

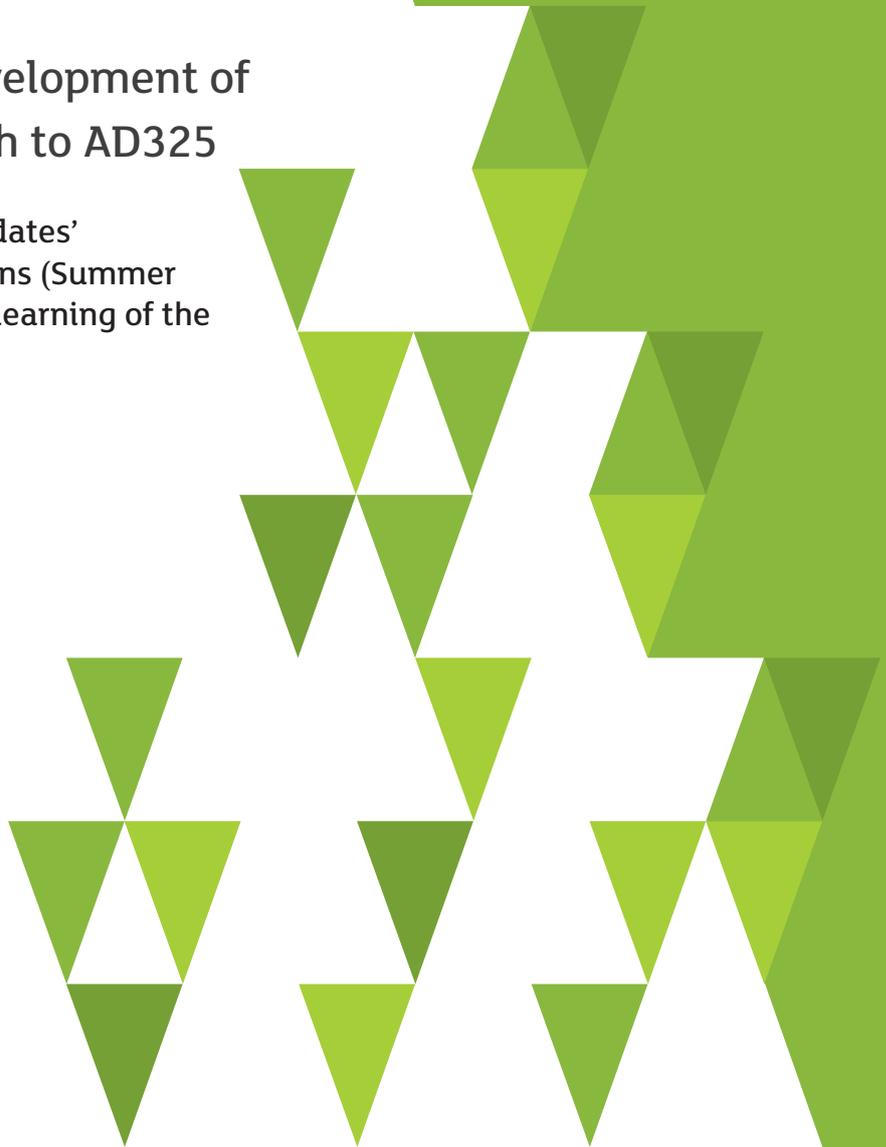
GCE



CCEA GCE AS
Exemplifying Examination
Performance
Religious Studies

**AS 4: The Origins and Development of
the Early Christian Church to AD325**

This is an exemplification of candidates' performance in GCE AS examinations (Summer 2017) to support the teaching and learning of the Religious Studies specification.



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EXEMPLIFYING EXAMINATION PERFORMANCE

GCE Religious Studies

Introduction

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Students' grade A responses are reproduced verbatim and are accompanied by commentaries written by senior examiners. The commentaries draw attention to the strengths of the students' responses and indicate, where appropriate, deficiencies and how improvements could be made.

It is intended that the materials should provide a benchmark of candidate performance and help teachers and students to raise standards.

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Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donna Finlay". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'y'.

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GCE: AS Religious Studies

SRE41: The Origins and Development of the Early Christian Church to AD325

Grade: A Exemplar

Section A

Answer **one** question from Section A

Q1a “Various factors were responsible for the rapid growth of the Church in the first three centuries.”

Explain the truth of this statement. [25]

Student's response

This statement is true as there were various factors which contributed to the spread of the church. Two main way were the religious and political factors.

Firstly from the political factors came the construction of roads throughout the Roman Empire. These roads were built in order to carry soldiers between different borders. They provided easy access to towns, cities and nations throughout the full extent of the Empire. Christian misionaries were allowed to use these roads which had a major contribution to the rate of which Christianity could spread. Coupled with this factor is the fact that Roman soldiers were constantly being moved around the Empire with these roads. This meant the harsh judicial system in Rome was upheld by the soldiers acting as a deterrent for crime. This allowed for safe and easy travel for missionaries across the empire. Furthermore, the pax Romana and rapid border expansion in Rome led to rapid church expansion. Roman peace was as a result of brutal punishments for crime meaning people were scared to commit crime. The rapid boarder expansion allowed for access to far away nations. The conquering attitude of Roman generals meant Christian ministries were allowed access to many new nations to expand the early church.

On top of these political factors, various religious factors also contributed to rapid growth of the early church. In every town where ten Jewish men were present, there was a synagogue for Jewish worship. This meant there was a pre-established meeting place for missionaries to preach the word of God allowing people to be converted faster. Moreover, the festival of pentecost welcomed the first three thousand members into the early church through baptism. As Jews from all across the Empire meet in Jerusalem for this festival it meant when the holy spirit came to the disciples in the miracle known as Golossolia, many Jews were converted and took the message of Jesus back to their home towns across the empire. This aided in the rapid expansion of the church. A final point in relation to religious factors was the Greek philosophy. Well educated Greeks enjoyed debates in which Christian missionaries joined in. This had the effect of converting previously pagan educated men into believing Christians, whom had influence in society due to their education background.

There were other reasons for rapid growth in the early church in the first three centuries. For example, there was religious tolerance granted to Christians at many points throughout early church history. Between Decius and the great persecution there was forty years of toleration allowing Christianity to spread. In the first two centuries, persecution was localised, sporadic outbreaks with no systematic imperial policy. This enabled the growth of Christianity throughout the empire.

In conclusion this statement is true as there were various factors that were responsible for the growth in the early church. These were religious, political and times of toleration towards Christianity. This meant that christianity and the early church was able to spread like wild fire throughout the empire.

Examiner's comments

Band 4 – 19

The candidate is addressing the task throughout this very good response. In the opening paragraph they concur with the statement and reference is made to religious and political factors. As the essay develops, the candidate addresses these two kinds of factors. Clear references are made to various Roman factors and the candidate has a high degree of understanding of how these contributed to the spread of Christianity. A range of religious factors is also identified as being responsible for the rapid growth of the Church. A brief conclusion is offered. The essay has a coherent structure and makes very good use of technical language and vocabulary.

Q1b Comment on the claim that Christianity did not attract converts from every level of society. Justify your answer. [25]

Student's response

This claim has some truth, however also there were Christians present in all levels of society. They were mostly present in lower classes but with a minority present in upper classes.

Christianity was seen, and still is seen as a 'crutch' for people to lean on when they are in need. Therefore in Roman society it was believed that Christianity was a religion for the peasants in society. This can be seen in the account of Blandina the slave girls persecuted under Emperor Marcus Aurelius. She was in lower class society and was martyred for her faith. This shows Christians being present in the lower classes. However, in Domitian's family there is speculation as to if his wife Domitilla was a Christian. This means that christianity had spread not just into lower or middle classes but also the imperial family. Moreover, in the account of Justin Martyr, killed under the order of Marcus Aurelius, we see that christianity was present in educated classes. Justin was teaching christianity to pupils showing how christianity was not just for peasants.

The claim can also be counter argued by the information in the writings of Pliny to Trajan. In Pliny's letter to Trajan we see that christianity is described as a "contagion" which had "spread to all classes in society". If this information is accurate then how can this claim that christianity did not attract converts from all levels of society be true? In this letter to Trajan it is clear to see that christianity was not just spreading horizontally to peasants and poor lower classes, but also vertically to educated and respected philosophers and teachers. A prime example of vertical spread was the conversion of a Roman emperor himself, Constantine. This shows christianities presence in all levels of society. Saying that christianity did not attract converts from all levels of society cannot be true as it is clear that it was an ever growing problem within the Roman Empire. These examples show to the full extent the spread of christianity. Christianity was often under persecution however this enabled it to grow even more. From the slave class with the example of Blandina to the emperial family of Domitian and Emperor Constantine himself. It is very apparent that christianity was existing in every level of society. By the time of Constantine Christians were in the courts with Constantines chief advisor being a Spanish bishop, Glabrio.

In conclusion, this claim has some truth in terms of Roman belief that christianity was for the weak. However, through this critical analysis and justification with examples, it is clear to see that christianity was apparent and attracted people from every class in society.

Examiner's comments

Band 5 – 21

This is an excellent attempt at constructing a well informed and balanced argument. Throughout, the candidate offers accurate evidence from various sources relating to every level within society. The response has a clear structure with accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Q2a Give an account of the development of the practice and doctrine of the Eucharist, with particular reference to Hippolytus and Cyprian. [25]

Student's response

Throughout the first three centuries of the early church, there was clear development in both the practice and doctrine of the Eucharist, leading it to be more significant in the lives of early Christians.

In our first source, the New Testament impression is given that there was no fixed liturgy or series of events associated with the doctrine and practice of the Eucharist; the process was quite simplistic. In Matthew, Jesus instructed the disciples to carry out the practice of the Eucharist in "remembrance of me" adding clear significance to the practice. The Eucharist outlined the meal which took place, as the bread was broken and then thanks given, followed by the meal and then the drinking of the wine. In the first century, the Eucharist was carried out in the evening time and was associated with the Agape of Christian love feast. As one scholar stated, "when the Eucharist being taken in the morning began is unclear". The doctrine of the Eucharist created links with Jesus and had significance in the lives of early first century Christians so Jesus asked them to carry out the practice in remembrance of him – However, this contrasts with the Eucharist in the second century as it followed a set format.

Hippolytus writing in the 2nd century contrasts to the writings of the New Testament and the Didache which provide similar accounts of the doctrine and practice of baptism. Hippolytus reveals a growing complexity in regards to the doctrine and practice of the Eucharist from Rome in the late 2nd century. Hippolytus implies how a set liturgy had been put in place in reference to the bishop's words and the response of the congregation, although this liturgy was not entirely fixed, it provided the foundation for our services on the Eucharist today. Also, the account provided by Hippolytus references to the importance of the Eucharistic elements; the elements were commonly taken home or provided to those who were sick or in prison and Hippolytus warned against leaving the elements unattended where a mouse or an unbaptised may eat it. Hippolytus reveals a growing complexity in the doctrine of the Eucharist also as he conceives a realistic interpretation, he believed that upon

entering your body, the bread and wine physically changed to become the actual body and blood of Christ – however Hippolytus offers little along the lines of transubstantiation, the belief of the Catholic Church today. Hippolytus's source reveals how the doctrine and practice of the Eucharist had increased in importance throughout the 2nd century.

The 3rd century writers from North Africa of Tertullian and Cyprian adds to the growing complexity of the doctrine and practice of the Eucharist through the introduction of 3 cups, water mixed with wine, symbolising the unity of Eucharist, milk and honey to show the sweetness of Eucharist and water to show purity. It was also separated from the Agape meal by the 3rd century. The practice of the Eucharist developed as by the 3rd century, a fixed liturgy had been and was effectively carried out in each Eucharistic service. Cyprian regards that the Eucharist was celebrated daily in the 3rd century showing its importance in the early church. Furthermore, Cyprian had a sacrificial understanding of the Eucharistic elements as well and realistic interpretation as he believed the bread and wine were symbols of the body and blood of Christ that changed at a different stage. This reveals a growing complexity and understanding of the practice and doctrine of the Eucharist throughout the first three centuries.

Examiner's comments

Band 5 – 23

This response is focused throughout, beginning with the necessary New Testament background but moving relatively quickly to focus on the two Church Fathers identified in the question. The candidate demonstrates comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the writings of these two individuals. The essay offers an excellent balance between practice and doctrine. There is an extensive range of technical language and accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Q2b Consider how far it is true to say that the Eucharist was the most important part of Christian worship. Justify your answer. [25]

Student's response

To an extent, the Eucharist can be viewed as the most important part of Christian worship as Jesus instructed his disciples to carry out the practice in remembrance of him and therefore the practice of the Eucharist creates a link between people and God. The Eucharist could be considered the most important part of Christian worship due to the fact that over 3 centuries, the growing complexity and understanding of the Eucharist implies it was important as figure heads in the church felt that the doctrine and practice required development.

Moreover, the realistic interpretation of the Eucharistic elements provided that some sources believed that the Eucharistic elements physically changed into the body and blood of Christ and therefore the Eucharist can be viewed as the most important part of Christian worship.

However, the doctrine and practice of baptism is more important than the doctrine and practice of the Eucharist, as according to Brox, baptism is viewed as rite of, "acceptance, admission and initiation into Christianity." Baptism also developed into a complex practice throughout the first three centuries, 'implying it is more important than the Eucharist. The practice of baptism involved a 3 year preparation period, the chatechumens fasting of both the baptismal candidate and the baptiser, as well as daily exorcisms leading up to the act of baptism itself. Baptism can be viewed as more important than the Eucharist as Baptism was viewed as a rite of initiation into the Christian religion.

Furthermore, in order to partake in the Eucharist, the candidate must be baptised. This implies that the Eucharist was not the most important part of Christian worship as baptism was required in order for a person to be the member of The Christian Church and therefore baptism can be viewed as more important. The importance of baptism can be compared to the Eucharist as baptism only took place once in a person's life, whereas the third century, the Eucharist was happening daily – the Eucharist had become daily practice and therefore not much importance was associated with the doctrine of the Eucharist as it might have lost meaning for some candidates.

This can be compared to the doctrine of baptism as Bull stated, "the doctrine of baptism was more important than the form". Baptism can be perceived as more important than the Eucharist as Jesus himself was baptised by John in the River Jordan and the specific request for "cold running water" by the Didache in Syria Palestine implies that the doctrine and practice of Baptism is more significant and important than the doctrine and practice of the Eucharist.

Moreover, other parts of Christian worship such as charity and prayer can be perceived as more important than the Eucharist and therefore it is apparent that the Eucharist was not the most important part of Christian worship.

Examiner's comments

Band 5 – 23

This response is clear and coherent and avoids repetition from part (a). The candidate also avoids including excess knowledge content in relation to baptism. The student begins by identifying several reasons why the Eucharist was the most important part of Christian worship, but then shifts focus to the significance of baptism. The response is an excellent attempt at the application of beliefs to the question asked and provides personal insight and independent thought. The concluding brief paragraph mentions other aspects of Christian worship that were important.

Section B

Answer **one** question from Section B

Q3a Discuss the main themes in the writings of Ignatius of Antioch. [25]

Student's response

Ignatius of Antioch was the bishop of Antioch in Syria and was an Apostolic Father. An Apostolic Father is someone who was "a early Christian writer known to have had personal relationships with the Apostles" (Catholic Encyclopeda).

Staniforth writes that Ignatius was "a disciple of St. John". His early background is hazy. He was arrested in Antioch to be brought to Rome to be martyred. Banks suggests "he was arrested as a part of a quota of victims which needed to be supplied to the Ampitheatre in Rome". While being transported he wrote 6 Epistles to churches in: Symrra, Philadelphia, Magnesia, Ephesus, Tralles and Rome, as well as a personal epistle to Polycarp. The main themes in his epistles are Meresy, martyrdom and unity.

Heresy was threatening many churches at the time. There were 2 types of Heretics – Docetists and Judasiers. Judasiers were Jewish converts who believed that Old Testament requirements should still be followed. Ignatius said "don't be deceived by strange or ancient teachings, seeing that they are profitress". In his epistle to Philadelphia he tries to correct signs of Judaism present in the church.

The Docetists were Gentile converts who believed "Jesus only appeared to human, to have a body, to have suffered and died" (Banles). Stevenson says that the "Docetists morals were as weak as their theology". Ignatius warns the church in Magnesia not to be "deceived by their teachings" as they "don't follow the Eucharist" (Stevenson). In this Epistle he also harshly condemns them.

Unity is the next theme in his epistles. Ignatius says "the bishop is the centre or unity" (Bantles) and we have to "follow the bishop, all of you, as Jesus Christ followed the father". His epistles mark the 1st appearance of the "monarchical episoacy" (Eusebics). This is when the bishop is the head of the church and is assisted by deacons and presbyters. This may mark the emergence of the practice.

Martyrdom is the final theme and only appears in the epistle to Rome. Ignatius says that the church "shouldn't intervene" in his martyrdom as through this he will ascend to heaven. Ignatius longed to be martyred, saying he would even "intice the wild beasts" (Steveson) to attack him. Holmes outlines that he may have been depressed and longed to "become a disciple of Jesus through the wild beasts"

(Holmes). His church was also failing and thus martyrdom may have improved the situation in his church and his reputation (Holmes).

In conclusion, Heresy, unity and martyrdom are the 3 main themes in his epistles.

Examiner's comments

Band 5 – 21

The opening paragraph begins by accurately introducing Ignatius and his writings. Throughout the essay, the candidate refers to the wording of the question i.e. 'themes'. These are accurately identified and dealt with in a sophisticated and well-structured response. Spelling of technical words is mainly accurate. The candidate also includes a good range of relevant quotations and refers to recognised scholars.

Q3b With reference to other aspects of human experience, assess the claim that martyrdom is no longer an issue for the religious believer. Justify your answer. [25]

Student's response

Some are of the opinion that martyrdom is non-existent in the world today. In the west persecution is non-existent and believers are not persecuted. The News also doesn't report martyrdom, reading many to believe it doesn't exist. A poll by Christian unity in various states in America found that 67% of Christians believed martyrdom was non-existent in the world today.

Many reasons for persecution in the past also don't exist today. In western society, the church religion and state are separate and thus the government doesn't persecute. Refusal to worship Gods and refusal to curse Christ is unheard of in the modern world.

However persecution and martyrdom is still an issue. Opendoors.com claims the 20th century was the worst ever for persecution. Atrosities such as the Holocaust made over 6 million martyrs, which is a "cruel spectacle" (Chadwick).

Opendoors.com also lists that North Korea is the dangerous country to be a Christian in today. The government kills Christians in the country so many are forced to worship in secret. John Lai was part of a secret Christian group in North Korea. The group was discovered by North Korean forces and the members were killed. Gordon states that "martyrdom and persecution are very much present in the world today."

Gordon outlines how many Middle Eastern countries such as "Iraq and Afghanistan" are actively persecuting Christians. These 2 countries are listed in the Top 5 most dangerous countries to be a Christian in by open doors. Open doors highlights that Saif was an Afghani Christian who was kidnapped by Islamic extremists and was beheaded after refusing to convert to Islam.

In conclusion martyrdom is still very much an issue for the religious believer.

Examiner's comments

Band 4 – 16

The candidate begins by briefly offering good reasons why some in the west might agree with the claim. The response identifies and briefly explores why there is a lack of persecution in western society. Critical analysis follows with reference to other aspects of human experience including information from Open Doors. Several countries are referenced in relation to continuing persecution. Overall the candidate makes a very good attempt to construct well informed and balanced arguments.

Q4a Discuss the accounts of Constantine's conversion with particular reference to the influence of earlier events in his life. [25]

Student's response

Constantine was born on 27th of 2nd around 272AD and was the son of Constantius, a ceasar, then augustus, of the west of the Empire. Constantine was brought up in the court of Diocletian, no doubt he was a hostage for his father's loyalty to him and good behaviour. There he would have seen Christians coming in and out. His mother, Helen would also have a big role in his Christian life, being a Christian herself. She had influence over him and he respected her. His half-sister was also thought to have been Christian with her name Anastasia meaning resurrection. When Diocletian withdrew due to sickness, his father became Augustus of the west as due the tetrachal system the Augustus on the west had to leave as well. His father became ill a year later and asked to see his son. Galerius now Augustus of the East didn't want him for fear that the tetrachal system would collapse yet he left. His dad prayed to God of his death bed, so was a Christian. Constantine, to Galerius's annoyance became Augustus. He had to prove himself though. He went to war to Rome against Maximius. There he prayed to the God of his father and he saw a vision and was told to put the symbol he saw on to the shield, the voice said 'conquere by this'. Constantine put it on his shield and indeed even though Maximius' army was bigger they drown in the river tibre.

Lanctantius and Eusebius's accounts of the conversion differ. Eusebius recalls that Constantine called out for help to the Christian God whereas Lanctantius states that God just appeared to him without calling. However there is bais with these writers. Although Lanctantius' account was 5 years after the event to quite fresh in his mind, he did reach crispus, his son so may have made Constantine more heroic than he actually was. Eusebius is well regarded as an author yet he did write about it a lot time after the events took place and could have forgotton some details.

Constantine then believes in Christ and becomes the 1st Christian emperor. He makes Christianity equal to pagan beliefs for the first time ever. Constantine helps the church by building new churches, letting the church not pay tax and implymented Christian morals such as slaves not being branded on the face.

In conclusion it is evident by his actions after his conversion that it was genuine and Christianity had been planted in his mind since he was young. Due to his mother being a Christian.

Examiner's comments

Band 4 – 17

The candidate begins by identifying and analysing earlier events in the life of Constantine and how these influenced him. The essay progresses to the two accounts of Constantine's conversion. Throughout the response there is a high degree of understanding and almost totally accurate knowledge. There is a brief reference to his religious policy before the conclusion. The structure is mainly clear and coherent, and spelling punctuation and grammar are mainly accurate.

Q4b "Religious conversion is always a dramatic event in the life of the religious believer."

Evaluate the truth of this statement with particular reference to other aspects of human experience. Justify your answer. [25]

Student's response

I believe that religious conversion is always a dramatic event in the life of the religious believer.

Nicky Cruz is a prime example of a dramatic conversion. Nicky was born to devil worshipping parent. His mother even called him a 'son of the devil' while in a trance. He became the president of the notorious Brooklyn street-gang the Mau-Manus. He fell into an endless cycle of alcohol, drugs and violence. However a street-preacher, Wilkerson, with unconditional love changed this man. Before his conversion a phycologist said he would in the future be put into jail, or sentenced to death row and go to hell, but this is not the case. Now Nicky helps people that are in gangs stop and teaches the word of God. This was a very dramatic conversion.

Darrett Tunningly also had a very dramatic conversion. He was in prison and thought he would go to the Alpha programme for tea and biscuits. He never thought he would believe. He went and prayed in his cell and the nexted day he woke up and tried to smoke but couldn't feeling sick. He threw out all his cigarette and became a new person.

Now-a-days especially for Muslims converting to Christianity in countries such as Syria, conversion is a very dramatic event.

Many muslims lose their family as they are disowned. Some even have their children taken away from them due to their new faith. Others, are forced to marry muslim men in order to forget about this new religion.

Many muslims who convert even lose their life. 'Honour Killings' occur as the family is dishonoured due to the new religious belief acquired by the family member.

Some in small villages are frowned upon by their neighbours and they will not shake hands with the convert as they are now 'unclean'.

I believe that since conversion is repentance, forgiveness and the new life with God it has to be dramatic. You cannot continue with the past bad morals, you are a new person.

However some say that for people who were brought up Christians and become Christians the conversion is not as dramatic. It is almost expected by family. Also in muslim countries conversion to religions such as Christianity may not be dramatic as they may have to keep their faith a secret due to fear of persecution, also in these country's there are probably no Christian churches so it is made to become a secret as you can't share your faith with anyone.

In conclusion I believe that conversion is always a dramatic event in the life of the believer as no matter your circumstances you will be at least changed inside.

Examiner's comments

Band 4 – 20

The candidate begins by agreeing with the statement and then offers several accurate examples of human experience to support the claim. Critical analysis follows and the response is focused on the statement throughout. This is a very good attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought.



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