

## **Religious Studies**

Advanced GCE A2 H572

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS H172

### **Examiners' Reports**

---

**January 2011**

**HX72/R/11J**

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA) is a leading UK awarding body, providing a wide range of qualifications to meet the needs of pupils of all ages and abilities. OCR qualifications include AS/A Levels, Diplomas, GCSEs, OCR Nationals, Functional Skills, Key Skills, Entry Level qualifications, NVQs and vocational qualifications in areas such as IT, business, languages, teaching/training, administration and secretarial skills.

It is also responsible for developing new specifications to meet national requirements and the needs of students and teachers. OCR is a not-for-profit organisation; any surplus made is invested back into the establishment to help towards the development of qualifications and support which keep pace with the changing needs of today's society.

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 specification 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.

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this report.

© OCR 2011

Any enquiries about publications should be addressed to:

OCR Publications  
PO Box 5050  
Annesley  
NOTTINGHAM  
NG15 0DL

Telephone: 0870 770 6622  
Facsimile: 01223 552610  
E-mail: [publications@ocr.org.uk](mailto:publications@ocr.org.uk)

## CONTENTS

### Advanced GCE Religious Studies (H572)

### Advanced Subsidiary GCE Religious Studies (H172)

## EXAMINERS' REPORTS

<b>Content</b>	<b>Page</b>
Chief Examiner's Report	1
G571 Philosophy of Religion	2
G572 Religious Ethics	6
G573 Jewish Scriptures	9
G574 New Testament	12
G575 Developments in Christian Theology	14
G576 Buddhism	16
G577 Hinduism	19
G578 Islam	20
G579 Judaism	23
G581 Philosophy of Religion	25
G582 Religious Ethics	27
G583 Jewish Scriptures	29
G584 New Testament	31
G585 Development in Christian Theology	32
G586 Buddhism	33
G587 Hinduism	35
G588 Islam	36
G589 Judaism	37

## **Chief Examiner's Report**

The candidates who are entered for the January Units are usually a mixture of those who have only had a short period of preparation and those who are retaking a Unit. Results are therefore mixed and highlight, more so than in the June examinations, deficiencies in the writing of essays. Examiners, this year, were also more acutely aware of poor handwriting and bad presentation. It is worth reminding candidates that legibility is certainly worth sacrificing quantity of writing, for the obvious reason that if it cannot be read, a script cannot be awarded marks.

On the whole, though, the standard of evaluative answers is improving and in some cases at AS, AO2 answers are better than those for AO1. A2 candidates, however, are often less certain how to evaluate ideas and often resort to listing contrasting ideas without much connecting analysis.

All candidates should take note of the advice given in the Philosophy of Religion report about the right use of technical language especially when forming good, clear and robust arguments.

## G571 Philosophy of Religion

Although some candidates answered the questions well, and had good knowledge and understanding of the topics addressed, many failed to grapple with the heart of the question. Once again, this lack of focus on the specific question asked led to some clearly able candidates not achieving their full potential, by simply regurgitating all they knew on a particular topic. Perhaps this can be attributed to candidates being entered too early in the year to have developed the skills for AS level essay writing.

Perhaps the nature of questions 1, 2 and 3 lured some candidates into a non-philosophical approach. There was a significant number of candidates who wrote 'BBC documentary answers', rather than essays.

Unfortunately, there are still candidates who attempt this examination with insecure knowledge of basic philosophical concepts and terminology. Many remain unaware of the correct meaning of terms such as 'empirical', 'logical', 'refute', 'metaphysical', '*a priori*' or '*a posteriori*'. For some reason, the term 'predicate' was widely misused: it is not the same as the quality of a 'thing', and 'God' is not a predicate. This subject *presupposes* familiarity with basic philosophical notions and some candidates have paid too little attention to these. Some struggled with the fundamental skill of constructing arguments, especially in part (b) of questions. A *statement* of a viewpoint is not an *argument*, and argument by assertion is inappropriate in philosophical writing. Many would simply present alternative viewpoints but make no attempt to use these to work to their own conclusions. Candidates would benefit from thinking through the implications of the descriptors in the published Levels of Response used for marking – these are invaluable for explaining precisely those abilities rewarded by examiners.

Overall the general standard of answer to part (b) questions seemed lower. Many candidates were content to simply list vague arguments and failed to build an argument specifically tailored to the question asked. This led to much implicit analysis and vague, rather than evidence/scholar based arguments.

**1 (a)** Better answers demonstrated selection of relevant material and a methodical approach. Weaker responses struggled to identify what the question was requiring of them, leading to considerable irrelevancy. More thoughtful approaches were able to identify that God is Good because of his actions and nature (although many candidates wandered into the general topic store by explaining every other attribute of God as well as highlighting the fact that God is seen as the source of morality.

Many candidates had been clearly prepared to discuss this question in the light of the Biblical writers and often produced a wide-ranging account including evidence of God's goodness shown through creation, the Decalogue, immanence and personal responses to such as Hannah's prayer, ideas of justice for the poor and eventual judgement as well as use of the incarnation, life, works and salvation of Jesus.

Some answers considered questions over God's goodness such as the destruction of Ai or the experiences of Job, with occasional forays into the Euthyphro Dilemma. Some candidates included references to Aristotle's Prime Mover and even Plato's Form of the Good. Whilst a few candidates could relate these to the idea of god as the source of all goodness and pure actuality, most went off on a tangent, some even claiming that the Form of the Good was Plato's god, rather than the Demiurge.

Some incorrectly chose to see the question as an opportunity, either to list a succession of proofs for God's existence, or to treat this as a question solely about the problem of evil.

- 1 (b)** Some candidates were able to identify that this was the Euthyphro Dilemma (as discussed by Plato) and went on to produce reasonable arguments. Better responses clearly stated the problems on both sides of the dilemma – if God commands things that are good then he is not the source of all goodness; if things are good because God commands them then he could command anything to be good, eg rape. Some even then went onto consider how this reflected on God's goodness, linking in with Divine Command Theory and discussing Aquinas' view on the character of God.

Others who were able to identify the philosophical conundrum then struggled to know what to do with their argument once stated. Poorer answers failed to engage with either horn of the dilemma and were therefore lost completely.

However, some candidates had clearly understood the question differently and answered it from the perspective of "things are only good because God commands them" ie God cannot command anything other than good. These candidates went onto discuss how to correlate this with apparent opposing acts of God, such as the destruction of Ai and the book of Job.

Many could not spell *Euthyphro*; *Eurythmic* was an interesting variation. Some argued unpersuasively that the existence of people not following the commandments meant that God was not commanding the good. Some, again, chose to treat this as the Problem of Evil, usually with limited success.

- 2 (a)** This question was less frequently attempted. Some candidates were able to identify that there is not a single unified view from creationists and so were able to construct good answers around this. Others gave clear statements of the reasons why creationists in general would not agree with the Big Bang, clearly meaning Young Earth Creationists although few actually named this group. Many had an understanding that the age of the universe/earth was a major factor, as well as explaining theological and scientific issues.

The majority of answers were limited to the notion that creationists believed in creation as described in the Bible and most clearly understood this as to be a literal interpretation. Selection of relevant material was often a problem as weaker answers tended to concentrate on design, Paley's watch making a regular appearance thus often denoting a general topic response. Some centres had clearly taught this section well with their candidates able to explain the variety of views from Young and Old Earth Creationists, the gap theory and progressive creationists.

Some candidates used this question as an opportunity to describe the proofs of Paley, Aquinas and even Anselm. This seemed to an attempt, once again, to use revised material without addressing the actual question. Quite a few candidates claimed that Darwin was a creationist.

- 2 (b)** Candidates, in the main, struggled to produce an argument. There was plenty of assertion and poorly thought through 'there's no evidence' style answers which did not focus enough on the issue of *why* the universe was here. This sometimes took the form of looking at the origins of life on Earth rather than the origins of the universe.

Good answers made useful links to philosophers' attempts to explain the universe through a *posteriori* argument in the form of the cosmological argument and argued from there that there are more explanations for why the universe was here. However, one plus point was that the 'how'/'why' oversimplification was conspicuous by its absence. On occasion, better answers used evidence from Polkinghorne and Gould's non-overlapping majesteria.

A candidate who has studied the specification fully must, at least, stop and think before dismissing religious worldviews as having no real evidence. There was some good use of Plato and Aristotle to place the debate in its historical context. It is worthwhile to note that some religious people and philosophers are actually as clever as scientists!

Less able responses simply asserted that one side was correct. Many still appeared to assume that scientists offered certain proof, a claim not made by scientists themselves. It was disappointing that so many still assume that all Christians – and especially Roman Catholics – are Biblical literalists.

- 3 (a)** This was the most popular question. However, many candidates failed to spot the subtlety of the question by approaching it with the 'I'll tell you everything I know' attitude. This meant that a significant number of candidates failed to adequately explain the basic nature of the problem of evil. They would often simply say: 'People have questioned whether God exists if evil exists as good is supposed to be all-loving and all-powerful'. The solution to the problem of evil then became the main focus in the form of listing the theodicies of Augustine, Irenaeus and Hick.

Better answers could clearly explain the types of evil (moral and natural) and why the inconsistent triad posed a problem to the nature of the god of classical theism as opposed to simply stating it. There was some use made of Dostoyevsky's *Brothers Karamazov* in response to this question. Some candidates were insistent that that inconsistent triad had a fourth point, that God was omniscient! However, some used this idea to further outline the nature of the problem of evil and thus were credited accordingly.

Where candidates were more successful in their answers, they used the differing views of the nature of evil (from Irenaeus, Augustine and Hick primarily) and so re-clarified the nature of the problem as identified by these thinkers.

- 3 (b)** This question was generally well answered. Some answers focused on the second part of the question and simply accepted the first premise without argument. Better responses considered both elements of the question, often demonstrating the link between God as creator, God's attributes and God's ultimate responsibility for moral evil through human free will as well as natural evil. Answers were well supported with a variety of well known philosophical figures within the area of evil. However, candidates still struggled at times to 'consider' or demonstrate any 'critical analysis' of different viewpoints. Some weaker answers had already listed the arguments from Augustine and Irenaeus in part (a) and failed to see the relevance for the theodicies.

A substantial minority argued, unconvincingly, that natural evil was wholly man's fault, caused by lack of environmental awareness and use of deodorants and aerosols. This did not convince as a reason for either Pompeii or the Lisbon Earthquake. No more convincing were claims that natural evil just happened and therefore it raised no questions about God.

- 4 (a)** This was a fairly popular question, although as is often the case, candidates tended to focus on Kantian ethics with less focus on what the question required, the summum bonum. Many answers simply defined the summum bonum as the "greater/est good" and apparently had little understanding of this being the combination of virtue (due to doing one's duty) and happiness. Having established that Kant believed we should do our duty for its own sake, not for personal gain or reward, candidates were quite happy to state that the summum bonum was therefore their reward for being morally virtuous.

Many also appeared to hold the view that the summum bonum was another term for the afterlife, missing Kant's argument about ought implies can (or thinking this was about doing one's duty rather than achieving the summum bonum), and the idea that just consequences of moral duty do not always follow in this life. Good responses focussed on the question at hand and did not simply rehash the moral argument attributed to Kant. Weaker responses still fared relatively well at times because they knew something about Kant but lacked focus or clarity of understanding.

- 4 (b)** Many candidates tended to use this question as an opportunity to revisit general discussion about morality and the existence of God. Most answers contained some relevant argument with much use of Freud. Freud's theories on the mind, and thus the source of morality being a psychological construct, were often well outlined.

Weaker responses simply re-told the Oedipus Complex, Primal Horde or obsessional neurosis idea without reference to how Freud linked these to morality. A number of answers included reference to evolution, and some could argue how evolutionary psychology could explain morality. The generic moral arguments (from Newman and Owen, although not always named) were used to good effect in arguing against the question. A few good answers also used Kant's moral argument and were able to critically analyse this using scholars such as Davies.

## G572 Religious Ethics

### General Comments

The question paper provided sufficient scope for candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. There were many excellent answers. However, the level of achievement did depend on the ability of the candidate to focus fully on the question using ethical terms and apply ethical concepts correctly.

Many candidates, in their answers, used up-to-date examples such as the recent Papal teaching on contraception.

Pleasingly, many candidates answered the question on Religious Ethics very thoroughly, whether they focussed on one theory used by religious believers such as Natural Law, or by giving an overview of the many different approaches which could be used.

Interestingly, many candidates scored proportionately higher marks in the part (b) questions.

**1 (a)** This was one of the most popular questions. Most candidates were able to address this question with at least one difference. However, many simply focused on the differences between Bentham and Mill, erroneously stating that Mill was the founder of Rule and Bentham the founder of Act. Some candidates did not explain the two terms.

Some candidates tended to list Act then Rule characteristics; any comparisons were incidental.

Better answers addressed the question with good examples. These responses also discussed strong and weak Rule Utilitarianism and explained the Hedonic Calculus.

**1 (b)** This question elicited some very good discussions of what was meant by useful and for whom this approach to euthanasia might be considered useful.

However, a few candidates spent too long explaining all the different types of euthanasia and never really got to grips with answering the question.

Candidates tended to apply Utilitarianism in the general sense rather than looking at the fundamental components of it.

Higher level responses did address the question directly, often applying the Hedonic Calculus, Rule and Preference to euthanasia and judging what sort of outcomes they would provide. Some candidates contrasted the usefulness of Utilitarianism with another ethical theory such as Natural Law; these answers tended to expose the weaknesses as well as the strengths of using Utilitarianism as an approach.

**2 (a)** This was also a very popular question and most answered it well, giving some rationale of duty, reason, good will and lack of emotions. Higher level responses really addressed the question, using Kant's own examples to support their explanation.

Most candidates were able to explain why Kant preferred the Categorical Imperative to the Hypothetical Imperative and were able to explain consequences and motives.

Although some candidates did not specifically address the question 'why', most were able to achieve marks by implicit use of the purposes as they explained the Categorical Imperative.

- 2 (b)** Generally, this question was well answered. Candidates were able to show how universalising a maxim could present difficulties.

There were some excellent responses which discussed individuality, subjectivism and the problems of relativism.

However, few answers seemed to mention conflicting duties, although some did use W. D. Ross' ideas to adapt Kant.

- 3 (a)** Many candidates were not successful in this question as they failed to address the question – they did not consider the *issues raised* by abortion but instead simply focussed on abortion in general with many unlikely scenarios. The concept of personhood was not mentioned by many candidates.

Some candidates discussed theories which are relative in their application but failed to apply them to the issues surrounding abortion.

Good responses showed that relativism is an artificial construct which was added later to the theories, and one candidate wrote an excellent response showing that Natural Law is both relativist and absolute, but unfortunately, only applied this to abortion in general.

Some excellent responses centred their arguments on cultural relativism, pointing out that a relativist could not criticise different approaches to the issues surrounding abortion followed by different countries such as Ireland and China.

- 3 (b)** Good answers showed how relativist approaches can lead to both good and bad choices, but many also recognising that for a relativist there are no wrong moral choices.

Some candidates mistook choices for outcomes and others simply discussed whether abortion should be allowed.

Good answers contrasted the choices made by followers of different ethical theories, which could be considered either relativist or absolute in their approach to making moral choices about abortion, and how they might judge each others' choices.

Other responses detailed the relative and absolute nature of theories such as Natural Law and applied these ideas.

- 4 (a)** Most candidates used Christianity in their answers and presented a good range of ideas from the Christian tradition. Candidates had a good knowledge of the Biblical ethical principles as well as ethical theories such as Natural Law and Situation Ethics.

Some candidates' knowledge of biblical ethics was superficial, but many of these candidates supplemented their responses to explain the diversity of approaches: fundamentalism, liberalism, Kingdom ethics, the work of the Holy Spirit, Church teaching such as the Pope and the Magisterium, the use of prayer and conscience, and Natural Law.

Most candidates approached this question with a depth of knowledge and understanding which showed a great improvement when compared to previous examinations. Pleasingly, very few candidates used Kantian ethics or Utilitarianism as methods used by followers of a religion.

- 4 (b)** This question produced the most interesting answers on the question paper. Many excellent responses considered the problems of Divine Command and the Euthyphro dilemma, some using Freud and cultural aspects, and some at the disparity of religious practice and moral behaviour.

Some recognised that while religion implies morality the reverse is not necessarily true.

## G573 Jewish Scriptures

### General Comments

All questions proved to be accessible, whilst also achieving the intended differentiation.

Rubric infringements were rare and most candidates managed to complete the paper within the one hour 30 minute time limit. Most candidates approached the questions in accordance with the two assessment objectives, but there are still some candidates who seem to think that they have to debate the (a) parts of the questions. The main weakness was a tendency to regurgitate lesson notes without due regard to engaging with the wording of the question. Many candidates relied on story telling and general knowledge. It remains disappointing that candidates do not make much reference to wider historical and literary critical scholarship and, in a few cases, it appeared that candidates had not even read the set texts. There were, however, some excellent responses which showed depth and breadth of knowledge and understanding, quoted the set texts appropriately, made reference to issues of date, authorship, purpose and historicity when relevant, and were a pleasure to read.

### Comments on Individual Questions

**1 (a)** This was popular and often answered well. Candidates described the situation that led to the covenant, worked through the main features and explained that G-d promised not to destroy the earth by flood again, and that the rainbow was set as the sign or seal of the covenant. Some good responses made links between this and other covenants in identifying main features. They emphasised that the agreement G-d made with Noah and his sons is regarded in the Jewish Scriptures as binding on all nations. Some pointed out that Noah is allowed to eat meat, which Adam was not allowed to do.

Some candidates identified this covenant as the first really recognisable covenant in the Jewish Scriptures in that it has ritual, Noah making a sacrifice, sealing, signs, conditions etc.

Only a few candidates showed real familiarity with the set text (Genesis 8:20-9:29). Disappointingly, it was sometimes possible for examiners to reconstruct the notes provided in centres, suggesting pre-prepared responses.

**1 (b)** Many candidates tended to focus on the fact that this covenant was meant for all people, not just the Jews and argued that, therefore, today it is still the only one relevant to everybody.

Some did, however, develop their discussion by linking the covenant with Noah and the obligation of stewardship laid originally upon Adam. There were some excellent analyses of the global crises that need to be addressed in the world today.

Some candidates took the line that all the covenants in the Jewish Scriptures are important because they are part of G-d's purpose for the world through all time. Some explained the Jeremiah covenant as a key factor in this plan. Others argued that the Mosaic Covenant is the most relevant today not just for the Jews but because it is the basis of most of the laws in all societies.

- 2 (a)** This question was popular but was often the most badly answered, mainly because candidates leapt at the opportunity to tell all they knew about the stories of Jonah and Job without paying due attention to the question.

There were some who engaged with the reasons for resentment but explained the situations in such an immature manner that it was hard to believe that they had any grasp on what is expected for AO1 at AS level.

Some candidates, however, did demonstrate understanding of the challenging theological dilemmas faced by both characters and the scripts were supported by relevant textual references. Such responses tended to contrast the suffering of the innocent Job and the suffering that Jonah brought on himself. Some candidates successfully justified Jonah's behaviour because of the threat posed by Assyria. Good responses usually included the kikayon incident.

- 2 (b)** Most discussions included the likelihood of being swallowed by fish.

The discussion of which book was the harder to believe was often invalidated by inaccurate evidence. It seemed that the cause of the inaccuracies was inadequate study of the set texts.

A few candidates sensibly considered the nature of these books and the types of literature each might represent before coming to a conclusion. Such scholarly discussions were more like the standard usually expected at this level.

- 3 (a)** These topics have always been part of the background to this course and now they are part of the specification. The few candidates who addressed this question wrote well and often seemed to have a grasp of what scholarship and even simple knowledge of history and geography could add to the reader's understanding of the material being studied.

At the simplest level, candidates identified the Exodus and the Exile, usually placing the two events in their appropriate historical context. Some candidates, however, moved beyond the historical background and grasped the theological dimensions that are rooted in these events, in the past and for posterity.

It was clear that the teaching of this topic had tapped into something which was producing potential future scholars and the results were interesting to observe and a pleasure to assess.

- 3 (b)** This was not a popular question but those candidates who had been successful in their part (a) responses tended to repeat this success here. It is obvious that Jeremiah 31 would make little sense to people who did not know about Moses and the Mosaic Covenant since verses 31ff contrast the old and the new. As far as that went, candidates who knew the set text would be reasonably successful. Some, however, fine tuned the discussion to argue, for various reasons, that the meaning of Jeremiah's prophecy of the new covenant can be understood without necessarily knowing the historical background of the Exile in Babylon. There were some interesting comments about layers of meaning and the mechanics by which readers divine G-d's message in revealed literature.

**4 (a)** This was the least popular question.

David was the first of the covenant kings to whom G-d promised a house in the sense of a lineage. The set text is 2 Samuel 7. It involves the promise relayed via Nathan of a Davidic dynasty and that Solomon would build the Jerusalem Temple.

The previous covenants in the specification are: Genesis 1:26-30 (Adam); 8:20-9:29 (Noah); 12, 15 & 17 (Abraham); Exodus 19-24 (Moses). Jeremiah 31 (the new covenant) comes after 2 Samuel 7 (David).

Some key differences between covenants tend to reflect the context and the extent to which G-d makes the agreements with individuals and/or with the whole nation, the promises given, the conditions set for the recipients and the consequences of forgetting the covenants.

The few candidates who addressed this question did it well and their scripts were a pleasure to read.

**4 (b)** Most discussions considered the relative significance of each of the covenants and some candidates developed the discussion by incorporating the query 'least important to whom?'

Some candidates also leapt at the chance to recognise, by various criteria, the most important covenant, usually Abraham and/or Moses.

Other candidates saw the covenant story as a whole and therefore argued that no covenant stands alone but is part of salvation history in the eyes of the Jewish writers and editors.

## G574 New Testament

### General Comments

The entry for this Unit was of widely varying ability. There were some very good attempts to answer two questions in detail, showing understanding and analysis and with accurate evidence from the text. However, it was notable that a substantial number of candidates had only a sketchy understanding of the ways in which gospel texts might be interpreted and the debates they have caused. In part (a) answers, knowledge of the provenance of some of the texts quoted was limited and there was often confusion in identifying gospel authors. A prevalent trend, among candidates who did not achieve the higher levels, was the reiteration of sources or pre-prepared notes, with what appeared to be only a little understanding or analysis of the text. Some candidates did not seem to be aware that parts (a) and (b) of questions were testing different assessment objectives.

### Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 (a)** There were some good, detailed answers to this question. However, some answers tended to be about either beliefs or practices and not about both. Weaker candidates confused the Essenes with some aspects of the beliefs and behaviour of Pharisees or Sadducees. This was a straightforward topic but it appeared to be one that had not been studied or revised well enough to produce many very good or excellent answers.
- 1 (b)** Unfortunately, candidates who had only a sketchy knowledge and understanding of what was required in part (a) were also at a loss in trying to evaluate whether the Essenes could be said to have any influence on main-stream Judaism. Some answers merely stated that the Essenes had no influence and then moved on to discuss the influence of Pharisees or Sadducees or both. Only a few candidates organised their answer to develop evidence from both sides of the argument to demonstrate whether the Essenes had influence. It was commendable that some candidates did argue that the importance of the discovery about the Essenes lies not in whether they had influence on the belief and practice of other Jews, but in what is revealed about diversity in Jewish belief and practice at the time of Jesus.
- 2 (a)** Careful selection of information and correct cross-referencing, as well as some understanding of views on Mark's purpose, distinguished the good and very good answers from the rest in this question. It was not a popular question and generally was not well answered. References to texts were often not specific enough and Old Testament references and motifs were often confused.
- 2 (b)** Candidate performance on this part of the question was usually commensurate with the knowledge and understanding demonstrated in part (a). The quality of answers was varied but there were some good attempts to argue and offer evidence that, in the Passion narrative, Mark might have had more than one purpose in his portrayal of the identity of Jesus.

- 3 (a)** This question was a popular choice and well answered, on the whole. Candidates were expected to move beyond a factual description of the trial and death scene and a good number of candidates accurately described, and showed understanding of, the background to the social and political influence of the Romans and the history of appeasement and conflict between Jews and Romans in first century Palestine. Such responses were also accurate in their understanding of the way the Romans were portrayed in the gospels throughout the passion narrative, and gained appropriate credit. However, there were some weaker and confused answers, which showed an inability to distinguish between the role of the Jews and that of the Romans.
- 3 (b)** There were some well argued answers demonstrating evidence for a balance of views, based on details from the text, historical evidence, and different points of view on Mark's portrayal of both Pilate and the Jews. Some candidates, however, failed to address the question correctly and based their arguments, which were usually simplistic, on whether Pilate was fair to Jesus.
- 4 (a)** There were some very good and excellent answers to this question, which showed thorough and accurate understanding of why Matthew's account is so distinctive in its portrayal of the resurrection and correctly identified all aspects of the account as singular to Matthew. Unfortunately, the common error, as in other answers, was the inability to identify the correct text, confusing events from all four gospels and interpreting them all as being distinctive to Matthew. Some produced answers which could gain little credit.
- 4 (b)** The best answers showed engagement with the question in assessing Matthew's motive and purpose in the apologetic nature of his account. Also, exploring the evidence for Matthew being a later gospel which attempted to answer all aspects of doubt and disbelief raised by the story of the resurrection. There were some intelligent and perceptive arguments based on evidence from the text. Some candidates, who were inaccurate in part (a), were able to reproduce revised notes on this topic which gained some credit but overall performance on the question remained basic or just satisfactory.

# G575 Developments in Christian Theology

## General Comments

The quality of answers varied greatly between candidates who clearly knew the material well, and were able to set out the ideas in a good, clear and well organised manner, and those who gave very general and unspecific responses. Sometimes, short specific answers gained far higher marks than much longer answers which lacked focus. However, it was good to see candidates linking various parts of the specification and, by 'thinking on their feet', giving very reasonable theological responses to some of the questions.

All questions were attempted; none proved to be more or less popular than another.

## Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 (a)** Most candidates understood the broad distinction between exegesis and eisegesis. However, few were able to explain the relationship between exegesis and historical criticism and eisegesis and reader response. Most considered that exegesis is the province solely of fundamentalism and eisegesis of liberals; whilst such a distinction may be true, candidates need to understand that this is not necessarily so. The question invited explanation of various hermeneutical approaches to the Bible, but few candidates managed to say more than that hermeneutics is the art of interpretation without suggesting what this 'art' is.
- 1 (b)** Good responses suggested that as the Bible is a holy book or texts, then at least for those who regard it as the Word of God it cannot be read like any other text. Some argued that the Bible should be read like any other text because it requires controlled interpretation as befits any ancient writing set in a time and culture very different from our own.
- However, some candidates were not clear what the phrase 'like any other text' meant and they hoped that, by referring to fundamentalism, the question would somehow be answered.
- 2 (a)** The question invited any theologically valid approach, but those who focused on Augustine usually produced the better answers. Good answers therefore considered pre- and post-Fall state of humans, the nature of sin, sexuality, free will and concupiscence. Many also referred to Calvin's *sensus divinitatis* as an example of the general human ability to know God and some discussed Aquinas' distinction of humans, angels and animals.
- 2 (b)** It was clear in their responses that despite their answers to 2(a), some candidates were not really sure what is meant by human nature. Some very good answers did tackle the philosophical notion whether humans have an essential nature (corrupted or otherwise) or whether humans create their own identities from a *tabula rasa*. No one discussed how the Fall might be interpreted today given the general scepticism of it as a historical event.

- 3 (a)** Those who rooted their answers in Marx first, and then considered how liberation theologians had adapted the terms in their theology, generally wrote very good answers. Even so, some gave good responses beginning with the political/historical situation in Latin America. However, there were few candidates who could discuss the philosophical/theological nuances of alienation in terms of spirit and matter, individual and Church, poverty and humanity. Some ventured that the two ideas are the foundations which drive the mediations, but often the idea was tacked on to the end of an essay without being fully integrated into the explanation.
- 3 (b)** Those who referred to the *Instruction* and the problems raised by using Marx were able to produce some good answers. Some very good answers considered the dangers of base communities and their subversion of the traditional idea of Church. Otherwise answers tended to be more general and scored less well.
- 4 (a)** There were a wide variety of approaches to this question. As reference to the poor is the starting point of all liberation theology, this question left it wide open for candidates to give any clear account of the central building blocks of any liberative theology. Indeed, many candidates did refer to James Cone.

However, very few candidates picked up on the *historical* aspect of liberation theology and its unusual reversal of traditional dogmatic theology with a theology which begins in the material world. Nevertheless, some candidates ably pointed out that 'underside' is the cue for conscientisation both of the poor and the Church when reversing the real subjects of theology.

- 4 (b)** Some candidates pointed out that as liberation theology has failed to bring about the revolution promised by the early Latin American theologians – especially its critique of capitalism, then whether there are oppressed people or not such a theology has no future.

It would have been good to have seen reference here to other liberative theologies (African, dalit etc) but, other than Cone's black theology, few candidates appeared to have a very sound overall view of the strengths and weaknesses of liberation theology.

## G576 Buddhism

### General Comments

There were very few rubric errors. Those which were found consisted primarily of candidates not completing the part (b) section of their second question, or not completing a second question at all. In most cases, this did not seem to be a result of timing issues.

The quality of answers varied greatly. Some candidates gave detailed and thoughtful answers showing a good awareness of Buddhist concepts. A few candidates gave very brief answers, and seemed to have little knowledge of Buddhism at all.

There was evidence in some responses of candidates writing prepared answers on a topic rather than addressing the question asked. This does inhibit candidates' ability to access the higher levels as they are not selecting relevant material.

### Comments on Individual Questions

**1 (a)** Weaker responses tended to recount Asoka's life story without any understanding of which elements might be used to illustrate Asoka's importance.

Better responses tended to select relevant aspects of Asoka's life and explore why they were important for the development of Buddhism. Areas which were considered included the edicts issued by Asoka, the erection of stupas, missionary activities, and the reformation of the sangha.

**1 (b)** Weaker responses tended to focus on Asoka's bloodthirsty history before the battle of Kalinga. They then concluded that he was not a good Buddhist because he had not followed the teaching of ahimsa, or that he was a good Buddhist because he changed after the battle.

Better responses tended to explore whether Asoka truly had Buddhist interests at heart, or whether he used Buddhist ideas as suited his social and political aims.

**2 (a)** Weaker responses tended to give an account of the life story of the Buddha, with little reference to the social conditions in which he lived.

A significant number of responses focused entirely on the religious conditions prevalent at the time of the Buddha, often with little more than an explanation of the caste system and a mention of the Vedic tradition.

The best responses tended to explore how economic conditions and urbanisation led to a flowering of religious exploration in the shramana movements. These responses also usually had a good knowledge of the Vedic and Folk Traditions as well as some of the most popular shramana movements.

- 2 (b)** Weaker responses tended to argue that, in other social conditions, the Buddha would not have been protected from, and then seen, the four signs so would never have become a Buddha. These responses tended to show little awareness of the mythological as opposed to the historical importance of the account of the four signs.

Very few responses to this question showed any awareness of the eternal dhamma, or the idea that the ultimate truths do not change. Some responses were able to show effectively how the Buddha's teachings were affected by the prevailing culture. They could evaluate ideas which he accepted and rejected from the Vedic tradition in particular.

- 3 (a)** In general this question was poorly addressed. Most answers tended to compare the understanding of the Buddha in Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism. In a significant number of cases, the responses focused primarily on the Mahayana understanding of the Bodhisattva path, with only fleeting references to the Theravada position.

In the middle range, candidates tended to give a response focused on the importance of the three refuges, where reference to the importance of the Buddha as a refuge could gain some credit.

The best responses tended to explore the importance of the Buddha in Theravada Buddhism as an example of a real man who achieved enlightenment, and thus could serve as an inspiration and role-model to Buddhists. Candidates also explored his importance in revealing the dhamma and as a meditative focus.

- 3 (b)** Most answers were in the middle range. These responses tended to focus on the presence of multiple Buddhas in Mahayana Buddhism and took the position that this made Buddhas more important in Mahayana Buddhism.

Some responses explored the position of the historical Buddha in both Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism, in more depth, before reaching a conclusion. They generally argued that Shakyamuni Buddha was more important in Theravada Buddhism as he was one of a small number of Buddhas in Theravada Buddhism. Candidates generally felt that the multiplicity of Buddhas in Mahayana Buddhism devalued the status of Shakyamuni Buddha.

- 4 (a)** There was some evidence of prepared answers here. These answers tended to explore the relationship between kamma and samsara. Where the concepts were explained in detail this did not harm their overall achievement, but this was not always the case.

Weak responses often had little awareness of the complexities of kamma, and were limited to exploring the notion that 'what goes around comes around'.

Better responses were able to explore kammic causes and kammic consequences, many referring to bija (kammic seeds). They also tended to explore the importance of intention in more depth.

Weak responses made little reference to samsara beyond a reference to the 6 realms of rebirth. Better responses often understood the process of rebirth and made appropriate references to dependant origination and the three poisons in order to explain the operation of the system.

- 4 (b)** Answers to this question tended to be in the middle range. Most candidates were able to construct some argument about the fairness or unfairness of the system. Often, these focused on examples relating to the student's own experiences of fair or unfair punishments. They often showed little awareness of the importance of intention in Buddhism or the fact that kammic consequences could occur within this lifetime. Many students made claims along the lines of it being unfair to have a rebirth in the hell realms for stepping on an insect by accident.

The best responses tended to explore how kammic consequences could be fair when operating over many lifetimes given the Buddhist concept of anatta. A small number of students explored whether the terms reward and punishment were appropriate in the Buddhist context.

## **G577 Hinduism**

### **General Comments**

There were too few entries to make meaningful comment.

## G578 Islam

### General Comments

There were many good scripts which were a pleasure to read. However, there were other scripts which suggested that the candidates were poorly prepared for an examination at this level.

The four questions differentiated well. Unfortunately, there were one or two candidates who seemed to misunderstand the rubric and only answered two subsections of one question rather than two whole questions.

### Comments on Individual Questions

**1 (a)** This question was very popular. Most responses dealt with the social and religious features separately and it was clear that centres had inculcated a real sense of the time and place into which Muhammad ﷺ was born. Many candidates knew the term Jahiliyyah, the Days of Ignorance. Tribal culture and rivalries, family life, including the role of women and infanticide, were dealt with as part of the social background.

Some excellent responses explained the significance of the trade routes and the importance of Makkah and used this as a transition to the topic of religion. Some candidates concentrated on the polytheism, idolatry, superstition and animism of nature religions and of desert dwellers whilst others went on to include the historical religious influences on the region, particularly Jewish, Christian and Zoroastrian. A few just used the opportunity to tell about the early life of Muhammad ﷺ.

**1 (b)** Most candidates answered only that Muhammad ﷺ was both prophet and statesman rather than arguing why he may be more one than another. They usually dealt with the prophethood of Muhammad ﷺ by referring to him as the founder of Islam and the seal of the prophets, who received the Qur'an, spoke to angels and visited heaven, besides being referred to in the Shahadah.

Evidence that he was a statesman was usually a synopsis of his life in Makkah then in al-Madinah, covering going to battle as well as making social improvements for all the community. Some wrote exceptionally well about the theocratic ethical democracy that Muhammad ﷺ was establishing. These candidates often concluded that Muhammad ﷺ was good at both aspects because Allah had chosen him for both roles.

**2 (a)** This was also a popular question. Responses began with a description of sawm as one of the Five Pillars, and explained that it entails fasting during the hours of daylight in the month of Ramadan. However, some responses then continued to write about all the Five Pillars, ignoring the thrust of the question.

Other responses used the opportunity to provide further practical details of the fast and explained that the Qur'an was first revealed to Muhammad ﷺ in Ramadan. The better responses tended to be those which then focused directly on the way sawm strengthens the Ummah within the family, the community and worldwide. A few candidates also included reference to Zakat-ul-Fitr

**2 (b)** Discussions tended to develop points made in the first part of the question and most argued for sawm being about both the individual and the community. There were some insightful arguments about the solidarity of Islam and the tradition set by Muhammad ﷺ's sunnah that valued every individual Muslim. Some linked this cohesiveness with the theological unity of Tawhid.

**3 (a)** There was a tendency for candidates to produce the all-purpose essay on the mosque describing and explaining the features which reflect beliefs about Allah and worship. Sometimes it worked quite well, especially when candidates included the features which are essential for prayer, eg purification and a clean place and why the mihrab indicates the qiblah. There were some interesting and excellent responses from those who targeted the thrust of the question and addressed the concept of 'adapting a building'. Some were full of practical suggestions as well as the obvious theological necessities.

**3 (b)** This question was generally handled well, except by some candidates who simply reiterated that the mosque is important for Muslims without providing evidence to demonstrate the importance of the mosque in various aspects of community worship and activities. Some tried to give a balanced view using examples of the role of mosques in different countries and communities.

Some reflected on the unity in Islam of all aspects of religious worship and everyday living; all being equally part of submission to Allah. A few concluded that, in the end Allah, is central – not the mosque, nor anything else, because that would be shirk.

**4 (a)** Most candidates started with Laylat-ul-Qadr when Jibril appeared and commanded Muhammad ﷺ, who could not read nor write, to 'recite'. As in previous years, quite a few candidates gave examples which show the importance of the Qur'an, the respect it is given and its status in matters of law and theology for Muslims of all persuasions, rather than attempting to address why it has authority, let alone 'absolute' authority.

Some responses did explain the importance of the message the Qur'an contains about Allah, the one true God, the last judgement and the straight path to paradise. Others commented on the inimitability of the script and the effect it has on people.

The best responses demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the concept of revelation and made it clear that the authority is not just of Muhammad ﷺ the seal of the prophets but of the very words of Allah and therefore 'absolute' authority.

**4 (b)** Most candidates stated that a sacred text is a revelation and all parts are equally important.

Some tried to discuss whether knowing the context might be helpful for the interpretation of any sacred text.

The best responses came from candidates who seemed to be aware of the advice in the specification about considering the potential differences in the Surahs revealed at Makkah and those at al-Madinah.

Some candidates knew that Muslim scholars try to solve apparent contradictions by comparing the Surahs with events in the life of Muhammad ﷺ, to see which command might chronologically supersede another. Though Surah 4 is not in the AS specification content, some candidates knew that it was probably written after the battle of Uhud and this was used that fact in their discussions. Surahs 1 and 96 were used to argue that it does not matter where they were revealed because their meaning is obvious, and Allah ordained where they should be placed.

## G579 Judaism

### General Comments

The paper proved successful in allowing candidates to respond at different levels, and most were able to provide full answers to their chosen questions. It was clear that candidates had been well prepared for the examination and that the questions proved accessible. Since the last session, the quality of written communication has improved but poor sentence structure and punctuation frequently marred the development of argument in part (b) responses. All questions were attempted, with the best answers coming from those candidates who focused specifically on the question asked. There were no rubric infringements.

### Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 (a)** Most candidates began their response by describing the Torah in the limited sense of the Five Books of Moses and explained it as a divine work regulating every aspect of a Jew's life. There was good discussion of the importance of the commandments, both to the individual and to the community, although few pointed out that Jews vary a great deal in the degree of their observance of the mitzvot. All candidates included some reference to Torah readings in the synagogue, and many explained that the lectionary is organised so that the entire Torah is read during the course of a year. A good number discussed the importance of the daily recital of the Shema prayer. Surprisingly, few candidates emphasised the importance of studying Torah.
- 1 (b)** Candidates generally agreed with the statement, most supposing that if Torah contains a human element then it is merely the words of humans and has no eternal significance. Others argued that the essential truths of Torah can still be accepted regardless of how one believes they came about.
- 2 (a)** Many candidates began their response by relating the 'chosen people' concept to the covenants, especially those with Abraham and Moses. Some explained the tradition that the Jews themselves, in entering the covenant with G-d, had to make the final decision whether or not they would accept the Torah and serve as a 'light to the nations'. Most candidates discussed Israel's obligation to obey G-d by following the mitzvot, and a good number explained that the choice of Israel was for the benefit of all nations. Some explored the relationship between the role of the Jews as a 'chosen people' and the concept of a royal priesthood. Only a handful of candidates discussed the concept of suffering as a mark of Israel's election.
- 2(b)** Answers to the statement were varied. Some candidates maintained that G-d is the unintelligible and human beings cannot possibly understand His reasons. Some argued that although the 'chosen people' concept suggests divine favouritism, the Jewish people were chosen for specific tasks and with specific responsibilities. Others argued that G-d had already shown His concern for all humanity with the Noahide code before choosing Israel.

- 3 (a)** Most candidates began their response by defining the mitzvot in terms of G-d's requirements of Israel as stipulated in the Five Books of Moses. Some discussed four categories of mitzvot: reflexive laws, ethical laws, national laws and laws of holiness. Others discussed mitzvot concerned with the sanctity of the person, the sanctity of time, and the sanctity of place. Only a small number of candidates were able to cite scholarly opinion in support of their answer; notably, the views of the twentieth-century Jewish philosopher, Rabbi Abraham Heschel. The majority of candidates stressed that the mitzvot benefit Jews by helping them reach a level of holiness.
- 3 (b)** Candidates generally agreed with the statement, most maintaining that the mitzvot enable Jews to know how G-d wishes them to behave, and therefore provide an opportunity of doing G-d's will. Some made reference to the Ten Commandments where G-d calls those who observe His commandments 'those who love Me'. Others argued that many mitzvot are too restricting and do not allow Jews to enjoy the pleasures of life.
- 4 (a)** Most candidates began their response by explaining that women have a different status to men in Judaism. Many centred their discussion on the role of the woman as wife, mother and homemaker, and most explained that it is the mother who plays the dominant role in the upbringing of the children. Some included useful discussion of the image of the ideal woman in Proverbs 31. Most candidates explained the man's role in terms of providing for the family, but few showed awareness of the importance attached to his teaching responsibilities. Some explained that although the traditional roles remain important within Judaism, they are now beginning to change, and they frequently gave the example of Jewish wives going out to work. Weaker responses were focused almost entirely on the role of women within the Jewish family. Some candidates erroneously supposed that it is the woman who recites the Sabbath Kiddush in Orthodox households.
- 4 (b)** On the whole, candidates disagreed with the statement, most arguing that differences in practice between men and women simply reflect a difference in role and not inferiority. Some argued that the biblical text is not as patriarchal as non-Jews are frequently led to believe. Others maintained that Jewish tradition does discriminate against women and often cited their exclusion from public ritual in support.

# G581 Philosophy of Religion

## General Comments

There were many very good scripts this session which demonstrated sound understanding of the questions and relevant theories. An examination at this level is not primarily a test of what candidates know, but rather of how well they can respond to the question. Some candidates wrote at enormous length, covering every theory they could remember, but often without demonstrating how these might be remotely relevant. A number of candidates tried to disguise general topic answers by adding a phrase at the end of each paragraph which attempted to link their thoughts back to the question.

Good responses establish relevance; it is then clear to the examiner why a particular point has been made. Some essays read simply as lists, as if learned by rote from notes or lists of bullet points. Better candidates had clearly reflected on issues, rather than simply learning them. In doing so, they were able to construct effective arguments.

A significant number of candidates handicapped themselves by poor use of English: muddled expression too often points to, and creates, muddled thought. A particular problem for many was inadequate grasp of the grammar of philosophy, with terms such as 'prove' (used as a synonym for 'argue'), 'refute' (used to mean 'deny'), a priori (often mistakenly used for 'innate'), a posteriori, 'analytic' and 'metaphysical' commonly misunderstood. A special problem was that some candidates argued that something such as miracles was 'logically impossible'. Improbable it might have been, but there was no intrinsic logical contradiction.

Some candidates penalised themselves by writing illegibly. Examiners can reward only what they are able to read. A small number of candidates are still using blue rather than the required black ink.

## Comments on Individual Questions:

1 This was a popular question, though a disappointingly large number of candidates failed to understand the nature of propositional and non-propositional approaches, arguing that the first implied direct revelation (normally literal) and the latter indirect revelation. Neither definition is correct. Very many failed to recognise that in the life of believers, both aspects are frequently present. Some responses still suggested that Roman Catholics are fundamentalist literalists in their approach to scripture. Some, less successful responses, tended to catalogue different views uncritically, providing only modest glimpses of analysis and argument. Nevertheless, many candidates demonstrated valuable understanding of how Scripture presents its own problems of understanding as a result of mistranslation, misunderstandings, internal contradictions etc.

Some candidates, a minority, seized on this question as an opportunity to write, to little effect, their pre-prepared Religious Experience essay. This may have been acceptable if they had used religious experience as a counter argument or as a foundation to scriptural revelation.

2 This was a very popular question, which attracted some excellent answers. Most candidates demonstrated some good understanding of analogy, though a significant number argued that analogy was an example of equivocal language (if this were true it would have no value as a description of God, or anything else), unaware that Aquinas defended analogy against both equivocal and univocal language.

The understanding of myth was sometimes less focused, though better responses drew attention to the human need for narrative and demonstrated the varieties of myth. Some embarked on a long description of Bultmann without establishing why he was, or might be, directly relevant to the question.

Some candidates read this question as 'List every theory you know about religious language' and there were some pedestrian and unfocused responses, based on what appeared at times to be pre-prepared answers. Those who addressed the question specifically were usually well rewarded.

- 3 This was a popular question which attracted many good responses. Most candidates knew something about reincarnation though many seemed unaware of the Nicene Creed's insistence on 'the resurrection of the body', assuming that Christianity believes just in spiritual continuity. Some responses confused resurrection and reincarnation. Most candidates sent John Smith off again on his global travels but a surprising number assumed, incorrectly, that Hick's thought experiment was expressly created to demonstrate the likelihood of reincarnation.

It was disappointing that very few said anything about what was needed to be a continuous person, a question which for many philosophers is central to the plausibility of either theory of life after death. A few candidates wrote pre-prepared 'life after death' essays and a few threw in a great deal of material about near-death (often described as 'outer [sic] body' experiences), with no obvious relevance.

- 4 This was the most popular question. Most candidates had some awareness of Hume's arguments though many failed to recognise the central problems of the inductivism which lies at the heart of Hume's argument. Many candidates simply dealt with his subsidiary arguments. Of those who did mention inductivism, it was notable that some clearly did not fully understand the issues involved. A surprising number thought – contrary to Hume's own account - that he claimed the laws of nature were fixed and unbreakable, with miracles impossible. Some candidates wrote pre-prepared miracle essays, with little, and occasionally no, reference to Hume. An interesting anachronism which appeared in several scripts, from different centres, was the claim that St Teresa of Avila cured her TB by bathing in the waters of the Lourdes grotto, a claim sceptically received by Hume.

## G582 Religious Ethics

### General Comments

This question paper produced a wide variation of marks across the complete mark range. The quality of candidates varied between those who were obviously very well prepared and aware of the demands of the question, and those who were not so well prepared and whose writing lacked the skills of evaluation.

On the whole, candidates were able to analyse and evaluate elements within the main argument rather than tacking it on as a paragraph at the end of their response. Whilst both are viable methods, the former tended to produce better, more analytical responses.

Very good candidates were able to focus on the question and their answers showed flair and genuine understanding.

- 1 This was the most popular question on the paper. Candidates appeared to have been well prepared by their teachers, and were able to construct thoughtful, and for the most part, articulate responses to the question.

Many candidates covered a good range of views from St Paul to Kohlberg. Some candidates who discussed Aquinas did not seem clear about his ideas on conscience and did not refer to *synderesis*, *conscientia* or *recta ratio*. There also tended to be little distinction between the views of Butler or Newman. There was also some confusion as to whether Butler saw conscience as the voice of reason – he was identified on both sides of the question by different candidates.

The question of whether conscience as the voice of reason was compatible with conscience as the voice of God was welladdressed by some candidates.

Understanding Freud also proved problematic for some candidates. Some were determined to include everything they knew about him (Oedipus, Electra etc) without actually considering the relevance to the question.

There were, however, some excellent responses which considered whether Freud's super-ego was in fact rational in the sense that it mediated a person's relationship with family and society.

Some candidates also considered whether conscience was in fact a voice at all.

- 2 This was the least popular question. Some candidates were able to cope with the demands of the question, showing clear understanding of the problems facing the environment. These approaches often centred on the impact of business on the environment, and the relevance of different thinkers, individuals and ethical theories, in order to create a clear and effective response.

However, many responses seemed to be very general discussions; some failed completely to relate any ethical approaches to business. Many gave emotive responses, writing about the importance of the environment without questioning the role of business or being able to provide any evidence for their responses.

For some candidates, once the views of Friedman on the profit motive of the shareholder model business had been explained, there did not seem much left to say apart from noting the contrasting ethics of the Body Shop.

Good responses managed to grasp the bigger picture and the complexities of the question.

- 3 This was a very popular choice amongst candidates and produced some very interesting responses. The vast majority of candidates recognised the question as making reference to determinism, and were able to make a response on this basis. Many candidates seemed keen to analyse the concept of social conditioning and made direct reference to the work of behaviourists such as Skinner and Pavlov; this approach was generally supported with reference to Darrow's defence in the Loeb trial. Most candidates were able to contrast this with other hard determinists. Some candidates were unclear as to how this might affect ethical decision-making, but most were able to give good examples of ethical decisions which might be influenced by social conditioning.

Some candidates simply explained all the different approaches from hard determinism through soft determinism and libertarianism, with good use of relevant scholars. Other candidates made good use of the word 'merely' in the question and were able to posit alternative sources for ethical decisions.

Candidates responded to the question using different approaches. Some used conscience, with a reasonable degree of success, whilst others used meta-ethical theories. Those who focused on answering the question were successful whatever approach they took.

- 4 This was also a popular question. Most candidates were able to effectively apply Natural Law theory to the issue of sex before marriage and contrast the response to other ethical theories. Some responses, however, fell into the trap of either explaining and analysing Natural Law in detail, or trying to display a knowledge and familiarity of as many aspects of pre-marital sex as possible. The former produced responses which did not have time to apply it to pre-marital sex; the latter produced responses where the relationship with Natural Law was only referred to in passing. In general the main difficulty candidates had with this question was one of balance.

Weaker responses showed limited understanding of Natural Law, and this limited the scope of their subsequent discussion. Some candidates applied the primary precepts accurately, but many seemed unsure of the stance of Natural Law on marriage itself. Some even seemed to lose the focus of the question and simply wrote about sex in general.

Some candidates made good use of the phrase 'most reliable approach' and were able to posit a range of more reliable or less reliable approaches, with clear evaluation as to the reasons for these views. There were some good discussions of the merits of the approach of Bentham, compared with that of Mill, in terms of pre-marital sex.

## G583 Jewish Scriptures

### General Comments

All questions with the exception of Question 3, which was not attempted, proved to be accessible.

Rubric infringements were rare and most candidates managed to complete the question paper within the one hour 30 minute time limit. The main weakness was a tendency to regurgitate lesson notes without due regard to engaging with the wording of the questions. The better responses tended to quote the set texts appropriately, made reference to issues of date, authorship, purpose and historicity when relevant.

### Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 Five candidates attempted this question. Those who demonstrated knowledge of the text of the Temple Sermon in Jeremiah 7, and showed some familiarity with the text of the book of Amos tended to do well as long as they addressed the question using specific quotations, rather than simply trying to adapt their class notes.

Candidates usually pointed out that the situation was different as far as the date and place were concerned, but that the key message is the same. The focus tended to be on the condemnation of social ills. Two candidates included general all purpose comments from scholars.

- 2 This was the most popular question. It was handled fairly well, and one or two responses were excellent.

The texts in the specification itemised in relation to the topic of reward and punishment are: Isaiah 53, Jeremiah 7, Ezekiel 18, Daniel 12, Psalm 1 and 2 Maccabees 7 and candidates tended to address the question by working their way through some of these.

Most responses noted the word 'only' in the stimulus quotation. One or two argued that there seems to be, particularly in apocalyptic literature and especially after the Maccabean revolt in 165BCE, a development of beliefs about the resurrection of the body (eg Daniel 12:2) and about judgement and life after death. One candidate managed to use a reference to a scholar's comment in the introduction and then made a significant return to it in the conclusion.

- 3 This question was not attempted.

- 4 The few candidates who chose this question began with an introduction about Micah who felt called to preach in Jerusalem in Judah in the eighth century BCE. They explained, with examples, that Micah condemns both Israel and Judah for unreal religion as well as social injustice. They pointed out that, besides his denunciations, Micah has messages of hope including the announcement of a Messiah.

Differentiation tended to depend on how well the candidates knew, and used, the actual contents of Micah in addressing the question. Micah 6:8 was seen as a key verse. One excellent candidate also quoted the opinions of scholars about the points made.

*Examiners' Reports – January 2011*

The specification emphasises the Messianic aspect of the book and one candidate supported this theme as the most important. The others tended to think all the themes were equally important, and one went on to remark that the Messianic Kingdom will be founded on social justice.

## G584 New Testament

### General Comments

The overall performance by candidates entered for this Unit was very mixed. There were several candidates who achieved the top level of marks, band 5, in one question but no outstanding performances which achieved band 5 for both questions. The majority of candidates achieved a good, or satisfactory, level of marks. However, weaker responses lacked original thought or logical development of ideas. There was also, in some cases, an unquestioning reiteration of sources which showed a lack of understanding of the text or the source/notes being quoted. In general, most of the candidates attempted to construct their answers using the minimum amount of evidence from the specified texts which hindered the quality of the answers.

### Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 This was a popular question and relatively well done. Candidates approached it from a variety of angles, all equally valid. The purpose and *raison d'être* of the two gospels was usually well contrasted with explanations about audience and motive, supported by evidence from the content of Mark and Matthew. In some answers, the synoptic relationship between the two was also recognised to be relevant. Most candidates were equally strong on the two assessment objectives AO1 and AO2. Some weaker candidates limited their performance by writing too generally about the life of Jesus rather than about the gospel authors.
- 2 This was another fairly popular question. There were some good and satisfactory attempts, comparing and analysing scholarly debates on realised, futuristic and inaugurated eschatology with supporting evidence from the texts. However, some answers were notable for inaccurate or limited use of text as evidence to support the arguments. Some candidates shoe-horned a limited number of two or three miracles or parables into evidence or proof of any theory regarding Jesus' teaching on eschatology. The same text was often used to support each different theory without any clear explanation as to why the interpretations might differ. A weakness, in all but the best answers, was the failure to develop the argument holistically to answer the question.
- 3 Too few candidates attempted this question for the examiners to make any general comments.
- 4 The candidates who produced the best answers had made a thorough and detailed study of the parables in the set texts, were able to engage with the question, and develop and present their views in an individual way. The majority of the candidates who chose this question did have an understanding of the focus of the question, and clearly had access to relevant information and sources. However, the degree of accuracy and understanding shown about the allegorical debate and the different views of Jesus' use of parables varied considerably between candidates. The interpretation and analysis of certain parables was sometimes inaccurate, or candidates did not offer evidential support for their views. Some candidates showed a lack of skill in organising their answer or in being able to come to a conclusion.

## G585 Development in Christian Theology

### General Comments

There were very few poor answers and several theologically highly literate responses. In some cases, there were some extremely good answers demonstrating a wide range of philosophical and theological ideas, but if the candidate failed to focus on the question it was difficult to award high marks.

### Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 Most candidates had a reasonable grasp of Hick's theology, though not many really understood how his Kantian basis was important. Some interesting answers considered him in terms of inter faith dialogue and the problems which this poses. Good answers, therefore, focused on his lack of Christology and the dangers of demythologising. Only the very best candidates actually considered what 'doomed to failure' might mean and why it might possibly be made as a criticism.
- 2 Very few candidates answered this question but those who did were able to articulate Rahnerian teaching clearly, though few did in sufficient detail. Nevertheless, most candidates pointed out that Rahner's theology is strongly exclusive despite his inclusive notion of grace. Few candidates looked at his idea of church.
- 3 This question produced a wide range of responses. Some candidates looked specifically at the Bible, others focused on *Mulieris Dignitatem* in detail (and to good effect), whilst others looked at the teaching of Augustine, Luther and Aquinas. All these were legitimate approaches and produced some interesting essays. Some candidates could see that radical feminist theologians offered very similar answers to conservative theologians, although the notion of duty was perceived in very different ways.
- 4 Those candidates who knew relevant Old Testament passages well were able to construct some good arguments. There were some excellent considerations of Tribble's analysis, although too many candidates then strayed off into the New Testament, presumably thinking that St Paul's ideas belonged to the Old Testament. There was an opportunity here to consider Womanist theology and the wilderness theme, but no one did.

## G586 Buddhism

### General Comments

There were very few rubric errors. However, there were some candidates who did not complete a second question. In most cases, this did not seem to be a result of timing issues.

The quality of answers varied greatly. Some candidates gave detailed and thoughtful answers showing a good awareness of Buddhist concepts. A few candidates gave very brief answers and seemed to have little knowledge of Buddhism at all.

There was evidence in some responses of candidates writing prepared answers on a topic, rather than addressing the question asked. This approach does inhibit candidates' ability to access the higher levels as they are not selecting relevant material.

### Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 The best responses to this question tended to explore this question through an analysis of the eightfold path. Candidates explored the aspects of the path, comprising of morality and meditation, and usually demonstrated how the two supported each other.

Some candidates did refer to the bodhisattva path and/or the Mahayana understanding of upaya. However, these responses tended to have only a rudimentary understanding of the issues w were being discussed. This was disappointing, for if these areas had been explored with more facility this would have added significantly to the discussion being undertaken.

- 2 There were a number of very weak responses to this question. Some candidates confused which concepts were being explored in each scripture, and even who the speakers in each scripture were. A significant number of candidates focused mainly on retelling the parables from the Lotus Sutra, with very little understanding of their importance to Mahayana Buddhists.

There was some evidence of prepared responses to this question, with a number of candidates comparing the importance of these scriptures for Theravada and Mahayana Buddhists, rather than focusing on their value in the Mahayana tradition.

The best responses had a good understanding of the concepts in each scripture and their influence on various Mahayana traditions. Candidates were able to explore a range of issues – for example, whether the concept of sunyata had a more profound influence on Mahayana belief and practice than upaya, or whether the Lotus Sutra had greater appeal to the laity before reaching their conclusions.

- 3 Weaker responses to this question tended to say the question was ludicrous as the word Zen meant meditation, and then explore some Zen meditation practices – often with little understanding of their nature or purpose.

Many candidates were able to provide evidence of the use of meditation in Zen, and compared its importance with either scripture or ethical practice before stating that meditation was very important.

Very few candidates explored the issues connected with sunyata and the 'sameness' of samsara and nibbana to aid them in their analysis. Those who explore these issues often provided very good responses, as they were able to explore whether meditation itself was important, or whether the aim of meditation was important.

- 4 Answers to this question were often in the middle range of marks. Most candidates had some awareness of the Dalai Lama's political importance as the leader of all Tibetans, and his role as the figure-head of the resistance to the Chinese occupation of Tibet. They were therefore able to create some argument that his political role was very important.

Few candidates demonstrated a secure understanding of Dalai Lama's religious status, or even referred to the fact that he was considered to be a bodhisattva. Those who were able to demonstrate this understanding had no awareness that this only applied to one of the Tibetan schools of Buddhism. As a result, there was little informed analysis of his religious leadership. This was disappointing, as the Dalai Lama's own statements about the likelihood of his role continuing after his death make this a fertile area of discussion at present.

## **G587 Hinduism**

### **General Comments**

There were too few entries to make meaningful comment.

## G588 Islam

### General Comments

The full range of ability was represented, although a certain academic immaturity of response from some candidates was evident. Question 1 was the most popular and all the questions differentiated well. There was a tendency from some candidates to try and repeat responses to past topics without focusing on addressing this session's actual questions.

### Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 A number of candidates focused on the development of the religion rather than on its possible demise after the death of Muhammad ﷺ and, as a consequence, tended to compare Bakr's achievements with those of the three subsequent Caliphs. Some candidates combined the two ideas – survival and development. One candidate clearly grasped the meaning of the question and explored the range of possible answers showing that (s)he understood that while Abu Bakr performed well as Caliph, the fact that Ali was overlooked clearly led, eventually, to a split in the faith.
- 2 Some candidates assumed that the question was asking for a discussion of the differences between Shi'a and Sunni Muslims and failed to consider the different groups referred to in the specification. Other candidates combined this exposition with very brief references to the different Shi'a groups. A few candidates explored the differences in terms of the number of Imams accepted, but few showed any deeper understanding and, in consequence, tended not to do well at AO2. There were, however, one or two excellent responses from candidates who seemed at ease with the skill of essay writing at this level.
- 3 The depth of knowledge was, generally, not very great with only a few candidates showing that they understood the variety of 'issues' which the concept of al Qadr raises. A few candidates clearly failed to understand the meaning of 'implications'. One or two candidates wrote excellent essays dealing not only with related beliefs and Articles of Faith, but also with the long and short term implications for daily living.
- 4 This was probably the least popular of the four questions. One candidate seemed to think that the question was about Jihad and so wrote about the greater and lesser Jihad. Most candidates understood the question. Some were able to explore the approach of the four schools but failed to show that Ijtihad is anything other than the possibility for personal decisions about the way to cope with situations which were not covered in the Qur'an and Sunnah. There was some good use of technical terms in a few responses.

## G589 Judaism

### General Comments

There was a small entry for this Unit but the standard of response covered the whole range of ability. There were few poor scripts, although some candidates tended to produce descriptive, rather than evaluative answers. The best responses came from those candidates who maintained a strong focus on the question.

All questions were attempted, with questions 3 and 4 proving the most popular choices. There did not appear to be difficulties over time allocation and there were no misinterpretations of the rubric. The poor quality of written English remains a weakness in some candidates' work.

### Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 This proved the least popular question. Unhappily, it was answered in general terms as a question on the development of modern Zionism, and with little reference made to the life and work of Judah Halevi.

Little successful analysis was shown. The issue was whether or not Judah Halevi encouraged a vision of the Jewish people and the Land of Israel which would have resonated with modern Zionists.

- 2 Responses were generally satisfactory. Good answers came from those candidates who concentrated their efforts on Maimonides' teachings on the person and work of the Messiah, and the purpose of the Messianic Age. Some candidates lost the focus of the question and spent too long contrasting the views of Maimonides and the Maharal. Many candidates were able to make reference to the statement of the Twelfth Principle of Faith concerning the days of the Messiah.

In their evaluation, nearly all candidates agreed that Maimonides' teachings concerning the Messiah have relevance for Jews today. Many cited the example of the Lubavitch missionaries whose aim is to bring all Jews back to Torah obedience; arguing that this is the precondition for the Messianic Age. Some candidates argued that Progressive Judaism has little use for Maimonides' teachings because its emphasis is on a new age rather than a personal Messiah.

- 3 The most popular question. Most candidates began by discussing anti-Semitism in general terms as attitudes and acts of prejudice against the Jewish people. Nearly all candidates focused on the Holocaust as the most horrific, systematic anti-Semitism in history, and discussed the attempts of various post-Holocaust theologians to confront the question of survival. Fackenheim and Rubenstein were the two scholars whose opinions were most frequently cited.

There was general agreement with the statement in the question, many candidates arguing the importance of Jews reaffirming their Jewish identity and rebuilding Jewish life as their own protest against anti-Semitism. Some candidates argued the obligation placed on Jews to remember the horrors of the Holocaust as a means of helping to prevent future acts of hatred. Others viewed the establishment of the State of Israel as 'the most positive response'; arguing that the State has saved the lives of many Jews and given them hope.

- 4 In general, candidates had greater knowledge of Reform Judaism than Conservative Judaism. Most discussed the origins of the two movements and the leading personalities, including Mendelssohn, Geiger, Frankel and Schechter. Some showed awareness of later developments, including the decision to ordain women rabbis in Conservative Judaism, and Reform's reassessment of its attitude towards Zionism. Weaker candidates could do little more than describe Conservatism as a position midway between Orthodoxy and Reform.

Many candidates disagreed with the statement in the question, arguing that Reform's rejection of the traditional authority of Jewish law and tradition continues to distinguish it from Conservatism. Others argued that Conservatism's more recent (liberal) attitude towards halakhah, and Reform's restoration of (certain) ritual has blurred the distinctions between the two movements.

**OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)**  
**1 Hills Road**  
**Cambridge**  
**CB1 2EU**

**OCR Customer Contact Centre**

**14 – 19 Qualifications (General)**

Telephone: 01223 553998

Facsimile: 01223 552627

Email: [general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk](mailto:general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk)

**[www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk)**

For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored

**Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations**  
**is a Company Limited by Guarantee**  
**Registered in England**  
**Registered Office; 1 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB1 2EU**  
**Registered Company Number: 3484466**  
**OCR is an exempt Charity**

**OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)**  
**Head office**  
**Telephone: 01223 552552**  
**Facsimile: 01223 552553**

© OCR 2011

