

# **Religious Studies A**

GCSE 1930

GCSE Short Course 1030

## **Report on the Units**

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**June 2006**

**1930/1030/MS/R/06**

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**2391 - Paper 1 Christianity through a study of either Luke or Mark**

**General Comments**

Candidates appeared to be well prepared in terms of exam technique and had the skills to cope with the assessment targets within the time allowed. Many candidates had a good knowledge of the specified texts from Luke and Mark and employed this to great effect in part (a) of questions. Most recognised the trigger words of 'why' and 'how' for understanding and application in the (b) questions and coped with ease in giving two points of view in the (c) question. However, in both (b) and (c) questions there was a noticeable lack of supportive evidence from the texts and this led to bland assumptions and repetitive ideas in some (b) answers and a reliance on common sense rather than religious answers in part (c). Some candidates used the same material in an 'umbrella' type of answer for all (b) questions, regardless of the specific teaching(s) in part (a) of a question.

There was some evidence that candidates entering the Luke section of the paper, which is the longer running alternative, appeared to have studied the text more closely than some candidates entering Mark. A close study of the significant features of the specified text equips candidates better to answer all three sections of a question.

**Section A: Luke**

**1) (a) From Luke's gospel, describe the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, including the visit of the shepherds. [8]**

Generally well answered. Many candidates gave clear, detailed descriptions and earned maximum marks. All relevant answers earned some credit, however, there was confusion about stars, wise men and gifts and some were unable to quote or paraphrase the message of the angels. Some good answers failed to locate the story historically by not referring to the Census.

**(b) Explain why Luke's story of the birth of Jesus is important to Christians today. [7]**

The best answers were comprehensive and made links with the birth story and the Christian celebration, showing the importance of the incarnation and the fulfilment of O.T. prophecy, emphasised by the re-enactment of the story in nativity plays and church services and carols. A significant number of candidates interpreted the question too widely and gave reasons why the whole of Jesus' life/ministry was significant.

**(c) Only Christians should celebrate Christmas. Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]**

The best candidates argued from a good understanding of the meaning of Christmas for Christians and incorporated textual evidence about universalism (the shepherds at the birth etc) and the inclusion of non-Christians. Some weaker answers concentrated on the commercialisation of Christmas or argued about the exclusion of Christians from festivals in other faiths.

**2 (a) Describe the Parable of the Good Samaritan [8]**

Well answered overall. It was encouraging that a large number of candidates knew the questions asked before the parable and the meaningful instruction 'Go and do likewise' at the end.

**(b) Explain how the Parable of the Good Samaritan might influence the lives of Christians. [7]**

Good responses made the connection clearly and applied the parable to situations and people today, quoting specific Christians and organisations, not just the Samaritans. They made the connection with prejudice and discrimination and Jesus' example of dealing with outcasts. Weaker answers tended to be vague and just about helping people/neighbours, some made a tenuous link with Christians wishing to be doctors or nurses or help in charity shops.

**(c) 'Christianity is only about loving your neighbour.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]**

This was generally well answered by those who knew the second part of the quotation and also referred to the importance of Christianity's love of God and its expression in worship. Some interpreted the question as only loving your immediate neighbour and developed the argument that everyone should be your neighbour, which in some answers had merit but in others was very confused. Some weak answers wrote about the impossibility of loving some neighbours.

**3 (a) Describe the Transfiguration of Jesus. [8]**

This was well answered by those who knew the text. In very good answers the event was recounted in detail showing understanding through the description that this was an awe-inspiring vision of Jesus' nature, as seen by the disciples. Some confused the Transfiguration with the Resurrection, Ascension or Baptism and were worthy of some credit but clearly did not fully match the intention of the question. A few referred to the Day of Pentecost.

**(b) Explain how Christians might show that they are disciples of Jesus. [7]**

The best answers made some reference to teachings on discipleship from the specification and gave examples of Christians today including for example, Mother Teresa or the Salvation Army, with reference to other types of service such as church attendance and reading the Bible.. Some answers began well but tailed off into a checklist of actions which included the inevitable charity work. Weak answers were repetitive and vague.

**(c) 'All Christians should read Luke's gospel.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]**

There were some good, well argued responses to this question with the best candidates making comparisons between gospels and showing awareness of the individual merits of Luke. Weaker candidates wrote vaguely about freedom of choice or reading the whole Bible without reference to any content.

- 4 (a) Describe what Jesus teaches about prayer in Luke's gospel. [8]

Very few candidates answered this question. Of those who did, only a very few made reference to the teaching in Luke, the majority wrote vaguely about prayer being good or that Jesus had prayed. Those that did know Jesus' teaching from Luke 11:1-13, including the Lord's Prayer, scored highly.

- (b) Explain why Jesus' teaching might encourage Christians to pray. [7]

A mixture of responses, most of which were quite weak. Some candidates made little comment other than that prayer was probably a good thing. The better answers explained the importance of persistence in prayer and the need for a realistic approach to the expectation of prayers being answered as required.

- (c) 'Caring for others is more important than praying.'

Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

The majority of answers argued well that both were important aspects of Christianity and that praying was a form of caring. Some candidates argued only in favour of the statement, perhaps showing a lack of appreciation of the role and importance of prayer in the life of a Christian.

**Section B: Mark**

- 5 (a) From Mark's gospel, give an account of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, beginning with the preparations. [8]

There were some detailed answers but some candidates had not read the question carefully enough and a large majority omitted Jesus' discussion with the disciples and the collection of the donkey. A significant number answered the question based only on the information given in the picture stimulus and although these answers gained some credit the candidates had not demonstrated that they were familiar with the text. Some knew it as Palm Sunday.

- (b) Explain why it is important to Christians that Jesus was the Messiah. [7]

This question appeared to be too challenging for a number of candidates. There were some very general answers about the life and ministry of Jesus. However, the strongest answers showed a clear conceptual understanding of the expectations for the Messiah and linked this with Jesus' life, death and resurrection.

- (c) 'Jesus' teaching was more important than his death.'

Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

This was generally well answered with the better responses showing some understanding of the meaning for Christians of Jesus' death and balancing this with Jesus' practical and moral teaching. Some answers that made a good attempt at showing the two as interdependent in importance became confused and found it difficult to reach a conclusion or just offered unsupported statements.

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- 6 (a)** Describe what Jesus said when he was accused of being possessed by Beelzebub. [8]

The candidates who chose this question gave clear, straightforward accounts with many of them achieving the higher levels.

- (b)** Explain why there was conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees. [7]

Most responses were knowledgeable about the many examples of conflict with the Pharisees in Mark's gospel and gave good examples (e.g. healing on the Sabbath), without always explaining fully the reasons behind the conflict.

- (c)** 'A Christian life is too strict for most people.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

The majority gave well-balanced arguments and achieved full marks for a straightforward debate of the issues.

- 7 (a)** Describe the Transfiguration of Jesus. [8]

This was a popular question and the event was well known. There were some clear and detailed answers. Answers were obviously based upon the Mark version of this story, as Jesus' comments in verse 9 were included even though the specification only refers to Mark 9:2-8. In some answers God's words at the Baptism were confused with the Transfiguration. Some candidates, as in 3(a) wrote about other events where Jesus was of altered appearance or nature and although they gained some credit, this was not the intention of the question.

- (b)** Explain how Christians might show that they are disciples of Jesus. [7]

As with responses to 3(b), the best answers made reference to teachings on discipleship from the specification and gave examples of Christians today including, for example, Mother Teresa and the Salvation Army, with some reference to other types of service such as church attendance or reading the Bible. Some answers began well but tailed off into a checklist of actions and became the kind of 'umbrella' answer used for many (b) questions which included the inevitable 'charity work'.

- (c)** 'All Christians should read Mark's gospel.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Good responses. The majority of answers were a well-balanced evaluation of the merits of Mark's gospel in comparison with either the other gospels or the Old and New Testament. Most concluded that Mark had appeal but Christians needed to balance their reading with other sources. The inevitable answers about 'freedom of choice' tended to be weak and along the lines of 'they can if they want to'.



- 8 (a)** From Mark's gospel, describe what happened when the women discovered the empty tomb. [8]

This question was answered well by those who knew the text but a large number of candidates did not end their account with the women fleeing from the tomb and rambled on into muddled accounts of resurrection appearances. Some related very little about the discovery of the tomb and there was a lot of inaccuracy. Mark 16:1-18, the shorter ending, is a key text and should be studied closely.

- (b)** Explain how belief in the resurrection of Jesus might influence the lives of Christians. [7]

Generally, answers to this were only fair attempts, with candidates not going beyond repetitive statements about the resurrection as proof of afterlife or the divinity of Jesus and making little connection to the lives of Christians today. Fewer answers than expected made reference to Christian beliefs such as, the resurrection of all believers, atonement and forgiveness. Only a minority mentioned the Eucharist.

- (c)** 'Only Christians should celebrate Easter.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Some candidates wrote that a wider celebration might influence others towards belief and included the idea of universalism; however they also balanced this view with the very specific nature of the resurrection and its importance only to Christians. Weaker answers referred to the commercialisation of Easter and that this made the celebration available to all, despite Christian beliefs.

## 2392/01 - Paper 2A Christian Perspectives on Personal, Social and World Issues

### General Comments

The paper proved accessible to the candidature and provided appropriate challenge at all levels, achieving good discrimination between the candidates. The vast majority of candidates were able to attempt all parts of three questions and only a handful of candidates failed to observe the requirement to answer Question 1. Time management was a problem for a small number of candidates. There seemed to be more occasions this year when candidates were determined to fit a response which they were familiar with to the question, rather than attempt to answer the question as stated. Answers that did what the questions asked offered fresh and sometimes outstanding responses which could be credited much more highly than 'learned' responses. This problem was especially evident in the b) (AO2) sections of the paper. Overall, achievement tended to be higher in the a) and c) parts of the questions. Good responses in the a) sections offered detailed, specifically Christian teaching drawn from the preamble to the specification for this paper or from other sources, as outlined in the mark scheme. Generalised responses, for example; 'Christians believe all people are equal', limited achievement to levels 1 or 2. Responses to the evaluative section c) have improved greatly in recent years and there were some outstandingly mature responses noted by examiners. However some evaluative responses ran to over one and a half pages leading to the time management problems mentioned above. A substantial number of candidates, failed to take note of the guidance offered by the wording of these questions and just repeated knowledge already offered in a) or b) as their response to the stimulus, without any attempt to evaluate the material at all. Others failed to give supporting reasons for their view or the views of others and thus limited their level of achievement. There was evidence that some candidates felt under-prepared for this exam.

### Comments on individual questions

- 1 (a) Describe the teachings which Christians might use in a discussion about the issue of race. [8]

General responses to this question referred to doctrine of creation to justify the idea that all people should be treated equally. The best responses alluded to a variety of Christian teaching about the issue of race as suggested in the mark scheme, rather than recounting the teaching in detail. Candidates, for example, who just retold the parable of the Good Samaritan were awarded some credit, but not at the highest level.

- b) Explain how Christians might work to overcome discrimination. [7]

Candidates offered a wide range of suggestions as to how Christians might do this. Active participation in anti-racist organisations, pressing for and supporting anti-discriminatory laws, making the problem of racism a feature of personal prayer, anti racist conduct, and ensuring that the local and national church was anti-discriminatory were commonly suggested. Some candidates took the question to mean, how would Christians cope with being discriminated against? Candidates offered responses which could be credited as they referred again to the need for Christian to seek strength through prayer, or support from the Christian Community. Many candidates referred to the work of people like Martin Luther King and Desmond Tutu as examples of what Christians might be able to achieve now, by similar means. Answers that just offered a life history of one of these people gained little credit.

- (c) 'You can't be a Christian and be prejudiced.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

The stimulus provoked good discussions. Candidates tended to take the view that Christians would not be prejudiced because they were guided by agape, which led them to be concerned for others. If they were prejudiced, it would only be about trivial matters which was not a problem as long as the prejudice remained a thought and never became an action. Other candidates referred to the Slave Trade or the attitude of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa to show that Christians had been prejudiced in the past and that the issue of women priests showed a similar prejudicial attitude today.

- 2 (a) Describe Christian teachings which might help a Christian couple who are having problems in their marriage. [8]

Many candidates drew upon the content of the marriage vows to show that a Christian couple would be able to draw strength from them in times of difficulty. A number of candidates assumed that this was an opportunity to write about Christian attitudes to divorce. Whilst the teaching on divorce was relevant, some of these candidates forgot the thrust of the question entirely and devoted their efforts to responding to a different question which had not been asked at all.

- (b) Explain Christian teachings about the relationship between children and parents. [7]

Good answers to this section highlighted respect, discipline and the need for Christian love to prevail. The use of the word 'agape' without any explanation was frequent and whilst the context usually showed that the candidates knew what it meant, their answers would have benefited from greater detail. New Testament teaching and the commandment to 'honour father and mother' were evident in most good responses. Many candidates referred to the likely reversal of roles with age. The weaker responses tended to concentrate simply on the idea of respect for family members. Many answers were extremely sensitive and indicated how important family life is to the candidates.

- (c) 'Divorced people who want to get married should not be allowed a Christian marriage ceremony.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Many responses suffered from the 'think as you write' type of approach and lacked planning. As a result, they often started as a discussion about divorce and only later focused on the main thrust of the stimulus. Some responses focused only on pros and cons of divorce without really making it relevant to the question, usually missing any reference to remarriage. The view that the innocent party in a divorce should be allowed to re-marry in church was commonly expressed.

- 3 (a) Describe Christian teachings about how wives and husbands should treat each other. [8]

The best responses used references to the appropriate teaching especially from the New Testament with some candidates noting how it has to be reinterpreted to take account of the equality expected in today's marital relationships. Weaker responses referred to couples showing love, respect and staying faithful to each other without drawing on any specific Christian teaching.

- (b) Explain how being brought up in a Christian family might affect a child's attitudes and behaviour. [7]

Apart from a tendency to suggest that Christian children would have to be good all the time, many candidates presented responses based on the idea that a truly Christian family would be stable and loving, which would give the child a good start in life. The values of the family would mean that the children would develop strong moral principles which would be expressed in their attitude to their friends, faithfulness and concern for others. It was in this question that the maturity of some candidates and the immaturity of others was most evident and the responses befitted or suffered accordingly.

- (c) 'Christian teachings about family life and not relevant in the 21st century.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

The vast majority of candidates found plenty to discuss here with many being very positive about the value of Christian teaching for today. Some excellent responses accepted that although aspects of Christian teaching might appear 'time conditioned', the underlying principal of agape would never be out of date. Most candidates took the view that as the fundamental nature of people has not changed, Christian teachings have a lasting relevance.

- 4 (a) Describe Christian teachings which might be used in a discussion about fertility treatment. [8]

Good responses included reference to different types of fertility treatment and to different views about; the destruction of embryos, the use of donor sperm or eggs, mechanical adultery, unnatural methods of becoming pregnant and surrogacy. Biblical material was well known ranging from the command to 'go forth and multiply' to the idea of 'life as a gift from God' and the commandment 'do not kill'. There was little evidence of knowledge of statements from the churches about this issue apart from general ideas based upon the Biblical texts. Weaker responses concentrated briefly on methods of fertility treatment rather than on Christian attitudes to them. A number of candidates took the question to be about Abortion or Contraception and could not be credited with anything or at best, only marks at Level 1.

- (b) Explain how Christian teachings might support Christians who are caring for people who are terminally ill. [7]

Candidates who did not read the question carefully either assumed this was the Euthanasia question and trotted out their version of the debate, or failed to notice that the issue was about how Christian teaching might support a carer. These candidates tended to write about how someone might care for the person instead. The principle of salvage was applied by examiners to these responses enabling candidates to gain some credit. Good answers focused on how Christian teaching would encourage carers to apply 'agape' and to ensure that euthanasia in all its forms was rejected, respecting the sanctity and value of the life of the person. Many candidates referred to the principle of 'double effect', seeing medical treatment which reduced pain but shortened life as justified.

- (c) 'Every woman has the right to have a child.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

The predominant idea here was that as Christians believe that God gives and takes life, some women just have to accept that that they are not chosen to have children. The other common view was that women only had a right to have children if they were fit to bring them up – hence drug users, alcoholics, violent and abusive women did not have the right to a child. Many candidates just repeated much of their

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response to a) having assumed that the woman referred to was infertile. The concept of a 'right' was not particularly well understood although some candidates did refer to the Human Rights of individuals.

**2392/02 – Paper 2B Christian (Roman Catholic) Perspectives on Personal, Social and World Issues**

**General Comments**

Responses to the questions were generally relevant and the majority of candidates were able to demonstrate knowledge on a range of issues. Weaker answers also showed basic knowledge but found it more difficult to relate belief to practice. Candidates seemed to be well prepared for the paper and vocabulary was understood and a good range of biblical passages were known. Some candidates did not offer two points of view and a Christian response in A03 (part c) of the questions) which meant they could not gain full marks for the question.

**Comments on Individual Questions**

- 1 (a) Describe Roman Catholic teaching about prejudice. [8]

There was a range of standards in response to this question. Many rarely went beyond recognising that the Church sees prejudice as wrong. Others used Bible passages to good effect commenting on the lessons of 'The Good Samaritan' and the implications of Jesus' teaching - often thought to be one of the Ten Commandments - to 'treat others as you would like to be treated' and 'love your neighbour'. The Old Testament teaching on treatment of the 'alien' and the suggestion that only God should judge also featured. Weaker responses mentioned these ideas but did not offer further detail. Some merely defined prejudice and discrimination without offering any Catholic teaching.

- (b) Explain how the work of one well known Christian has helped to overcome prejudice. [7]

Some candidates failed to notice the flag words 'one well known Christian' and offered a general Christian response while others offered non-Christian examples such as Nelson Mandela and although these could be given some credit, the best responses concentrated on more obvious examples such as Martin Luther King. Good responses looked at how he helped overcome prejudice through the bus boycott, march of 1,000 men, non-violent action, speeches and martyrdom. Many knew his biography and many candidates were able to achieve higher levels. Other candidates offered a range of well-known Christians. Jesus, St Paul and Mother Teresa made appearances in answers. It was important to make some reference to the impact the chosen person has had on overcoming prejudice for full marks rather than just giving information about them.

- (c) 'Fighting prejudice is the most important thing a Roman Catholic can do.' Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

Most candidates easily saw the tension of the question and argued that fighting prejudice was important but that other contemporary issues were also important and that Catholics may have other priorities such as spreading the good news. Some candidates focused on 'fighting' prejudice and argued for non-violent responses. Both were valid answers.

- 2 (a) Describe Roman Catholic teaching about abortion. [8]

Many candidates confidently offered summaries of Catholic teaching on: the sanctity of life; life beginning at conception; so abortion equated with murder and life as a gift

which only God can take away. However, few knew that Catholic teaching is that abortion is always wrong and most thought it permissible in cases of rape or other difficult situations. Some included the principle of double effect and made good use of this teaching, others were confused about what it meant. A few merely repeated that it broke the 5th commandment, 'Thou shalt not murder' without establishing why it did so.

- (b) Explain why the Roman Catholic Church is against the use of embryos. [7]

Almost all candidates knew the meaning of 'embryo' though some who chose this question could not offer an answer to part b). Many discussed why the Church is against the use of embryos in fertility treatments. While concerned about the creation and discarding of many embryos, there was some irrelevant discussion about whether the Church allowed AIH and sperm donors. Others used genetic engineering and scientific experiment as their issues. Most equated Catholic objection to use of the embryo with life beginning at conception and repeated some of their answer to question a).

- (c) 'Every woman has the right to a child.'

Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

Many candidates responded to this question without any reference to Christianity, which meant they could not be given full marks. They mainly offered examples of unfit mothers (drug users, abusive mothers etc) who had no right to a child as opposed to general rights to a child. Few considered the nature of God's gift of children rather than a right of women. No one considered the removal of the right to have children e.g. in China. A few discussed whether it was right to go to extraordinary lengths in pursuit of the right to a child.

- 3 (a) Describe Roman Catholic teachings about marriage. [8]

Many candidates used prompts such as 'the four ideals of marriage' to good effect in their answers. Even weaker answers gave a range of teachings about marriage – sacramental, monogamous, permanent and open to having children. There was some repetition of the same ideas in different words and candidates could have benefited from taking a few minutes to organise their ideas more effectively. Many included a discussion of teaching on divorce and annulment in their answer but this was largely relevant to the point being made about permanence.

- (b) Explain why Roman Catholics believe that having children is important. [7]

This question presented a greater challenge to candidates. Most were able to describe some teaching about children. Many thought children added to the Catholic Church, offering it a future. Not all referred to the promise to have children that the couple make in their vows. Many recognised that there was a willingness to accept the gift of children from God. Others saw children as strengthening a marriage.

- (c) 'A life-long commitment to another person is no longer possible.'

Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

Once again those candidates who did not achieve top marks were those who did not offer any Christian points of view in their answer. Some took a sociological view, citing divorce figures and modern temptations as reasons for the difficulty of life long commitment versus their experience of their own parents' and grandparents' dedication. It was nice to see the number of 'nans and granpas' who have been together 'forever' are still going strong at 70 and 80! Better answers used the importance of making marriage vows and Catholic beliefs about divorce to show why those with religious faith were more likely to have a life long commitment.

**4 (a)** Describe Roman Catholic teaching about euthanasia. [8]

Many candidates were able to explain some Catholic teaching on euthanasia clearly and knew that the Church regards 'active euthanasia' as wrong. Many answers failed to demonstrate an understanding of the issues surrounding passive euthanasia.

**(b)** Explain how a Roman Catholic might use these teachings when looking after someone who is terminally ill. [7]

Answers to this question were again not fully thought out and rarely went beyond not letting someone choose euthanasia because of reasons already given in a). Surprisingly, there was little consideration given to hospice care or pain control. Some candidates thought that they would tell the terminally ill to put up with their suffering as God had allowed their illness and others recognised the difficulty of seeing their own family suffering or agreed to helping by offering euthanasia if that was what the person wanted.

**(c)** 'Only God has the right to end a human life.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

Difficult to avoid Christianity in response to this question but few commented on autonomy, focusing instead on God's right to take a life he had given in the first place.



## 2393 - Paper 3 Buddhism

### General Comments

Overall response to this paper were good and it achieved good differentiation, allowing the most able candidates to shine whilst ensuring that other candidates achieved reasonably well. Candidates were generally well prepared for this exam and it was gratifying to see far more candidates aware that the Buddha is not regarded as a god. Questions dealing with beliefs and teachings were particularly well answered and it is gratifying to see candidates grappling effectively with part (b) questions rather than merely giving descriptive, knowledge based responses to them. Most candidates are addressing part (c) questions well, but a number of answers mentioned a number of different religions in their responses, often inaccurately, and as a result failed to reach the required depth of evaluation to access the highest marks.

### Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 (a) Describe how Buddhists might use a rupa (image of the Buddha) in their worship. [8]

Most candidates performed well on this question and there were very few who did not manage to make any sort of a valid response. Surprisingly few actually described Buddhist practices in puja, with most describing why it is important to Buddhists to use a rupa and what they can learn from it. Some of the best answers differentiated between different forms of Buddhism and compared the importance and use of rupas in different traditions. Candidates frequently discussed the mudras of various rupas and most responses made some mention of the Buddha as a role model and inspiration. There were only a few candidates who were not aware that the Buddha is not generally regarded as a god.

- (b) Explain how learning about the life of the Buddha might help Buddhists in their daily lives. [7]

This question produced a particularly high level of differentiation. Some candidates gave a description of the Buddha's life but did not go beyond this to explain its importance to Buddhists. Some spoke of the teachings of the Buddha rather than of specific incidents in his life and of how these could help Buddhists to reach enlightenment. This was credited as far as it was accurate and did, in fact, refer to teachings of the Buddha himself. There were, however, some truly outstanding answers which showed knowledge, imagination and critical reasoning. Many spoke of the Buddha as inspiration or as a guide ("What would the Buddha have done in my position?"). Answers at the upper end of the mark range spoke of the Middle Way and the importance of not being attached to worldly possessions. They also talked of determination and perseverance as well as inspiration drawn from the fact that the Buddha was a mere man and yet achieved enlightenment.

- (c) 'Buddhists should not worship the Buddha.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

At the lower end of the mark range, candidates gave simple answers suggesting that of course Buddhists should worship the Buddha, otherwise what was the point in being a Buddhist; or that Buddhists should be free to do as they chose without interference. In the negative they sometimes cited other religions such as Christianity or Islam which claim exclusivity. In this question in particular, there was a slightly worrying trend to try to contrast a Buddhist view with that of another religion whether it was relevant to do so or not, which prevented some candidates from reaching the required depth of evaluation as they failed to understand that they were not comparing like with like and were therefore not answering the question. This said there were some excellent answers which discussed the precise meaning of "worship" and suggested that the Buddha should be remembered and honoured whilst not being deified or ascribed any salvic powers.

- 2 (a) Describe the ceremony of ordination into the Sangha. [8]

Few candidates attempted this question but those who did tended to do so very well with some extremely detailed and accurate answers. Many candidates were aware of the two different levels of ordination and described the preparations for the ordination as well as the ceremony itself. Most included a description of the Ten Precepts and the idea that unlike in Christianity ordination is not necessarily a life long commitment in Buddhism.

- (b) Explain how the Sangha might affect the lives of Buddhists who are not monks. [7]

Although this was not answered as well as part (a) there were some very impressive responses. Many of the candidates who attempted this question spoke about the lay Buddhists being able to learn from the monks, especially at particular festivals and times of year, as well as gaining merit by providing the monks with their needs. Many explained the symbiotic relationship that can exist and that it is helpful to monks and lay Buddhists alike in their quest for enlightenment. At the lower end of the ability range answers tended to be vague, with a few suggesting that the monks are a discouragement as the lay Buddhists cannot achieve enlightenment and have to watch and put up with the monks who can. When this view point was well presented and argued it was credited.

- (c) 'The Sangha is the most important of the Three Refuges.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Buddhism in your answer. [5]

Most candidates did well here, although some responses were quite formulaic and offered another of the Refuges as an alternative without much in the way of a supporting argument. There was little scope here for candidates to offer alternative view points from other religions and most did not attempt to do so. Most candidates claimed that the Refuges were interdependent and so equally important and the majority of candidates were able to defend this view point. There were very few, if any candidates who did not know what the Three Refuges were.

**3 (a)** Describe Buddhist beliefs about rebirth. [8]

This question was quite popular with candidates but it was not generally well answered and depressed the marks of some candidates. There is still far too little understanding evident of the differences between rebirth and the Hindu concept of re-incarnation. Very few candidates mentioned the concept of anatta and, more worryingly, those who did mention it went on to ignore it in the rest of their answer merely giving an account of re-incarnation. Whilst some candidates mentioned nibbana as the ultimate aim of Buddhists most thought of it as an equivalent to the Christian heaven. Candidates, not surprisingly, find this a difficult concept to deal with. Centres need to ensure that candidates are aware of the differences between Buddhism and Hinduism in their views about rebirth.

**(b)** Explain why kamma is important to Buddhists. [7]

Candidates coped better with this question on the whole although many answers were descriptive and did not really address the question of why kamma is important. Those candidates who did address the question spoke of kamma as important for ensuring a good birth. The majority of candidates who attempted this question were able to give competent responses, although again it is important that they are able to understand the differences between Buddhist and Hindu teachings.

**(c)** 'This life is all that matters.'

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Buddhism in your answer. [5]

This part of the question was generally well answered with many candidates achieving full marks. Arguments in the positive talked about the uncertainty of an after life or the importance of this life for amassing kamma or reaching enlightenment. Some good answers countered that by arguing that a person is the sum of all their lives so all are equally important. Where candidates failed to achieve highly it was often because they did not refer to a Buddhist view point. A few answers interpreted the question to mean that your own life is more important than that of another person or animal. Where answers of this type were encountered they were credited at an appropriate level.

**4 (a)** Describe the Three Universal Truths. [8]

The weakest responses to this question did not show any knowledge of what the Universal Truths were and evidenced more or less accurate guesses. The majority of responses were good, describing the Universal Truths in detail and giving examples of how and where they could be found in life. The majority of candidates were able to give a good account of the doctrine of anatta which was particularly pleasing. Some candidates, however, gave impermanence and co-dependency as two of the Universal Truths and so did not deal with anatta at all.

**(b)** Explain how the Four Noble Truths might help a Buddhist to find enlightenment. [7]

Again, this was very well answered. Almost all of the candidates who attempted this question were able to name the Four Noble Truths and give a basic explanation of them. The majority then went on to explain how each in turn is necessary to enlightenment, often placing particular emphasis on the Eightfold Path as what you can actually do to achieve enlightenment. Again, most candidates who attempted this question scored highly.

- (c) 'The Buddha is the only way to enlightenment.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Most did well on this question and there were some excellent answers. Many argued that since the Buddha was the first to achieve enlightenment his teachings were crucial. Others referred to the importance of finding one's own way. Several candidates approached this question by considering the extent to which other religions can be said to contain the concept of enlightenment. Some managed to do this well and concluded that the Buddha was the only way to enlightenment since only Buddhism really contains the concept. Some, however, were determined to claim that since Jesus was enlightened there are clearly other ways to enlightenment; the determination to include views from other religions even where it is not appropriate to do so again leading to a lack of true understanding and evaluation.

## 2394/01 - Paper 4A Christianity

### General Comments

Examiners judged this to be an appropriate paper, which was accessible to all candidates who had completed the course. Whilst the full range of ability was represented, and there were some excellent answers, there was a feeling that the overall performance by candidates this year was somewhat disappointing.

Question 4 was the least popular and the least well answered and this does raise the question of whether or not candidates are as familiar with the Biblical sections of the syllabus as they are with the other sections. An additional concern is that many candidates did not demonstrate in their answers a basic knowledge of Christianity, suggesting that there may be a tendency to assume that the candidates know more than they do about Christianity at the start of the course. A very common and worrying mistake by candidates this year was that Christians believe that Jesus was crucified on a Sunday and, indeed, was born on a Sunday whilst very few actually knew that Christians believe it was the Resurrection that took place on this day.

There were few rubric errors although a number of candidates failed to address the questions fully. For example, in question 1 where candidates were asked to “describe” the main features of a Christian place of worship, many contented themselves with a list of features including little, if any, description at all. A small number of candidates attempted all four questions thus limiting the time they allowed themselves for each question and thereby reducing their chances of achieving high marks. Most candidates achieved 3 or 2 marks from QWC but a number of candidates had very poor handwriting that was almost illegible in places.

### Comments on Individual Questions:

- 1 (a) Describe the main features of a Christian place of worship. [8]

The word “describe” was ignored in a number of answers, with many being little more than a list of features. Even some better responses failed to describe features in depth. Most candidates did mention two or three, of what could be called major features (altar, pulpit, font, and lectern) and one or more of the more minor features however the descriptions given by most were disappointingly vague.

- (b) Explain why Sunday is important for many Christians. [7]

This question caused a number of problems not least because it appears that a significant number of candidates did not know the real reason why Sunday was chosen as the Christian holy day. Many of the answers to this question could have quite happily been credited on a Judaism paper as they focused on Sunday being the seventh day of the week and thus the Sabbath day. Few candidates actually mentioned how and why the Christians adopted Sunday as their holy day to distinguish them from the Jews and few seemed to be aware that it was chosen primarily as it was the day that Christians believe Jesus rose from the dead. Many candidates mentioned the importance of Sunday as the day of worship for Christians and as family time.

- (c) "Sunday is the most important festival for many Christians"

Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Many candidates scored well for this question. A large number suggested Sunday was not a festival therefore could not be the most important. Some answers were confused with a number saying that Sunday was important because Jesus died on that day and was born on that day. Again, few mentioned the resurrection or Sunday as the adopted day or worship. Many still concentrated on it being a day of rest and a family day. Very few candidates referred to anything other than Easter or Christmas as possible contenders for the most important festival and the majority of those who did failed to make a link between Easter and Sunday.

- 2 (a) Describe Christian private worship. [8]

This was quite a popular question and was quite well answered. Most candidates mentioned private prayer and Bible reading. A number mentioned praying the rosary and meditation. Few who answered it did not achieve at least level 2, 4 marks.

- (b) Explain why some Christians celebrate the Eucharist. [7]

Many answers to this question were disappointing. Some answers did not demonstrate any understanding of what the Eucharist was and many of those that did lacked depth. However, some did understand the religious significance of the Eucharist, mentioning consubstantiation and transubstantiation and the importance of the Eucharist to the communicant.

- (c) "It is better to worship God with other people than by yourself."

Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

Mostly, this was answered well. Most candidates were aware that they needed to give points of view for and against the statement and develop those points. However, there are still those who are giving one simple statement without any support and many of the better answers still lacked depth and breadth. Most candidates concentrated on the idea of being alone with God and being able to "communicate" privately and more intimately.

- 3 (a) Describe what is said and done at a Christian funeral. [8]

This was the most popular of the optional questions. However, too much emphasis was placed on the "done" and little on the "said". In many cases the said was simply "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust." Even when describing what is done, many answers were too secular. There were too many "media" answers in that candidates had obviously seen a funeral on the TV or in a film and had written about what had happened then. However, these answers rarely reflected Christian religious practice and consequently did not receive high marks. Only a few good answers mentioned a requiem mass.

- (b) Explain how beliefs about life after death might affect the way Christians live. [7]

The majority of candidates concentrated on heaven and hell. Not many referred to judgement though there were those who mentioned purgatory and there were a considerable number who referred to reincarnation and some considered karma to be Christian belief. However, the main problem was that the candidates did not necessarily relate the beliefs to the way Christians live. It seems to be a perennial problem with b) questions that candidates may know the teachings and beliefs but do not relate them to Christian lifestyle.

- (c) "Christianity is more concerned with this life than the next."  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

A number of candidates got themselves tied up in knots with this question because they could not really decide whether Christians are or are not more concerned about this life. Most could see that what Christians do in this life will affect their afterlife but they then could not decide which life they were then concerned about. Some answers went off at a tangent and began discussing the issue from the point of view of an atheist or a member of another religion, which then did not answer the question set.

- 4 (a) Give an account of the teachings in the Sermon on the Mount about people who are blessed. [8]

This was not a particularly popular question. The words "Give an account" led to some problems in this question. Many candidates simply tried to write a list of the Beatitudes without mentioning the promises attached. Some only wrote down one or two. Only some acknowledged that those who are blessed are not the ones you would expect to be blessed. A minority who attempted the question did not know what the Beatitudes are.

- (b) Explain the attitude that Christians should have towards possessions according to the Sermon on the Mount. [7]

Many candidates did relate their answers to Christian teaching but many failed to refer to the Sermon on the Mount in particular and very few quoted directly or indirectly. Treasures in Heaven was very popular but most answers to this question lacked detail.

- (c) "The Sermon on the Mount makes life more difficult for Christians."  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Generally well answered with most in disagreement. Some good answers considered the Sermon on the Mount to be a guidebook for Christians and therefore a good thing. Others considered the idea that it is the striving to achieve the standards set rather than actually achieving them which is important. Many acknowledged that to live by the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount would be very difficult.

**2394/02 – Paper 4B Christianity (Roman Catholic)**

**General Comments**

On the whole, candidates tackled the paper well and chose questions that allowed them to show their knowledge and understanding of aspects of Catholicism.

**Comments on Individual Questions**

- 1 (a) Describe Roman Catholic teachings about forgiveness. [8]

This question drew out varied and individual responses. Most candidates knew that forgiveness is called for and that those who are truly sorry deserve forgiveness. Many offered examples of Jesus' forgiveness such as towards those who crucified him, the woman caught in adultery or Zacchaeus. Others used Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount or his exhortation to forgive 70x7 times and many also used the Lord's Prayer, 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us', to show that forgiveness should be offered again and again, and that our final judgement may depend on it. Weaker answers used 'treat others as you would like to be treated' and repeated ideas rather than developed them.

- (b) Explain how receiving forgiveness might strengthen the faith of a Roman Catholic. [7]

Most candidates struggled to go beyond fresh start, closer relationship with God and relief from guilt. Some candidates saw that forgiving had an effect on the community as well as the individual and that the experience of being forgiven could lead to good works and offering forgiveness to others. Some felt that it might lead to a desire to serve in some ministry within the Church.

- (c) 'Evil people need punishment not forgiveness.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

Whilst a few candidates thought that response to evil people should be that they should 'be locked up and the key thrown away', many debated the ethics of fair and just punishment and rehabilitation. The feeling was that punishment was needed if crimes were bad but that forgiveness could and should be extended to those who were sorry for their crimes and indeed once someone had served their punishment they should be forgiven. There was some discussion about whether anyone could be described as evil other than Satan. The question also attracted discussion of God's final judgement and the punishment of hell. Many commented that it is hard to forgive and that victims need to be thought about as well as the offender.

- 2 (a) Describe the main features of a Roman Catholic church. [8]

Better responses offered specifically Catholic features of a church: crucifix rather than cross; statues of the Blessed Virgin Mary and saints; stations of the cross; Paschal candle; tabernacle and confessionals. Most candidates were able to give a range of features and explain their use or their significance for Catholics. Weaker answers took the form of lists without explanation of use or importance. A few offered labelled diagrams but these generally added little to the answer and should not replace written responses.



- (b)** Explain the different ways a Roman Catholic church may be used by the community. [7]

There was good understanding of how a community might use their church. Most candidates included a variety of examples ranging from religious uses - sacraments, other services such as funerals and quiet prayer - to the more secular – choir practice, fund raising activities, teaching groups, concerts and plays and even school visits and tourism. Some commented on the restrictions of the shape of the building and the benefits of a church hall but few fully considered the appropriate use of a consecrated building.

- (c)** 'Going to church is the most important thing a Roman Catholic can do.' Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

Most candidates were able to produce good evaluative answers to this question. They picked up on 'most important' and either compared and contrasted prayer at home and prayer in church or considered other ways of being Catholic such as charitable work.

- 3 (a)** Describe a Roman Catholic baptism. [8]

The best answers again gave a full account of the service and were able to offer and explain a range of signs and symbols. Many were able to offer the Trinitarian formula but most missed the fact that baptism includes the words '(Name...) I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.' and is a naming ceremony. Many candidates struggled for words to describe what is done with the water in a baptism. Many thought a sign of the cross is made with water on the child's forehead and 'Spill', 'bathe', 'wash down' and 'heads put under water' were often used rather than an idea of flowing water such as 'pour'.

- (b)** Explain why baptism is important to Roman Catholics. [7]

The most common answer was that the sacrament allowed those who received it into the Church and the family of God. Many discussed Original Sin and the issue of whether the unbaptised enter heaven. Some looked at the initiation rites of the Church and that other sacraments cannot be received unless you are baptised. A few saw it as allowing entry into Catholic schools.

- (c)** 'Only adults should be baptised' Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

Most candidates were able to answer this question well and saw the significance of the issue. They balanced believer's baptism with the value of being forgiven Original Sin and joining the family of God. They argued whether or not it was better to make a choice as an adult.

- 4 (a)** Describe Roman Catholic teaching about Salvation. [8]

This was not a popular choice. Candidates either knew what salvation was and made a good attempt to answer or, possibly wanting to answer the questions on the 10 Commandments, had to guess at the meaning of salvation with varied success.

- (b)** Explain why the Ten Commandments are important to Roman Catholics. [7]

Candidates were able to show understanding of the importance of the 10 Commandments as a guide for living or as a way to gain heaven.

- (c)** 'The Ten Commandments should never be broken'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Most candidates did not see the significance of this question. Few went beyond recognition that they are hard to follow. Weaker responses offered constant repetition including much of their answer to question b).

## 2395 - Paper 5 Hinduism

### General Comments

There were no particular problems with the paper which was generally well answered and which achieved good differentiation. Fewer candidates than in some previous years made rubric errors and almost all finished the paper. Section (b) questions were, on the whole, answered better than in previous years. Less able candidates continue to struggle with these, but the more able are becoming better at answering the question asked rather than giving a purely descriptive answer as they have sometimes been inclined to do in previous years. A significant part of the cohort for this paper appears to be made up of Hindu faith adherents and this continues to be evident in the responses. These candidates, however, are becoming more skilled at giving a critical evaluation and explanation for their faith which answers the questions well, rather than a simple statement of Hindu belief or practice which does not meet the requirements of the qualification. The full range of marks was achieved by candidates on this paper.

### Comments on Individual Questions

- 1) (a) Describe Hindu beliefs about the god Ganesha. [8]

This question was well answered by the majority of candidates and most managed to give a competent account. The weaker answers still made good use of the stimulus provided and described this, attempting to give a symbolic explanation for the various things seen. Some did this with greater success than others but only a very few failed to achieve at least at level 2. Most candidates gave an account of how Ganesha came to have an elephant's head. There was a wide range of opinion about which deities were his parents but the story was generally well known and well told. Better answers also described the role of Ganesha in Hindu life and worship and the times at which he may be particularly invoked. There were some truly outstanding answers, and candidates were clearly well prepared for the question.

- (b) Explain why performing puja is important to Hindus. [7]

Inevitably some of the weaker answers merely gave a description of puja without going on to explain its importance and so were unable to achieve beyond level 2. However a large number of candidates made an attempt to get to grips with the question and to explain why Hindus perform puja and what they get out of it. There were some excellent answers here, concerned with karma and re-incarnation or the quest for moksha. Others dealt with puja as petitionary prayer in order to receive help from the gods, often going on to explain how different gods might be petitioned for different reasons. Some considered the idea of puja bringing families or communities closer together and helping people to feel closer to God which would help them in their daily lives. A few thought about puja as "divine command" or fulfilment of dharma and as necessary in order to avoid angering the gods. A pleasing number of candidates were able to explain that puja was a form of bhakti, but few, if any made reference to darshan. The evidence generally suggested that candidates were well prepared for the question.

- (c) "People do not need pictures or statues to help them worship God."  
Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Hinduism in your answer. [5]

Although this was less well answered than part (a) or (b) there were still many good answers to this question. While a few candidates continued to give only a single one-sided statement of opinion, most did at least support this with a reason. Most followed the instructions by giving a balanced two-sided discussion which made specific

reference to Hinduism. Weaker answers often concentrated on being able to worship anywhere or not being able to afford murtis and the ubiquitous “Hindus should be able to do whatever they like.” answers made an appearance. Better answers thought about the symbolic value of murtis as a focus and a few of the most able candidates were aware of the belief that deities inhabit or infuse murtis that have been correctly installed. Negative answers considered the omnipresence of God (most candidates pointing out that Hindus only worship one God so that worship to a particular deity or murti is not necessary.) some contrasted the Hindu approach with Christian or Muslim prohibitions on “idol” worship. Very few, if any candidates, talked about murtis and the puja associated with them being prescribed in the scriptures.

**2 (a)** Describe Hindu beliefs about dharma. [8]

Although this was not one of the more commonly answered questions it was attempted by a reasonable number of candidates, and those who did seemed well prepared for it. Some candidates however clearly did not know what dharma was and made guesses that it was a deity or festival, or, on one occasion, “something bad”. Most however were able to describe dharma in terms of duty and connect it to the idea of karma, samsara and moksha. Many candidates gave excellent accounts of varnashramadharma which they then contrasted with sanatana dharma. The majority of candidates who attempted this question were well prepared for it and gave answers which were competent or good.

**(b)** Explain the difficulties a Hindu might have in following the teaching about ahimsa (non-violence). [7]

Many candidates failed to come to terms with this question and gave very simple responses along the lines of “It might be difficult to follow teachings about ahimsa because if you are attacked you wish to retaliate.” Whilst there were answers which talked about vegetarianism and how this might be more difficult in Western countries most did not really deal with this issue. Better answers explained how ahimsa might affect career decisions and a very few candidates considered the contradiction which appears to exist between ahimsa and the dharma of ksatriyas as it is considered in the Bhagavad Gita. Some candidates discussed Gandhi and the degree to which his methods were successful or desirable.

**(c)** “Everyone should be treated equally.”

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Hinduism in your answer. [5]

Most candidates gave valid or competent answers to this question and the majority made at least some reference to the caste system. Some managed a good discussion about the fairness or otherwise of the castes although the idea of everyone being God on an ultimate level and therefore equal did not feature. Some candidates discussed the status of women in Hinduism, and some stated that criminals do not deserve equal treatment to others. There was some awareness of arguments concerning the fairness of the caste system based on the fact that one's caste is one's own responsibility based on actions in previous lives, but this was not widespread. The weakest answers stated as self-evident the belief that everyone is equal without further qualification or discussion.

**3 (a)** Describe how some Hindus perform puja (worship). [8]

This was a popular question and it was generally done very well. Candidates were able to give some very detailed and full accounts of puja, some distinguishing different forms of puja and the ways in which it is offered to different deities. Although

it was not specifically required by the question many of the best answers also gave an account of the symbolism and meaning of puja and this was credited where it occurred.

- (b) Explain how visiting a mandir might help to strengthen a Hindu community. [7]

Candidates found this question difficult in comparison to part (a) but most managed to give a competent response. Many explained that the role of the mandir might be different and more important for Hindus living outside India and gave examples and arguments to back this up. The different things that might happen in a mandir were also discussed and related back to the question. The simplest answers were along the lines of mandirs being places where you meet people and can relax and have fun.

- (c) "Hindus need to worship together."  
Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Most candidates fulfilled the rubric of the question and gave a two-sided discussion of the question which compared the benefits of worshipping alone to worshipping in a community or family. Responses to this question were good overall

- 4 (a) Describe a Hindu marriage ceremony. [8]

This was well answered by almost all candidates and was a popular choice. There were some detailed descriptions of the preparations leading up to the ceremony and in a few cases candidates had spent too much time on this leaving little time for a description of the ceremony itself. There were some excellent, detailed accounts of the ceremony itself with some candidates comparing ceremonies from different parts of India.

- (b) Explain how Hindu beliefs about marriage might help to strengthen a Hindu family. [7]

Candidates found this the most difficult question to answer, although this was often mitigated by the high marks gained on part (a) of the question. Many answers were limited to families becoming stronger by joining with another family or the addition of children. Some discussed the idea of arranged marriages or teachings about divorce and considered ways in which this might strengthen a family. The most able candidates were able to discuss varnashramadharma as it applies to family life and beliefs about marriage talking about how each family member fulfilling their dharma would lead to a strong family unit. Other candidates also discussed scriptures such as the Ramayana and what could be learnt from them about marriage which might strengthen a family.

- (c) "Marriage is the most important life-ceremony (samskara)."  
Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Hinduism in your answer. [5]

This part of the question was also generally well done with most candidates discussing the importance of marriage within Hinduism. Many went on to state that another samskara (often the sacred thread ceremony) was more important but struggled to justify this with a clear argument, and many more said that all samskaras were equally important, although sometimes the justification for this did not go beyond "otherwise they wouldn't be there." Some of the most able were able to produce a discussion about the comparative importance of marriage and the "householder" ashrama with samskaras associated with renunciation or death. They

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questioned the twin aims of re-incarnation and moksha and whether marriage might be important in the case of the first but not the second where it might create unhelpful attachment.

## 2396 - Paper 6 Islam

### General Comments

For all three assessment objectives, scripts were marked according to levels of response and the questions seem to have provided opportunities for candidates of a wide range of ability to demonstrate their skills. There were some excellent responses but also a number of extremely weak responses where candidates confused Islam with other faiths. Some candidates seemed to be unaware that each individual question is structured in three parts which are intended to guide the candidate through the whole topic. There was evidence that candidates are coping better with the AO3 parts of the question which examine evaluative skills. More discussions tended to be based on accurate information and candidates remembered to consider other views and to refer to Islam. Candidates need to be advised that 'other views' do not have to be the total opposite of the stimulus quotation.

Once again, examiners have made the plea that candidates identify the two questions on the grid on the front of the answer booklet. Some candidates are not even numbering the questions or the parts of the question when they write the answers. There were very few rubric infringements this year but candidates need to be reminded that three marks are available for the Quality of Written Communication, which includes legibility.

### Comments on Individual Questions

#### 1 (a) Describe how a mosque is used for worship. [8]

There was the full range of responses to this compulsory question. Even the apparently weaker candidates managed to describe the use of some features of a mosque or describe communal prayer on Friday. The best responses often defined the mosque as the place of prostration and selected appropriate material to address the question in the context of use for worship. Most good responses included the call to worship from the minaret and use of facilities for washing as essential preparation for praying as well as describing the worship in the prayer room facing the mihrab in the qiblah wall. Some described community use also and justified the inclusion on the grounds that all Muslim life is lived in submissive worship before Allah.

#### (b) Explain why there are no pictures of Allah or Muhammad (pbuh) in a mosque. [7]

Many answers relied on superficial explanations such as 'nobody knows what they look like'. A surprising number either referred to Allah as a human being or to Muhammad (pbuh) as if he was a god and some said there were no statues or pictures of Allah and Muhammad (pbuh) because they were human and Muslims only had statues of gods. Some thought Allah and Muhammad (pbuh) were the same person.

There were some excellent responses, however, which explained the dangers of idolatry and made reference to Ibrahim's beliefs or to Muhammad (pbuh) riding into Makkah in 629 CE and destroying the idols of wood and stone. Some explained that only Allah is to be worshipped and to make an image or picture or any representation would be shirk. Others wrote that Allah is beyond imagining; Allah is too great to be portrayed by humans; Allah is the creator so no living creature can be portrayed etc.

- (c) 'Allah knows everything so there is no need to pray.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Apart from candidates trying to apply a formula structure, such as 'I agree because...' and 'I disagree because...', without backing this up with religious knowledge, most candidates gave thoughtful arguments exploring the purpose of prayer. Most candidates began by acknowledging that Allah/God knows everything and some added, 'That's the reason why people pray.' Salah being one of the compulsory Five Pillars was a key argument against the statement in most responses and many candidates swiftly moved beyond negative reasons about punishment and Jahannam to the positive benefits of prayer for the believer. Some candidates commented that the people who pray out of habit or without meaning it are the ones who should remember that Allah knows everything.

- 2 (a) Describe how Muslims celebrate Id-ul-Adha. [8]

Candidates who knew about Id-ul-Adha had a chance to shine but those who did not would have been better off selecting another question. General activities at festivals-prayers, new clothes, feasting, sharing etc. were given credit but good responses were those which showed awareness of the link with the Hajj sacrifice on 10th of Dhul Hijjah at Mina and the worldwide Muslim solidarity with the pilgrims.

- (b) Explain the importance of Id-ul-Fitr for Muslims. [7]

The best candidates explained that Id-ul-Fitr celebrates the successful completion of the Ramadan Fast which is one of the Five Pillars and keeping the Id is itself an act of obedience whilst paying Zakat-ul-Fitr is an act of gratitude. Very few mentioned the reward at the Day of Judgement. The importance of celebrating with family and community, local and worldwide, led neatly into the next part of the question for many candidates.

- (c) 'Festivals are not a very important part of religious life for Muslims.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

This stimulus was probably the reason some candidates chose question 2. Most candidates argued in general terms about community and family celebrations building up religious unity. Good answers showed knowledge of other festivals besides Id-ul-Adha and usually argued that the festivals serve a purpose within ummah and tend to be linked with something important e.g. pillars such as the fast of Ramadan or the Hajj. The best discussions usually included points about the whole structure of Islam hanging together as one entity.

- 3 (a) Describe the Five Pillars of Islam. [8]

This popular question had the full range of responses. Good answers identified all five usually with a brief description of each e.g. Shahadah (Declaration of Faith)- There is no god but Allah; Muhammad (pbuh) is the messenger of Allah / Salah (Prayer)- five times a day / Zakah (Purification of wealth by payment of annual welfare due- any equivalent word)-usually 2 ½ % annually / Hajj (Pilgrimage) to Makkah and Arafat- once in a lifetime at least by all who are physically and mentally able / Sawm (Fasting)-in the month of Ramadan during daylight hours. Weaker responses usually still offered a partially accurate account.



- (b)** Explain how keeping **one** of the Five Pillars might affect the life and beliefs of a Muslim. [7]

There were some excellent responses, appropriate to the Pillar chosen, which considered both life and beliefs and moved beyond negative effects and disadvantages to more positive effects relevant to the practice of the particular Pillar. Some candidates interpreted the question to mean keeping only one of the Five Pillars and not keeping the other four. This interpretation was accepted though such responses tended not to be developed enough for high marks.

- (c)** 'All the Five Pillars are of equal importance to a Muslim.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Good discussions developed points made earlier in the structured question. Most candidates pointed out that the Five Pillars as a whole are said to support the faith of Islam and so could be argued to be equally important. However, some candidates made a well argued case for Shahadah being the central idea of the faith and the starting point of Muslim belief.

- 4 (a)** Describe the ceremonies which take place at the start of a Muslim baby's life. [8]

There were many excellent and good descriptions which included most of the following or equivalent areas in detail: washed, call to prayer in right ear, command to worship in left ear; named with a significant Muslim name; head shaved; equivalent weight of hair in money to poor; males circumcised; goats or sheep sacrificed.

- (b)** Explain what Muslims believe about dying and life after death. [7]

Good answers explained that for Muslims dying is a stage in life not the end because the permanent life is akhirah. Credit was given for the beliefs about the last words a Muslim should hear but some candidates spent too much time writing about funerals without addressing the actual question. Good answers went on to describe the beliefs about life after death from when the two angels of justice Munkar and Nakir visit the person, recording their good and bad deeds and asking questions. Good answers explained about the importance of the Day of Judgement when the good will be rewarded by Paradise (al-Jannah) and the rest will suffer hell (Jahannam). Some candidates used the term re-incarnation for the bodily resurrection and, though this was given credit when the meaning was clear, candidates should be warned that such usage can lead to confusion with some other faiths e.g. Hinduism.

- (c)** 'Ceremonies at a birth are more important than ceremonies at a death.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Islam in your answer. [5]

All candidates seemed to enjoy discussing this topic, trying to decide the real purpose of the ceremonies and for whose benefit they existed. Most concluded that they seemed to serve various functions and were equally important. In referring to Islam, many candidates continued themes from the previous parts of the question by linking the fact that the first and last things a Muslim hears is the name of Allah.

## 2397 - Paper 7 Judaism

### General Comments

As in previous years, this paper has elicited a wide range of responses, covering a broad ability spectrum. The most popular optional question was clearly number two, though all combinations were well represented. There was a gratifying reduction in the number of candidates making rubric errors, though there is still scope for improvement in this respect. Generally, the standards of written communication were high. Examiners are still aware of the use of a generic approach to evaluation questions, and this is now also apparent with other questions too. Candidates are referring to the impact of a given ritual, for example, on the individual, family and community. This approach provides a clear structure, but its success varies from question to question.

### Individual Questions

- 1 (a) Describe how Jews celebrate Pesach (Passover). [8]

The stimulus photograph proved to be very useful to those with less knowledge about this topic, in that it clearly provided something to write about. However, these candidates tended to focus on the plate to the detriment of the other aspects of the festival. Stronger answers referred in some detail to the preparation for Pesach and showed an awareness that it constituted more than one evening. Some candidates were inclined to include unnecessary detail about the original Biblical story. Others confused Pesach with other festivals, especially Shabbat and Yom Kippur.

- (b) Explain the importance of Pesach for Jews. [7]

Biblical detail sometimes helped candidates to explain the importance of the festival in this question. There was a tendency for confusion between festivals to persist throughout the different components. Candidates often failed to make connections between the original story and the more recent experience of the Jewish people. Some responses tended to be of a generic nature, which helped some answers, whilst others might have been written about any festival, not simply Pesach.

- (c) 'Festivals encourage children to follow a religion'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Judaism in your answer. [5]

Candidates were generally supportive of this quotation, and had little difficulty in including different points of view; however, there was a tendency for candidates to forget to refer to Judaism in their answer. Inevitably this limited the amount of marks awarded. Many responses were well argued and interesting. Using a generic structure to answer this evaluation question worked well provided there was sufficient development.

- 2) (a) Describe what happens when a boy becomes Bar Mitzvah. [8]

This was certainly the most popular of the optional questions. It was generally well answered, although some candidates confused Bar Mitzvah with Jewish birth rituals. Most candidates referred to the reading of the Torah. Some descriptions of Bar Mitzvah were good, with clear reference to the preparation involved, the ceremony in the synagogue and the celebrations that follow; all of these were credited. Weaker responses did not look at the role of the father or the rabbi in the process. Sometimes too much time was spent describing the ritual dress.

- (b)** Explain why the celebration of Bar Mitzvah is important for Jews. [7]

For those candidates who had confused Bar Mitzvah and Brit Milah, these problems tended to persist. Weaker answers tended to reprise the description of part a. Credit was given for explaining the implications of the boy's new status, including being part of the minyan and the impact upon his father. Some candidates suggested that the boy might wear his tephillin on the Shabbat. Working through the importance of the proceedings for the individual, family and community worked well in this question.

- (c)** 'There is no set age for becoming an adult.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Judaism in your answer. [5]

This question seemed to lend itself to two clearly delineated points of view. In general, candidates were able to set out the Jewish perspective, but did not always correctly identify the origins of the tradition. Weaker responses did not always include reference to Judaism, which prevented them from achieving the higher levels. Some responses tended to be largely sociological, legal or biological.

- 3 (a)** Describe the ritual dress worn by Jews. [8]

This question was the least frequently attempted on the paper. Candidates who did attempt it varied in their approach, but the first part was generally well executed. Most candidates were able to write about the tephillin, tallit and yamulkah. Valid descriptions abounded for all three ritual objects, although there was some confusion over the exact nature of the tzitzit. Some were able to include the kittel and traditions of modest dress among some members of the Jewish community.

- (b)** Explain why the mezuzah is important for Jews. [7]

Even some candidates who had responded well to the first part, tended to struggle on the subject of the mezuzah. Some confused it with the Sefer Torah and others with the menorah. The best were able to explain the importance of its location and the meaning it might have for a Jew. Better answers focused in part on the shema and its importance for Jewish practise and belief. However, examiners felt that some candidates had not read this part of the question before choosing to answer it.

- (c)** 'What you wear should show what you believe.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Judaism in your answer. [5]

Candidates had strong feelings on this subject. They seemed well able to set out two points of view and support these with coherent arguments and development. Most were able to link Jewish ritual dress with obedience to the Torah. The opposing viewpoint tended to be a secular one, but some responses referred to dress codes in other religious traditions, which added depth.

- 4 (a)** Describe the ways that Jews show respect for the Sefer Torah (scrolls). [8]

This question proved to be a reasonably popular option. Some focused their attention on the production of the scroll, whilst others concentrated on its decoration or treatment during a service in the synagogue. Reference was sometimes made to its positioning in the ark. All appropriate approaches were credited and the best included all aspects. The weaker responses sometimes did not refer to the scroll, but to Torah in general.

- (b)** Explain the importance of the Torah for the Jewish community. [7]

Some candidates continued to refer to the Sefer Torah, and this was credited. The more successful responses, however, focussed on the impact that the Torah has on the everyday life of a Jew. Most commonly, reference was made to kosher food, Shabbat and ritual dress, all of which were credited. The best answers connected the Torah to the Jews' covenant with G-d, and some referred to its divine origin on Sinai.

- (c)** 'All Jewish laws (mitzvot) are equally important'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Those candidates who interpreted this question as referring to denominational differences performed well. The weakest answers overlooked the religious aspect and simply focussed on the law of the land. Some responses distinguished between ethical and ritual law, though less informed candidates continue to interpret the progressive position as being a lazier version of orthodoxy.

## 2398 - Paper 8 Sikhism

### General Comments

The majority of candidates clearly understood the format of the paper and were able to answer question 1 and 1 additional question.

Most candidates were able to plan and use time effectively. There were very few examples of rubric error.

Some candidates are still unable to differentiate between the requirements of (a) and (b), but most were competent in their attempts to answer (c) sections.

### Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 (a) Describe the main features of a gurdwara. [8]

The majority of candidates were able to give details of the main features of the gurdwara. The Nishan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib and associated artefacts (manji and chauri for example) were mentioned as well as specific areas in the gurdwara such as the langar and Diwan Sahib.

- (b) Explain the importance of a gurdwara for the Sikh community. [7]

Good answers demonstrated that candidates understood the function of the gurdwara as a place of worship, education and community centre. The celebration of rites of passage and the strengthening of Sikh brotherhood were also mentioned. Some candidates also mentioned that Sikh gurus established the gurdwara.

Less detailed answers concentrated on the obvious functions of worship.

- (c) 'Worshipping together is not an important part of Sikh life.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

The majority of candidates were able to explain that communal worship is not essential but desirable. Good responses also explained that many Sikhs would not be able to keep a GGS at home and thus the gurdwara is an important place for them. Most candidates offered a discussion about the relative value of communal and personal worship.

- 2 (a) Describe what Sikhs mean by samsara. [8]

The majority of candidates who answered this question were able to explain the idea of the cycle of life and death, with a good number mentioning re-birth. The inclusion of karma, and mukti were also common. Some candidates were able to explain that the soul does not die. Few candidates linked the Sikh beliefs to those of Hinduism, which might have helped in their explanations.

- (b) Explain how a Sikh might try to reach mukti (release). [7]

A significant proportion of candidates were able to explain the meaning of mukti and a commendable number were also able to link this to sewa and to the need to follow the rules of good conduct.

- (c) Sewa (service to others) is the most important aspect of Sikhism. Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Some candidates agreed and gave detail of types of sewa with detail (often repeated from (b)). Others suggested that there are other important aspects of Sikhism –prayer for example. A number of candidates gave quite general answers with only passing reference to specific details from a Sikh perspective.

- 3 (a) Describe how Sikhs celebrate Baisakhi. [8]

Most candidates described key elements of the festival, including the changing of the Nishan sahib, reading of the Akhand Path, initiation ceremonies and prayers at the gurdwara. Most candidates clearly knew the basics at least, although there were a few who confused this festival with others such as Divali. Few referred to the harvest or to fairs held at this time.

- (b) Explain the importance of Baisakhi for Sikhs. [7]

Most candidates referred to the founding of the Khalsa at this time, and related it to the Panj Payare and the 5ks.

- (c) 'Festivals are the best way to learn about a religion.' Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Sikhism in your answer. [5]

Most common was the idea that festivals encourage enjoyment and are a good way to remember key concepts. However a lot of candidates gave general answers without reference to Sikhism. Some suggested that festivals detracted from true belief and simply encouraged a good time. Good responses explained that study of the GGS and the teachings of the gurus were cited as better ways to learn for Sikhs.

- 4 (a) Describe the Five Ks. [8]

The majority of candidates knew the 5Ks and could mention them by name. A large number confused 'describe' with 'explain' and this led to a lot of repetition between a) and b).

- (b) Explain the importance of the Five Ks to Sikhs. [7]

Most mentioned the 5Ks as a sign of identity and belonging. Some candidates gave a long description of the origin (not necessary in depth). A number of candidates explained the additional responsibilities for a member of the khalsa and talked of personal sacrifice, increased expectation of service to others and high standards.

Common misconceptions include the idea that a kirpan must draw blood if it is unsheathed.

- (c) 'People need symbols to strengthen their faith.' Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Sikhism in your answer. [5]

Generally good clear answers – pointing out that Sikhs do not worship symbols or objects, whilst recognising that they may be helpful reminders of Sikh beliefs.

## 2301 - Paper 1 Christianity through a study of either Luke or Mark

### General comments

This year, approx. 60% of candidates answered from the Luke section of the paper and 40% from Mark's gospel which indicates the growing popularity of Mark. Overall, there appeared to be greater familiarity with the characteristics of Luke's gospel, his aims and purpose and his overall theme of universality and by contrast, this was lacking in some answers to Mark. Some of the particular emphases in Mark; Messianic Secret, son of God, Son of Man, authority of Jesus, were not known as distinctive signposts in the gospel.

As in other years, narrative answers in part (a) of questions were very good. However, despite the growing understanding of the demands of parts (a) and (c) of questions, sometimes even in contrast to narrative, there is still a noticeable lack of argument based on evidence. Many answers to part (b) were lengthy but trite generalisations about helping others, loving neighbours, observing the 10 Commandments or behaving like Mother Teresa and many ignored the specific teaching in a particular text or applied it inappropriately to offer 'umbrella' type answers to all part (b) questions as being the sum total of their impression of Christianity.

The majority of candidates answered three questions, there were few rubric errors and the indication was that time allowed had been used efficiently.

### Comments on individual questions.

#### Section A:

- 1 (a) Describe the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, including the visit of the shepherds. [8]

This was generally well known and recalled accurately by those who had studied the text. Some accounts also included the Annunciation and, even, the birth of John the Baptist. Quite a number of candidates omitted the historical reason for the journey, i.e. the Census. In weaker candidates there was an incidence of fabricated details of the star and the wise men and several inns refusing admission to the couple.

- (b) Explain why the stories of the birth of Jesus are important to Christians today. [7]

The best answers focused on the link between the birth narrative and a Christian Christmas, i.e. the importance of the incarnation, re-enactment in nativity plays, church services and carols etc. and there was a grasp of the universal theme as expressed by the visit of the shepherds and the message of Christmas, as shown by care of the homeless and the work of the Salvation Army etc. A fair number of candidates offered answers that were too general and applicable to the importance of the whole of Christ's ministry rather than the specific event of his birth. There were also some confusing answers on Mary's immaculate conception and the importance of family life.

- (c) Only Christians should celebrate Christmas.  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Many of the better responses offered discussions of the issue in multi-faith terms with a positive outcome. There were some impressive, well-balanced arguments. However, some referred to other faiths as excluding Christians from Divali or Hannukah so why should they celebrate Christmas. Some of the weak answers ignored the word 'only' and proceeded to discuss how commercial Christmas had become.

**2 (a)** Describe the Parable of the Good Samaritan. [8]

As expected, the parable was well known and this was a popular question. The best answers included both the introductory questions and the meaningful instruction 'Go and do likewise' which sparked off the right debate for the answer to question (b). Many candidates who accurately recounted the story without the introduction and the end scored good marks but were prone to offer misleading generalisations in part (b).

**(b)** Explain how the Parable of the Good Samaritan might influence the lives of Christians. [7]

Fewer candidates than expected addressed the issue of prejudice. The good answers understood that the basis for the parable lay in the actions of the non-Jew, already pre-judged by the contemporary religious establishment. Although, in many good answers, practical caring was an important part of the answer, there were too many answers which offered lengthy but weak generalisations about 'loving your neighbour', Mother Teresa and becoming doctors and nurses. The weakest answers were trite observations about 'healing' or 'anyone in need as your neighbour'

**(c)** 'Christianity is only about loving your neighbour.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

There were some very good answers here showing awareness of the many dimensions of practising Christianity. However, the word 'only' was sometimes ignored and there were many answers about 'love your neighbour' being the rock underpinning Christian values and although prayer and worship were mentioned as alternatives, they were seldom developed.

**3 (a)** Describe the Transfiguration of Jesus. [8]

This was the other most popular question in this section. In many impressive and very good answers the event was recounted in detail showing understanding through the description that this was an awe-inspiring vision of Jesus' nature, as seen by the disciples. A few candidates related the baptism of Jesus which was worthy of credit but was not the intention of the question.

**(b)** Explain how Christians might show that they are disciples of Jesus. [7]

Candidates appeared to enjoy answering this question and it was the best answered of all part (b) questions because of the detailed focus of the answers. In the strongest answers there was a good balance between explanations about leaders in Christianity in the twentieth Century i.e. Oscar Romero, Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa etc. and the potential to become committed disciples today in terms of vocation and practical Christian service and ethics.

**(c)** 'All Christians should read Luke's gospel.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Good answers discussed the purpose of Luke and its particular emphasis and importance to Christianity. However, many answers missed this opportunity and offered very general answers comparing reading the 'whole Bible' to reading Luke, with little reference to content.



- 4 (a) Describe what Jesus teaches about prayer in Luke's gospel. [8]

This was the least popular question and attempted by only a minority, many of whom had little knowledge of the specific teachings in Luke. However, there were answers which gained some credit for knowledge about Jesus teaching through example by praying on several occasions. Only a few connected their answer to Luke: 11 1-13 and included The Lord's Prayer.

- (b) Explain why Jesus' teaching might encourage Christians to pray. [7]

In the main, not well answered because candidates did not have the basic knowledge on which to base any argument. In general the tendency was to waffle about prayer and conclude that it probably was important.

- (c) 'Caring for others is more important than praying.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

Some sophisticated discussions in this part of the question made up for failings in part (a) and (b) but again many answers were trite discussions about 'caring'. It was, however, good to see that some candidates had grasped that 'praying' could be construed as 'caring' and argued for the importance of both.

- 5 (a) Give an account of the Parable of the Great Banquet. [8]

In the best answers this parable was known in detail and candidates who reported it accurately, including the last line of rejection to those who ignored the invitation. There were some weak responses but the majority of those who chose this question gained full credit for their answers.

- (b) How might Jesus' teachings on the Kingdom of God influence Christians? [7]

Candidates with good knowledge and understanding of the parable performed well on this part of the question. These and others with good understanding of the Kingdom of God as portrayed in Luke offered very good answers about the concept of the Kingdom in Christianity, as well as in practical, ethical living. However, there were an equal number of weak answers and generalisations about what Christians had to do to get to Heaven.

- (c) 'Luke's gospel teaches that it is wrong to be rich.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Some excellent answers. Candidates had grasped well the idea that Jesus in Luke's gospel taught that 'serving riches/money is wrong, not possession. Most answers showed an awareness that it is how wealth is viewed and what is done with it that is important. Many also used textual evidence to support their arguments. Some took the argument a step further and praised those who valued vocation above material possessions.

## Section B Mark

- 6 (a) From Mark's gospel, give an account of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, beginning with the preparations. [8]

The best answers included all the main details of the description from Mark 11:1-11, showing that they had also read the question carefully. Most candidates knew the event and showed through their description that it was a dramatic event. Some answers were vague or ignored the instructions to the disciples. Weak answers were able to gain some credit for interpreting the picture stimulus although it was evident they knew little from the text. Unexpectedly, a number of candidates interpreted 'preparation' as being the people being prepared for Jesus' ministry (by John) and this was seen by the examiners as a creditable interpretation of this part of the question.

- (b) Explain why it is important to Christians today that Jesus was the Messiah. [7]

In most answers there appeared to be a lack of understanding of the term Messiah in the context of Christian belief. In many cases the O.T. background and the concept of a redesigned kingship (to Jewish expectation) was not explained or even mentioned. Some candidates based their answer on Jesus as Son of God and ignored the word 'Messiah'.

- (c) 'Jesus' teaching was more important than his death. Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

These answers ranged from excellent to confused. Candidates who dealt with the two issues separately gave the most coherent answers. Sometimes the theology of Jesus' death was expressed but not fully understood and candidates had a better idea of the purpose of Jesus' teachings. Those who linked Jesus' teaching and death as dependent upon each other (to make an impact) usually had difficulty in giving more than a cursory argument or reaching any conclusion.

- 7 (a) Describe the story of the Faith of a Syro-Phoenician Woman. [8]

The candidates who chose this question and clearly knew the story gave impressive, detailed answers. However, a significant number recounted the story of the Sick Woman.

- (b) Explain how the story of the faith of a Syro-Phoenician woman might influence the lives of Christians. [7]

It was disappointing that many of the candidates who demonstrated their knowledge of the story in (a) failed to explain the prejudice issue. Many explained the miracle as an issue of faith in miracles or in healing and practical applications were often missing. Only a few of the best answers included attitudes and actions regarding prejudice today.

- (c) 'Christianity is only about loving your neighbour.' Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Once again, many candidates omitted to note the word 'only'. Often 'loving God' was argued as the only alternative to 'loving your neighbour' and answers were vague about this. There was little about Christian community life, charity, the role of worship, festivals etc. The most common argument, often supported by little evidence other than a reference to the 10 Commandments, was that 'loving your neighbour covered all Christian teaching.

**8 (a)** Describe the Transfiguration of Jesus. [8]

This was a popular question and the event was well known. There were some impressive, clear and detailed answers. Most answers were obviously based upon the Mark version of this story as Jesus' comments in verse 9 were included even though the specification only refers to Mark 9:2-8.

**(b)** Explain how Christians might show that they are disciples of Jesus. [7]

This was very well done indeed with the vast majority of answers showing a good balance of the varying facets of discipleship with, often, some examples from Twentieth Century noted Christians or even people in the candidate's own community. In almost all answers there were relevant references to Christian service, worship, church attendance, bible readings and acts of witness etc.

**(c)** 'All Christians should read Mark's gospel.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

As with 3 (c) there were many generalisations about the 'whole Bible' and not enough reference to the impact of the content of Mark and its significance for Christians today.

The better answers argued for the reading of both Old and New Testament and not just one gospel and gained reasonable credit.

**9 (a)** Describe what happened when Jesus healed a Paralytic (paralysed man). [8]

Although this was generally well answered there were responses that omitted the interaction with the Pharisees or some other aspect such as Jesus forgiving the man's sins.

**(b)** Explain what this miracle might teach Christians about faith. [7]

Answers were often repetitive and failed to explain how faith in God might affect Christian lives in a variety of ways and in many situations. Some weak answers were only about faith in oneself and did not mention God. In the better answers, persistence in faith was referred to and faith in times of sickness or in the need for forgiveness but the standard of answer was usually far too general and made little reference to the miracle in (a).

**(c)** 'Sick people should have faith in doctors, not religion.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

Some thought-provoking answers showed that even candidates who did less well in (a) and (b) were aware of the value of both doctors and prayer/faith. The best answers were well-balanced arguments supported by evidence from real-life situations.

- 10 (a)** From Mark's gospel, describe what happened when the women discovered the empty tomb. [8]

This was one of the most popular questions in this section and there were some very good, accurate answers. However, the vast majority were textually inaccurate with extracts from films and John's and other gospels to confuse the picture. Many of the significant and important features of Mark's account were missing from these answers.

A careful study of the text in this part of Mark's gospel is recommended.

- (b)** Explain how belief in the resurrection of Jesus might influence the lives of Christians. [7]

There was a wide range of answers to this question. These varied from a standard answer on the importance to Christians of the hope of life after death and the need to act accordingly, to a more perceptive understanding of a belief in the Risen Christ and the resurrection of all believers. Fewer answers than expected made reference to the Eucharist. A significant number of answers made mention of proof of Jesus as Son of God or the fulfilment of God's promise etc.

- (c)** 'Only Christians should celebrate Easter.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Some candidates wrote that a wider celebration might influence others towards belief and the best answers included the idea of the universalism of Christ's sacrifice. Weaker answers referred to the commercialisation of Easter and that this made it available to all.

## 2302/01 - Paper 2A Christian Perspectives on Personal, Social and World Issues

### General Comments

The paper proved accessible to the candidature and provided appropriate challenge at all levels, achieving good discrimination between the candidates. The vast majority of candidates were able to attempt all parts of three questions and only a handful of candidates failed to observe the requirement to answer Question 1. Time management was a problem for a small number of candidates. There seemed to be more occasions this year when candidates were determined to fit a response which they were familiar with to the question, rather than attempt to answer the question as stated. Answers that did what the questions asked offered fresh and sometimes outstanding responses which could be credited much more highly than 'learned' responses. This problem was especially evident in the b) (AO2) sections of the paper. Overall, achievement tended to be higher in the a) and c) parts of the questions. Good responses in the a) sections offered detailed, specifically Christian teaching drawn from the preamble to the specification for this paper or from other sources, as outlined in the mark scheme. Generalised responses, for example; 'Christians believe all people are equal', limited achievement to levels 1 or 2. Responses to the evaluative section c) have improved greatly in recent years and there were some outstandingly mature responses noted by examiners. However some evaluative responses ran to over one and a half pages leading to the time management problems mentioned above. A substantial number of candidates failed to take note of the guidance offered by the wording of these questions and just repeated knowledge already offered in a) or b) as their response to the stimulus, without any attempt to evaluate the material at all. Others failed to give supporting reasons for their view or the views of others and thus limited their level of achievement.

- 1 (a) Describe the teachings which Christians might use in a discussion about the issue of race. [8]

General responses to this question referred to doctrine of creation to justify the idea that all people should be treated equally. The best responses alluded to a variety of Christian teaching about the issue of race as suggested in the mark scheme, rather than recounted the teaching in detail. Answers that just retold the parable of the Good Samaritan were awarded some credit, but not at the highest level.

- (b) Explain how Christians might work to overcome discrimination. [7]

Candidates offered a wide range of suggestions as to how Christians might do this. Active participation in anti racist organisations, pressing for and supporting anti-discriminatory laws, making the problem of racism a feature of personal prayer, anti racist conduct, and ensuring that the local and national church was anti-discriminatory were commonly suggested. Some candidates took the question to mean, how would Christians cope with being discriminated against? Candidates offered responses which could be credited as they referred again to the need for Christian to seek strength through prayer, or support from the Christian Community. Many candidates referred to the work of people like Martin Luther King and Desmond Tutu as examples of what Christians might be able to achieve now, by similar means. Answers that just offered a life history of one of these people gained little credit.

- (c) 'You can't be a Christian and be prejudiced.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

The stimulus provoked good discussions. Candidates tended to take the view that Christians would not be prejudiced because they were guided by agape, which led them to be concerned for others. If they were prejudiced, it would only be about trivial matters which was not a problem as long as the prejudice remained a thought and never became an action. Other candidates referred to the Slave Trade or the attitude of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa to show that Christians had been prejudiced in the past and that the issue of women priests showed a similar prejudicial attitude today.

- 2 (a) Describe Christian teachings which might help a Christian couple who are having problems in their marriage. [8]

Many candidates drew upon the content of the marriage vows to show that a Christian couple would be able to draw strength from them in times of difficulty. A number of candidates assumed that this was an opportunity to write about Christian attitudes to divorce. Whilst the teaching on divorce was relevant, some of these candidates forgot the thrust of the question entirely and devoted their efforts to responding to a different question which had not been asked at all.

- (b) Explain Christian teachings about the relationship between children and parents. [7]

Good answers to this section highlighted respect, discipline and the need for Christian love to prevail. The use of the word 'agape' without any explanation was frequent and whilst the context usually showed that the candidates knew what it meant, their answers would have benefited from greater detail. New Testament teaching and the commandment to 'honour father and mother' were evident in most good responses. Many candidates referred to the likely reversal of roles with age. The weaker responses tended to concentrate simply on the idea of respect for family members. Many answers were extremely sensitive and indicated how important family life is to the candidates.

- (c) 'Divorced people who want to get married should not be allowed a Christian marriage ceremony.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Many responses suffered from the 'think as you write' type of approach and lacked planning. As a result, they often started as a discussion about divorce and only later focused on the main thrust of the stimulus. Some responses focused only on pros and cons of divorce without really making it relevant to the question usually missing any reference to remarriage. The view that the innocent party in a divorce should be allowed to re-marry in church was commonly expressed.

- 3 (a) Describe Christian teachings which might be used in a discussion about fertility treatment. [8]

Good responses included reference to different types of fertility treatment and to different views about; the destruction of embryos, the use of donor sperm or eggs, mechanical adultery, unnatural methods of becoming pregnant and surrogacy. Biblical material was well known ranging from the command to 'go forth and multiply' to the idea of 'life as a gift from God' and the commandment 'do not kill'. There was little evidence of knowledge of statements from the churches about this issue apart

from general ideas based upon the Biblical texts. Weaker responses concentrated briefly on methods of fertility treatment rather than on Christian attitudes to them. A number of candidates took the question to be about Abortion or Contraception and could not be credited with anything or at best, only marks at Level 1.

- (b)** Explain how Christian teachings might support Christians who are caring for people who are terminally ill. [7]

Candidates who did not read the question carefully either assumed this was the Euthanasia question and trotted out their version of the debate, or failed to notice that the issue was about how Christian teaching might support a carer. These candidates tended to write about how someone might care for the person instead. The principle of salvage was applied by examiners to these responses enabling candidates to gain some credit. Good answers focused on how Christian teaching would encourage carers to apply 'agape' and to ensure that euthanasia in all its forms was rejected, respecting the sanctity and value of the life of the person. Many candidates referred to the principle of 'double effect', seeing medical treatment which reduced pain but shortened life as justified.

- (c)** 'Every woman has the right to have a child.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

The predominant idea here was that as Christians believe that God gives and takes life, some women just have to accept that that they are not chosen to have children. The other common view was that women only had a right to have children if they were fit to bring them up – hence drug users, alcoholics, violent and abusive women did not have the right to a child. Many candidates just repeated much of their response to a) having assumed that the woman referred to was infertile. The concept of a 'right' was not particularly well understood although some candidates did refer to the Human Rights of individuals.

- 4 (a)** Describe Christian teachings about stewardship of the environment. [8]

Most candidates were able to describe some of the teaching from Genesis. Good responses gave detail about the goodness of God's creation and the role of humans within in it linked both to dominion and stewardship. References from Psalms were also commonly used.

- (b)** Explain the reasons a Christian might give for fighting in a war. [7]

A very high proportion of candidates were able to refer to the idea of the Just War or at least were able to describe, with examples, the sort of war that might be acceptable to Christians. Good responses referred to the idea of Holy War, God as a warrior in the Old Testament as well as to Jesus' words and aspects of Christian History. Some candidates, believing all Christians to be pacifists, turned the question on its head and their responses consisted of why war is unacceptable for Christians. Even by applying the principle of salvage, little credit could be given to such responses.

- (c) 'Christians should take the lead in dealing with issues like war or the environment.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Candidates attacked different aspects of this stimulus and examiners were able to give credit for a wide range of responses. The best answers concentrated on whether Christians should take the lead with regard to issues like these. Many candidates took the view that whilst they felt Christians ought to be active with regard to the issues, it was not all up to them alone as all people are affected by these problems. A substantial number of candidates repeated what they had already said in either a) or b) without offering an evaluation of whether Christians ought to be leading or even if they should be involved in these matters, which reduced the value of their responses considerably.

- 5 (a) Describe Christian teaching about helping poor people. [8]

The vast majority of candidates managed to refer in general terms to the golden rule the idea of the helping others and loving one's neighbour. Better responses selected specific teaching about the poor with reference for example to the parables of the Sheep and the Goats and Lazarus and Dives and the Widow's mite. Some candidates wasted time by retelling whole parables without actually drawing out the significance of the meaning of them. Other good responses referred to statements from the Churches and Christian aid agencies about why Christians should help the poor.

- (b) Explain how one Christian aid organisation puts Christian teaching into practice. [7]

The best responses referred to a clearly identified Christian organisation (usually one of the examples given in the specification), describing key aspects of the work and showed how it reflected Christian teaching. Candidates selecting a non-Christian agency were given credit where appropriate, but clearly disadvantaged themselves. It was disturbing to note how many candidates had only a very slight knowledge of what their chosen organisation actually does except that it 'helps people in Africa' and 'collects money through charity shops and door to door collections'.

- (c) 'Christians should not help the poor in countries where the government wastes money on war.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Many candidates initially agreed strongly with the view of the stimulus but as they considered the matter realised that the poor did not deserve to suffer as they probably had little or no control over the actions of their government. Christians therefore ought to give to the poor, even if it meant some money going into the wrong pockets. The majority of candidates assumed that the government was conducting a war for its own ends. Very few candidates considered the possibility that spending money on a war might not be a waste at all but might be the right thing to do if it was a defensive war and therefore of benefit to the poor people themselves.



**2302/02 - Paper 2A Christian (Roman Catholic) Perspectives on Personal, Social and World Issues**

**General Comments**

Responses to the questions were generally relevant and the majority of candidates were able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of a range of issues. Weaker responses showed a basic knowledge but often did not relate belief to practice. Many candidates used specialist religious vocabulary and biblical passages appropriately. Candidates appeared to enjoy discussing the topics on the exam paper and were able to offer personal examples.

**Comments on Individual Questions**

- 1 (a) Describe Roman Catholic teachings about marriage. [8]

This question was answered well in a variety of ways. Many candidates used prompts such as 'the four ideals of marriage' to good effect in their answers. Even weaker answers gave a range of teachings about marriage – sacramental, monogamous, permanent and open to having children. There was some repetition of the same ideas in different words and candidates could have benefited from taking a few minutes to organise their ideas more effectively. Many included a discussion of teaching on divorce and annulment in their answer but this was largely relevant to the point being made about permanence. On the whole this question was answered well.

- (b) Explain why Roman Catholics believe that having children is important. [7]

This question proved more challenging. Candidates were able to describe some teaching on children. Many thought children added members to the Catholic Church, offering it a future. Not all referred to the promise to have children that the couple make in their vows. Many saw the significance of being willing to accept the gift of children from God. Others saw children strengthening a marriage.

- (c) A life-long commitment to another person is no longer possible.' Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

Some took a sociological view, citing divorce figures and modern temptations as reasons for the difficulty of life long commitment versus their experience of their own parents' and grandparents' long lasting marriages. Better answers used the importance of making marriage vows and Catholic beliefs about divorce to show why those with religious faith were more likely to have a life long commitment. Those candidates who did not achieve top marks were mostly those who did not offer any Christian points of view in their answer.

- 2 (a) Describe Christian teachings about pacifism. [8]

Most candidates were able to define pacifism but were unsure of teaching beyond 'Thou shalt not kill' and Jesus' example during his arrest. Better answers used the teaching from Sermon on the Mount. There was a general understanding that members of the Society of Friends (Quakers) were pacifist rather than awareness of Catholic pacifists.

- (b) Explain why some Roman Catholics might support going to war. [7]

Most candidates were able to cite the Just War theory and its conditions to good effect. Some mentioned Holy War and duty to country. Some felt that the story of Jesus being angry in the temple demonstrated a good reason for being allowed to go to war.

- (c) 'Christians should only use non-violent protest.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

Difficult to avoid Christianity in response to this question. It was generally answered well. The Just War was used again here and Martin Luther King's non-violent protest was given as an example that got results.

- 3 (a) Describe Roman Catholic teaching about abortion. [8]

Many candidates confidently offered summaries of Catholic teaching on sanctity of life, life beginning at conception, so abortion equated with murder and life as a gift which only God can take. These were usually backed up with Bible quotations and occasionally the Didache or the Catechism. However, many candidates did not know that Catholic teaching is that abortion is always wrong and thought it permissible in cases of rape or other difficult situations. Some included the principle of double effect and made good use of this teaching, others were confused about what it meant. A few merely repeated that it broke the 5th commandment, 'Thou shalt not murder' without establishing why it did so.

- (b) Explain why the Roman Catholic Church is against the use of embryos. [7]

Almost all candidates knew the meaning of 'embryo' though some who chose question 3 could not offer an answer to part b). Many discussed why the Church is against the use of embryos in fertility treatments. While concerned about the creation and discarding of many embryos, there was some irrelevant discussion about whether the Church allowed AIH and sperm donors. Others used genetic engineering and scientific experiment as their issues. Most equated Catholic objection to use of the embryo with life beginning at conception and repeated some of their answer to question a).

- (c) 'Every woman has the right to a child.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

Many candidates responded to this question without any reference to Christianity, which meant they could not be given full marks. Candidates failed to note the significance of the question. They mainly offered examples of unfit mothers (drug users, abusive mothers etc) who had no right to a child as opposed to any woman's general rights to a child. Few considered the nature of God's gift of children rather than women having an automatic a right to a child. Very few considered the removal of the right to have children e.g. in China. A few discussed whether it was right to go to extraordinary lengths in pursuit of the right to a child, commenting on recent stories such as older mothers.

**4 (a)** Describe Roman Catholic teaching about poverty. [8]

Many candidates struggled to go beyond a definition of poverty or a description of the unfair distribution of resources in the world and that the Catholic Church saw this as wrong. Others offered confident responses and mentioned Bible references such as the parable of the Sheep and the Goats, Dives and Lazarus.

**(b)** Explain how Roman Catholics might respond to poverty in their own community. [7]

Some candidates lost the focus on 'own community' and wrote about CAFOD and helping the poor overseas. Surprisingly few candidates mentioned, for example, their own school's responses, the work of local Catholic charities or the work of the SVP, concentrating instead on general exemplars - giving to collections, organising fund raisers, donating surplus and working with local needy or homeless. 'Soup Kitchens' were very popular. A few candidates, obviously concerned about the latest shortage, wrote about organising clean water.

**(c)** 'Christians should look after their own family before others.'

Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

Most candidates argued that as we are all God's children, we are one big family. Many thought that families in this country have a lot compared with the poor elsewhere and so should help others. Again, the main thing that prevented candidates achieving top marks was a failure to offer any Christian points of view in their answer.

**5 (a)** Describe Roman Catholic teaching about prejudice. [8]

There was a range of standards in response to this question. Some merely defined prejudice and discrimination without offering any Catholic teaching or going beyond recognising that the Church sees prejudice as wrong. Most considered that God made us in his image and we are all equal in his sight but on the whole references were not used as well as they had been on other questions. Some, however, did use bible passages to good effect commenting on the lessons of 'The Good Samaritan' and the implications of Jesus' teaching - occasionally described as one of the Ten Commandments - to 'treat others as you would like to be treated' and 'love your neighbour'. Some were able to quote St Paul 'all are equal in Christ'. The Old Testament teaching on treatment of the 'alien' and the suggestion that only God should judge also featured. Weaker responses mentioned these ideas but did not extend them further.

**(b)** Explain how the work of one well known Christian has helped to overcome prejudice. [7]

Some students failed to notice the flag words 'one well known Christian' and offered a general Christian response while others offered non-Christian examples such as Nelson Mandela. Although these got some credit, the best responses concentrated on more obvious examples such as Martin Luther King. Good responses looked at how he helped overcome prejudice and still inspires today through the bus boycott, march of 1,000 men, non-violent action, speeches and martyrdom. Many knew his biography and this question allowed many candidates to achieve higher levels. Other candidates offered an example from a range of well-known Christians. Jesus, St Paul, the Good Samaritan, Rosa Parks, Trevor Huddleston and Mother Teresa made appearances in answers with varied success. For higher marks candidates had to

make some reference to the impact the chosen person has had on overcoming prejudice rather than just giving biographical information about them.

- (c) 'Fighting prejudice is the most important thing a Roman Catholic can do.' Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

Most candidates saw the tension of the question and argued that fighting prejudice was important but that other contemporary issues were also important and that Catholics may have other priorities such as spreading the Good News. Some candidates focused on 'fighting' prejudice, which they took to mean using violence, and argued for non-violent responses. Both were valid answers.

## 2303 - Paper 3 Buddhism

### General Comments

This paper achieved good differentiation, allowing the most able candidates to shine whilst ensuring that most candidates could access the questions appropriately. It was gratifying to see that far more candidates are aware that the Buddha is not regarded as a god. Questions dealing with beliefs and teachings were particularly well answered and it is gratifying to see candidates grappling effectively with part (b) questions rather than merely giving descriptive, knowledge based responses to them. Most candidates are addressing part (c) questions well, but some candidates tended to mention a number of different religions in their responses, often inaccurately and as a result failed to reach the required depth of evaluation to access the highest marks.

### Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 (a) Describe how Buddhists might use a rupa (image of the Buddha) in their worship. [8]

Most candidates performed well on this question and there were very few who did not manage to make any sort of a valid response. Surprisingly few actually described Buddhist practices in puja, with most describing why it is important to Buddhists to use a rupa and what they can learn from it. Some of the best answers differentiated between different forms of Buddhism and compared the importance and use of rupas in different traditions. Candidates frequently discussed the mudras of various rupas and most responses made some mention of the Buddha has a role model and inspiration. There were only a few candidates who were not aware that the Buddha is not generally regarded as a god.

- (b) Explain how learning about the life of the Buddha might help Buddhists in their daily lives. [7]

This question produced a particularly high level of differentiation. Some candidates gave a description of the Buddha's life but did not go beyond this to explain its importance to Buddhists. Some spoke of the teachings of the Buddha rather than of specific incidents in his life and of how these could help Buddhists to reach enlightenment. This was credited as far as it was accurate and did, in fact, refer to teachings of the Buddha himself. There were, however, some truly outstanding answers which showed knowledge, imagination and critical reasoning. Many spoke of the Buddha as inspiration or as a guide ("What would the Buddha have done in my position?"). Responses at the upper end of the mark range spoke of the Middle Way and the importance of not being attached to worldly possessions. They also talked of determination and perseverance as well as inspiration drawn from the fact that the Buddha was a mere man and yet achieved enlightenment.

- (c) 'Buddhists should not worship the Buddha.'

Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

At the lower end of the mark range, candidates gave simple answers suggesting that of course Buddhists should worship the Buddha, otherwise what was the point in being a Buddhist; or that Buddhists should be free to do as they chose without interference. In the negative they sometimes cited other religions such as Christianity or Islam which claim exclusivity. In this question in particular there was a slightly worrying trend to try to contrast a Buddhist view with that of another religion whether it was relevant to do so or not, which prevented some candidates from reaching the required depth of evaluation as they failed to understand that they were not

comparing like with like and were therefore not answering the question. This said there were some excellent answers which discussed the precise meaning of “worship” and suggested that the Buddha should be remembered and honoured whilst not being deified or ascribed any salvic powers.

**2 (a)** Describe the main features of Tibetan Buddhism. [8]

This question was attempted by a reasonable number of candidates although it was not one of the most popular questions. Those who attempted it generally did so well, achieving good marks. Answers covered a wide variety of features most concentrating on Tibetan interest with the senses, using colour and sound in their puja. Surprisingly few discussed the Bodhisattvas considering the part (b) which followed. Some talked about attitudes to death and rebirth and quite a few mentioned the Dalai Lama.

**(b)** Explain Bodhisattvas are important to Tibetan Buddhists. [7]

Many candidates appeared to struggle with this question and answers were often vague. Most knew what a Bodhisattva was and were able to describe them, but they found it harder to explain the importance. Very few candidates spoke of images of Bodhisattvas and their uses in meditation, or to give examples of particular Bodhisattvas. Answers tended to be vague and were mostly concerned with Bodhisattvas helping to “save” people because of their compassion. Some suggested that becoming a Bodhisattva was important as it could help you to achieve enlightenment.

**(c)** ‘Buddhism should stay the same wherever it is practised in the world.’  
Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

There was surprisingly little reference here to the teachings of the Buddha himself on this issue, or his belief that the Dhamma was a means to an end rather than an end in itself. Some of the better responses were aware of this and made use of it. Answers tended to be more superficial. That said, there were some very good answers talking about the Sangha in particular and how it might not be understood or appreciated in non-Buddhist countries. Surprisingly few mentioned specifically Western forms of Buddhism such as the FWBO. There was a wide range of achievement on this question but quite a large number gave answers which were, according to the level descriptors, valid rather than competent.

**3 (a)** Describe the main features of samatha meditation. [8]

This question was generally well answered with a wide variety of accurate and detailed descriptions. Where candidates did not perform well it was often because they had confused samatha with another form of meditation, often metta-bhavana.

- (b) Explain why Buddhists meditate. [7]

Many candidates demonstrated a good understanding of meditation. Answers which relied on “relaxing” or “being calm” were in the minority, although a number of candidates thought, mistakenly, that meditation is used to amass kamma. Many of the best answers talked about meditation as a tool to reach enlightenment, linking it to the eightfold path. Some singled out vipassana meditation as being particularly helpful for reaching enlightenment and this was very pleasing to see.

- (c) “Meditation is a waste of time.”

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Buddhism in your answer. [5]

A wide range of marks was awarded on this question but the majority did well, giving competent or good responses. Weak answers often suggested that meditation was a waste of time if you are not a Buddhist, or were anecdotal (“it didn’t work for me...”) Better answers considered whether helping people would be a better use of time and a few contrasted the eschatological goals of a good rebirth and nibbana.

- 4 (a) Describe the Three Universal Truths. [8]

This was a popular question and candidates were clearly well prepared for it. Some candidates did not know what the Universal Truths were and made more or less accurate guesses. The majority of candidates, however, answered the question well, describing the Universal Truths in detail and giving examples of how and where they could be found in life. The majority of candidates were able to give a good account of the doctrine of anatta which was particularly pleasing. Some candidates, however, gave impermanence and co-dependency as two of the Universal Truths and so did not deal with anatta at all. The majority of candidates who attempted this question scored highly in it.

- (b) Explain how the Four Noble Truths might help a Buddhist to find enlightenment. [7]

Again, this was very well answered. Almost all of the candidates who attempted this question were able to name the Four Noble Truths and give a basic explanation of them. The majority then went on to explain how each in turn is necessary to enlightenment, often placing particular emphasis on the Eightfold Path as what you can actually do to achieve enlightenment. Again, most candidates who attempted this question scored highly.

- (c) ‘The Buddha is the only way to enlightenment.’

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Most did well on this question and there were some excellent answers. Many argued that since the Buddha was the first to achieve enlightenment his teachings were crucial. Others talked about the importance of finding one’s own way. Several candidates approached this question by considering the extent to which other religions can be said to contain the concept of enlightenment. Some managed to do this well and concluded that the Buddha was the only way to enlightenment since only Buddhism really contains the concept. Some, however, were determined to claim that since Jesus was enlightened there are clearly other ways to enlightenment; the determination to include views from other religions even where it is not appropriate to do so again leading to a lack of true understanding and evaluation.

**5 (a)** Describe the ceremony of ordination into the Sangha. [8]

Few candidates attempted this question but those who did tended to do so very well with some extremely detailed and accurate answers. There was clear evidence of good teaching and the candidates who attempted this question were well prepared for it. Many candidates were aware of the two different levels of ordination and described the preparations for the ordination as well as the ceremony itself. Most included a description of the Ten Precepts and the idea that unlike in Christianity ordination is not necessarily a life long commitment in Buddhism.

**(b)** Explain how the Sangha might affect the lives of Buddhists who are not monks. [7]

Although this was not answered as well as part (a) there were some very impressive responses. Many of the candidates who attempted this question spoke about the lay Buddhists being able to learn from the monks, especially at particular festivals and times of year, as well as gaining merit by providing the monks with their needs. Many explained the symbiotic relationship that can exist and that it is helpful to monks and lay Buddhists alike in their quest for enlightenment. At the lower end of the ability range answers tended to be vague, with a few suggesting that the monks are a discouragement as the lay Buddhists cannot achieve enlightenment and have to watch and put up with the monks who can. When this view point was well presented and argued it was credited.

**(c)** 'The Sangha is the most important of the Three Refuges.'

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Buddhism in your answer. [5]

Most did well here, although some were quite formulaic and offered another one of the Refuges as an alternative without much in the way of a supporting argument. There was little scope here for candidates to offer alternative view points from other religions and most did not attempt to do so. Most candidates claimed that the Refuges were interdependent and so equally important and the majority of candidates were able to defend this view point. There were very few, if any candidates who did not know what the Three Refuges were.



## 2304/01 - Paper 4A Christianity

### General Comments

Examiners judged this to be an appropriate paper, which was accessible to all candidates who had completed the course. Whilst the full range of ability was represented, and there were some excellent answers, there was a feeling that the overall performance by candidates this year was somewhat disappointing.

Questions 2 and 4 was the least popular and the least well answered and this does raise the question of whether or not candidates are as familiar with the Biblical sections of the syllabus as they are with the other sections. An additional concern is that many candidates did not demonstrate in their answers a basic knowledge of Christianity, suggesting that there may be a tendency to assume that the candidates know more than they do about Christianity at the start of the course. A very common and worrying mistake by candidates this year was that Christians believe that Jesus was crucified on a Sunday and, indeed, was born on a Sunday whilst very few actually knew that Christians believe it was the Resurrection that took place on this day.

There were few rubric errors although a number of candidates failed to address the questions fully. For example, in question 1 where candidates were asked to “describe” the main features of a Christian place of worship, many contented themselves with a list of features including little, if any, description at all. For all three assessment criteria, scripts were marked according to levels of response. It was pleasing to see that AO3 answers were predominately competent or good while AO2 continues to be the weakest of the three. Most candidates achieved 3 or 4 marks for the Quality of Written Communication although a surprising number of candidates had very poor handwriting.

### Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 (a) Describe the main features of a Christian place of worship. [8]

The word “describe” was ignored in a number of answers, with many being little more than a list of features. Even some better responses failed to describe features in depth. Most candidates did mention two or three, of what could be called major features (altar, pulpit, font, and lectern) and one or more of the more minor features however the descriptions given by most were disappointingly vague.

- (b) Explain why Sunday is important for many Christians. [7]

This question caused a number of problems not least because it appears that a significant number of candidates did not know the real reason why Sunday was chosen as the Christian holy day. Many of the answers to this question could have quite happily been credited on a Judaism paper as they focused on Sunday being the seventh day of the week and thus the Sabbath day. Few candidates actually mentioned how and why the Christians adopted Sunday as their holy day to distinguish them from the Jews and few seemed to be aware that it was chosen primarily as it was the day that Christians believe Jesus rose from the dead. Many candidates mentioned the importance of Sunday as the day of worship for Christians and as family time.

- (c) "Sunday is the most important festival for many Christians"  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Many candidates scored well for this question. A large number suggested Sunday was not a festival therefore could not be the most important. Some answers were confused with a number saying that Sunday was important because Jesus died on that day and was born on that day. Again, few mentioned the resurrection or Sunday as the adopted day or worship. Many still concentrated on it being a day of rest and a family day. Very few candidates referred to anything other than Easter or Christmas as possible contenders for the most important festival and the majority of those who did failed to make a link between Easter and Sunday.

- 2 (a) Give an account of the work of a Christian community. [8]

This question posed a lot of problems not least because of the interpretation of the word "community" by candidates. Many described the work of a charity not a religious community. Of those who did answer the question well, Taize seemed to be the most popular choice with Iona and Corrymeela following close behind.

- (b) Explain Christian teachings about charity and concern for others. [7]

Many of the answers to this question were rather disappointing. A large number of candidates wrote in very general terms about what Christians think they should do to help others but few referred to specific Christian teachings or gave quotations (direct or indirect) from the New Testament.

- (c) "How people behave is more important than what they believe."  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Although it was obviously intended that the issues raised in the first two sections of this question would help the candidate answer this section, for many this was not the case. Very few referred to the idea of justification by faith and justification by deeds and very few made any reference to Biblical teaching at all. Some answered from a totally secular point of view.

- 3 (a) Describe what is said and done at a Christian marriage service. [8]

This was a popular question. Most answers were valid or competent though there were less good answers than expected. However, those that were good showed a breadth and depth of knowledge. Most candidates concentrated on the "done" rather than the "said" and, if candidates did refer to what was said, it tended to be a little general. Some answers concentrated on the white dress and all the trimmings but not so many as might have done in the past, which was reassuring. Few referred to the purpose of marriage but most did refer to the vows, though only a few could quote directly.

- (b) Explain how teachings about marriage might affect the life of a Christian couple. [7]

This caused some problems in that candidates did not address fully how teachings might affect the life of a couple. A large number did refer to some teachings about marriage but not so many applied the teachings. The most common teachings referred to were the ones about divorce and adultery but the application of these teachings tended to be vague and rather "secular".

- (c) “Only people who attend a Christian place of worship regularly should be allowed to be married there.”  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Most answers were competent or good. Most thought anyone should be able to be married in a church irrespective of their beliefs (or lack of them). Few candidates seemed to be aware that everyone has the right to be married in their Anglican parish church. Few related their arguments to anything they had previously written in a) or b).

- 4 (a) Give an account of the teachings in the Sermon on the Mount about people who are blessed. [8]

This was not a particularly popular question. The words “Give an account” led to some problems in this question. Many candidates simply tried to write a list of the Beatitudes without mentioning the promises attached. Some only wrote down one or two. Only some acknowledged that those who are blessed are not the ones you would expect to be blessed. A minority who attempted the question did not know what the Beatitudes are.

- (b) Explain the attitude that Christians should have towards possessions according to the Sermon on the Mount. [7]

Many candidates did relate their answers to Christian teaching but many failed to refer to the Sermon on the Mount in particular and very few quoted directly or indirectly. Treasures in Heaven was very popular but most answers to this question lacked detail.

- (c) “The Sermon on the Mount makes life more difficult for Christians.”  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Generally well answered with most in disagreement. Some good answers considered the Sermon on the Mount to be a guidebook for Christians and therefore a good thing. Others considered the idea that it is the striving to achieve the standards set rather than actually achieving them which is important. Many acknowledged that to live by the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount would be very difficult.

- 5 (a) Describe Christian private worship.

This was quite a popular question and, for those who did it, it was in the majority well done. Most mentioned private prayer and Bible reading, and a substantial number mentioned praying the rosary and meditation. Few who answered it did not achieve at least level 2, 4.

- (b) Explain why the Bible is a sacred text for Christians. [7]

This was generally well answered. Most candidates knew why the Bible was important to Christians referring to the historical content and the teachings within. A pleasing number considered how Christians interpret the Bible in different ways and most knew the New Testament was more important than the Old Testament to Christians but that the Old was still valuable and applicable to Christian life.

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- (c) "All parts of the Bible are important for Christians."  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Many did use the information in their answers to a) and b) to inform their answer for c). Answers were mainly competent and good.

**2304/02 – Paper 4B Christianity (Roman Catholic)**

**General Comments**

Candidates on the whole tackled the paper well and dealt with theological concepts such as forgiveness and salvation alongside the more knowledge based questions such as describing a baptism service with equal skill.

**Comments on Individual Questions**

- 1 (a) Describe Roman Catholic teachings about forgiveness. [8]

This question drew out varied and individual responses. Most candidates knew that forgiveness is called for and that those who are truly sorry deserve forgiveness. Candidates were well prepared to discuss the general teaching on forgiveness and also a variety of biblical texts that illustrate the theme. Many offered examples of Jesus' forgiveness towards others: those who crucified him, the woman caught in adultery or Zacchaeus, others used his teaching like the Sermon on the Mount or his exhortation to forgive 70x7 times or parables such as The Prodigal Son and the Merciful Servant and many also used the Lord's Prayer, 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us', to show that forgiveness should be offered again and again, and that our final judgement may depend on it. Many then moved onto the sacrament of Reconciliation and were able to identify the four main aspects of reconciliation. Some missed the opportunity to expound on their choice of bible texts in depth. Weaker answers used 'treat others as you would like to be treated' and repeated ideas rather than developed them, using platitudes such as 'forgive and forget'.

- (b) Explain how receiving forgiveness might strengthen the faith of a Roman Catholic. [7]

Most candidates struggled to go beyond fresh start, closer relationship with God and relief from guilt. Some candidates saw that forgiving had an effect on the community as well as the individual and that the experience of being forgiven could lead to good works and offering forgiveness to others. Some felt that it might lead to a desire to serve in some ministry within the Church.

- (c) 'Evil people need punishment not forgiveness.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

On the whole there were well-expressed views on both sides of this argument. Many debated the ethics of fair and just punishment and rehabilitation. Many examples of evil acts were not really evil but some candidates recognised that the term 'evil' did not adequately describe the repentant. The feeling was that punishment was needed if crimes were bad but that forgiveness could and should be extended to those who were sorry for their crimes. Very few realised that (temporal) punishment and forgiveness are not mutually exclusive. The question also attracted discussion of God's final judgement and the punishment of hell. Many could see that it is hard to forgive and that victims need to be thought about as well as the offender.

- 2 (a) Describe the main features of a Roman Catholic church. [8]

Good answers were detailed, choosing specifically Catholic features of a church: crucifix rather than cross; statues of the Blessed Virgin Mary and saints; stations of

the cross; Paschal candle; tabernacle and confessionals. Some offered explanation of the Vatican II changes to the position of the altar, showing good understanding of the importance of the altar. Most candidates were able to give a range of features. Weaker answers took the form of lists without explanation of their use or importance or offered more unimportant features such as pews. A few offered diagrams but these generally added little to the answer and should not replace written responses. Some did not understand 'features' as referring to furniture and artefacts and discussed the priest, readings and even the 10 Commandments.

- (b)** Explain the different ways a Roman Catholic church may be used by the community. [7]

There was good understanding of how a community might use their church. Most candidates included a variety of examples ranging from religious uses - sacraments, other services such as funerals and quiet prayer - to the more secular - choir practice, fund raising activities, teaching groups, concerts and plays and even school visits and tourism. There was little consideration of the limitations for the use of a consecrated building but a good sense of the church at the centre of the community in many of the answers.

- (c)** 'Going to church is the most important thing a Roman Catholic can do.' Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

Although most disagreed, candidates were able to produce good evaluative answers to this question. They picked up on 'most important' and either compared and contrasted prayer at home and prayer in church or considered other ways of being Catholic such as charitable work and spreading the Good News. Very few referred to the Eucharist or the need for community.

- 3 (a)** Describe a Roman Catholic baptism. [8]

The best answers again gave a full account of the service and were able to offer and explain a range of signs and symbols. Others were not as confident about the main symbols of baptism and guessed at their meaning. The candle's significance was perhaps least understood and the white clothes were thought to be a sign of purity. Many did not mention anointing and few referred to chrism and catechumen oils. Many were able to offer the Trinitarian formula but most missed the fact that baptism includes the words '(Name...) I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen', and that it is essentially a naming service.

- (b)** Explain why baptism is important to Roman Catholics. [7]

The most common answer was that the sacrament allowed those who received it into the Church and the family of God. Many discussed Original Sin and the issue of whether the unbaptised enter heaven. Some looked at the initiation rites of the Church and that other sacraments cannot be received unless you are baptised. Others looked at the advantages of a Catholic upbringing. A few saw it as allowing entry into Catholic schools.

- (c) 'Only adults should be baptised'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

Most candidates were able to answer this question well and saw the significance of the issue. They balanced believer's baptism with the value of being forgiven Original Sin and joining the family of God. They argued whether or not it was better to make a choice as an adult than to have parents make the choice for a baby. The alternative, less well expressed on the whole, was chiefly a stress on individual choice.

- 4 (a) Describe Roman Catholic teachings about Advent and Christmas. [8]

The AO3 (c) part of this question proved to be prophetic, as details of Advent and Christmas were not well known in general and its meaning lost altogether. Many of candidates offered little beyond lighting the candles on the wreath for Advent and that Jesus was born on Christmas Day. Many candidates struggled to see the significance of Advent beyond a month's preparation for Christmas. Knowledge and understanding of Christmas was a little better. Some knew that Matthew and Luke offered different accounts of the Nativity and told them to good effect.

- (b) Explain the importance of the Epiphany for Roman Catholics. [7]

While most candidates knew what the Epiphany was; few were able to assess its importance. Some very good answers knew that the implication of the visit of the Magi (usually referred to as the three kings) was that Christ has come for all people, not just the Jews. They also commented on the significance of the gifts, which prophesied aspects of Christ's life and death. Confusion of epiphany and theophany led to the Baptism of Jesus, the miracle at Cana and the Transfiguration being included in some answers.

- (c) 'The real meaning of the Christmas season has been lost.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Most seemed to agree with the idea and were unhappy about the ubiquitous 'Xmas'. Many candidates responded to this question without any reference to Christianity, which meant they could not gain full marks. Better answers linked Advent preparation and attending Midnight Mass or Christmas day masses with the Christian base of traditions such as giving presents to show that the Christian message was not ignored.

- 5 (a) Describe Roman Catholic teaching about Salvation. [8]

Candidates either knew what salvation was and made a good attempt to answer or, possibly wanting to answer the questions on the 10 Commandments, had to guess at the meaning of salvation with varied success. Quite a few thought it had something to do with the work of the Salvation Army. A few mentioned atonement and a few more mentioned the Cross and Resurrection or how Christ's gift of salvation comes to us. Those who did understand salvation as 'getting into heaven' saw it as being earned through keeping the 10 Commandments.

- (b) Explain why the Ten Commandments are important to Roman Catholics. [7]

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Candidates were generally able to show understanding of the importance of the 10 Commandments as a guide for living, rules for maintaining order and peace in the world or as a way to gain eternal life.

- (c) 'The Ten Commandments should never be broken'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Most candidates did not see the significance of this question. Few went beyond recognition that they are hard to follow. Weaker responses offered constant repetition including much of their answer to question b). Examples of breaking commandments were limited to killing in self-defence and stealing for your family when starving. Only a few noted the specifically religious significance of the first three Commandments.



## 2305 – Paper 5 Hinduism

### General Comments

There were no particular problems with the paper which achieved good differentiation. Fewer candidates than in some previous years made rubric errors, although some answered only parts of each question. Almost all finished the paper. Section (b) questions were, on the whole, answered better than in previous years. Less able candidates continue to struggle with these, but the more able are becoming better at answering the question asked rather than giving a purely descriptive answer as they have sometimes been inclined to do in previous years. A significant part of the cohort for this paper is made up of Hindu faith adherents and this continues to be evident in the responses. These candidates, however, are becoming more skilled at giving a critical evaluation and explanation for their faith which answers the questions well, rather than a simple statement of Hindu belief or practice which does not meet the requirements of the qualification and this is gratifying to see. The full range of marks was achieved by candidates on this paper. There was a tendency for some candidates to spend too much time on part (c) questions and this left insufficient time for (a) and (b) in some cases. Some Centres appear to be instructing their candidates to use several faiths in their response to part (c) questions. This is not always helpful as the information offered by the candidates is sometimes inaccurate, it takes up unnecessary time and it can lead candidates away from a fully balanced and “in depth” evaluation of the question.

### Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 (a) Describe Hindu beliefs about the god Ganesha. [8]

This question was well answered by the majority of candidates and most managed to give a competent account. Weaker responses still made good use of the stimulus provided and described this, attempting to give a symbolic explanation for the various things seen. Some did this more successfully than others but only a very few failed to achieve at least at level 2. Most candidates gave an account of how Ganesha came to have an elephant’s head. There was a wide range of opinion about which deities were his parents but the story was generally well known and well told. Better answers also described the role of Ganesha in Hindu life and worship and the times at which he may be particularly invoked. There were some truly outstanding answers, and candidates were clearly well prepared for the question.

- (b) Explain why performing puja is important to Hindus. [7]

Weaker responses merely gave a description of puja without going on to explain its importance and so were unable to achieve beyond level 2. However a large number of candidates made an attempt to get to grips with the question and to explain why Hindus perform puja and what they get out of it. There were some excellent answers here, concerned with karma and re-incarnation or the quest for moksha. Others dealt with puja as petitionary prayer in order to receive help from the gods, often going on to explain how different gods might be petitioned for different reasons. Some considered the idea of puja bringing families or communities closer together and helping people to feel closer to God which would help them in their daily lives. A few thought about puja as “divine command” or fulfilment of dharma and as necessary in order to avoid angering the gods. A pleasing number of candidates were able to explain that puja was a form of bhakti, but few, if any made reference to darshan.

- (c) "People do not need pictures or statues to help them worship God."  
Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Hinduism in your answer. [5]

Although this was slightly less well answered than part (a) or (b) there were still many good answers to this question. While a few candidates continued to give only a single one-sided statement of opinion, most did at least support this with a reason. Most followed the instructions by giving a balanced two-sided discussion which made specific reference to Hinduism. Weaker answers often concentrated on being able to worship anywhere or not being able to afford murtis and the ubiquitous "Hindus should be able to do whatever they like." answers made an appearance. Better answers thought about the symbolic value of murtis as a focus and a few of the most able candidates were aware of the belief that deities inhabit or infuse murtis that have been correctly installed. Negative answers considered the omnipresence of God (most candidates pointing out that Hindus only worship one God so that worship to a particular deity or murti is not necessary.) some contrasted the Hindu approach with Christian or Muslim prohibitions on "idol" worship. Very few, if any candidates, talked about murtis and the puja associated with them being prescribed in the scriptures.

- 2 (a) Describe the main beliefs of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON).

Not many candidates answered this question. Those who achieved highly gave very detailed answers and in some cases it was evident that the Centres had made effective use of visits to ISKCON temples. Many candidates, however, were only able to give brief and vague answers to this question. Most were aware of the connection to Krishna (who was often described as a god of love) and of social aspects of the work of the group. Most were aware that ISKCON is active in the West and has many non-Indian members. Few, however, could say much about the particular distinguishing beliefs of the movement or its connection to bhakti.

- (b) Explain why it might be difficult for Hindus to follow their religion in Britain. [7]

Candidates generally coped better with this than they did with part (a) and most were able to give two or three reasonable examples. Some were quite basic, dealing with festivals not being national holidays, having to travel to mandirs and so on. Others dealt with the problems of preserving cultural and religious heritage in a strange and unsympathetic society. A few considered the ways in which Hinduism is changing and adapting to a new culture and discussed whether this was a good thing.

- (c) "All Hindus should believe the same things."  
Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Surprisingly few candidates considered different branches of Hinduism although several discussed the different deities and the extent to which they could be considered aspects of a single God. Basic answers stated that Hindus could do as they wished although it was simpler to believe the same thing and maybe you could not be a "real" Hindu if you did not. Few were aware of the huge range of diversity within Hinduism and the particular relevance of this to the question. The few candidates who attempted this question usually achieved better marks on parts (b) and (c) than they did on part (a) meaning that on the whole scores were comparable with those on other questions.

- 3 (a) Describe Hindu beliefs about dharma. [8]

Although this was not one of the more widely answered questions it was attempted by a reasonable number of candidates, and those who did seemed well prepared for it. Some candidates did not seem to know what dharma was and made guesses that it was a deity or festival, or, on one occasion, "something bad". Most however were able to describe dharma in terms of duty and connect it to the idea of karma, samsara and moksha. Many candidates gave excellent accounts of varnashramadharma which they then contrasted with sanatana dharma. The majority of candidates who attempted this question were well prepared for it and gave answers which were competent or good.

- (b) Explain the difficulties a Hindu might have in following the teaching about ahimsa (non-violence).

This was less well answered with many candidates failing to come to terms with the question and giving very simple responses along the lines of "It might be difficult to follow teachings about ahimsa because if you are attacked you wish to retaliate." Whilst there were answers which talked about vegetarianism and how this might be more difficult in Western countries most did not really deal with this issue. Better answers explained how ahimsa might affect career decisions and a very few candidates considered the contradiction which appears to exist between ahimsa and the dharma of ksatriyas as it is considered in the Bhagavad Gita. Some candidates discussed Gandhi and the degree to which his methods were successful or desirable.

- (c) "Everyone should be treated equally."  
Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Hinduism in your answer. [5]

Most candidates gave valid or competent answers to this question and the majority made at least some reference to the caste system. Some managed a good discussion about the fairness or otherwise of the castes although the idea of everyone being God on an ultimate level and therefore equal did not feature. Some candidates discussed the status of women in Hinduism, and some stated that criminals do not deserve equal treatment to others. There was some awareness of arguments concerning the fairness of the caste system based on the fact that one's caste is one's own responsibility based on actions in previous lives, but this was not widespread. The weakest responses stated as self-evident the belief that everyone is equal without further qualification or discussion.

- 4 (a) Describe a Hindu marriage ceremony. [8]

This was well answered by almost all candidates and was a popular choice. There were some detailed descriptions of the preparations leading up to the ceremony and in a few cases the candidate had spent too much time on this leaving curtailed space for a description of the ceremony itself, although this was comparatively rare. There were some excellent, detailed accounts of the ceremony itself with some candidates comparing ceremonies from different parts of India.

- (b) Explain how Hindu beliefs about marriage might help to strengthen a Hindu family. [7]

Candidates seemed to find this the most difficult question to answer, although this was often mitigated by the high marks gained on part (a) of the question. Many answers were limited to families becoming stronger by joining with another family or the addition of children. Some discussed the idea of arranged marriages or

teachings about divorce and considered ways in which this might strengthen a family. The most able candidates were able to discuss varnashramadharma as it applies to family life and beliefs about marriage talking about how each family member fulfilling their dharma would lead to a strong family unit. Other strong answers also discussed scriptures such as the Ramayana and what could be learnt from them about marriage which might strengthen a family.

- (c) "Marriage is the most important life-ceremony (samskara)."  
Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Hinduism in your answer.

This part of the question was also well done with most candidates discussing the importance of marriage within Hinduism. Many went on to state that another samskara (often the sacred thread ceremony) was more important but struggled to justify this with a clear argument, and many more said that all samskaras were equally important, although sometimes the justification for this did not go beyond "otherwise they wouldn't be there." Some of the best responses offered a discussion about the comparative importance of marriage and the "householder" ashrama with samskaras associated with renunciation or death. They questioned the twin aims of re-incarnation and moksha and whether marriage might be important in the case of the first but not the second where it might create unhelpful attachment.

- 5 (a) Describe a Hindu place of pilgrimage and what Hindus do there. [8]

This was the most popular question and was generally well answered. Almost every candidate described Varanasi or the Ganges and accounts were, on the whole detailed and accurate making this a high scoring question. Some of the weakest responses merely described a temple and which could only be credited as a valid response.

- (b) Explain how going on pilgrimage might strengthen the faith of a Hindu. [7]

Candidates found this more difficult than part (a) but there were some imaginative answers. The more basic responses were concerned with feeling good and talking to new people. Better answers discussed learning more about the faith, the effect of seeing for yourself and expense and inconvenience showing commitment. Some discussed the value for Western Hindus of returning to the "source" of their religion. The strongest answers explained about fulfilment of dharma; bhakti and darshan and the role of pilgrimage in the quest for moksha.

- (c) "Hindus need to worship together."  
Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Most candidates fulfilled the rubric of the question and gave a two-sided discussion of the question which compared the benefits of worshipping alone to worshipping in a community or family.

## 2306 – Paper 6 Islam

### General Comments

The full range of ability was represented again this year. On the whole, the questions were accessible and differentiated well. Candidates seemed to enjoy the challenge to demonstrate their skills.

For all three assessment criteria, scripts were marked according to levels of response. Many candidates addressed the AO1 questions well, in clear and crisp English, demonstrating breadth and depth of knowledge, often with good usage of specific Islamic terminology.

A number of examiners commented that the main general weakness this year was in the approach to the AO2 questions. 'Describe, analyse and explain the relevance and application of religion(s)' requires understanding on the part of the candidates of the meaning, importance and significance to believers of the material studied. Candidates trying to adapt prepared answers often demonstrated lack of understanding.

Many candidates, however, are coping better with the AO3 questions which examine evaluative skills. More discussions tended to be based on accurate information and candidates remembered to consider other views and to refer to Islam. Candidates need to be advised that 'other views' do not have to be the total opposite of the stimulus quotation.

Some candidates wrote at too much length on the final parts of each question than is warranted for five marks maximum whilst others wrote too much on their first two questions and, unfortunately, had to rush the last one. On the whole, though, there was not much evidence of candidates running out of time and much to suggest they were using their time effectively. Cross accreditation between sections of the questions was allowed by examiners where appropriate. There were very few rubric infringements this year but candidates need to be reminded that four marks are available for Written Communication which includes legibility.

### Comments on Individual Questions

**1 (a)** Describe how Muhammad (pbuh) was given the Qur'an. [8]

Most candidates, probably inspired by the stimulus, began with descriptions of Muhammad (pbuh) being called to 'recite' by Gibrail (Jibril) (Gabriel) on the Night of Power and some made reference to further visitations but only the best responses included the background information about polytheism in Makkah. Many candidates gained credit by details about the personal situation of Muhammad (pbuh) and how Khadijah encouraged him. The question differentiated well in that it gave some candidates the opportunity to produce excellent answers which quoted lines from Surah 96 whilst other candidates displayed a lack of understanding by writing about Allah, before his death, giving the book to his son, Muhammad, and telling him to keep it safe.

**(b)** Explain what was special about the message of Muhammad (pbuh). [7]

There were a number of different approaches to the question and any sensible interpretation of the question was acceptable. Many candidates wrote that the message was special because it had been given by an angel whilst others immediately turned their attention to the content of the message which the angel gave to Muhammad (pbuh) to recite. Some moved straight on to the impact of Muhammad (pbuh) preaching the message in the context of Makkah and the idolatrous pre-Islamic society. Some candidates thoughtfully included the Sunnah as part of the message. Whatever the approach, most candidates managed to explain something about the belief in one God and the rejection of idolatry. Good responses demonstrated understanding of not only the monotheistic message but also the inevitable corollary of submission and ethical living according to the straight path. Many understood the concept of revelation but only a few excellent responses

explained that the message enshrined in the Qur'an, as revealed to and proclaimed by Muhammad (pbuh), is believed to be the final uncorrupted revelation of the actual words of Allah in Arabic.

- (c) 'Holy books should never be translated.'
- Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Islam in your answer. [5]

Weaker answers gained some credit for general arguments about translating holy books into other languages or into more modern versions especially in world wide religions to help believers and young people understand their faith. Good discussions differentiated between the usage of texts in worship and in academic study by believers and non-believers. Candidates were free to come to any conclusion but discussions needed to be rooted in a sound understanding of Muslim attitudes to the Qur'an in classical Arabic as revelation and to non-Arabic translations as interpretations.

- 2 (a) Describe how Muslims prepare for prayer. [8]

Some apparently weaker candidates knew enough to gain some credit whilst some otherwise competent candidates limited their marks somewhat by keeping the response simply to an account of wudu.

There were some excellent full descriptions of the preparations which included covering head, removing shoes, using prayer mat and facing Makkah as well as giving detailed accounts of wudu, complete with niyyah. Many candidates began with an introduction about the three important conditions laid down by Muhammad (pbuh) - clean place; five times a day; facing Makkah.

- (b) Explain why there are no pictures of Allah or Muhammad (pbuh) in a mosque. [7]

There were some excellent responses which explained the dangers of idolatry and made reference to Ibrahim's beliefs or to Muhammad (pbuh) riding into Makkah in 629 CE and destroying the idols of wood and stone. Some explained that only Allah is to be worshipped and to make an image or picture or any representation would be shirk. Others wrote that Allah is beyond imagining; Allah is too great to be portrayed by humans; Allah is the creator so no living creature can be portrayed etc.

Many candidates, however, relied on superficial reasons such as 'nobody knows what they look like'. Examiners commented that the question highlighted the confusion in the minds of weaker candidates. A surprising number either referred to Allah as a human being or to Muhammad (pbuh) as if he was a god and some said there were no statues or pictures of Allah and Muhammad (pbuh) because they were human and Muslims only had statues of gods.

- (c) 'Allah knows everything so there is no need to pray.'
- Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Most candidates gave thoughtful arguments exploring the purpose of prayer. Most candidates began by acknowledging that Allah/God knows everything and some added, 'That's the reason why people pray.' Salah being one of the Five Pillars was an important reason in most responses and many candidates swiftly moved beyond negative reasons about punishment and Jahannam to the positive benefits of prayer for the believer. Some candidates commented that the people who pray out of habit

or without meaning it are the ones who should remember that Allah knows everything.

3 (a) Describe how Muslims celebrate Id-ul-Adha. [8]

Candidates who knew about Id-ul-Adha had a chance to shine but those who did not would have been better off selecting another question. General activities at festivals- prayers, new clothes, feasting, sharing etc. were given credit but good responses were those which showed awareness of the link with the Hajj sacrifice on 10<sup>th</sup> of Dhul Hijjah at Mina and the worldwide Muslim solidarity with the pilgrims.

(b) Explain why Muslim communities in non-Muslim countries may find it difficult to celebrate Id-ul-Adha. [7]

Most candidates used the United Kingdom as the example of a non-Muslim country. Many explained that British law says that animals must be slaughtered in an abattoir by a specially licensed person and some described how it is done. A few candidates mentioned the negative perception non-Muslim neighbours might have of the celebrations at Id-ul-Adha, especially in contrast to the ease with which Id-ul-Fitr is accepted.

(c) 'Festivals are **not** a very important part of religious life for Muslims.' Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Most candidates argued in general terms about community and family celebrations building up religious unity. Some candidates took the opportunity to write answers that demonstrated knowledge of other festivals besides Id-ul-Adha and usually argued that the festivals serve a purpose within ummah and tend to be linked with something important e.g. pillars such as the fast of Ramadan or the Hajj. The best discussions usually included points about the whole structure of Islam hanging together as one entity.

4 (a) Describe the Five Pillars of Islam. [8]

This popular question had the full range of responses. Good answers identified all five usually with a brief essential description for each e.g. Shahadah (Declaration of Faith)- There is no god but Allah; Muhammad (pbuh) is the messenger of Allah / Salah (Prayer)- five times a day / Zakah (Purification of wealth by payment of annual welfare due- any equivalent word)-usually 2 ½ % annually / Hajj (Pilgrimage) to Makkah and Arafat- once in a lifetime at least by all who are physically and mentally able / Sawm (Fasting)-in the month of Ramadan during daylight hours. Weaker responses still usually managed a partially accurate account.

(b) Explain how keeping **one** of the Five Pillars might affect the life and beliefs of a Muslim. [7]

There were some excellent responses, appropriate to the Pillar chosen, which considered both life and beliefs and moved beyond negative effects and disadvantages to more positive effects relevant to the practice of the particular Pillar. Some candidates interpreted the question to mean keeping only one of the Five Pillars and not keeping the other four. This interpretation was accepted though such responses tended not to be developed enough for high marks.

(c) 'All the Five Pillars are of equal importance to a Muslim.'

Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Good discussions developed points made earlier in the structured question. Most candidates pointed out that the Five Pillars as a whole are said to support the faith of Islam and so could be argued to be equally important. However, some candidates made a well argued case for Shahadah being the central idea of the faith and the starting point of Muslim belief.

- 5 (a)** Describe the ceremonies which take place at the start of a Muslim baby's life. [8]

This was the second most popular question. There were many excellent and good descriptions which included most of the following or equivalent areas in detail: washed, call to prayer in right ear, command to worship in left ear; named; head shaved; equivalent weight of hair in money to poor; males circumcised; goats or sheep sacrificed.

- (b)** Explain what Muslims believe about dying and life after death. [7]

Good answers explained that for Muslims dying is a stage in life not the end because the permanent life is akhirah. Credit was given for the beliefs about the last words a Muslim should hear but some candidates spent too much time writing about funerals without addressing the actual question. Good answers went on to describe the beliefs about life after death from when the two angels of justice Munkar and Nakir visit the person, recording their good and bad deeds and asking questions. Good responses explained about the importance of the Day of Judgement when the good will be rewarded by Paradise (al-Jannah) and the rest will suffer hell (Jahannam). Some candidates used the term re-incarnation for the bodily resurrection and, though this was given credit when the meaning was clear, candidates should be warned that such usage can lead to confusion with some other faiths e.g. Hinduism.

- (c)** 'Ceremonies at a birth are more important than ceremonies at a death.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Islam in your answer. [5]

All candidates seemed to enjoy discussing this topic, trying to decide the real purpose of the ceremonies and for whose benefit they existed. Most concluded that they seemed to serve various functions and were equally important. In referring to Islam, many candidates continued themes from the previous parts of the question by linking the fact that the first and last things a Muslim hears is the name of Allah.



## 2307 – Paper 7 Judaism

### General Comments

Once again candidates worked to an impressively high standard in this unit, which reflects well on their commitment and the professionalism of their teachers. There was perhaps less use of Hebrew terminology and direct references from the Torah than in previous sessions. As ever, candidates have managed to respond well to the evaluation questions, but there was a tendency for some to omit reference to Judaism which obviously limited the marks they received. Increasingly candidates are using generic style responses to other questions, making reference to the impact of an aspect of the faith on the individual, family and community. Good use is being made of the time available and rubric errors are limited to a very small minority.

### Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 (a) Describe how Jews celebrate Pesach (Passover). [8]

Most candidates were familiar with Pesach and were able to build on the stimulus photograph to gain some marks. Some, however tended to restrict themselves to the contents of the Seder plate. Others were able to elaborate on the meal but little more, and made no reference to other aspects of the festival. The best answers detailed the preparation and provided a thorough description of the meal and beyond. This included quotations from the Haggadah and reference to the role of Elijah.

- (b) Explain the importance of Pesach for Jews. [7]

The better answers referred back to the original Biblical story and made connections with current practices. They were also able to draw out comparisons with more recent Jewish history. There was a tendency for some candidates to produce somewhat generic responses that might have applied to any festival. More targeted responses were required for the higher levels. A small number of candidates had clearly confused Pesach with either Shabbat or Yom Kippur.

- (c) 'Festivals encourage children to follow a religion'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Judaism in your answer. [5]

Whilst this question provoked many competent responses, there was a tendency for some candidates to be so wedded to their generic framework for the evaluation question that they did not provide sufficient development to achieve full marks. In general, however, most candidates were able to offer different points of view and a brief conclusion to their deliberations that generally supported the quotation.

- 2 (a) Describe what happens when a boy becomes Bar Mitzvah. [8]

This question was very widely attempted. Although there was some confusion with Jewish birth ritual, this was not an issue for most candidates. Descriptions regularly referred to the reading of the Torah and the importance of ritual dress, whilst the most able detailed the preparation necessary and the guidance of the rabbi. Reference was often made to the role of the family, particularly the father. Credit was also given for describing the celebrations that followed the service in the synagogue.

- (b)** Explain why the celebration of Bar Mitzvah is important for Jews. [7]

Responses to this question did benefit from the generic treatment mentioned earlier. Candidates referred back to the preparation and were credited for doing so, and many went on to explore the lasting impact of being responsible for one's own morality and being part of the minyan. There was a tendency for some candidates to repeat too much of their description from part a. Overall responses to this question were good, though there was confusion over the wearing of tephillin on Shabbat.

- (c)** 'There is no set age for becoming an adult.' Do you agree?  
Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Judaism in your answer. [5]

Candidates were able to set out at least two coherent arguments relating to the quotation. Unsurprisingly one of these tended to be more of a sociological, biological or legal nature. The other developed argument was obviously the Jewish perspective, though the ages specified by Jewish teaching were not always traced back to the oral tradition. Some candidates made good use of the differentiation in male and female maturity to support their arguments.

- 3 (a)** Describe the ritual dress worn by Jews. [8]

This was a relatively popular question, and the answers were often supported by appropriate Hebrew terminology. Most candidates understandably limited themselves to the yamulkah, tallit and tephillin. Some of the most able were rewarded for describing the kittel and the traditional dress codes of some sections of the Jewish community. Many candidates did not provide a clear description of the tzizit.

- (b)** Explain why the mezuzah is important for Jews. [7]

Some of the responses to this question confused the mezuzah with other Jewish artefacts, often the menorah. Other candidates had perhaps not read past part a when choosing to answer the question. That said, many were able to demonstrate a clear understanding of the role and importance of the mezuzah, though others tended to simply provide a description, which limited the marks gained. The best responses took account of the shema and its teachings.

- (c)** 'What you wear should show what you believe.'  
Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Judaism in your answer. [5]

This question seemed to lend itself to two clear viewpoints, one of which was the traditional Jewish perspective. Responses often referred more to modest dress than ritual dress and both were credited. Some interesting responses introduced dress codes from other faiths, and did so to good effect. However, a small but significant number of students omitted any reference to Judaism in otherwise detailed responses and this inevitably limited the marks awarded.

- 4 (a)** Describe the ways that Jews show respect for the Sefer Torah (scrolls). [8]

This was also a relatively popular question and elicited some good responses that referred to the way the sefer torah is produced, the way it is decorated and the way it

is read in the synagogue. Other candidates wrote about the storing of the scroll in the ark and its location in the synagogue. Better responses included how Jews might show 'respect' in fulfilling the mitzvot in everyday life.

- (b)** Explain the importance of the Torah for the Jewish community. [7]

Candidates differed in their interpretations of this question. Some explained the importance of the scroll in ceremonies, whilst others referred to the 'Torah' as a body of teaching. Both approaches were credited, though the second was generally more successful in that it encouraged greater detail and depth. Reference was often made to the Torah as 'a guidebook for life'. A wide range of examples were given, including Shabbat, ritual dress and kosher food laws.

- (c)** 'All Jewish laws (mitzvot) are equally important'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Some of the best answers to this question took into consideration denominational variations, and some reference was made to chukim. Other candidates made a useful distinction between ritual and ethical mitzvot, along the lines of a progressive approach. Overall, this was a well-answered question that encouraged clearly delineated responses. It was only a small number of candidates who failed to refer to Judaism in their answer, and this was often because they had not interpreted 'laws' in a religious sense.

- 5 (a)** Describe the main differences between Orthodox and Progressive Jews. [8]

This was the least popular of the questions amongst the cohort. It seemed, however, to attract many well-informed responses. Some candidates concentrated on practical differences, whilst others included the principles behind the denominations and some historical background. Descriptions tended to display more breadth of knowledge than depth. There is still a tendency to stereotype progressive Jews as being somewhat lukewarm about their Judaism, and this was especially apparent in the weaker answers.

- (b)** Explain why some Jews are Zionist. [7]

This question often elicited two extremes of response. The more able provided detailed and well-informed answers that referred to motivations, the historical development of Zionism, and its characteristics post-1948. Many candidates were able to refer to beliefs about the Promised Land. At the other end of the spectrum was the candidate who had literally no idea of what Zionists believe. One must assume that they had not read the entire question before attempting it.

- (c)** 'All Jews should share the same beliefs'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

This question was generally well answered. Candidates generally referred back to their responses to part a. This assisted them in providing two clear arguments and a conclusion, but very few considered whether there might not be a clear set of beliefs that is adhered to by the Jewish community. Once again, there was a tendency to present progressive Judaism as a watered down version of the original.

## 2308 – Paper 8 Sikhism

### General Comments

The majority of candidates clearly understood the format of the paper and were able to answer question 1 and 2 additional questions.

Most candidates were able to plan and use time effectively. There were very few examples of rubric error.

Some candidates are still unable to differentiate between the requirements of (a) and (b), but most were competent in their attempts to answer (c) sections.

### Comments on the Individual Questions.

- 1 (a) Describe the main features of a gurdwara. [8]

The majority of candidates were able to give details of the main features of the gurdwara. The Nishan Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib and associated artefacts (manji and chauri for example) were mentioned as well as specific areas in the gurdwara such as the langar and Diwan Sahib.

- (b) Explain the importance of a gurdwara for the Sikh community. [7]

Good answers demonstrated that candidates understood the function of the gurdwara as a place of worship, education and community centre. The celebration of rites of passage and the strengthening of Sikh brotherhood were also mentioned. Some candidates also mentioned that Sikh gurus established the gurdwara. Weaker responses concentrated on the obvious functions of worship.

- (c) 'Worshipping together is not an important part of Sikh life.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

The majority of candidates were able to explain that communal worship is not essential but desirable. Good answers also explained that many Sikhs would not be able to keep a GGS at home and thus the gurdwara is an important place for them. Most candidates gave a discussion about the relative value of communal and personal worship.

- 2 (a) Describe a Sikh marriage ceremony. [8]

Many candidates gave a lot of detail about events preceding the ceremony and seemed unclear about the ceremony itself. A number of candidates gave vague generic answers about marriages in general with no specific religious content. Good responses mentioned the Anad Karaj, the witness of the GGS the tying of the scarves and the lavan.

- (b) Explain why marriage is important for Sikhs. [7]

Most candidates were able to explain the importance of marriage as a precursor to family life. Examples from the gurus –all of whom were married expect one. Many candidates also explained the joining of families as well as the married couple.

- (c) 'It is important that children are brought up to follow their religion.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Sikhism in your answer. [5]

There were many positive responses to this question, although a considerable number of answers did not refer to Sikhism as required. Continuing the faith was seen as important whilst from another point of view candidates suggested that children should be able to choose a faith (or none) when they are old enough to understand the implications. Some candidates did refer to Guru Nanak Dev who questioned the faith he was brought up in.

- 3 (a) Describe what Sikhs mean by samsara. [8]

The majority of candidates who answered this question were able to explain the idea of the cycle of life and death, with a good number mentioning re –birth. The inclusion of karma, and mukti were also common. Some candidates were able to explain that the soul does not die. Few candidates linked the Sikh beliefs to those of Hinduism, which might have helped in their explanations.

- (b) Explain how a Sikh might try to reach mukti (release). [7]

A number of candidates were able to explain the meaning of mukti and a commendable number were also able to link this to sewa and to the need to follow the rules of good conduct. Generally this was answered well by most candidates who attempted the question.

- (c) 'Sewa (service for others) is the most important aspect of Sikhism.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your opinion and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Some candidates agreed and gave detail of types of sewa with detail (often repeated from (b)). Others suggested that there are other important aspects of Sikhism –prayer for example. A number of candidates gave quite general answers with only passing reference to specific details from a Sikh perspective.

- 4 (a) Describe how Sikhs celebrate Baisakhi. [8]

Most candidates described key elements of the festival, including the changing of the Nishan sahib, reading of the Akhand Path, initiation ceremonies and prayers at the gurdwara. Most candidates clearly knew the basics at least, although there were a few who confused this festival with others such as Divali. Few referred to the harvest or to fairs held at this time.

- (b) Explain the importance of Baisakhi for Sikhs. [7]

Most candidates referred to the founding of the Khalsa at this time, and related it to the Panj Payare and the 5ks.

- (c) 'Festivals are the best way to learn about a religion.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your opinion and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Sikhism in your answer. [5]

Most common was the idea that festivals encourage enjoyment and are a good way to remember key concepts. However a lot of candidates gave general answers without reference to Sikhism. Some suggested that festivals detracted from true

belief and simply encouraged a good time. Good answers explained that study of the GGS and the teachings of the gurus were cited as better ways to learn for Sikhs.

**5 (a)** Describe the Five Ks. [8]

The majority of candidates knew the 5Ks and could mention them by name. A large number confused 'describe' with 'explain' and this led to a lot of repetition between a) and b).

**(b)** Explain the importance of the Five Ks to Sikhs. [7]

Most mentioned the 5Ks as a sign of identity and belonging. Some candidates gave a long description of the origin (not necessary in depth). A number of candidates explained the additional responsibilities for a member of the khalsa and talked of personal sacrifice, increased expectation of service to others and high standards. Common misconceptions include the idea that a kirpan must draw blood if it is unsheathed.

**(c)** 'People need symbols to strengthen their faith.'  
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your opinion and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Sikhism in your answer. [5]

Generally good clear answers –pointing out that Sikhs do not worship symbols or objects, whilst recognising that they may be helpful reminders of Sikh beliefs.

## 2309 – Paper 9 Religion, the Media and Entertainment

### General Comments

The questions allowed for full flexibility candidates were able to answer from all the religions and used a variety of valid approaches. Unfortunately many of the candidates appeared not to have read the questions thoroughly which led to a lot of re-iteration and some candidates penalised themselves by giving answers more suited to other questions. Candidates performed well when using specific examples from the media or religious teachings to support their answers. Some candidates used examples / religious teachings but did not explain them or just regurgitated without matching them to the requirements of the question; some candidates did not appear to understand the full implications of the teachings they used. Some candidates did not demonstrate their full understanding of the term 'media' and many did not know what 'evangelism' meant – some even stating that they did not know.

Most mentioned films: The Da Vinci Code, The Passion of Christ, The Life of Brian and The Miracle Maker.

### Comments on the Individual Questions

- 1 Describe the attitudes of the religion(s) you have studied towards the way religion is shown in the media. [8]

Some candidates failed to recognise the full import of this question and just discussed the media in general. Others were able to show the positive and negative aspects of the media: 'Songs of Praise' was used by many as a good example citing it helped the elderly and ill to celebrate their faith whilst some even showed the negative aspects by stating it made people lazy. Many candidates emphasised the negative way that the media responded to 9/11 and the London bombings which has resulted in racist and anti-religious behaviour. Other candidates focused on music and sport citing celebrities spreading their faith. Others focused on values and commented that the media was rampant with sex and violence.

- 2 What are the teachings in the religion(s) you have studied about spending money? [8]

Answers were mostly good; the better responses offered specific teachings and explained them although as stated above some did not understand them and just quoted or misquoted them. Uses of money such as alcohol (referring to the source) and gambling were referred to.

- 3 Explain how the religion(s) you have studied use the media for evangelism. [7]

This caused a lot of problems especially for those who did not understand the term. Quite a few missed this question out. Some did not focus on the 'how' and just concentrated on the God channel and Televangelism (Billy Graham) in America. The better responses focused on the 'how', citing radio, bill boards, Jehovah Witnesses etc. Celebrities celebrating their faith were also used; e.g. Imran Khan the cricketer – used in most of the answers. Some candidates who answered from Judaism and Hinduism specified that evangelism was not used because you had to be born into the faith. Some referred to why evangelism is important, referring to scriptural teachings and some discussed the pros and cons of evangelising. Some candidates wrote purely about evangelists.

- 4 How might people in the religion(s) you have studied react to the way religious people are shown in the media? [7]

Some candidates missed out the word 'people' and just repeated what they had said in question 1 by focusing on religion in general. Not many focused on the word 'react' by specifying what believers would do, but many did use appropriate examples where general religious believers were shown badly or well. Many discussed the idea that Muhammad (pbuh) or God should not be depicted in visual form. Only a few focused on religious people such as Mother Teresa. The Opera 'Jerry Springer', and the films The 'Life of Brian', and 'Dogma' were mentioned along with the idea of Islam being misinterpreted as a terrorist religion.

- 5 'Religion can be better expressed by some types of media than by others.' [10]

This appeared to be quite accessible to most candidates: some answered it by discussing the pros and cons of different types of media whilst others just focused on a debate between television and radio or television and newspapers. Some were obviously struggling with the term 'media' and just kept on stating 'media' without defining which type of media they meant, making it difficult for them to evaluate the stimulus statement. Some candidates did not support their statements with specific examples.



## **2310 - Coursework**

### **General Comments**

Work for this component continues to be of a very high standard. There was a slight decrease in the numbers doing this component with centres preferring instead to enter their candidates for the alternative Media paper - 2309.

The standard of marking and administration by Centres was generally very good, although some of the new procedures for this year, for example, the new system for the return of centre marks and the introduction of the Centre Authentication Statements caused problems for some. The main cause of correspondence with centres was missing Centre Authentication Statements.

Almost all of the work submitted used approved titles. Centres are urged to seek approval for titles used to avoid any risk to their candidates by allowing them to use a title which does not enable them to achieve in all the assessment objectives.

A small number of centres had their marking adjusted.

The use of the Internet as a source of information seems now almost universal as does the word-processing of coursework. Both of these are highly commendable though students may need to be reminded that books can also be used as reference material and that the use of a dozen different fonts with complex page layouts does not help improve poorly prepared work in any way. Candidates must acknowledge downloaded material so that there can be no suggestion of intentional plagiarism.

It was pleasing to note the maturity of many of the responses and the degree of humanity which so often appeared in the work submitted.

**General Certificate of Secondary Education  
Religious Studies A: World Religions Short Course (1030)  
June 2006 Assessment Series**

**Unit Threshold Marks**

Unit		Maximum Mark	a*	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	u
2391	Raw	43	40	35	30	26	22	18	14	10	0
	UMS	43	34	30	26	22	18	14	10	6	0
2392/01	Raw	43	36	31	26	22	18	14	11	8	0
	UMS	43	34	30	26	22	18	14	10	6	0
2392/02	Raw	43	40	35	30	25	22	19	16	13	0
	UMS	43	34	30	26	22	18	14	10	6	0
2393	Raw	43	41	35	29	24	20	16	13	10	0
	UMS	43	34	30	26	22	18	14	10	6	0
2394/01	Raw	43	36	32	28	25	21	17	13	9	0
	UMS	43	34	30	26	22	18	14	10	6	0
2394/02	Raw	43	38	34	30	26	22	18	14	10	0
	UMS	43	34	30	26	22	18	14	10	6	0
2395	Raw	43	42	37	32	28	23	18	13	8	0
	UMS	43	34	30	26	22	18	14	10	6	0
2396	Raw	43	41	36	31	27	22	18	14	10	0
	UMS	43	34	30	26	22	18	14	10	6	0
2397	Raw	43	39	34	29	25	21	17	14	11	0
	UMS	43	34	30	26	22	18	14	10	6	0
2398	Raw	43	42	40	34	28	23	18	14	10	0
	UMS	43	34	30	26	22	18	14	10	6	0
2399	Raw	43	38	34	30	26	21	17	13	9	0
	UMS	43	34	30	26	22	18	14	10	6	0
2400	Raw	43	38	34	30	26	21	17	13	9	0
	UMS	43	34	30	26	22	18	14	10	6	0

### Specification Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (i.e. after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
<b>1030</b>	86	68	60	52	44	36	28	20	12	0

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U	Total No. of Cands
<b>1030</b>	7.3	18.4	35.0	52.7	69.1	81.7	90.3	95.9	100.0	21678

21540 candidates were entered for aggregation this series

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see;  
[www.ocr.org.uk/OCR/WebSite/docroot/understand/ums.jsp](http://www.ocr.org.uk/OCR/WebSite/docroot/understand/ums.jsp)

Statistics are correct at the time of publication

**General Certificate of Secondary Education  
Religious Studies A: World Religions (1930)  
June 2006 Assessment Series**

**Unit Threshold Marks**

Unit		Maximum Mark	a*	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	u
2301	Raw	64	62	56	48	40	32	24	17	10	0
	UMS	64	56	50	44	38	32	26	20	14	0
2302/01	Raw	64	55	48	41	34	28	22	16	10	0
	UMS	64	56	50	44	38	32	26	20	14	0
2302/02	Raw	64	61	55	49	43	36	30	24	18	0
	UMS	64	56	50	44	38	32	26	20	14	0
2303	Raw	64	60	53	46	39	32	25	18	11	0
	UMS	64	56	50	44	38	32	26	20	14	0
2304/01	Raw	64	57	51	45	39	32	25	19	13	0
	UMS	64	56	50	44	38	32	26	20	14	0
2304/02	Raw	64	58	52	46	41	34	28	22	16	0
	UMS	64	56	50	44	38	32	26	20	14	0
2305	Raw	64	63	56	49	42	33	25	17	9	0
	UMS	64	56	50	44	38	32	26	20	14	0
2306	Raw	64	62	55	48	42	35	28	21	14	0
	UMS	64	56	50	44	38	32	26	20	14	0
2307	Raw	64	61	55	49	43	36	29	22	15	0
	UMS	64	56	50	44	38	32	26	20	14	0
2308	Raw	64	63	59	53	48	41	35	29	23	0
	UMS	64	56	50	44	38	32	26	20	14	0
2309	Raw	43	39	34	29	24	19	15	11	7	0
	UMS	32	28	25	22	19	16	13	10	7	0
2310	Raw	64	63	54	45	36	28	21	14	7	0
	UMS	64	56	50	44	38	32	26	20	14	0

**Specification Aggregation Results**

Overall threshold marks in UMS (i.e. after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
<b>1930</b>	160	140	125	110	95	80	65	50	35	0

*Report on the Units Taken in June 2006*

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

	<b>A*</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Total No. of Cands</b>
<b>1930</b>	8.3	24.9	47.6	67.6	82.5	91.3	96.0	98.3	100.0	24748

24707 candidates were entered for aggregation this series

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see;  
[www.ocr.org.uk/OCR/WebSite/docroot/understand/ums.jsp](http://www.ocr.org.uk/OCR/WebSite/docroot/understand/ums.jsp)

Statistics are correct at the time of publication





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