



AS

Religious Studies

7061/2B Study of religion: Christianity

Report on the Examination

7061
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General Comments

All questions were marked with direct reference to the published Level Descriptors for AO1 and AO2.

There were some very accomplished scripts for this paper, and some outstanding individual answers. Students demonstrated AO1 knowledge and understanding of topics generally comparable to previous years, and most were able to discuss alternative views for AO2 answers. There was limited critical analysis at AO2. Some students have been taught to write ‘this is a strong argument because...’ or ‘this is a weak argument because...’ but this strategy does not guarantee that what follows is creditable critical analysis. In order to reach L4 and above for AO2, students need to reply to an argument presented, or develop a dialogue between different views.

1.1 Explain different Christian perspectives about the authority of the Church.

[15 marks]

Most students were able to discuss different understandings of the authority of the church to some extent. There were some excellent answers which unpacked Catholic and other views with a good focus on authority and the Church. Some less successful answers failed to keep to the question, and instead focused their discussion on different understandings of the authority of the Bible. Marks for answers that did not focus on the Church were constrained by the levels of response criteria; although generally accurate and relevant (Level 3), there was limited application to the question (Level 2). The best answers showed a clear knowledge and understanding of different views based on historical factors, different understandings of scripture, the views of Martin Luther, and the role of apostolic succession and apostolic tradition in the Catholic Church.

1.2 ‘The sanctity of life means Christians cannot support abortion or embryo research.’

Assess this view.

[15 marks]

There were some very strong answers which distinguished between the strong sanctity of life principle and the weak sanctity of life principle, and which applied both to abortion and embryo research as separate issues. A number of students made no distinction between abortion and embryo research, and considered mainly whether or not some generic sanctity of life principle allows the destruction of an embryo. Such answers rarely exceeded Level 3 ‘a general response’. One area of concern for examiners was a widespread lack of understanding of the term ‘embryo research.’ Many students seemed to understand this to include creating designer babies, pre-natal diagnosis and in vitro fertilisation, none of which are research activities. Students were not penalised for misunderstanding, but the quality of arguments was sometimes limited by the use of inaccurate evidence. As in all AO2 essays, critical analysis is required for Level 4 and above, so students who merely listed views for and against the statement were unable to progress beyond level 3.

2.1 Explain why Christians have different understandings of the significance of Jesus' actions at the last supper.

[15 marks]

The specification expects students only to have studied Luke's account of the last supper, in which there is limited reference to actions. Responses were therefore credited for discussing Jesus' words as well as his actions at the last supper. Most students were able to discuss different understandings of the events of the last supper, but some failed to focus on reasons for different understandings. The assessment objectives in the specification requires students to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief including [...] causes and significance of similarities and differences in belief [...] Marks for answers that did not address the causes were constrained by the levels of response criteria; although generally accurate and relevant (Level 3), there was limited application to the question (Level 2). The best answers gave clear explanations of why different denominations see different significance in the account of the last supper. A few students discussed Jesus' actions in John's account of the last supper, and although this content could not be expected, it was fully credited.

2.2 'For Christians, the afterlife can only be spiritual.'

Assess this view.

[15 marks]

The best answers to this question focused on physical and spiritual understandings of resurrection, and what those imply for understanding heaven, hell and the concept of purgatory. Many used biblical texts effectively to support views, including the parable of the sheep and the goats and 1 Corinthians 15. Many also cited texts beyond those listed in the specification and were credited appropriately. Stronger essays included accurate references to scholars including Augustine to support different views, and a few discussed the concept of objective immortality in process thought as neither spiritual nor physical. Some students failed to find the focus of the question; there were some answers that discussed rather general understandings of heaven, hell and purgatory. A few responses included explanation of a psychological understandings of heaven and hell, which is not creditable since it does not describe life after death. Some critical analysis was essential for responses to gain Level 4 and above; responses that merely listed arguments in support of, and disagreeing with, the statement were unable to achieve higher than Level 3 'different points of view supported by evidence and chains of reasoning'.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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