

Religious Studies B

General Certificate of Secondary Education **GCSE 1931**

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

Report on the Components

June 2008

1931/1031/MS/R/08

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This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the syllabus content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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1031/01

1 General impression of the paper:

Appropriate

2 Overall performance of the candidates:

Candidates who did not perform to their full potential were those who were unable to address the focus of the questions; they tended to be implicit rather than explicit. There is a need for candidates to understand the difference between 'describe'; 'explain'; 'attitudes'; 'teachings' and 'beliefs' etc. Some candidates are still finding it difficult to evaluate and show a differing viewpoint in the part (c) section. Some candidates only answered three questions whilst others are still answering more than they should or only answering parts of questions. It is recommended that as much exam practice as practical is used by Centres so that candidates have a clear understanding of the paper.

A lot of candidates had difficulty in accessing some of the questions because they did not understand the terminology.

The usual perennials were apparent: "life begins at Contraception"; "vowels"; "Christians believe in reincarnation"; and "Catholics are not Christians".

Some candidates wrote their own marks on the scripts whilst others wasted time writing out the questions.

Some candidates who have been taught topics from different religious perspectives are losing valuable time/marks because they are referring to different religions in parts (a) and (b) rather than concentrating on the religion mentioned specifically in the question. If the candidate refers to two different religions in part (c) this is creditable as long as one of them is the one specifically referred to in the question. Also, some candidates are still answering parts (a) and (b) as their opinions rather than focusing on religious ideas/beliefs/teachings etc.

Some candidates tend to "throw in" a religious teaching but do not show how it relates or explain how it supports their response or how it relates to the question.

A lot of candidates are not separating the question into the different sections: (a), (b) and (c).

The standard of written communication appears to be deteriorating.

Not all candidates used a black pen as directed by the new Examination Rules.

3 Questions

Topic 1 The Nature of God

Question 1

- (a) Usually this was answered well but some candidates did not understand what “the nature of God” was: some were referring to the “birds and the bees”. Explanations of the Trinity or detailed descriptions of the “omni” attributes were used to great advantage.
- (b) Some candidates misunderstood the focus of this question and concentrated on what Christians believe about miracles rather than why they might believe in them. Some candidates focused on Lourdes and modern day miracles whilst others discussed biblical events.
- (c) This was usually well addressed with candidates sometimes referring to the theological proofs or using Science to dispel belief.

Topic 2 – The Nature of Belief

Question 5

- (a) Candidates needed to describe how symbols are used to achieve higher levels. Many candidates gave very general references to how the cross is used as jewellery, whilst a small number were able to write with success about the symbolism of the bread and wine.
- (b) Most candidates could only focus on prayer as “talking to God” whilst others were able to show a good understanding of how prayer might strengthen the faith.
- (c) Some candidates did not understand what the term “fasting” meant. Other candidates gave some interesting and thoughtful answers concerning the use and purpose of fasting.

Topic 3 – Religion and Science

Question 9

- (a) Candidates needed to address both parts of the question to achieve the higher levels. A lot of candidates tended to put Biblical views here rather than address the question. Many candidates found it difficult to rise above Level 3 as knowledge of scientific views was limited.
- (b) Candidates who used religious concepts to address why the Big Bang and evolution are considered to be wrong did well. Some candidates discussed that perhaps some Christians might not disagree entirely.
- (c) Most candidates did believe that humans were created for a reason although a lot counter-argued that evolution mean there was no reason. Stewardship or dominion were cited as arguments for the statement.

Topic 4 – Death and the Afterlife

Question 13

- (a) Some candidates referred to Plato and Aristotle theories of the body and soul but needed to link them explicitly to Christian teachings to achieve marks. Most candidates were able

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to show that perhaps there is a dualist view by referring to the body in the ground and the soul going to heaven.

- (b) A lot of candidate discussed heaven and hell rather than address the question. Many discussed “how” rather than “why”. However there were some good answers with candidates referring to biblical teachings to support their explanations.
- (c) Some candidates interpreted this statement to ask whether life after death was real. However others addressed the question well, with many saying Christians would not be afraid of death because of what happens after; although some did say that purgatory was not a place of joy. Others believed that fear was a good reason to have the belief.

Topic 5 – Good and Evil

Question 17

- (a) A lot of candidates misread the question and discussed why Christians should behave morally rather than describing whether a Christian would go to find moral guidance.
- (b) Many candidates did not focus on the “problem of evil”, perhaps not understanding the complexities of this concept and instead focused on evil itself, discussing moral and natural evil. Other candidates used different approaches to this part of the question: some focused on the theological responses of how God can be excused whilst others focused on what Christians would do about the existence of evil because this was one of the answers to the problem.
- (c) Answers investigated whether or not the devil exists. Some candidates who had been unable to address the part (b) did so in this part of the question, showing that they did know what the problem of evil is but they had not recognised the terminology.

Topic 6 – Religion and Human Relationships

Question 21

- (a) A lot of candidates tended to use social/PSHE/Citizenship views rather than rely on specific religious teachings. A lot of the candidates who did address the focus tended to use Church teachings rather than Biblical teachings. The concept of marriage as a sacrament, and thus inviolate, was discussed. Some tended to discuss the idea of re-marriage as well as divorce.
- (b) There were different approaches to this section: some candidates discussed the wedding ceremony whilst others discussed the purposes of marriage and the relevance of the vows. Others referred back to divorce. One answer stated marriage is a sacrifice.
- (c) There were some interesting responses: a lot of candidates believed that for Christians marriage would never be outdated whilst others spoke of the exorbitant cost of weddings these days and the fact it was just a piece of paper. Some candidates referred to the fact that people live longer these days and thus tastes change, so people need a change of partner.

Topic 7 – Religion and Medical Ethics

Question 25

- (a) Again, a lot of candidates focused on social teachings rather than religious views. Quite a few candidates appeared to be confused about the exact meaning of dominion and stewardship.
- (b) Some candidates appeared to have misconceptions over the specific Church views and there were a lot of social reasons given rather than reference to biblical teachings on sanctity of life.

However, a lot of candidates were able to achieve full marks because they were well prepared.

- (c) Some candidates did not understand the term “fertility treatment” and so discussed abortion or contraception instead. Other candidates tended to describe different methods and beliefs about these rather than evaluate the focus of the question. Some candidates referred to the biblical reference of Hannah.

Topic 8 – Religion and Equality

Question 29

- (a) Some candidates did not understand the term “sexism” and referred instead to sexual orientation. Candidates who did well referred to the different Pauline teachings as well as Genesis and also the Catholic stance on women priests compared to the other churches.
- (b) There was, at times, some repetition of part (a) but other candidates referred to racism and included specific biblical teachings such as the Golden Rule and God having no favourites. The Tower of Babel was used to show that God had specifically divided the races and examples of racism were given referring to the KKK or the Dutch Reform Church. Some candidates tended to discuss Martin Luther King Junior and what he did rather than using him as a specific example to support Christian teachings about equality.
- (c) A lot of candidates believed that everyone deserved a second chance. There were some references to non-forgiveness of people like Joseph Fietzl and Hitler. Some candidates were able to support their arguments well with specific biblical teachings.

Topic 9 – Religion, Poverty and Wealth

Question 33

- (a) There were a lot of misquotes of Paul’s “the love of money....” Some candidates approached this from the stance of what Christians would not spend their money on and ethical business ideas. Some candidates referred to tithing along with biblical references such as the camel and eye of a needle or “you cannot serve two masters”. Some discussed how monks or nuns would give up their worldly goods.
- (b) There were some general ideas, which were not supported with reference to biblical or church teachings. Candidates who did well made reference to specific parables and Jesus’ actions (WWJD).
- (c) A lot of candidates were able to address this by using various ideas about how poverty is caused in the Third World, through debts, war, corrupt governments etc. Many candidates

were adamant that it was people, not God, who caused poverty. Some had difficulty in explaining why it might be God.

Topic 10 – Religion, Peace and Justice

Question 37

- (a) Some candidates omitted this part of the question or did not understand what the term means. There were many references to Gandhi and his quote “an eye for an eye and the world will become blind”. Specific examples of pacifists e.g. the Quakers, the Amish and Martin Luther King Junior were used. Candidates tended to discuss biblical teachings on both war and peace.
- (b) There was a lot of repetition of the opposing ideas of war and peace from part (a) but the candidates who did well discussed the various responses of “protest against”; going to war or being a pacifist, using specific religious teachings to support their answers. Some candidates talked of pacifists being in a war as ambulance drivers, people sending food parcels to the victims of war or Army Chaplains. Some candidates tended to reference the conditions of a Just War rather than explaining them.
- (c) If the candidate understood the term “injustice” then there were some good responses. Again, Martin Luther King Junior was used as an example of how some Christians would not accept injustice but would do it in a non-violent way. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was used as an example of someone who went against his beliefs to advocate violence.

1031/02

General Comments

Pitch of paper was appropriate with most questions attempted and the full range of marks accessed. Biblical responses were widely used, but often without appropriate development or awareness of relevance. Some candidates repeated the same reference in each question regardless of relevance.

Section (c) questions are starting to be answered better, although some just state two opposing viewpoints without explaining supporting arguments.

As usual, most candidates answered on Christianity, with Islam and Hinduism the next most popular, respectively. More centres this year appeared to answer a single question on Islam or Hinduism.

Comments on particular questions

Topic one

No particular issues

Topic two

No particular issues.

Topic three

There was a degree of crossover in answers between parts (a) and (b). A significant number of candidates merely described Christian teaching in part (b). There were some very good responses to part (c).

Topic four

Candidates found part (a) particularly difficult, with many giving general answers concerned with life after death. Part (c) was also difficult, with many giving an evaluation of the evidence for life after death rather than tackling the second part of the question.

Topic five

No obvious problems beyond those on part (b) identified at the standardisation meeting. Most candidates who attempted this did reasonably well.

Topic six

There were no obvious problems here, except that insufficient use of actual teachings, Biblical and otherwise, was made in part (a). There was a great deal of cross-over in answers between parts (a) and (b). Part (c) was well answered.

Topic seven

Part (a) was not generally well answered, with far too many thinking that Christian teaching requires animals to be treated equally to humans. Part (c) caused problems, as there are still far too many candidates who confuse fertility treatment with contraception or abortion.

Topic eight

Answers tended to be very vague and not sufficiently backed up with teachings. Several candidates got confused on part (a), answering on teachings about sex or homosexuality.

Topic nine

No obvious problems here.

Topic ten

There are still far too many candidates who do not know what pacifism is, despite obviously having studied the unit. They have a tendency to claim that pacifism is a bad or dangerous thing and that Christians are opposed to it. There was a great deal of cross-over between (a) and (b), with many candidates effectively giving the same answer twice. Part (c) was well answered with regard to violence but few tackled the issue of injustice.

1031/03 Coursework

General Comments

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

Centres are reminded that there will be no coursework options in the new GCSE RS specifications.

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. There were a number of centres where contact proved difficult.

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.

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

1931/01 & 1931/03

These comments apply to both papers (1931/01 & 1931/03)

General Comments

Once again, there has been an increase in the candidature for these papers. The majority of students answered questions from a Christian perspective. Where Centres were well prepared, with candidates understanding clearly the difference between the assessment objectives, candidates performed well and the majority achieved a good standard. There was a good range of responses and differentiation was achieved in most of the questions, though there were fewer candidates achieving full marks. Very able candidates produced more 'A' level type answers. Answers from an Islamic perspective were also of a high standard. There were some high quality responses to both the Hindu and Jewish questions, although the least popular were the Jewish questions.

There is evidence of candidates answering in a formulaic way and this was effective, provided that they selected the appropriate 'set piece' for the question. In some areas candidates struggled to understand the differences in the how/why questions in section (b). Better answers for section (c)-type questions provided several opinions and views with well-developed arguments and reasons to support both religious and non-religious views. Weaker responses tended to be those which were only opinions, with little or no evidence of reason or argument.

Some questions were better answered than others. The best answered topic was Topic 1, whereas the least popular topic was Topic 2. Better answers for all the questions were ones which focused clearly on the wording of the question. Some candidates selected the wrong material to answer the question e.g. Q1(a) candidates wrote about the arguments for the existence of God rather than describing the nature of God according to Christians. The point of some questions was missed and answers included everything about a particular topic.

Most candidates managed their time well and questions were answered in detail and length throughout the exam.

There is a marked increase in the number of Centres not following the rubric instructions. Many candidates did not record the question numbers on the front of their answer paper as instructed. Also there are an increasing number of candidates answering the wrong number of questions, i.e. five instead of four or just four part-questions.

Comments on particular questions

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

Topic 1 - The Nature of God

Question 1

- (a) There were some very high-quality answers given to this question. The best answers went beyond a list of words such as omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient and so on, to explaining their meaning for Christians. Credit was given to detailed explanations of the Trinity, immanence and transcendence, as well as describing God as a father figure with attributes of mercy and kindness, a judge and a creator. For candidates to get above a level 2 they needed to have had some development of the aspects of God's nature, rather than just a list. Some candidates spent too much time developing the arguments for the

existence of God which is not what the question asked for. The focus was on the nature of God.

- (b) Some candidates spent time explaining what a miracle is or described in detail some of Jesus' miracles. The question wanted to know why Christians believe in them. Good responses included more than one reason for believing in miracles. Arguments such as "because the Bible tells of miracles and as the word of God should be believed"; "Jesus did miracles and is the source of their faith"; "the resurrection is the greatest miracle ever to happen and the reason for many believing in Christianity"; "some people have experienced miracles in today's time" and "there are places in the world where miracles are said to have happened" were among the varied responses to the question.
- (c) This was generally well done. The higher level answers cited evidence that God's existence has been proved by Jesus' existence, the Bible, or the creation of our world and revelations to people. An alternate view commonly expressed was 'if God was so great why did he not reveal Himself to everyone?' Candidates then explained why they dismissed some of the above evidence. There are still some candidates who say "I agree" or "I disagree" without backup or justification. Other candidates gave their own view, a Christian view and an atheistic view but with no justification for these views.

Question 3

- (b) This was quite a difficult question for candidates answering from an Islamic point of view. Credit was given to developed answers explaining why some Muslims do not believe miracles happen, as well as responses revolving around the idea of creation, the Qu'ran as evidence of miracles and a belief in Isa (Jesus) as a miracle worker.

Topic 2 The Nature of Belief

Question 5

- (a) This question was one of the least well answered questions. Some focused only on the many different ways Christians use symbols i.e. wearing crosses or holding prayer beads, with no reference to Christian beliefs. Others described various symbols such as the different types of crosses, Alpha and Omega sign and the Fish symbol, and explained how they strengthened, supported, educated and reminded Christians of their beliefs. Credit was given to both approaches. Poorer answers reflected a lack of understanding about the word 'symbol'. Some candidates wrote about the features of the Church or the services within the Church. Where there was reference to a symbolic meaning behind the features or a service e.g. a font, a Eucharist, credit was given. Some just described a range of symbols without saying how they expressed Christian beliefs.
- (b) Some described different types of prayer but did not relate this to the question. Others talked about how individual praying and communal praying strengthens belief through a closer relationship with God and others in their community, making one feel part of a wider faith community, sharing common experiences and supporting one another. Some candidates talked about answered prayers and how this made them feel towards God; others talked about needing forgiveness or guidance from God and how praying supported them through difficult times. This question was generally well answered.
- (c) This question showed evidence of teachers covering the syllabus in good detail and candidates used sophisticated reasoning. Better answers challenged the idea of fasting but supported abstinence from pleasurable things during Lent. Some referred to its importance in other religions. Some candidates did get confused by the negative in the question.

Question 7

- (a) Credit was given to candidates who explained the concept of symbols to the proximity of idols and hence shirk. Some candidates talked about Islamic calligraphy, the moon and the crescent sign or the dome on a mosque. However, there were not many level 4 responses to this question. Many candidates simply described the Five Pillars, without attempting to explain why they qualify as symbols.
- (b) This was generally answered very well, with the majority of candidates explaining how Salat is one of the Five Pillars and how they impact upon their faith. They distinguished between praying as a duty and personal praying. Deepening their faith in Allah, strengthening the sense of community amongst Muslims and regular praying, putting Allah first in one's life, were some of the good responses.
- (c) This question was well answered. Candidates understood the Muslim perspective on fasting, involving not just giving up food but sex and watching TV. They explained how it helped to deepen their commitment to Allah. Some candidates were unable to argue from a different point of view, so could not attain the highest level possible.

Topic 3 Religion and Science

Question 9

- (a) All candidates knew something about the scientific ideas. There were some excellent scientific and anthropological answers explaining in detail the Big Bang Theory and Darwin's theory of evolution. Some candidates described religious rather than scientific ideas about the origins of the world and humanity or combined both scientific and religious ideas in the same response. Some candidates did not understand the word 'origins'. Credit was given to answers referencing Christian scientists who believed in the Creationist Theory. Poorer answers just focused upon one aspect of the question i.e. the origins of the world and not humanity or the other way round.
- (b) This was well answered by candidates approaching this from the Christian and Muslim perspectives. Candidates were able to state a number of points as to why Christians might not accept these views, for example what the Bible says about creation and the origins of humanity. Detailed quotes were used from the text, with the belief that the Bible is the Word of God and is to be accepted and what the Church teaches. Some candidates explained how and why not all Christians disagree with scientific ideas and were credited for this.
- (c) This was a straight forward question and there were many individual opinions with reasoned arguments. Candidates understood the Christian perspectives, for example man's responsibility for stewardship on this planet, and were able to argue whether they agreed or disagreed with this view very well. The most common alternate view proposed was there is no reason for human's existence. It was accidental or a development of evolution, nothing more.

Topic 4 Death and the Afterlife

Question 13

- (a) This question achieved the highest degree of differentiation on the paper, with many high level candidates providing sophisticated answers focusing on Dualism, Materialism and the teachings of St. Paul. In some cases too much was made of the soul and what happens to it after death and little was said about the part played by the body. Some candidates showed little understanding of the distinction between the body and the soul. A large

number of weaker responses included details about funeral rituals instead of answering the question. Some just wrote what they thought about the soul.

- (b) The most common response to the question was that behaviour upon Earth affected one's life after death. Sometimes candidates spent too long describing heaven, hell and purgatory or giving examples of teachings on behaviours from the Bible, instead of explaining why such places or teachings might impact upon people's behaviour whilst living on earth. Candidates explaining why achieved the higher levels. Other reasons included the need to follow in the footsteps of Jesus and the example he set, if one claimed to be a follower of Jesus. Another view was that behaving morally was good for all people and made for a better society.
- (c) Most candidates were able to offer views on both sides and give reasons. Many talked about their own fears of dying and that believing in life after death gave people hope. Good Christian responses were ones in which candidates explained how the resurrection provided evidence that there was life after death to all who believe in Jesus, therefore they did not fear death.

Topic 5 - Good and Evil

Question 17

- (a) There were a number of sources described in detail which were credited. These included following the teachings of the Bible or The Church, talking and listening to Church leaders such as The Pope or local ministers, following examples of Christian parents and friends, following the examples set by famous Christians such as Martin Luther King or Desmond Tutu, praying to God for guidance, talking with Christians at House groups or Bible study sessions and following ones conscience. Some candidates talked about how Christians behave rather than how they find the best way to behave. This resulted in a lower level response.
- (b) Most candidates explained what is meant by the term 'the problem of evil' before going on to explain how Christians dealt with the issue. There were some exceptional answers to this question with candidates referring to various theodicies e.g. Iraneaus, Augustinian and Process Theodicy, and other philosophers' views on religion e.g. Nietzsche and Kant. Many of these views were explained in detail. Some described what is meant by the word 'evil' and how one can stop it happening, from their own point of view. Other responses described in detail The Fall and the role of the devil in the world, the differences between Natural evil and Moral evil, reward in heaven and the value of soul-making. Some candidates confused the term 'evil' with 'suffering'.
- (c) There were several reasoned arguments given on both sides of the question. Some argued that suffering is caused by the devil, relating it to scriptural teachings and beliefs about the work of the devil. Other views focused upon the amount of suffering caused by mankind and his actions, not the devil. Some discussed the literal or symbolic nature of the devil and discussed whether he is real. Others talked about how God sends suffering as a test or it is the product of freewill and the not the devil that causes suffering.

1931/02 & 1931/04

General Comments

Candidates generally did well if they could address the question using religious responses, rather than social ones. Some of the poorer answers resulted from studying the specification from the perspective of two religions. Better answers usually concentrated on one religion.

Many candidates who had been taught different denominational perspectives were often unclear about the specific meaning of such terms as 'fundamental'; 'liberal'; 'traditional' and 'orthodox'. Also, the teachings between Protestants and Catholics were confused. Some candidates are, as ever, still unclear about whether Catholics are Christians or a different faith altogether. Some candidates 'marked' their own papers and wrote down the marks on the paper.

Some candidates changed question in the middle – i.e. moving across from one page to the next. Some attempted to make a list of various religious teachings in the hope they would gain extra marks but they needed to show how these teachings/quotes relate to the question or explain them to show their understanding of the importance of the quote. Quite a few candidates did not use a black pen as directed by the new examination rules.

Comments on specific questions:

Question 1

- (a) Worryingly, some candidates did not know what contraception was – some discussed abortion while others focused on fertility treatment. There were many social/citizenship/PSHE responses. Some candidates believed Catholics would allow contraception to prevent STIs. Candidates using specific religious teachings referred to scriptural references such as the sin of Onan, God's command to Adam and Eve and also Church teachings, with some making reference to Aquinas' Natural Law and, as a result, these candidates did well. Some candidates attempted to bring in teachings on the Sanctity of Life but did not state why these teachings were applicable to the question.
- (b) Some candidates did not know what the term 'vows' meant whilst others just generalised and did not refer to any of the vows specifically. Other candidates discussed the ceremony in detail rather than addressing the focus of the question. There were some good answers, referring to how the vows provide guidance to married life and how they reflect Christian beliefs. Most candidates stated that the vows were important because they were stated in front of God and thus could not be broken.
- (c) Most candidates were able to score highly on this part of the question, although some did not refer to specific religious teachings, thus only reaching Level 3. There were some good Hinduism responses which referred to the laws of Manu.

Question 5

- (a) Usually, this was answered well. Candidates referred to the sanctity of life using Biblical teachings in support and stating the different Church responses. However, some candidates focused more on why abortion could be allowed rather than why many Christians consider it to be wrong or the lesser of two evils. There were many purely social views. Some candidates discussed a Natural Law approach as opposed to Situation Ethics whilst others discussed the dilemma of when life begins.

- (b) Again, this was usually answered well with candidates referring to traditional views of people going to hell and not being buried in consecrated ground, as opposed to the modern view that compassion is needed. A lot of candidates believed suicide was cowardly, selfish and not fair on the people left behind. Some candidates also discussed assisted suicide. One or two references were made to martyrs and suicide bombers.
- (c) There were different approaches to this question: some candidates discussed the fact that animals do not have souls and thus were not as sacred, whilst others referred to stewardship. Animal testing was also discussed. Murderers and people who committed crimes were not considered to be sacred. The quality of life, as opposed to the sanctity of life, was discussed. Some candidates referred to the fact the God did not exist whilst some queried whether the devil's life was sacred if all life is.

Question 9

- (a) This was usually answered well if the candidate was able to refer to specific Biblical teachings. Some discussed Pauline, some referred to the Catholic stance on woman priests and others to Genesis. Candidates using solely social responses did not get beyond level 2.
- (b) Unfortunately some candidates misread the question and concentrated on 'how' not 'why'. Good answers referred to Jesus' statement "I am the way" and the concept of salvation through Christ and Jesus' command to go forth and baptise. Other candidates also discussed why some Christians are pluralists or exclusivists.
- (c) Most candidates understood the term 'prejudice' but a lot found it difficult to give an opposing view as to why it is not wrong. Some referred back to part (b), stating that some Christians are prejudiced against other religions, or part (a), stating there is sexism within the Church.

Question 13

- (a) There was, as expected, a lot of misquotes of Paul's letter to Timothy. Some candidates were able to give specific religious teachings, for example Parables of Rich Fool; Lazarus and the Rich Man; Sheep and the Goats; Good Samaritan and the story of the Widow's Mite, but were not able to show how they directly related to the question. Others were able to quote and explain them very well indeed. The quote about the camel and the eye of the needle was also used, sometimes to good effect, and sometimes the candidates did not fully understand what Jesus was referring to. Some candidates concentrated on specific charities and some discussed why some charities would not be appropriate.
- (b) There was often a lot of repetition of part (a). Some did not write in length in this section, possibly to avoid repetition. A lot of candidates discussed, quite harshly, the concept that some Christians would not help poor people because it was their fault they were poor. Other candidates discussed the concept that people are judged on their actions, not their wealth, and everyone is equal to God. Some discussed what Christians would do to help the poor.
- (c) There were different approaches to this question. Some candidates considered that this statement was about discrimination in the work place and that, as everyone is equal, there is no job which they cannot do. Others referred to specific jobs, such as hit man and debt collector, which a Christian would not do. Some did support these examples with religious teachings, whilst others tended to generalise and just state 'because it is against their religion'.

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Islam responses were usually good, focusing on the purification of wealth (Zakat) or speaking of Zakat as charity (as expected) and support of the Ummah. Riba and sadaqah were discussed.

Question 17

- (a) Many candidates did not understand this term and often discussed punishment, prompting repetition in part (b). Those who did understand the term were able to describe it well: liberation theology was mentioned.
- (b) Most candidates were able to do justice to this question. Answers referred to the aims of punishment, discussed the pros and cons of capital punishment in relation to Christian teachings and also discussed the concept of forgiveness. Some candidates referred to the fact that everyone will be judged at the end of time for their sins, with the prospect of purgatory.
- (c) Most candidates were able to answer this question well, although some used this as an opportunity to write down all they knew about Just War. Extremists and terrorists were used as examples of fighting, compared to the pacifist stance.

Hindu responses were good, referring to varnashramadharma in part (a) and the aims of punishment in part (b). Part (c) referred to the idea of duty as stated by Krishna to Arjuna.

1931/05 Coursework

General Comments

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

Centres are reminded that there will be no coursework options in the new GCSE RS specifications.

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. There were a number of centres where contact proved difficult. 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 continued increasing maturity of the candidates' responses should be noted, as should the degree of humanity which so often appears in the work submitted.

Grade Thresholds

General Certificate of Secondary Education (Short Course)
 Religious Studies (Philosophy and Ethics) (1031)
 June 2008 Examination Series

Component Threshold Marks

Component	Max Mark	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Paper 1	84	66	57	48	39	30	21	12
Paper 2	63	51	44	38	30	23	16	9
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	76	66	57	48	39	30	21	12
Percentage in Grade		6.0	11.6	15.9	17.7	16.6	13.5	9.6	6.2
Cumulative Percentage in Grade		6.0	17.6	33.5	51.2	67.8	81.3	90.9	97.1

The total entry for the examination was 64,178.

Paper 2, 3

	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Overall Threshold Marks	80	70	63	56	49	39	30	21	12
Percentage in Grade		8.7	10.7	15.6	17.7	20.5	13.5	8.1	3.6
Cumulative Percentage in Grade		8.7	19.4	35.0	52.7	73.2	86.7	94.8	98.4

The total entry for the examination was 4,836.

Overall

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Percentage in Grade	6.2	11.5	15.9	17.7	16.9	13.5	9.5	6.0
Cumulative Percentage in Grade	6.2	17.7	33.6	51.3	68.2	81.7	91.2	97.2

The total entry for the examination was 69,053.

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

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