

Religious Studies B

General Certificate of Secondary Education **GCSE 1931**

General Certificate of Secondary Education (Short Course) **GCSE 1031**

Report on the Components

June 2007

1931/1031/MS/R/07

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1031 – Short Course Religious Studies B

General Comments

These comments apply to both papers in this specification and should be read in conjunction with the reports on the individual papers.

There was, once more, a significant increase in candidature for these papers. This produced a very full spread of ability in the papers received with, again, a general increase in standard with many responses being of excellent quality. There were very few low level scripts. Most candidates were thoroughly prepared for the examination and all sections of the questions were well-addressed. As in previous years, the vast majority of responses were still on Christianity. However there was a significant increase in candidates answering from Hinduism, Islam and Judaism. There were also some excellent papers from candidates doing exclusively Hinduism, Islam or Judaism.

Mostly scripts were excellent – with high scores and excellent use of terminology. Even when whole cohorts appear to have been entered the standard was usually high. Some answers had difficulty in addressing the focus of the questions and some had difficulty with the terminology. Overall many answers appeared to struggle to score highly in part (b) sections with often too much descriptive material and sometimes too little appeal to teachings, texts etc.

Comments are on the Christianity questions, the most popular choice, noting others as appropriate.

Comments on Individual Questions

These comments apply equally to the papers for Option A and Option B.

Topic 1 – The Nature of God

- 1 (a) Describe Christian beliefs about God. [8]

Simplistic responses referred to God as giving people good luck whilst some of higher ability were determined to bring in the theological proofs thus not addressing the focus of the question although it was an 'open' question. However some of the answers which included 'all they knew' were able to achieve good marks though more by luck than anything else.

- (b) Explain how believing that the Bible is the word of God might affect the lives of Christians. [7]

Some candidates focussed on the first part of the question 'the Bible is the word of God' whilst others on the second half – how the Bible affected the lives of Christians. The latter interpretation was the usual one and was mainly how the Bible could be used. Most could cite the Ten Commandments although 'love thy neighbour' was mentioned as being one of them. There were some negative responses: that a Christian would spend too much time reading it or that the contradictions in the Bible led to confusion. The different interpretations of the Bible: 'story with a meaning for Christians' or a literal/fundamentalist approach was addressed.

- (c) 'Believing in God is essential.'
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your opinion and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

Some candidates used this question to bring in the theological proofs whereas others used it as a means of expressing their disbelief in a divine entity. One answer interpreted the question as not just believing but there having to be agape. Opus Dei was mentioned.

Topic 2 – The Nature of Belief

- 5 (a) Describe how a Christian might worship God at home. [8]

A simplistic response was watching videos and DVDs about God but other answers included prayer; grace; having statues or pictures of God, and some included doing charitable deeds.

- (b) Explain how fasting might help people to worship God. [7]

Most candidates were able to access this although there were some who were not sure what fasting meant. References to Jesus in the desert and respecting God were used; whilst others elaborated further to include empathy for those suffering in the Third World or collecting money for charities in Lent.

- (c) 'Music helps people to worship God.'
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your opinion and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

This caused a lot of problems with hardly any references to the type of Church music which could be used. Heavy metal was mentioned as causing a distraction. The usual simplistic answers were 'yes' it helps and 'no' it would be annoying/distracting. One answer stated that just because you are singing it does not mean you believe. Swear words in modern rap songs were referred to.

Topic 3 – Religion and Science

- 9 (a) Describe Christian teachings about people and their responsibility for the planet. [8]

Some answers just addressed the first part of the question whilst others interpreted it as men and women having different roles because Eve was created from Adam's rib. Very few answers were able fully to address the true focus of the question and discuss ecology and stewardship in detail or with references to biblical teachings. Some discussed recycling etc.

- (b) Explain why some Christians might believe that humans are the most important part of creation. [7]

Most candidates were able to answer this although some answers were very simplistic; some felt that reproduction made humans the most important. However, others referred to the soul and the role of the humans as stewards. Some believed that humans were not the most important because of the fact that some animals were now extinct.

- (c) 'It is the responsibility of every Christian to care for the planet.'
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your opinion and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

Most were able to access this citing the fact that everyone/other religions also have a responsibility.

Topic 4 – Death and the Afterlife

- 13 (a) Describe Christian beliefs about what happens to good people after death. [8]

Invariably most answers wanted to discuss hell and, as a result, they did not go into detail or cite biblical/Christian teachings on heaven or purgatory. Some answers discussed the fact that only the Saints go to heaven. A lot of answers qualified 'good' and one or two discussed whether 'good' meant believers otherwise that would mean all good people whether Christians or not would go to hell.

- (b) Explain how a Christian funeral service might comfort someone whose relative has died. [7]

The weaker answers did not focus on the key term 'comfort' and instead just related what happens at a funeral. The better answers did address the focus of the question and used specific instances in the service which demonstrated Christian beliefs in life after death. The idea of everyone mourning together was addressed as being a comfort.

- (c) 'A forgiving God would not send people to hell.'
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your opinion and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

This caused some difficulties in understanding the focus of the question. A lot wanted to 'tell God what to do' and a lot believed it would not be fair if he didn't send people to hell especially since some sins were considered to be unforgivable. Hitler was used as an example.

Topic 5 – Good and Evil

- 17 (a) Describe Christian beliefs about the origins of evil. [8]

The term 'origins' was not always understood. There were also some weird and wonderful ideas about Satan – Satan was thrown out of heaven because he wanted to have sex with a woman and Satan was in charge of music in heaven. A lot of answers just discussed what evil was going into moral and natural evil. There were many references to the 'apple' when relating the Original Sin story.

- (b) How might Christians explain the purpose of suffering? [7]

There were some good responses to this including references to Job, God's plan etc. One example was Terry Waite. Some talked about suffering in hell.

- (c) 'People should make their own moral decisions without bothering about 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 Christianity in your answer. [5]

Some used this to be derogatory about religion whilst others thought the question was asking whether you should be able to choose your religion and missed out the moral decisions part.

Question 20 was also a popular question and was generally well answered.

Answers to part (a) tended to be a retelling of the story of Lucifer's fall and, to a lesser extent, the fall in Eden. Often these were not explicitly linked to the question and lacked sophistication to access highest marks.

Topic 6 – Religion and Human Relationships

- 21 (a) Describe Christian teachings about the use of contraception. [8]

Weaker answers were able to refer to contraception in general terms whilst the better answers included references to biblical teachings e.g. the Sin of Onan; 'go forth and multiply' and Hannah (womb closed). Some answers were adamant that the Vatican has relaxed its views on condoms because of AIDS. Some candidates used this question to discuss abortion in detail.

- (b) Explain Christian attitudes towards sexual relationships. [7]
This was mostly answered well although a few did stick on sex out of marriage being wrong. 1 Corinthians 7:3 was mentioned, Thessalonians and Genesis. The American idea of the silver ring was broached (save sex – not 'safe'). Some referred to IVF and the fact AIDS was 'adultery'.

- (c) 'Divorce is often the best solution.'
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your opinion and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

There was a belief that divorce happens when a partner dies. However most answers were able to discuss why divorce should or should not happen, citing abuse or adultery as reasons for divorce, but not many addressed the idea that it was the 'best solution'. One answer rather profoundly referred to the fact that when a divorce happens the problems are not actually sorted but are just put aside and forgotten.

Topic 7 – Religion and Medical Ethics

- 25 (a) Describe Christian teachings about euthanasia. [8]

Some believed it was useful and others argued extensively for euthanasia. A lot of answers wanted to discuss the different types of euthanasia rather than focussing on the key word 'teachings'. Better answers addressed the idea that God is the giver of life but not many used the term Sanctity of Life. Slippery slope argument was mentioned along with double effect and also reference to John 10:10. The Hospice movement was mentioned as an alternative.

- (b) Explain how Christians might respond to someone who wants to die. [7]

There was considerable waffling here or just repetition of part (a). There were also some hard hearted answers committing the person to hell whilst one stated they would arrange for a proper funeral. Better answers referred to the Samaritan and finding out why the person wanted to die and getting the Church to pray for them.

- (c) 'People should have the right to choose when they die.'
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your opinion and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

Again there was some repetition but most answers gave differing points of view. One thought that nobody should want to die whilst others believed it was dependent on why the person wanted to die.

Topic 8 – Religion and Equality

- 29 (a) Describe what Christians believe about forgiveness. [8]

The weaker answers struggled because they were unable to refer to specific teachings. However the ones who could access: 70 times 7; the Unmerciful Servant; Prodigal Son; Woman in adultery; Lord's Prayer etc. were able to achieve good marks. Jesus' teaching on 'whoever strikes you on the right cheek...' was interpreted as forgiveness. Some answers argued that it depended on the nature of the sin – some being easier to forgive than others. The Amish massacre was mentioned. Quite a few answers quoted teachings but were not able to show full depth of understanding and so could not relate them in a specific context.

- (b) Explain how a Christian might respond to someone who is racist. [7]

Many answers just addressed this as Christian beliefs/teachings on racism rather than what the question was asking. Trevor Huddleston and Martin Luther King Jr. were used as examples although some confused King with Desmond Tutu or Nelson Mandela, putting King in Africa. Some used this question to discuss sexism.

- (c) 'Christianity is right so other religions must be wrong.'
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your opinion and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

It was refreshing when some of the answers used the biblical teaching of 'I am the way...' Most of them said everyone is equal and no one religion is right. Some believed that Christianity is right about some things but not about others.

Topic 9 – Religion, Poverty and Wealth

- 33 (a) Describe Christian teachings about moral and immoral occupations. [8]

Many answers just related what was a moral or immoral occupation and did not explain why or apply them to biblical teachings. Some did not understand this question. One answer wrote about a con man of the Bible.

- (b) Explain Christian attitudes towards lending money. [7]

A lot focussed on why the money was needed and very few were able to relate to biblical teachings. Some answers discussed Third World Debts.

- (c) 'Everyone must give some of their money to charity.'
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your opinion and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

Report on the Components taken in June 2007

This was accessible to all candidates; several answers believing that you would give to charity only if you could afford to.

Question 35 – There were some similar responses to those for the Christianity question some answers believed it would not be charity if they had to give money and there were references to rich footballers.

Topic 10 – Religion, Peace and Justice

- 37 (a) Describe Christian teachings about crime and punishment. [8]

Quite a few answers had clearly hoped for a question on war and this was the answer they gave. Others referred to the punishment theory and the Old Testament teaching of 'an eye for an eye' and compared it to the Golden Rule. Capital punishment was condemned as being against the sixth commandment. There was a lot of repetition of Q.29 – forgiveness. Opus Dei and self punishment was referred to.

- (b) Explain how Christians might treat criminals. [7]

Again there was repetition of part (a) and Q.29 - forgiveness. Elizabeth Fry was referred to.

- (c) 'Criminals must be punished as an example to others.'
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your opinion and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

There were some Utilitarian responses and many wrote in favour of the death penalty.

1031 – Short Course Religious Studies B - Coursework

General Comments

Work for this component continues to be of a very high standard. There was a slight increase in the numbers doing this component which appears to be explained in part by a decrease in the numbers sitting Specification A 1930.

Also the standard of marking and administration by centres was generally very good, however, the Centre Authentication statements still caused problems for some.

Almost all of the work submitted was on approved titles. Where this was not the case centres are urged to seek approval for titles used.

A small number of centres had their marking adjusted. Again, the main cause of correspondence with centres was missing Centre Authentication Statements.

Nevertheless, teachers who are inevitably under great pressure must be commended overall for their work and expertise. 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 should be encouraged to acknowledge downloaded material so that there can be no suggestion of intentional plagiarism.

Again, the increasing maturity of the candidates' responses should be noted as should the degree of humanity which so often appears in the work submitted.

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

Some used this to be derogatory about religion whilst others thought the question was asking whether you should be able to choose your religion and missed out the moral decisions part.

Question 20 was also a popular question and was generally well answered.

Answers to part (a) tended to be a retelling of the story of Lucifer's fall and, to a lesser extent, the fall in Eden. Often these were not explicitly linked to the question and lacked sophistication to access highest marks

Papers 2 and 4

Topic 6 – Religion and Human Relationships

- 1 (a) Describe Christian teaching about the purpose of marriage. [8]

Most candidates were able to answer this by addressing one or two of the purposes although some did resort to writing out the marriage ceremony. Some appeared to follow a mnemonic of PURPOSE to include procreation, unity; rearing children; pattern for society; one flesh; sacrament and eternal.

- (b) Explain Christian teaching about sexual relationships. [7]

Again most candidates were able to address this question although some did state that it was something to do on a Friday night. Procreation was addressed along with the use of contraception and some ventured into IVF. Sex before marriage and adultery were also addressed. Issues of homosexuality were commented on but not many answers were able to use specific biblical teachings.

- (c) 'Women should always obey their husbands.'
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your opinion and show that you have
thought about different points of view. [5]

Various viewpoints were discussed with several answers commenting on the fact that marriage should be for mutual respect and so husbands should obey their wives and vice versa. Paul's teachings were used along with the now obsolete vow.

Topic 7 – Religion and Medical Ethics

- 5 (a) Describe Christian attitudes towards fertility treatment. [8]

Pleasingly, most of the candidates knew what fertility treatment meant. Various teachings/attitudes were discussed: Hannah in the Old Testament; 6th Commandment for the spare embryos and the 7th Commandment for AIDS, along with the concept of agape and Jesus showing compassion. Some discussed Rachel, Jacob & Bilah as an example of surrogacy.

- (b) Explain why Christians might have different views about abortion. [7]

Most answer were able to achieve full marks on this question using teachings about the Sanctity of Life, 6th Commandment and different Church attitudes e.g. Roman Catholics versus the Methodists or the Quakers (Quackers as some answers called them!). There was even the old perennial 'life begins at contraception'.

- (c) 'Every unborn baby has the right to live.'

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

Again many achieved full marks on this; some repeated what they had said in part (b) whereas others discussed viability and Ensoulment.

Topic 8 – Religion and Equality

- 9 (a) Describe the role of women in Christian society. [8]

This question caused the most problems. Some answers discussed women in the home but were unable to relate the views to actual teachings. Some answers discussed the role of Priests/Vicars but again were unable to clarify why there were different views. Only a few discussed the woman's role in the Church as a fund raiser etc. A lot of them gave teachings: e.g. Eve made from Adam's rib, contrasting 'image of God' and Galatians, the story of Martha and Mary but were unable to apply them to the role of women. A few candidates discussed how Elizabeth Fry and Mother Teresa had influenced society.

- (b) Explain the teaching which a Christians might use in a discussion about gender. [7]

Most answers just reiterated what had been stated in part (a) with the better answers explaining how they affected the views of males and females. It appeared that 'gender' was not always known and the story of the Good Samaritan was used.

- (c) 'All people must be treated equally.'

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

This either generated a discussion of sexism again or there were views on racism and the work of Martin Luther King Jr. The Good Samaritan was used to good effect here, although Jesus helped the mugged man (another perennial). Most answers felt that criminals should not be treated equally whereas others discussed how infants and disabled people could not be treated equally although they should be.

Topic 9 – Religion, Poverty and Wealth

- 13 (a) Describe Christian teaching about the treatment of the poor and the needy. [8]

Most candidates were able to refer to specific Christian teachings e.g. Parable of Rich Man and Lazarus; Parable of Sheep and the Goats; Camel and Needle; etc. Some referred to John Donne. Another perennial: love thy neighbour was said to be one of the Ten Commandments.

- (b) Explain why Christians might think that some charities are more important than others. [7]

This proved to be an 'easy' question for some. All were able to come up with reasons why Christians might think that some charities were better than others citing personal interest; long or short term aid; Christian charities (CAFOD). They were also able to say why some charities would not be supported i.e. Comic Relief because they give money to abortion clinics and animal charities not being as popular because animals do not have souls. There was also mention of some charities not giving all the money donated to the people concerned.

- (c) 'Gambling is always wrong.'
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your opinion and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

Rather worryingly some answers stated that gambling was a good way to earn a living especially if you did not have enough money – there was even one reference to Fraser on 'Neighbours' (he makes a living from gambling for the uninitiated). Some referred to the fact that we all gamble because life is a gamble. The teachings of the Parable of the Talents versus Timothy were discussed. The opposing viewpoint was gambling is addictive and silly.

- 15 (a) Describe Muslim teaching about the treatment of the poor and the needy. [8]

This was usually answered well with references to Zakah, Sadaqah (some unusual spellings), charity been done in private; angels on shoulders; and money donated at festivals and birth naming ceremony.

- (b) Explain why Muslims might think that some charities are more important than others. [7]

A lot of candidates stressed how health is an important issue in poverty and how Muslims would support charities which looked after health. They also discussed the Ummah and how Muslims would support Muslim charities and how Zakah being one of the pillars would make this an important charity. Discussions were also held on what charities would not be as important e.g. animals and charities which did not promote Muslim values.

- (c) 'Gambling is always wrong.'
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your opinion and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

Most answers were able to gain full marks. Discussions were held on the fact Muslims were against the lottery but that the lottery did support charity work.

Topic 10 – Religion, Peace and Justice

- 17 (a) Describe Christian attitudes towards pacifism. [8]

The term pacifism was not always known and some even wrote that they did not know. Some said it meant 'atheist'. Some were more inclined to write about war or even the treatment of criminals. Better answers were able to address the question using specific teachings of Jesus (although quite a few omitted reference to Jesus at all). Some used the contrast of the teachings in Joel 'prepare for war... beat ploughs into spears' with Micah 'beat swords into ploughshares'. Some mistook Oscar Romero for Camillo Torres. Some were intent on discussing the Just War Theory. The Quakers were sometimes confused with Conscientious Objectors.

- (b) Explain why Christians might believe that war is sometimes necessary. [7]

This led to repetition of part (a) especially from those who had not been able to make reference to the teachings of Jesus. The Just War theory was usually addressed with some exemplification by the better answers.

- (c) 'Justice is more important than peace.'

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

[5]

This caused some confusion. Probably some did not really understand what justice meant. The better answers were able to contrast retribution ('eye for an eye') with the teachings of Jesus.

1931 – Religious Studies B - Coursework

General Comments

Work for this component continues to be of a very high standard. There was a slight increase in the numbers doing this component which appears to be explained in part by a decrease in the numbers sitting Specification A 1930.

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General Certificate of Secondary Education

Religious Studies (Philosophy and Ethics) (1031)

June 2007 Assessment Session

Component Threshold Marks

Component	Max Mark	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Paper 1	84	67	58	50	41	32	23	14
Paper 2	63	52	46	40	32	24	17	10
Paper 3	63	52	46	40	32	24	17	10

Syllabus Options

Paper 1

	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Overall Threshold Marks	84	77	67	58	50	41	32	23	14
Percentage in Grade		6.3	12.8	16.9	17.5	13.7	9.0	5.0	2.1
Cumulative Percentage in Grade		6.3	19.2	35.9	52.8	70.3	84.0	93.0	97.9

The total entry for the examination was 59992.

Paper 2, 3

	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Overall Threshold Marks	80	74	66	58	51	41	31	22	13
Percentage in Grade		5.2	13.2	16.5	16.9	20.7	14.9	7.6	3.3
Cumulative Percentage in Grade		5.2	18.4	34.8	51.8	72.5	87.4	95.0	98.3

The total entry for the examination was 4376.

Overall

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Percentage in Grade	6.3	12.9	16.7	16.9	17.7	13.8	8.9	4.7
Cumulative Percentage in Grade	6.3	19.1	35.8	52.7	70.5	84.2	93.1	98.0

The total entry for the examination was 64368.

General Certificate of Secondary Education

Religious Studies (Philosophy and Ethics) (1931)

June 2007 Assessment Session

Component Threshold Marks

Component	Max Mark	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Paper 1	84	67	58	50	41	32	23	14
Paper 2	84	64	56	47	37	27	17	7
Paper 3	63	52	46	40	32	24	17	10
Paper 4	63	50	44	38	31	23	14	6
Paper 5	126	104	92	80	64	49	34	19

Syllabus Options

Paper 1, 2

	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Overall Threshold Marks	168	148	131	114	97	78	59	40	21
Percentage in Grade		21.5	21.0	18.4	14.2	10.6	7.1	4.3	2.1
Cumulative Percentage in Grade		21.5	42.5	61.0	75.2	85.8	92.9	97.2	99.3

The total entry for the examination was 19463.

Paper 3, 4, 5

	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Overall Threshold Marks	315	285	255	225	196	157	118	79	40
Percentage in Grade		28.8	25.5	18.9	11.6	9.5	3.4	1.4	0.8
Cumulative Percentage in Grade		28.8	54.3	73.2	84.8	94.3	97.7	99.1	99.9

The total entry for the examination was 4798.

Overall

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Percentage in Grade	23.2	22.1	18.7	13.9	10.4	6.0	3.5	1.7
Cumulative Percentage in Grade	23.2	45.3	64.0	77.8	88.3	94.3	97.8	99.5

The total entry for the examination was 24261.

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