



**General Certificate of Secondary Education  
June 2011**

**Religious Studies A (4050)**

**Unit 1: Christianity**

**405001**

***Report on the Examination***

Further copies of this Report on the Examination are available from: [aqa.org.uk](http://aqa.org.uk)

Copyright © 2011 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.

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 3644723) and a registered charity (registered charity number 1073334).  
Registered address: AQA, Devas Street, Manchester M15 6EX.

## Unit 1: Christianity

### General Comments

There was a good number of entries for the 2011 examination and with this came a wide variety in the standard of scripts produced by candidates. There are several general observations to be made prior to reporting on individual questions of the paper.

It is important for centres to note the key differences between the new specification and the legacy one, and the new material which must be taught. Two notable areas where candidates were often at a disadvantage were

- i) the Service of Dedication under the sub-section of ceremonies of commitment in Section 2, Commitment and Membership, of the specification
- ii) Non-traditional venues for worship, under Section 3, Places of Worship, of the specification.

Many candidates were uncertain about traditions other than Anglican or Roman Catholic traditions, despite other traditions, Orthodox and Baptist, being clearly stated in the specification for study in Section 3 Places of Worship. Examiners noted that lack of knowledge in this respect disadvantaged candidates, especially in Question B5(a) and, to a lesser degree, in B5(c).

Examiners noted a number of formulaic answers to AO2 questions. Teachers should ensure that candidates understand the requirements of both styles of AO2 questions. 3-mark questions do **not** necessarily require two differing points of view to achieve full marks. 6-mark questions **do** require two points of view and clear reference to Christianity (belief or practice) for Level 4 or above. Whilst it is sometimes advisable to encourage candidates to write to a formula or template, such a template needs to be flexible enough to allow candidates to produce top level answers, which require further 'evidence of **reasoned consideration** of two different points of view. Answers which adopted a simplistic binary approach such as, 'Some Christians think... However other Christians think...' rarely showed the necessary evidence of reasoned consideration or informed insights to progress beyond Level 4. If there is one key area which examiners would encourage centres to work on, it would be the technique of answering AO2 questions effectively. Study of the top levels of the Levels of Response criteria, included in the mark schemes, would assist candidates in this respect.

### Part A

#### Question A1 Beliefs and Sources of Authority

Part (a) was generally well done, and the majority of candidates were able to achieve Level 2 or Level 3 merely by listing what was **particular** to the role of a bishop. However, a mere list was capped at Level 3; only candidates who could provide 'clear knowledge and understanding with some development and/or analysis' were able to achieve full marks, Level 4.

Part (b) was also generally well answered, over 90% of candidates scoring at least Level 2. Those who knew the material in part (c) scored well. However, there was some confusion over the use of the word 'Church' as opposed to 'church', and there were several answers which focused on the building rather than the Church as a body of believers. Fewer, though still a significant number of candidates, referred to the 'body of Christ' in Eucharistic terms.

Again, part (d) was generally well done, and nearly 90% of candidates were able to score Level 2 or above.

### **Question A2 Prayer and Worship**

Part (a) was generally well answered. However, there were several answers which confined themselves to an inventive exegesis of the content of the Lord's Prayer, rather than seeing the obvious answers to the question. Candidates should be made very clearly aware of the fact that this was the prayer given by Jesus, and that it is a universal Christian prayer. Some inventive waffle was evident in several answers.

There was considerable variation in the standard of answers in response to part (b). The majority of candidates answered with reference to the rosary as an artefact to aid prayer. Others described the rosary as a suite of prayers. Either approach was creditable. Many who had learnt the rosary as an artefact to aid prayer were unable to describe how it was used with any accuracy. At the very least candidates should know how the rosary is divided into decades. The best answers had knowledge of the prayers said on the different beads. Additionally, they should be aware that meditation on the 'mysteries' is an essential part of praying with the rosary.

Part (c) was the first 6-mark AO2 question which candidates encountered on the paper. The majority were able to achieve at least Level 4. However, few candidates were able to provide the evidence of reasoned consideration necessary to progress beyond this to the top two levels.

### **Question A3 Festivals**

The majority of candidates were able to answer part (a) satisfactorily. There were very few weak answers scoring Level 0 or Level 1. Part (b) was a question which, surprisingly, divided candidates into two distinct groups. Nearly 40% of candidates scored 0 simply because they did not know what Pentecost was. Answers varied from confusion with the Epiphany to the events of Holy Week. Yet, at the other end of the spectrum, nearly 40% of candidates received full marks, and there were some exceptionally well developed answers.

Weaker answers to part (c) were typified by their lack of knowledge as to what is commemorated/remembered on Good Friday. Answers which confused Good Friday with the Resurrection or even referred to some inventive events in the life of Jesus which were ascribed to a Friday were not uncommon. A lack of simple basic knowledge of the Christian year was a common fault in many answers. Conversely, there were some excellent evaluations at the top of the range. This was a question which clearly differentiated between candidates.

### **Question A4 Baptism and Dedication**

Most candidates were able to gain the 2 marks on offer in part (a). However, candidates should be aware that baptism is not primarily about acquiring a name or godparents or to fulfil family tradition, but should consider the theological importance of the rite.

Part (b) was the question which attracted the weakest answers in the whole of Section A. Study of a Dedication ceremony is clearly stated in the specification; however, there was little evidence among the majority of candidates that they were able to distinguish it clearly and accurately from the ceremony of Baptism. 50% of candidates who attempted the question achieved 0 marks, and several did not attempt it.

Part (c) drew a considerable variety of response from candidates. Several candidates drew upon personal experience to answer the question, and this was credited. There were fewer really weak answers compared to other 6-mark AO2 questions, and top levels were very much in evidence amongst those who were able to use reasoning skills and to apply their knowledge and understanding to good effect.

## **Part B**

### **Question B5 Holy Communion**

This question was considerably less popular than Question B6.

Part (a) clearly divided candidates. Those who had good knowledge of the Orthodox liturgy were able to score high marks with ease, and there were several highly detailed, even encyclopaedic, answers evident. However, at the other end of the scale there was considerable confusion and many candidates responded with a few generic comments about the service of Holy Communion. Such answers rarely progressed beyond Level 3, and many were below that level.

In part (b) the question differentiated well but some candidates, particularly the less able candidates, did not fully understand the word 'symbolism'. Whilst examiners were instructed to be lenient in how a candidate interpreted the word within the question, several candidates focused too much on the symbols within the building rather than the symbolism within the rite of Holy Communion. Centres are encouraged to give clearer clarification and application of the terms 'symbol' and 'symbolism' in the context of worship and ceremony.

Generally responses to part (c) were weak. A considerable number of candidates were vague about what is distinctive about protestant Eucharistic belief. Examiners were clear that they should credit answers which were written from the Anglican and/or the non-conformist perspectives. It would certainly help candidates if centres would ensure that some non-conformist beliefs about Holy Communion were studied as part of the Protestant tradition. In particular, the beliefs relating to Holy Communion as a memorial as, for example, in the Baptist or Pentecostal churches would assist candidates in their understanding of some of the differences between traditions.

Part (d) drew a variety of responses, and many candidates were able to attain at least Level 4, which requires two developed reasons, with ease.

### **Question B6 Places of Worship and Pilgrimage**

There were very few top level answers to part (a). Several common faults were clearly evident. The specification clearly indicates that house groups, community halls and outdoor worship should be included in the study of non-traditional venues for worship; though this is not an exhaustive list, these are examples which examiners can reasonably expect to see in response to a question on non-traditional venues. The key thrust of the question was a corporate act of worship, not private worship in one's bedroom. Few candidates went beyond enumerating the attractions of informal worship as a reason for worship in non-traditional venues. Attention to historical, theological and ideological preferences for venues other than traditional places of worship would better equip candidates to answer a question on this topic. For example the best answers often included references to the informality of charismatic worship, there being no need for specific features such as an altar, or evangelism being more possible with outdoor worship. Too many candidates were under the misapprehension that Quaker Meeting Houses or Salvation Army Citadels are non-traditional venues for worship. Whilst examiners were instructed to show some leniency

towards candidates who had taken this erroneous approach, centres are reminded this assumption, particularly in the case of Quaker Meeting Houses, is incorrect.

Part (b) was a straightforward question which posed few problems for candidates who knew the material and could use it effectively.

Most candidates could name one place of pilgrimage in part (c). However, many candidates failed to read the question with sufficient care and often focused on the importance of pilgrimage rather than the importance of worship as part of pilgrimage. Weaker answers were often from candidates who had chosen Lourdes as their place of pilgrimage and, whilst their knowledge of Bernadette's vision was often full and clear, little in their answers was related to the focus of the question, which was worship. Candidates who used the Holy Land as an example were better able to relate their answer directly to the demands of the question.

Again, as with B6(b), the evaluation question in part (d) posed few problems to candidates who were well prepared and could deploy the material they had learnt in direct response to the question. There were several excellent counter-arguments in evidence, and some considerable evidence of clear and accurate reasoning.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

**UMS conversion calculator** [www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion](http://www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion)