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AS

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Component 2: Study of Religion

2B Christianity

Report on the Examination

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## General comments

There were many well-informed, relevant, answers that showed both an excellent grasp of the material studied and good examination technique. There were some full-mark answers to all of the questions set and some excellent scripts. There was very little evidence that answers were rushed and most answers were of a good length, although a little shorter than expected: many answers of around 300 words achieved the highest levels of the mark scheme. This was very impressive for the first examination of a new specification when teachers, as well as students, were unfamiliar with the demands.

Where there were weaknesses, they were often those commonly seen in work produced under examination conditions: a failure to focus on the question; a lack of support for, or development of, points made, and a failure to engage in debate in AO2 answers. Some AO2 answers were limited to a maximum of Level 2 because they only presented and explained one point of view and did not in any way recognise that others would disagree with the reasoning and the view expressed.

There was some impressive use of technical terms and specialist vocabulary; however, there was also some confusion when terms were used without any apparent understanding of their meaning.

Of the Component 2 faith options (2A – 2E), the majority of students sat option 2B Christianity.

## Question 01

### **01.1 Explain why there are different Christian beliefs about the authority of the Bible and why the differences between them are significant.**

Excellent answers focused clearly on the question, however, some weaker answers dealt with ‘what are the differences?’ rather than ‘why are there differences?’. Some of the best answers focused on the different understandings of revelation or inspiration and how they lead to different understandings of the Bible as the Word of God or the work of humanity and hence to different beliefs about the authority of the Bible. Many of these answers also clearly illustrated the significance of the differences, often by referring to different understandings of Genesis 1 or of Christian moral teaching.

In contrast, some weaker answers did not consider **why** there were differences, instead they explained what the differences were and then gained marks by explaining why they mattered; others completely ignored the significance of the differences described. In some answers there was also considerable confusion about which view of the authority of scripture belonged to which tradition: references to the Catholic, liberal, Evangelical Protestant and conservative traditions were used almost at random. Most answers used the material anticipated by the mark scheme, but biblical scholarship was also cited by some as a cause of different views.

### **01.02 ‘From a Christian point of view, God cannot be clearly described.’ Assess this view.**

There were some excellent answers to this question. Many were able to explain the idea that God is transcendent and therefore beyond description and some gave evidence to support this from the Bible or the concept of the ‘wholly other’. Many such answers also showed a clear understanding of why anthropomorphic language, and, less frequently, gender specific language, may be seen as inadequate. In some answers, however, little use was made of these ideas and students

responded more generally including ideas about how difficult it is to describe God as omnipotent, omniscient and all-loving, given the problem of evil, for example. Some answers ignored the word 'clearly' in the statement for discussion, and some took the statement to mean only that Christians do not know what God looks like. A good number of responses offered little in support of the view that God can be clearly described, however, many discussed the clarity, or lack of clarity of the concept of the Trinity, others argued that the belief that Jesus is God incarnate meant that God can be clearly described and/or that religious experience provides meaning for some of the words used, such as Holy.

## **Question 02**

### **02.1 Explain why good moral conduct is important in Christianity.**

Excellent answers focused clearly on the question. Weaker answers tended to summarise or explain the meaning of good moral conduct but made little reference to its importance. Other answers made statements about importance without explaining them and this was particularly evident in answers that referred to how good moral conduct 'brings about God's kingdom'.

### **02.2 'All Christians should be baptised as infants.' Assess this view.**

Excellent answers included a range of arguments and then reflected on the arguments presented. For example, the argument that infant baptism was needed to welcome children into the family of God was countered with the argument that there are other ways to achieve this, and the argument that infant baptism was needed to remove original sin was countered with arguments against the concept of original sin and/or theological arguments about God's mercy and the saving power of Jesus' death. There was a tendency for answers to summarise different views about baptism without dealing with the underlying arguments supporting each view meaning that in some answers it was stated that Catholics supported paedobaptism (a term that was frequently used) while Baptists supported credobaptism (also frequently used) and a brief description was given of how baptism was carried out. Such answers did not address the issue.

## **Use of statistics**

Statistics used in this report may be taken from incomplete processing data. However, this data still gives a true account on how students have performed for each question.

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

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