

Religious studies

Answers and commentaries A-level (7062)

Component 2B: Study of religion and dialogues: Christianity

Marked answers from students for questions from the June 2022 exams. Supporting commentary is provided to help you understand how marks are awarded and how students can improve performance.

Contents

The below content table is interactive. You can click on the title of the question to go directly to that page.

10 mark question (AO1) mark scheme	3
15 mark question (AO2) mark scheme	4
10 mark questions (AO1)	5
15 mark questions (AO2)	14
25 mark questions (AO1 and AO2)	23

Answers and commentaries

This resource is to be used alongside the A-level Religious Studies Paper 2B Study of Religion and Dialogues: Christianity June 2022 question paper.

10 mark question (AO1) mark scheme

Levels of response: 10 marks A-level – AO1	
Level 5 9-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge and critical understanding is accurate, relevant and fully developed in breadth and depth with very good use of detailed and relevant evidence which may include textual/scriptural reference where appropriate. Where appropriate, good knowledge and understanding of the diversity of views and/or scholarly opinion is demonstrated. Clear and coherent presentation of ideas with precise use of the appropriate subject vocabulary.
Level 4 7-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge and critical understanding is accurate and mostly relevant with good development in breadth and depth shown through good use of relevant evidence which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate. Where appropriate, alternative views and/or scholarly opinion are explained. Mostly clear and coherent presentation of ideas with good use of the appropriate subject vocabulary.
Level 3 5-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge and critical understanding is generally accurate and relevant with development in breadth and/or depth shown through some use of evidence and/or examples which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate. Where appropriate, there is some familiarity with the diversity of views and/or scholarly opinion. Some organisation of ideas and coherence with reasonable use of the appropriate subject vocabulary.
Level 2 3-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge and critical understanding is limited, with limited development in breadth and/or depth shown through limited use of evidence and/or examples which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate. Where appropriate, limited reference may be made to alternative views and/or scholarly opinion. Limited organisation of ideas and coherence and use of subject vocabulary.

Level 1 1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and critical understanding is basic with little or no development. There may be a basic awareness of alternative views and/or scholarly opinion. • Isolated elements of accurate and relevant information and basic use of appropriate subject vocabulary.
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No accurate or relevant material to credit.

15 mark question (AO2) mark scheme

Levels of response: 15 marks A-level – AO2	
Level 5 13-15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very well-focused response to the issue(s) raised. • Perspective discussion of different views, including, where appropriate, those of scholars or schools of thought with critical analysis. • There is an appropriate evaluation fully supported by the reasoning. • Precise use of the appropriate subject vocabulary.
Level 4 10-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A well-focused response to the issues(s) raised. • Different views are discussed, including, where appropriate, those of scholars or schools of thought, with some critical analysis. • There is an appropriate evaluation supported by the reasoning. • Good use of the appropriate subject vocabulary.
Level 3 7-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A general response to the issue(s) raised. • Different views are discussed, including, where appropriate, those of scholars or schools of thought. • An evaluation is made that is consistent with some of the reasoning. • Reasonable use of the appropriate subject vocabulary.
Level 2 4-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A limited response to the issue(s) raised. • Presentation of a point of view relevant to the issue with some supporting evidence and argument. • Limited attempt at the appropriate use of subject vocabulary.
Level 1 1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A basic response to the issue(s) raised. • A point of view is stated, with some evidence or reason(s) in support. • Some attempt at the appropriate use of subject vocabulary.
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No accurate or relevant material to credit.

10 mark questions (AO1)

Question 02.1

Examine the significant ideas of Daphne Hampson and Rosemary Radford Ruether about the patriarchal nature of Christianity.

[10 marks]

Mark scheme

Please refer to mark scheme on [page 3 for levels of response](#).

Target: AO1.1: Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief including religious, philosophical and ethical thought and teaching.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

Note that answers may, but need not, be limited to the consideration of the following specification content: A comparison of the significant ideas of Daphne Hampson and Rosemary Radford Ruether about the patriarchal nature of Christianity including Hampson's view that Christianity is irredeemably sexist and Ruether's ideas about the androgynous Christ and her view that the female nature is more Christlike than the male.

Daphne Hampson

Hampson argues as a post-Christian theologian that Christianity is subject to patriarchal imagery and attitudes from first century Palestine. It treats men as the norm and women as secondary, and in this sense, Hampson describes Christianity as 'fascist'. It is therefore so sexist that it is unacceptable today, and people should seek to express God in other ways.

Hampson also argues that because Christians look to a patriarchal model for moral decision making, taking instructions from a transcendent God rather than exercising moral choices freely, Christianity is not moral. She believes that basing moral decisions on an impossible one-off event that breaks the laws of nature, or on the teachings of a man who was supposedly related to God differently from all other people, does not make sense.

Rosemary Radford Ruether

Ruether argues as a Roman Catholic feminist, liberation theologian that the message of Christianity is one of liberation, where history, experience and hope all contribute to understanding. She sees parallels between Jesus' teachings and liberation theology, and believes that the Holy Spirit can lead people to an understanding of Jesus for the contemporary world, so Christianity can become a religion of liberation from patriarchy.

Ruether sees Jesus as having many qualities which are traditionally considered female, for example, he was a healer and showed love and care to the weak and outcasts, as well as the

male qualities of authority and power. In this sense she sees him as a being who embodies all aspects of human nature, an idea she describes as 'androgynous Christology'.

Student responses

Response A

Examine the significant ideas of Daphne Hampson and Rosemary Radford Ruether about the patriarchal nature of Christianity.

plan:

para 1: sexism within the church; views of men
↳ supports Hampson

para 2: Ruether and art in the church
↳ de Vinci's depiction

con: they are right; the Church = sexist & denial

Daphne Hampson and Rosemary Radford Ruether are important influential feminists and role models for girls/young women outside and inside the Church.

In the pre-nineteenth century church - the building and ~~for~~ foundations of the modern church today - is full of hate and sexism towards women. In the 5th century women were excluded from the Eucharist - very significant sacrament that involves celebrating Jesus Christ - as well as banned from being ordained into the church's hierarchy. As a woman (clearly expressed by Martin Luther in his writings) you were expected to be at home, be quiet and "bear and bring-up children" that is it your duty is to the men around you and a woman has to count on those men to educate her on God and his words. The only way to escape this fate was through celibacy - ~~the~~ Hildegard of Bingham ~~is~~ and Julian of Norwich*. So therefore, Hampson's statement that Christianity is "inherently sexist" is a fair and accurate description that she was very

right to bring attention too. The patriarchal nature of Christianity has held back and imprisoned women in the church – still now the Roman Catholic church does not allow women to be church leaders and be ordained.

Similarly, Rosemary Radford Ruether also fought and brought attention to the lack of women representation in the church. Thus creating her fine artwork depicting Jesus as a female figure, which unsurprisingly resulted in a large amount of hateful outrage. The hypocritical ~~nature~~ and patriarchal nature of Christianity is clearly shown in the outrage Ruether received - many complaining that the painting was inaccurate as Jesus was 'clearly a man' in the Bible. Interestingly, Leonardo Da Vinci did not receive any similar backlash on his also highly inaccurate (as Jesus was from the middle east) depiction of Jesus modelled after his lover - a white Italian man.

The ^{significant} ideas of Hampson and Ruether are long overdue and unsurprisingly not welcomed by the powerful men who benefit from the patriarchal ^{and unpowerful} nature of Christianity.

*considered two of the first ^{early} feminists in history

This is a Level 2 response

This response is limited. It shows very limited knowledge and understanding of the key ideas from the Ruether-Hampson debate, and the content on Ruether's views is inaccurate. There is some limited development in discussion of Hampson's views. Although there is some organisation of ideas, there is limited use of subject vocabulary.

4 marks

Response B

Daphne Hampson is a post-Christian theologian, presenting a radical feminist view of the flaws of religion and its patriarchal nature. She argues that Christianity carries immense "patriarchal baggage" from 1st Century Palestine, with views on women that should not be implemented in today's society. For example, in Galatians 5, it ~~highlights~~ instructs "wives, submit yourself to your husbands as you do to the Lord", illustrating the submissive role of women that Christianity promotes. Further, she states that it is "fascist" and "irremediably sexist", ultimately reducing women to the possession of men and providing a religious backing for the oppression of women in all areas of society, mimicking a fascist regime. ~~She~~ Additionally, Christianity is labelled as "not true" due to the wealth of errors regarding history and doctrine in the Bible, such as the fact that the creation story was based on a Babylonian myth. Hampson argues that God should not be "gendered" and that people should be "open to God", moving away from the patriarchal nature of Christianity and into their own individual relationship with God.

Rosemary Radford Ruether is a liberation theologian and Roman Catholic feminist, putting forward the view that Christianity should not be moved on from, but restated in feminist terms. She highlights the "androgynous" nature of Christianity through Jesus Christ, ~~she~~ stating that he had both typically female qualities in love and kindness, as well as typically male qualities with authority and leadership. This is seen in the healing of the sick.

as well as the sermon on the Mount, "with Ruether arguing that female nature was in fact more Christ-like. Ruether suggested that the patriarchal nature of Christianity had to be restored and the Bible reinterpreted to elevate the status of women both in society and in the Church. She saw the future as one where women would bring peace to a male dominated world. This highlights the ideas of Hampson and Ruether about the patriarchal nature of Christianity.

This is a Level 5 response

This response shows accurate, relevant knowledge and understanding, and is sufficiently developed, in the context of an exam, in both breadth and depth. The evidence used includes references to the scholars' own words and scripture, particularly in the section on Hampson. It explains the opinion of two scholars clearly, as required by the question. The ideas are presented clearly and coherently with good use of the subject vocabulary. It is not a perfect answer, being slightly weaker on Ruether than Hampson, but it is the best that could reasonably be expected from an A Level student under exam conditions after two years' study.

10 marks

Question 01.1

Examine why there are different Christian views about celibacy and marriage.

[10 marks]

Mark scheme

Please refer to mark scheme on [page 3 for levels of response](#).

Target: AO1.3: Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief including cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

Note: 'celibacy and marriage' may be treated as a single idea.

One reason for the difference depends on the fact that the Bible contains divergent teachings which may guide views. The Old Testament teaches that marriage is good, and several New Testament letters give positive teachings about marriage or treat the married state as normal, but Paul is understood to say that celibacy is the preferred state and marriage is only for those who cannot control themselves. Jesus is quoted as saying that there is no marriage in heaven.

A second reason is that different churches have different teachings. Some churches, for example, the Catholic Church, consider celibacy and marriage to be different holy states. The celibate vocation of monks, nuns and priests is considered superior, but marriage between lay people is a sacrament that is binding until death. Other churches see marriage as a desirable social and legal arrangement which forms the basis for Christian families, and consider life-long celibacy unnecessary.

A third reason depends on how far individual Christians follow traditional church teachings, and how far they follow social norms in their own context. In general, all churches support celibacy outside marriage, and marriage between a man and a woman as the context for sex. However, many western Christians today diverge from tradition, and take a more liberal view based on norms in society where sex before marriage and same sex marriage are acceptable, and marriage is not considered necessary for bearing and raising children.

Maximum Level 2 for answers that only explain different views.

Response C

Celibacy is ~~the~~ when a person remains unmarried and has no sexual relationships. There are different views regarding celibacy and marriage. This is because some views are derived from the Bible and biblical teachings. This is because Jesus never married, so the teachings from the Bible may highlight that marriage is not supported or encouraged, therefore marriage is not ~~a~~ necessary. Marriage is accepted and is a given, ~~except~~ ~~when~~ apart from when it involves a homosexual relationship or ~~some~~ ~~that~~ a relationship that has a transgender person in it. For many, this is seen as wrong and incompatible with the Bible and ~~the~~ teachings. ~~the~~ In the modern day, the views of marriage have changed and it is ~~now~~ accepted in most cases by the Church. However, ~~some~~ ^{those} ~~who~~ who have related views that are compatible with the Bible, may believe that marriage is not necessary as Jesus did not do it and certain relationships are not accepted. ^{Most} Modern thinking accepts marriage, however, may not encourage it.

On the other hand there are different views about celibacy because some Christians abide by biblical thinking and some adopt a more accepting modern ~~the~~ day view. Celibacy is ~~now~~ ~~not~~ ~~praised~~ and encouraged in the Church for ~~some~~ ~~praises~~ ~~and~~ ~~bishops~~. Those who are celibate are ~~now~~ seen as loyal and trustworthy and ~~for~~ ~~some~~ have a higher status than those who are not celibate. This is because celibacy allows a priest / bishop to focus on the Bible and

the teachings. ~~It is~~ It is a more acceptable approach to becoming ordained and keeping a high status and respected name in the Church. Some Churches ordain those who are not celibate but as they do adopt a modern approach and do not see celibacy as a sacrament to the Church. However, many respect those who are celibate and stick with the Church traditional teaching. However, in the Bible, there may be stories of not celibate individuals whose importance exceeds the idea of being celibate.

This is a Level 3 response

The student has rightly focused on reasons for different views, so has avoided the cap at Level 2. This is quite a general response. Knowledge and critical understanding is generally accurate and relevant, but relies on superficial generalisations rather than specific evidence in the form of examples and/or quotations to support and develop points made. The nature of the question requires some familiarity with a diversity of views, and this is evident in the response, but there is little explanation of these views. There is some coherent organisation of ideas into paragraphs, and reasonable use of subject vocabulary, but within each paragraph, clarity and coherence are less evident.

5 marks

15 mark questions (AO2)

Question 01.2

'Christians cannot justify the use of weapons of mass destruction.'

Evaluate this claim.

[15 marks]

Mark scheme

Please refer to mark scheme on [page 4 for levels of response](#).

Target: AO2: Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

Note that answers may, but need not, be limited to the consideration of the following specification content: sanctity of life: the concept of sanctity of life; different views about its application to issues concerning the use of weapons of mass destruction.

Answers may present, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments:

Christians cannot support the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) because, by definition, they kill many people, which breaks the sixth commandment and seems to go against the sanctity of life principle, that all life is intrinsically valuable and must be preserved. However, other Christians argue that the exceptional use of a WMD which causes fewer deaths than the alternative may be acceptable as the lesser of two evils, for example, the Hiroshima bombing compared to war continuing indefinitely.

Christians cannot justify using WMD because they are called to be peacemakers. They are taught to love their enemies and to turn the other cheek, and WMD are a feature of warfare used to attack or retaliate on a massive scale. However, Just War Theory, as developed by Augustine and then Aquinas, allows for Christians to engage in war under specific constraints, and some might consider that even WMD could be considered proportional as required by Just War Theory.

Christians cannot justify using WMD because they cause widespread suffering and death among innocent civilians, and the results may damage the environment. Chemical, nuclear and biological weapons do not discriminate between combatants and non-combatants, or between civilian and military targets. However, others argue that in order to maintain peace Christians need to be prepared to use all weapons available to them, including WMD, to preserve their value as a deterrent.

Student responses

Response A

~~The~~ ~~say~~ The claim that "Christians cannot justify the use of weapons or mass destruction" ~~holds a place in~~ cannot be undubitably proven and therefore does not hold any degree of religious weighting in responding to this claim.

Christianity as a religion is completely different to Christianity as a faith, and thus the ethics of a believer in the religion does not ~~hold any~~ have any reference to the faith as a way of life. In every book of the Bible, goodness and purity is preached, in the Old Testament through the Tenach and allegiance to the Jewish faith and in the New Testament through Jesus, son of God, or, son of Man. The Bible, having been written ~~any~~ across a period of human instability in the Greco-Roman ~~life at the~~ era, and later, is a conflux ~~and amalgamation~~ of amalgamation of stories, none of which include the uses of weapons or mass destruction, simply because they did not exist. Therefore, it is near impossible to say whether or not Christians can justify the use of weapons or mass destruction.

In Just War Theory, the idea ~~that~~ ^{devotes itself to} that ~~mitigates~~ proper reasoning, war is unjust, ^{Aristotle} Aristotle, Ancient Greek philosopher of the 3rd Century BC advocated for the unjust obsession with war and subsequent dearns. He ~~places~~ ^{the} pushes the point of lack of ~~pacifism~~ ^{pacifism}.

Security in the establishment and stability of a government, or group of leaders to show that war is unjust as it essentially ignores the importance of each life, and creates an atmosphere for where doing wrong is apparently just - as it is the nature of war itself. Therefore the existence of military alone is enough to make others believe that war is viable, which it is not as it is an overt opportunity for doing wrong. This can be taken into account by a Christian, however is not solely the Christian religion that does not value human life - and it is ~~not~~ impossible to either confirm or deny the statement that "Christians cannot justify the use of weapons of mass destruction."

This is a Level 2 response

This is a limited response to the issue raised. It has very limited focus on the question, but does present some relevant ideas with some supporting argument. The mention of Just War Theory and Aristotle does not amount to a discussion of the views of 'scholars or schools of thought' as required by Level 3. What argument there is does not discuss different views, either of scholars or schools of thought. However, it is more than 'a point of view...with some evidence or reasons' (Level 1). The first paragraph, which seems to be intended as an initial evaluation, does not succeed. The final sentences of the second and third paragraphs, although phrased as evaluations, are not consistent with the reasoning before them (Level 3). There is some appropriate use of subject vocabulary.

5 marks

Response B

Whilst it can be argued that the use of weapons of mass destruction goes against many of the 'just war' criteria, as well as Natural Moral Law, the weight of evidence suggests that Christians can justify the use of weapons of mass destruction but only as a last resort, which is confirmed by the Christian ethical theory of situation ethics.

Firstly it can be argued that in spite of the principle of sanctity of life or the belief that all life is precious and sacred, Christianity can not only justify war, but also the use of weapons of mass destruction if certain criteria are met. Such a decision would have to satisfy all the criteria for starting war outlined in the principle of *ius ad bello*, including the probability of success would have to outweigh the chance of failure, approval of a rightful authority and a cause worth fighting for, alongside others. However even if the just war theory may allow for war, it is questionable how far an atomic war could be justified by Christians

given the criteria of *ius in bello* which include that the war must be fought equally so that innocent people don't suffer unnecessarily and that there's a ~~chance~~^{chance} of success, which doesn't seem to be the case in a war fought with weapons of mass destruction, such as atomic bombs or biological weapons. Despite this reservation that some Christians may have, the use of

weapons of mass destruction' may be justified as seen in the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during WW2, since the threat that the fascist powers of Japan and Nazi Germany were going to destroy those who opposed them justified the use of the atomic bomb, since ^{as} the ^{purpose} ~~goal~~ was to produce more peace and avoid the evil destruction of innocent people arguably. Therefore Christians could indeed justify the use of weapons of mass destruction when it is to combat the greater evil as this satisfies the criteria of 'just war'.

More importantly, it can be argued that Christians could justify the use of weapons of mass destruction in spite of contradictions this causes with the commandments found in scripture, as Jesus himself was flexible in his adherence to the rules of the Old Testament, such as when he argued that "the sabbath was invented for the man, not man for the sabbath".

Although Jesus' teachings seemingly encourage pacifism in some and thus would lead Christians to not be able to justify using weapons of mass destruction, as

evidenced by Jesus' sermon on the Mount, where Jesus condemns the "eye for an eye" approach; Jesus himself used violence when necessary, such as when he overturned the tables thus suggesting in extreme situations Christians would be able

to justify use of weapons of mass destruction. However the use of weapons of mass destruction would go against the primary precept of NML which states defend the innocent to some extent, since an atomic bomb would also affect civilians and not just 'enemies'. In spite of this, Fletcher's Situation Ethics based on Jesus' agapeic love would enable Christians to justify this, since in certain cases this would be the most pragmatic and loving thing to do as for Fletcher justice is essentially love but applied.

Ultimately, although it is questionable to what extent those Christians who see Jesus as a pacifist and follow the precepts of NML would be able to justify using weapons of mass destruction, it can be argued that overall just now and Fletcher's SE would be able to justify it but in only extreme cases when all other solutions have failed.

This is a Level 5 response

This is a very well-focused response to the issue raised. There is a discussion of different views which uses examples and refers to Fletcher and the teachings of Jesus as well as more generally to schools of thought. There is clear critical analysis. Although this is not a perfect essay, it shows sufficient understanding and argument to be considered 'perceptive' in the context of an exam answer. The response starts and ends with a nuanced evaluation that is fully supported by the reasoning in between, and there is precise and accurate use of subject vocabulary. This is as much as could be reasonably expected from an A-level student under exam conditions after two years of study, and therefore earned full marks.

15 marks

Question 02.2

'Jesus is very important as a role model for Christians.'

Evaluate this claim.

[15 marks]

Mark scheme

Please refer to mark scheme on [page 4 for levels of response](#).

Target: AO2: Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

Note that answers may, but need not, be limited to the consideration of the following specification content, the authority of Jesus: different Christian understandings of Jesus' authority, including Jesus' authority as God's authority and Jesus' authority as only human; implications of these beliefs for Christian responses to Jesus' teaching and his value as a role model, with reference to his teaching on retaliation and love for enemies in the Sermon on the Mount: Matthew 5:38–48.

Answers may present, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments:

Many Christians believe Jesus is God incarnate, and therefore the ultimate role model, since, as God on earth, Jesus exemplifies perfected human living. Humans emulate Jesus' words and actions to become more God-like in the hope of attaining salvation. However, some Christians might find that Jesus' example of perfection makes him too different from fallible human beings. This would make him less important as a role model for Christians.

For some Protestants who believe that everything necessary for salvation is contained in the Bible, the words and actions of Jesus recorded in the gospels are part of God's direct teaching to humankind, and he is therefore a very important role model. However, other Christians argue that the gospels were written years after Jesus' lifetime by writers each with their own specific agenda, and contain material inserted by the early church. This limits how far Jesus, as portrayed in the gospels, can be seen as a role model.

Biblical literalists assume that Jesus is accurately portrayed in the Bible and therefore see him as the most important role model for all aspects of human living today. They may make everyday decisions based on the question 'What would Jesus do?' However, for other Christians, Jesus' masculinity, and the fact that he was a man of his time, make him less important as a role model for Christians today. Christians instead should follow the teachings of the church and model their behaviour on the example of the saints.

Student responses

Response A

"Jesus is very important as a role model for Christians" Evaluate this claim

The authority of Jesus in Christianity clearly shows his existence / position as a role model and source of wisdom for Christians.

~~Jesus~~ Jesus' morals and moral compass is renowned and has stood the test of time all over the world. There are many well known phrases inside and outside of Christianity that demonstrates his significance as a role model - 'run two miles'; 'do to others as you would have others do to you'; 'love your enemy'; 'What would Jesus do?'. Some of these were derived from a speech Jesus made that is accounted in the book of Matthew - the Sermon on the Mount. Although, the morals of Jesus are known and respected around the world they are mostly important for a ~~any~~ Christian in need of a role model.

Even though Jesus is understood as an important role model in the Church, because of his contrasts to the Bible - especially Old Testament many of his morals and values are lost to some Christians. For example, Jesus associated and supported many marginalised groups that are still discriminated against by Christians today: prostitutes, women, homeless, etc. Jesus is a very important role model but his intentions are often forgotten by Christians and they can act in ways he would deem wrong or

innappropriate.
In conclusion, Jesus ~~is~~ a very important role model for Christians and others as the morals, although forgotten, of Jesus continue to prove light years ahead of his time - and sometimes still ahead now.
* is the son of God and ~~therefore~~ therefore the voice of God on earth - who Christians strive to worship correctly,
~~the~~ ~~is~~ ~~is~~ making him

This is a Level 3 response

This is a general response to the issue. It explains two different views with some general examples, but there is no consideration of detailed examples or specific schools of thought to support the views presented. Argument for both viewpoints is clear but superficial, and there is no critical analysis which is required for Level 4. There is a rather general evaluation at the end, but it is consistent with some of the reasoning in the essay. There is some reasonable use of subject vocabulary.

8 marks

25 mark questions (AO1 and AO2)

Question 03.1

'Philosophical arguments are irrelevant to Christian beliefs about life after death.'

Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Christianity and philosophy.

[25 marks]

Mark scheme

Please refer to mark scheme on [page 3 for levels of response for AO1](#) and [page 4 for levels of response for AO2](#).

Target: AO1.4: Knowledge and understanding of approaches to the study of religion and belief. (10 marks)

Target: AO2: Analyse and evaluate aspects and approaches to religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study. (15 marks)

Material related to AO1 and AO2 may be presented discretely or holistically within the answer. Markers must read the whole of the response before either mark is awarded.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

AO1

Christianity

There are varying Christian beliefs about life after death including resurrection of the flesh and spiritual resurrection. Some process thinking offers belief in objective immortality and there are different interpretations of judgement, heaven and hell as physical, spiritual or psychological realities.

Philosophy

There are different views about the nature of the soul and the body/soul relationship, including Descartes' argument for the existence of the soul. The possibility of continuing personal existence after death is broadly discussed.

Maximum Level 3 for answers that do not include both Christianity and philosophy.

AO2

Philosophical arguments may be considered irrelevant if they fail to prove their case. For example, the argument that there is no soul to be passed on after death, because nothing can be detected using the five senses, fails if the soul is not regarded as something that can be sensed in this way. However, there are philosophical arguments in favour of life after death, or which at least show it to be a coherent possibility. There may be reference to Hick's idea of eschatological verification and to his replica theory here. Religion may consider philosophy relevant when it works in its favour.

Religious belief can be seen as a perspective, not itself based on evidence or reason, from which all evidence is viewed and all experiences interpreted. This likens belief to a 'Blik'. If belief is not based on reason it may be considered immune to rational argument. However, not all believers accept this understanding of faith and regard their position as reasonable and as supported by evidence. This means that philosophical challenges to the way the evidence has been interpreted are entirely relevant.

Philosophical arguments may be considered irrelevant to religious beliefs if religious claims are understood non-cognitively and/or as part of a religious language game in which those within the game can converse between themselves but have no significance for those outside the game. However, many see religion as making truth claims, such as 'there is a heavenly realm', which can be challenged by philosophy, and the analysis of religious language as non-cognitive may be seen as a philosophical argument.

Student response

Response A

Christians have a ~~divine~~ divine belief in the concept that there is a life after death. They believe that there is a heaven, which is the Kingdom of God, a Hell and a Purgatory. Your conduct of yourself and your key moral decisions that you make play an essential role in determining your destination after you die. There is a belief that if you right your wrongs that landed you in purgatory, you can eventually make it to heaven.

Some Christians would ask of where those unborn babies that are aborted go when they 'die'; as life starts at conception, according to their beliefs. Would it be that the child goes to Hell, for it was aborted and this is a sin? Or would they go to Heaven, where they could reunite with their family some day? This issue holds significant weight over some Christians and their beliefs in life after death.

~~Others~~

One philosophical idea which may hold some influence over a Christian's beliefs surrounding life after death is that of the 'Hierarchy of Souls', as proposed by Aristotle. He stated that we,

as humans, are at the top of the hierarchy, and the tiers run through all aspects of animals and the rest of nature, with grass being at the very bottom. As all are living things, all of them must have souls; but where do these souls go once their body has died? They cannot go to heaven, for this is only a place for those at the top of the hierarchy - and this is us, as humans. This makes a relevant and significant challenge as a philosophical argument against the Christian beliefs regarding life and death.

This is a Level 2 response for AO1 and a Level 2 response for AO2

The response demonstrates very limited knowledge and understanding of both aspects of the question. There is a superficial outline of generic Christian beliefs about life after death and a sketchy description of Aristotle's concept of the hierarchy of souls. However, there is limited development in depth, and none in breadth, of these two ideas. The mention of Aristotle constitutes limited reference to scholarly opinion. Although it is reasonably coherent, the ideas are not organised in a way that addresses the question, and there is limited use of subject vocabulary.

AO1: 3 marks

The AO2 aspect of this response is also very limited. There is little focus on the issue raised, the relevance of philosophical arguments to Christian beliefs about life after death. The question about the fate of unborn babies in the second paragraph is not situated in any philosophical framework. The third paragraph raises a potentially interesting philosophical question with respect to the fate of non-human souls but does not address Christian beliefs. The response as a whole only presents one point of view with respect to the focus of the question, that the hierarchy of souls challenges Christian beliefs, so at best this is 'a point of view relevant to the issue with some supporting evidence and argument'.

AO2: 4 marks

Total 7 marks

Question 04.1

'The beliefs of all religions are equally valid.'

Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Christianity and philosophy.

[25 marks]

Mark scheme

Please refer to mark scheme on [page 3 for levels of response for AO1](#) and page [12 for levels of response for AO2](#).

Target: AO1.4: Knowledge and understanding of approaches to the study of religion and belief. (10 marks)

Target: AO2: Analyse and evaluate aspects and approaches to religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study. (15 marks)

Material related to AO1 and AO2 may be presented discretely or holistically within the answer. Markers must read the whole of the response before either mark is awarded.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

AO1

Christianity

There is a range of Christian attitudes to different faiths, including both pluralism and exclusivism, which is often based on John 14:6. Diversity within Christianity is also viewed in different ways. Some see common moral values, and any actions based on them, as more important than the particular belief, or interpretation of a belief, that individuals might hold. On topics such as creation and miracles some beliefs within Christianity are contradictory.

Philosophy

This can be approached in a variety of ways. For example, philosophy may challenge the validity of all faiths. It may also point out that arguments used by one faith to support or attack belief in miracles or religious experiences must be applied to the claims of all faiths in relation to these topics. Mystical experiences may be seen as the common core of all faiths. Similarly, arguments for God's existence relate to God in general, rather than God as specifically understood by Christians, Muslims or Jews, or to Brahman or the Trikaya.

Maximum Level 3 for answers that do not include both Christianity and philosophy.

AO2

All arguments from philosophy in favour of or against a religious belief are common to all faiths where the belief is present, for example, beliefs about miracles, religious experiences and life after death. An argument supporting the possibility of personal existence beyond death, for example, supports all those religions that include that belief and arguments against the existence of a metaphysical dimension to life challenge all faiths that believe that such a dimension exists. This suggests that philosophy finds all faiths equally valid/invalid. However, many of the beliefs are contradictory, which seems to show that they cannot all be valid, and certainly some followers of individual religions claim that they alone know the truth.

The view may be supported by pluralists who see all religions/Christian denominations as historically and culturally relative expressions of the same underlying awareness or path. The individual faiths, on this view, are merely different ways of talking about ultimate reality which enables individuals to deepen their understanding of it, but the one reality lies beyond these. However, some Christians are exclusivists, often basing their view on John 14:6, and argue that they alone have the true faith, and it is very difficult to see some other faiths as expressions of the same underlying reality because of the great differences between them.

Tolerance of other faiths is a characteristic of much Christian teaching, and within a secular context, freedom of religious expression is extended to all faiths. However, there are values and practices in other faiths or denominations which some Christians find intolerable. These vary, but may include for example, polygamy and animal sacrifice. Divisions on ethical issues such as abortion are also evident. Beliefs that operate in the personal realm but are not expressed in practices may be accepted as 'valid' while acting on them is not.

Student responses

Response H

The validity of the beliefs of all religions hinges on whether the basis of these beliefs, which can be understood as religious experience or miracles is valid; whether the language or the articulation of these beliefs means anything and whether the claims of one religion are more true than others. It can be argued that it is not important whether the beliefs of all religions are equally valid or invalid, but that all beliefs equally influence their believers and thus are of great significance.

Firstly, it could be argued that the existence of religious experiences and miracles across all religions affirms that all beliefs are equally valid since all are based in real events. For Christians, these may include the miracle of Jesus' resurrection from the dead or the religious experience of St Teresa of Ávila who experienced an intellectual vision of Jesus. The Ganesha ~~drinks~~ milk drinking miracle in

India equally affirmed the Hindu belief in the Deity who began curping the milk offering given to it. However challenges from science and psychology negate the beliefs of all religions and deem them all equally invalid since they're based on a wrong interpretation rather than a fact. Freud argued that religious experience was "infantile and neurotic" and a mere manifestation of a subconscious need for control fulfilled by dogma thus showing that beliefs of all religions may be just that. The "God Helmet" by Persinger shows that beliefs of religions may be just products of stimulation of brain nerves negating the validity of religious beliefs. This is supported by R-F. Holland's antirealist view of miracles as mere beneficial coincidences confirming or forming beliefs due to interpretation. In spite of these challenges, James' account of mystical experiences ultimately affirms that beliefs of all religions are equally valid, since religion is the product of primary experience, which produces real effects, such as feelings of safety or a zest for life, present in the accounts and beliefs of all religions thus highlighting their equal validity.

Even more importantly, Hick's Principle of Eschatological Verification can be used to prove that beliefs of all religions are equally valid, since they will be either proved or disproved after death eschatologically. The Parable of the Celestial City shows how the Christian belief in

Heaven may be proved after death, but equally the beliefs of other religions will be proven to be true or false suggesting that beliefs of all religions in this life are all equally valid. However, Flew's argument that a religious believer will never let their beliefs be falsified as they will keep altering them or qualifying them until they are the "death of a 1000 qualifications" suggests that beliefs of all religions are all ~~equally~~ not equal since one belief is just the qualification of another. Even if Hick's thesis was correct another invalid religion would form out of eschatological proof as evidenced by the plurality of views in Christianity on life after death. In spite of this, the non-cognitivist understanding of religious beliefs of Hare as bitter, or deeply held beliefs which have a significant effect on the believer affirms that beliefs of all religions are equally valid since they will affect the believers in different ways. For instance a Christian who believes in justification by works will behave differently to a Muslim who believes in the 5 pillars of Islam. Therefore the beliefs of all religions are equally valid, since all will equally affect their believers to behave in a certain way.

Perhaps the most convincing view is that of inclusivism that the beliefs of all religions are equally valid, since all religions possess similarities and fundamentally believe similar ideas. Karl Rahner proposed the concept of

"anonymous Christians" that all people of faith are essentially saved by the grace of Christian God, although they may not believe the same things, as actions of all believers guided by their respective beliefs amount to access to God's love. This is substantiated by Acts in the New Testament where it is stated that God doesn't discriminate based on "nation" and the teaching in Galatians 3:28 that "all are one in Christ." However this idea is rather paternalistic as Hick argues and places Christianity above all other religions, which is invalid since there's no basis for this. Instead perhaps the strongest approach to beliefs of all religions is that of Hick of pluralism, or the belief that all religions are equal since they all speak of a shared reality but differ due to contrasting cultural frameworks. This is affirmed by the parable of the blind men and an elephant, which demonstrates the limits of one's perspective as the blind men define the elephant respectively by the part they're able to touch, whilst this definition not being a wrong one it is only a fragment of the whole truth. Similarly all religions and beliefs possess fragments of truth but are limited in their scope due to different circumstances, such as culture, place of birth and language. Therefore all beliefs of all religions are equally valid as they point to the shared reality beyond their insignificant differences.

Ultimately, it is indeed true that beliefs of all religions are all equally valid as not only are they formed on the same basis of religious experience, but also they're all a form of a 'blik' which thus deeply affects them despite it being in different ways. Most importantly all beliefs are correct in part as they collectively describe a shared reality but differ in the conditioning of believers through culture. This suggests that acceptance of pluralism is the only way forward.

This is a Level 5 response for AO1 and a Level 5 response for AO2

AO1: The AO1 aspect of this response shows accurate, relevant knowledge and understanding that is developed as fully as can be expected within the time available under exam conditions. Evidence and examples are used to good effect to add depth to explanations, including textual and scriptural references. There is a good understanding of diverse scholarly views. It is stronger on philosophical ideas within the dialogue than on Christianity, but both elements are integral to the discussion, and there is no requirement for a balance between the two as long as both are adequately addressed. The whole essay is well organised, clear, coherent, and uses appropriate subject vocabulary with precision.

AO2: The AO2 aspect of this response is extremely well focused. In listing the parameters by which validity is to be measured, the student sets a well organised agenda which maintains the focus throughout. The discussion is perceptive and considers, in depth and with clear understanding, a range of different scholarly views. Each segment of the argument shows clear critical analysis and leads to an interim evaluation at the end of every paragraph. As a result, the final evaluation is fully supported by the reasoning through the essay.

25 marks (AO1: 10 marks and AO2: 15 marks)

Response B

~~The dialogue that "b~~
 The statement "believers of all religions are equally valid" can be argued either way, with the side in favour of this statement holding a higher and stronger argument. John Hick, who argued in favour of religious equality ~~through~~ in ~~the~~ his works on the importance of Christianity as opposed to other religions concluded that it does not matter in which religion one believes and that God- or Gods-will accept all.

In Hick's work on truth claims of religion, he noted that while ~~Jesus~~ within Christianity, the most obvious truth claim is that of "Jesus is the Messiah" while in Buddhism for example, the Buddha holds maximum authority, and is the epitome of respect for the religion itself. Hick famously argued that neither religion should be better than the other, regardless of size or following, importance in today's society, or the covenants of such religion. He ~~was~~ adopts a neo-Kantian point of view and exercises this entirely.

Richard Dawkins, militant atheist, ~~conflictingly~~ conflictingly holds the view that no religions should be valid, and thus equally invalid. He makes a case that arguments in favour of any religion are ridiculous and

fail to hold even a degree of rationality in the midst of their stupidity. For Dawkins, and other atheist theologians, the concept of religion is a belief in something that is completely ridiculous and therefore doesn't even acknowledge the followers or such beliefs or such religions, but rather just the absurdity or believing in something other than bare and brutal reality. In Dawkins' ignorance, however, lays an element of truth. It can be ~~proper~~ said that to believe in a potentially untrue story - which is nothing more than a series of books produced over 2000 years ago - in the case of Christianity, is inconceivable and ~~ridic~~ strange. The cult following of the Bible, according to the atheist point of view is enough to "brainwash" an entire and significant portion of the population, who simply work toward some sort of verification by God, which may be eschatological and therefore untrue by an atheist's way of thinking, as it is inevitable empirically. In Hick's ~~Parable~~ ^{Parable} of the Celestial City, two men are seen walking along a long road, towards a supposed celestial city. One says they will get there while the other - the atheist - argues that they will be dead before finding out, which therefore implies there is no Celestial City - or eternal salvation in the kingdom of God. Therefore making the verifiability of life after death an

impossible feat, while also denouncing
 the possibility of the afterlife, which ^{neither}
 contradicts ^{or denies} Hick's ideas towards pluralism
 and truth claims in the respect that
 it a religion can believe something is
 undeniable fact, but whether it's
 empirically true is another matter.

This is a Level 3 response for AO1 and a Level 3 response for AO2

AO1: The AO1 aspect of this essay is generally accurate and relevant, but is limited to the ideas of Hick and Dawkins. Although there is some development in depth in the treatment of these two scholars, the response lacks breadth. There is some use of evidence. The essay shows only 'some familiarity' with the views of two different scholars, but it does not go into sufficient depth to 'explain' scholarly opinion, as required for Level 4. As a whole the essay is generally organised and coherent and shows a reasonable use of subject vocabulary.

AO2: This is a general, rather than a well-focused response. Different views are discussed, primarily Hick and Dawkins, but there is no critical analysis, which is required for Level 4. The student tries to demonstrate that the views of Hick and Dawkins represent different ways of assessing the validity of religious belief, rather than a clear focus on whether or not the beliefs of all religions are equally valid. As a result the direction of the argument is unclear. There is a very brief evaluation at the start of the essay, and a conclusion which appears to try and draw the reasoning together, but does not fully succeed.

Total: 13 marks (AO1: 5 marks and AO2: 8 marks)

Get help and support

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at aqa.org.uk/7062

You can talk directly to the Religious Studies subject team

E: religiousstudies@aqa.org.uk

T: **0161 957 3881**

Copyright © 2024 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

AQA Education (AQA) is a registered charity (registered charity number 1073334) and a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 3644723).

Registered address: AQA, Devas Street, Manchester M15 6EX.

