston's argument in relation to agape love applying agape, as he believed that "humans

have not yet "come of age" to seek more other than greater happiness, as we are born selfish."

Nevertheless, Preshin went further in his passage, to state that the focus in input on the community when it comes to applying such moral principles. As Preshin mentioned, teachings from the New Testament such as "Love others just as you love God" and "treat your neighbour how you would like to be treated", actually ~~involve~~ require Christian individuals to actively display the principles of "repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation" between one another and to the wider world. An example of this which Preshin would be in favour of is the E Ecumenical movement (1910) which aimed to "reunite the Christian church ~~the~~ through the ~~the~~ reconciliation and resolution of differences" (The New Christian Church Dictionary). Sociologist, Durkheim would also be in favour of this "radical" approach within the community, as to Durkheim, religion reinforced cultural norms and values, thus, reaffirming social solidarity.

However, contrary to such approaches, it was believed that displaying this way of life was a "nice" idea, however it was inapplicable, due to the fact that, yes it was based on the life of Jesus, which is good, but it must be considered critically that Jesus wasn't a normal man; he was the "son of God" (Matthew). This would imply that Preshin was right to indicate that the "New Testament is very rich in its

picture of the church".

On the other hand, it must be pointed out that there have been real applications of these ethic principles shown in communities, such as Martin Luther King's role in the civil rights movement. Also, the new church have been active in this area declaring that "we must not let prayer take over action".

Dieter Bonhoeffer would be in favour of these ideas as he spoke of "cheap and costly" grace in terms of situation ethics, by rejecting the rules and expectations, just as Jesus did, in order to benefit the community.

Bonhoeffer, was in fact criticised for his views and so would Preston, as the development of the church has been slow in terms of growth in numbers due to its focus on doctrinal matters rather than on the community. Stokholm commented that service with doctrine divides. This would suggest that Preston is right to want to focus concentrate on the ~~service~~ community aspect of Christianity and ~~actively~~ actively doing good rather than doctrine.

Preston, saw that there was an important relationship between love and justice. Preston gave an example of the parents who had two children to explain this, as he implied that although the parents loved their children, the outcome had to also be fair. This would suggest that the love in the community must be the same as the justice within the

community. Preten did not feel this was a "complex" relationship. This was because love demanded justice and "cannot require less than justice" and the consequence of this according to Preten was that "it degenerates into sentimentality". However, an implication of this, is that we are forced to question love truly relates to justice, due to the fact that groups love cannot be fairly dealt out. For example, two people in the same situation, may come to different conclusions on what is the most loving thing to do, or indeed, in the case of euthanasia. Freud commented in his previous writings that religion in terms of love and justice is in fact an idea of being fulfilled through the social construction of Christianity, so that Christian individuals believe they live in a loving world, when it is an "illusion". Supporting Freud's view is materialist philosopher, Marx, who saw that the idea of love and justice is a way in which the capitalist state can exploit individuals. Essentially, such ethics are inapplicable as they are ~~not~~ "false".

Nonetheless Martin Luther saw that there was a relationship between love and justice, especially in his explanation of the doctrine of atonement and salvation, in which ethics received "justification by faith," this "more and more often it, do not know what faith is".

To conclude, Preten has offered some key ideas to consider,

in particular, when it comes to applying moral ~~and~~ principles. However, perhaps, Preston should have evaluated these ethics from an objective point of view in order to get an unbiased understanding of Jesus' teachings.

b) I agree with Preston's ideas. This is because, Preston saw that Christians must actively display these ethical principles within the community, which Bonhoeffer believed to be an act of ~~disobedience~~ discipleship. By this Bonhoeffer believed that "we must ~~not~~ not simply bandage the wounds of the victims, but devise a medicine for the wound itself", meaning that although reading the Bible may expand Christian individuals' knowledge of God, it is simply not enough. By applying this such principle as "loving my neighbor", Preston saw that this was a way of following the steps of Jesus. However, it could be argued that the implications for the individual Christians is that they would be following a way of life that is outdated for instance Bonhoeffer's writing came from the time of Nazi Germany, in the 1930s, therefore people faced different circumstances, with modern day people don't have to deal with firearms. Jesus' teachings were considered radical, perhaps

only because of the time they lived in,
so in today's world, standing up for
individual beliefs is not significant as ~~they~~ there
are many campaigns that occur.

On the other hand, Prebster's ideas ~~had~~ to
have been reinforced in Stm Ninian
Smart's ~~Society~~ Ethical and Social
Dimensions in "The World Religions" book.
~~But~~ St Smart saw that for ethical codes to
be reinforced in Christianity the social context
had to be considered such as the state of the
community. Christian community. However,
Kirkcaldie saw that "truth was inward" and
if displayed was in fact "false or dead truth".
Similarly, Bultmann would agree with this as
he suggested the idea of "religion-less Christianity"
in order to get rid of 'mechanical and mere
expressions' (rites) of faith which were considered
as a "dead formality, excrement of faith", which
I too agree with.

Larry Prebster saw that the relationship between
Love and Justice were important. However, I must
question whether love justice can be attained
without love, then surely there would be no risk

of any "sentimental" value being placed for example, in the court, when someone has committed a crime the judge views the action objectively rather than subjectively with not feelings of love. This can be considered as fair. This would mean religion less or not, justice can be achieved by all.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

The standard of A01 was slightly better than A02. The first part was a comprehensive examination of the passage and worthy of the higher band within level 5. Whereas the second part was more limited in its range of alternative approaches. A01 was of a good standard in terms of a close examination of the text with reference to a few scholars. A02 had some good features such as reference to Smart's dimensions, but it could have been developed by a more sustained use of evidence and a discussion of a wider range of alternatives.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are encouraged to develop important study skills. This unit opens up the possibility of developing a range of study skills applicable to a number of career and HE routes. There are many excellent sources available. One noteworthy edition is:

The Arts Good Study Guide 2nd Edition 2008 Open University Worldwide Chambers, Ellie and Northedge, Andrew.

This includes a scrutiny of:

- a range of reading and note making techniques
- the craft and process of writing good essays
- significance of analysis and evaluation
- preparing for examinations.

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 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL.