GCE



CCEA GCE A2
Exemplifying Examination
Performance

Religious Studies

A2 2: Themes in Selected Letters of St Paul

This is an exemplification of candidates' performance in GCE A2 examinations (Summer 2018) to support the teaching and learning of the Religious Studies specification.



EXEMPLIFYING EXAMINATION PERFORMANCE

GCE Religious Studies

Introduction

These materials illustrate aspects of performance from the 2018 summer A2 examination series of CCEA's revised GCE Specification in 2016.

Students' grade A responses are reproduced verbatim and 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

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GCE: A2 Religious Studies

ARE21: Themes in Selected Letters of St Paul

Grade: A Exemplar

Section A

Q1a "In Galatians Paul wants to answer those who accuse him of weakening the requirements of the Law in order to win Gentile converts." Examine this statement. [20]

Student's response

In the Book of Galatians Paul wants to address the galatians that he is not weakening the requirements of the law

Paul begins by stating he was called by God and received the word through him This is Paul trying to get across that what he is speaking is the truth.

The Judaisers influenced how the Galatians thought. They still believed following the Old Testament law of Moses was the way to receive God. Whereas Paul teaches strongly against this 'Paul does not condemn good works but good works of the law'. Morris. Paul teaches that the way to receive God is by asking him into our lives by prayer.

The Judaisers believed in circumcision and that this was the way to receive God. Paul teaches neither circumcised or uncircumcised counts for anything. The Judaisers accused Paul of 'watering down the requirements, meaning he was trying to make it easier to follow. 'The thing that annoyed Paul most was that Christs death did not achieve what in fact he believed it achieved'. This quote ties in very well because Jesus' death was meant to bring forgiveness for everyone – Jews, Gentiles and Judaisers included. You could say, the law was very much outdated after Jesus' death.

Paul went to visit the apostles in Galatians. He went along with Titus and he states Titus was not forced to be circumcised. This shows that the law was gradually being broken down. He went to teach the word of God and he says 'Those who seemed influential added nothing to me'. Paul is talking about the apostles and they agreed with what he taught The true message was finally coming to light. In this letter Paul is showing that his way is the right way.

In Jerusalem, Paul oppossed Peter to his face. Paul was a Jew meaning his 'law' required him not to eat anything unclean. Paul was sitting at the table eating what was considered unclean but hid back in fear of circumcision. Paul oppossed him because he was being a hyprocrite. He told him he was acting like a gentile but living the life of a Jew. Paul tells him this way is not the way of salvation.

Paul uses an example of Abraham. Abraham was blessed with the promise of many descendants. Abraham came before Moses meaning he did not follow the law of Moses but he was still blessed by God. Paul states following the law of Moses was impossible – as there was 613 laws and only Jesus could keep these laws, no one else. Abraham had 2 children 1 child born of a free woman who was the promise, Isaac and one born of a slave woman who was known as Hagar. Paul uses this

example to tell the Galatians we are all children of the promise and the law is no longer required, only faith working through love.

Paul is not watering down the requirements of the law he is simply stating the truth and although many didn't accept and thought he was watering down the requirements, a lot believed and the number of Christians grew, which is what – Paul intended to do – he came to preach and not baptise.

Paul called the Galatians 'Foolish' (Chapter three) and he was 'astonished' that they were so 'quickly deserting him'. He was shocked they could turn their backs away from the truth to listen to the Judaisers Paul compares them to a runner in a race. He reminds them that they made a good start in their lives but the Judaisers got in the way and sidetracked them from the true path. Gutherie 'his apostleship was unquestioned'.

This essay has showed the ways in which Paul was accused but also how he argued against these accusations and proved them wrong.

Examiner's comments

This response is a very good attempt to provide a high degree of understanding and knowledge in response to the statement to the task that Paul in Galatians wanted to answer those who were accusing him of weakening the requirements of the Law. The response directly addresses the issue in a mature way and has a coherent structure. The response immediately and clearly articulates the issue of the influence of the Judaisers upon the Galatian community and how they were undermining Paul's gospel message. It shows a very good understanding of the precise nature of what the Judaisers believed. The response then deals with Paul's defence of his apostleship and his authority in response to his accusers clearly and shows some good analysis in identifying that the requirements of the Law were already being challenged earlier in Paul's missionary work with Titus. The response is systematic in how it offers evidence from Galatians such as the argument using Abraham and offers other good points of understanding such as his frustration with the Galatians and the assertion that Paul is not watering down the Law but stating the truth.

It would have been possible for the candidate to further develop the examples that were offered from the text and a more sophisticated style could improve the mark. There was some confusion over the characters of Peter and Paul.

Q1b With reference to Corinthians and Galatians, critically assess the view that Paul's writings still provide important moral guidance for Christians today. [30]

Student's response

Paul wrote the letters of Galatians and Corinthians to answer the questions the people of Corinth and Galatians had on how to live.

Paul taught the Galatians that they should not follow the law as a way of salvation but some still listened to the Judaisers anyway. This is still relevant today as many hear the word of God but they do not listen or they only chose to listen to parts of it, like in Galatians when Peter ate unclean but hid away from circumcision. Today people are easily swayed from the truth as there is so many religions who believe in different things; just like the Jews, Gentiles and Judaisers. The Bible and the word of God is not seen as important as it should be / used to be because of todays increasingly secular society.

In Corinthians Paul addresses many moral issues. He talks alot about marriage. He states the wife should submit to their husbands and husbands to their wives. He says that if the husband and wife separate, they should not remarry unless they become widows. He states they should have respect for each others bodies, like God did for the church. This moral teaching still applies today as there are increasing number of people who get divorced and end up remarrying but Paul teaches that this is wrong. If someone wants to divorce or remarry today then they should look to The Bible for help. The Bibles teaching is still relevant today and it will be until the end. The Bible should be a main priority when it comes to moral issues like these.

In Galatians Paul states how he violently persecuted the church and tried to destroy it. Paul changed his ways and was called by God. This applies today as there are many places in the world who still face persecution for their faith today. Terrorist groups like ISIS persecute those for their faith because they don't believe in their God. This example is very relevant for today as it is still happening and affecting people.

In Corinthians 13 Paul teaches we should all work through 'Love'. Everything we do should be done through love. We should care for our neighbours and those in need. This is relevant for todays society as there is so much violence and pain around us, for example ISIS. There are so many crimes that happen and other issues. We should all look to The Bible for help on issues like these to stop it.

In Galatians Paul teaches that the sexual immoral, jealousy, fits of anger etc will not inherit Gods kingdom. This provides important moral guidance on how we should not act as it is unacceptable and we should all try to be servants and stewards of Christ, like Paul was to help spread the true message of Christianity and bring more people to God. Paul tells us the fruits of the spirit which are; love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, self control etc. These are all practical ways of how we as

Christians should be living and we should practice these things daily as they still apply in the world today

In Cornthians Paul also talks about the issues of virgins, the unwidowed, fornification and to lead the life assigned by God. All these lessons Paul teaches in Galatians and Corinthians still provide important moral guidance for how Christians should live today.

Examiner's comments

A coherent response that demonstrates a very good attempt at critical analysis. Both elements of the task are addressed directly and in a structured manner. The response takes the approach of identifying several issues in Corinthians e.g. marriage and divorce or Galatians e.g. following the Law and then makes an argument for how they can speak to moral issues today such as the quest for truth in people's lives and the apparent crisis in marriage and family life today with the rising divorce rate. The response identifies scripture as a source of reference for decision-making for modern Christians and identifies the fruits of the Spirit from Galatians as a good practical guide for how Christians should live the moral life. Overall, using evidence, the response is a very good attempt at constructing a reasoned, well informed and balanced argument. There is little attempt to use scholarship overtly thus limiting the sophistication of the response.

Q2a Analyse Paul's teaching to the Corinthians on the nature and use of spiritual gifts. [20]

Student's response

The Corinthian church were troubled with the issue of spiritual gifts and how they were used during church worship. The new Christians were using such for their own gain and not for the advancement of God's kingdom. With such an issue Paul needed to ensure that the gifts provided by the Holy Spirit were being used correctly.

In 1 Corinthians, during worship chaos was irrupting. With many being blessed with the gift of glossulia (speaking in tongues), they all wanted to practice such. Therefore, the service was unable to happen as people were calling out in foreign tongues and no one could understand what was being said. Therefore, Paul guided the Corinthians to reserve their gift for a time when interpretation could happen, so that those around could understand and be blessed by what God had placed on the individuals lips. Paul also suggested that only one person should speak at a time to further inhibit any chaos or confusion to happen within the Corinthian Church.

With the gift of speaking in tongues being amazing and surprising many of the Corinthians regarded this gift to be the greatest of the spiritual gifts. Although, when Paul heard of such thoughts he quickly told the Corinthians otherwise. Paul outlined a number of spiritual gifts, including teaching, performing miracles, and apostleship, each in order of greatness. At the bottom of the 'list' was speaking in tongues. Paul used this to ensure the Corinthians would only use this gift for the correct reasons, not for any selfish gain. Furthermore, the Corinthians regarded anyone who was blessed with an alternative gift as inferior. The Lord didn't intend the Holy Spirt to be used in such a way, so it was important that Paul explained the proper use of the spirit's talents.

The important teaching which can be gleaned from Corinthians on spiritual gifts, is that of which no matter the gift, they are all equal. Each gift comes from the holy spirit who is above all else. No gift has less importance and a gift should never be used for human gain, only spiritual gain which may lead to the expansion of God's kingdom.

This response is a very good attempt to provide a high degree of understanding and knowledge of the nature and use of spiritual gifts in the Corinthian Church. The response immediately identifies the issue that they were being used by some for their self-aggrandisement and that Paul needed to ensure that they were being used properly and for the right reasons. The response then explains the chaos that was occurring at worship particularly with speaking in tongues and Paul's command to them to ensure interpretation was on hand. The response clearly articulates Paul's ideas about the erroneous attitude to the hierarchy of gifts and how speaking in tongues was much less valuable than other gifts which the response also identifies. The response shows some very good understanding of Paul's teaching by stressing the importance of the gifts of the Spirit such as teaching and miracles and their true purpose for the edification of the Church rather than for individuals. The response could have been improved with some reference to Cor 13 and Paul's teaching that love is the highest gift of all and the motif of the Church as the Body of Christ.

Q2b

"Paul's only interest in his writings was to correct the Christian communities, treating them as though they were disobedient children." With reference to the letters you have studied, critically assess this claim. [30]

Student's response

With the Corinthians, Galatians and Ephesians being 'new' Christians communities each under threat and confusion it was important for Paul to guide the church and discipline them when they done something wrong. Although this may seem like his was treating them like children, it was important for Paul to complete the tasks he was commissioned to do at the start of his missionary Journey's, in Antioch.

With the Church in Corinthians being set up during Paul's missionary journey, the new Christians were unsure of how they should act or deal with certain issues. When Paul received word of a young man being sexually immoral, he wanted to do what would strengthen the Church and not lead them on similar immoral roads. Using the example of bread with no yeast, Paul wanted the Church to see what the young man had done wrong, and how his actions could have a negative effect on their faith in Jesus. Therefore, it was in Paul's best interest to correct the Christians in Corinth in order for them is understand God's love for them and teaching them on how they can show God's love to others by remaining faithful to his laws.

In Galatians, when the new Christians who were 'child like' in their faith were being faced with challenges from the Judaisers Paul was there to help them to stay on the road to righteousness. The Galatian Christians understood how to serve God and worship him, although they were easily swayed. Therefore, by teaching them how to conduct themselves and treat others, it nearly was as if Paul was the father, and the Galatians were his disobedient children. This may not have been of benefit to the church in Galatia as they may have not appreciated Paul trying to tell them what to do, especially when his apostleship was under conflict with the Judaises.

In Ephesians, Paul was teaching the Christians there on how Christian living should be and how they are part of a new society which God has provided and set up. It is important to remember that this church was set up, also, by Paul during his missionary journey, so Paul felt he had the responsibility of looking out for the church and ensuring that they were remaining as strong in their faith was possible, therefore treating them as disobedient children was appropriate as they needed to realise the diversity of their sins.

Although, on the other hand, in Corinthians when Paul was teaching on marriage, Paul was nearly imposing his own views and not Gods. The Corinthians didn't have any issues only an issue of sexual immorality. Paul was showing his views so that, in the future they could understand how marriage was important but may also have been a distraction especially in their faith journey. Therefore, I don't believe Paul was correcting the Corinthian Christian community, merely just stating information of issues which may arise in the future.

The response is very good and coherent and demonstrates a very good attempt at critical analysis. The introduction clearly argues that whilst it may appear that Paul is treating the Christian communities to whom he is writing like children he is in fact having to guide and discipline new churches so that he could complete the task he had been commissioned to do by the Antioch church. The response argues this case by dealing specifically with some of the issues in the individual communities and how Paul deals with them and how this is ultimately in his best interests. For example when dealing with the degree of sexual immorality in Corinth the response makes good reference to Paul's image of the yeast and the dough. From Galatians the response clearly shows a good understanding of how Paul's attempt to rectify the influence of the Judaisers cause him to assume a fatherly approach to how the new Christians conduct themselves. The response recognizes the difficulty that his approach may have caused. The response also offers some analysis from Ephesians and how Paul felt responsible to correct them on Christian living and recognizing the severity of their sins. Some argument and critique of Paul is offered that he was perhaps more interested, as in case of marriage in Corinthians, in imposing his own views to prevent future problems.

Student's response

Paul teaches on Christian living throughout chapters four and five of Ephesians and does this to show the people of Ephesus how to get rid of the legalities within their church and to focus on how to live a Christian life with the Spirit.

He begins with telling them in chapter three how they are spiritually now they have been saved and tells them how to apply this in the cases of the church, the world and in a Christian household.

Paul begins to talk about the church and how they should focus on the idea of 'oneness' rather than the divisions to become a 'unified church of peace' (Freed). He said this onesness holds a lot of significance due to them only having one god, one faith, one church, one message under one spirit. Paul however puts an emphasis onto the fact that this unity does not mean uniformity and with their many different skillsets and talents they should build up the church as a temple and build up the body 'with Christ at the head'.

In the world, Paul focuses on godly attributes and how signs of the spirit can build them into better people. There are four signs that he mentions which are singing both alone and together, giving thanks and building each other up which are all they roles for a Christian to adopt into the world of that era.

For the Christian household, he expands on this idea of building each other up and explains the role all of a Christian marriage. The husband will love his wife unconditionally and lay down his life for her and the wife will respect her husband and allow the responsibility of her to be given onto him and this doubles as a perfect metaphor (Bruce) for the gospel with the Church standing as the wife and Jesus as the husband.

He tells them in closing to 'stand firm' with a metaphorical armour of God that will fill them with attributes of Jesus such as belt of truth, shoes of gospel and shield of faith to stand against temptation.

In the first paragraph, the response clearly tries to engage with the task and offers some insight into Paul's reasoning for dealing with the issue of Christian living in the Ephesian church. The response correctly identifies the importance of Paul's teaching on unity rather than division to achieve peace in the Church recognizing the need to build each other up. The response focuses on the relationship between husband and wife and how their love and respect for each other is a significant metaphor for the relationship between Christ and his Church. The response is a very good attempt to show a high degree of knowledge and understanding and is a very good response to the task. The response could be further improved by more evidence from the text itself e.g. some of the specific direction Paul gives about theft, unwholesome talk or being imitators of Christ in living a life of love.

Q3b Critically assess the view that Paul's advice to the Ephesians was relevant for its time, but is irrelevant now. [30]

Student's response

It can be argued that Ephesians is relevant in the case of it's time but irrelevant for nowadays teachings but I disagree with this statement.

A main argument for it not being relevant is the purpose of it being written. Ephesus was a city of legalisms and Paul was trying to point them away from this idea of rules and Law of Moses and break down this barrier that was blocking them from God's covenant fairly but many would agree in such a laidback diverse society with a strong focus on rights of expression and religion, legalisms such as this would not be focused upon.

Another argument could be that marriages explained in the perfect Christian household are not a like the more modern take of marriage in todays' society. Women have ever growing rights and a strong focus on feminism so the idea of giving all responsibility of their person to their husband would be almost unheard of in a developed society. Also the growing acceptance of homosexuality and many more members of LGBTQ+ outdates the typically seen 'perfect metaphore' of one man and one woman.

I, however, think that the work of Ephesus is still relevant now and can be used modernly in our society.

Ephesus was intended to be a round letter discussing how to act with heavenly and spiritual attributes in the church and in the world. It was always intended to reach 'the ends of the earth' as spoken by Jesus in his covenant and go to every person to extend God's covenant family. This is still the case for today with missionarys and evangelistic work so the purpose and intent of this book remains relevant.

Chapters two and three have a strong emphasis on the role of being physically alive but spiritually dead before the spirit was given to us and when Jesus died and rose we were risen along side him saved by justification by faith alone giving us a new life of purpose free from sin. Not only is justification through faith a main point in Christianity today but baptism is still widely used in church denominations such as Baptist and Christenings such as Presbyterian to visually create a metaphor of raising from the water with a new life full of spirit that Jesus gave. This idea of Baptism has not dated in our society.

Even the most common and one of the most important prayers of Christianity today calls upon the works of Ephesians. In the Lord's prayer the words of 'deliver us from evil and lead us not into temptation' are mentioned and known by millions worldwide today. These words call upon the spirit to not lead us to the devil and help us 'stand firm' with our armour of god helping us and guiding us through our lives even to this day.

In conclusion, many would believe on first read that Ephesians would be an irrelevant book to preach by today as it focuses on Ephesus issues and written in 62AD almost 2000 years ago so must be outdated for today's society. However, the underlying themes of salvation through faith in Jesus and living a Christian life with his faith stays actively relevant in todays society and is used in all Christian denominations today as they live out their faith and continue to add to God's covenant family just like Paul two thousand years ago.

Examiner's comments

The response recognizes that Ephesians needs to be understood in the context of its time and that in dealing with particular issues it is not relevant. For example, the response argues in a clear way that Paul's idea of the perfect Christian household is not relevant considering how the rights of women have progressed. Furthermore the development of gay marriage negates Paul's idealized vision on marriage between a man and a woman. The response also seeks to present critical analysis that argues against the statement and through the use of evidence from the text provides a well-constructed opinion that there is relevance for now in Ephesians and there are underlying themes that still pertain. The response identifies how people today can learn from Paul's teaching on how to live as Christ does and its implication specifically for those engaged in evangelism and missionary work. The response also states how the spiritual life and specifically the armour of God can be important for the believer in the face of evil. The response could have been stronger if there had been more clarity and specific reference to the text and some scholarly opinion.

Section B

Synoptic Assessment

Theme: Controversy, Division and Reconciliation

Q4a Discuss **one** reason why religious controversy is inevitable. You must support your answer with reference to at least one other unit of study. [20]

Student's response

Controversy including religion is a complex issue in today's society and some may even be of the viewpoint that it is inevitable.

Throughout both the Old and New Testament, there are varying degrees of controversy, sometimes both pieces of scripture take 2 different viewpoints.

In the Old Testament, the 10 commandments are given and these feature the likes of 'honour your mother and father' and 'thou shall not kill'. These commandments provide clear guidelines on what is perceived as morally right and wrong and it is used to base a number of teachings off. However, it is also noted in the Old Testament, the slaughtering of a bull is permitted and is morally justifiable. How can this be so if we are ordered not to kill?

The Old Testament also teaches 'an eye for an eye', encouraging revenge on those who do bad on to you, especially in the case of murder, i.e. if someone kills someone, they then should be killed. However, in the New Testament and Jesus' teachings it is clear to see that Jesus views reconciliation of most importance. When Peter asked him how many times should we forgive someone, Jesus responded with 'Seventy times seven', meaning that we should always forgive people. Jesus also said 'if someone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them your other'.

Through my study of Ethics, it is also clear to see that controversy is inevitable. A utilitarian viewpoint of Bentham would argue for the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number i.e. if the majority is in favour of the death penalty it should be applied. Mills harm principle indicates to never impose orders on someone unless they are a threat to society, therefore a number of illegal acts can be morally justified, and thus demonstrating why there will always be religious controversy.

This is a good attempt at analysis with evidence that is reasonably well informed. The response tries to deal with the inevitability of controversy in religion by attempting a critique on what the candidate argues is controversy within the Old Testament around a perceived moral contradiction between the 5th commandment and the acceptability of killing animals. The response also suggests controversy between the Old Testament Lex Talionis teaching and the teaching on forgiveness by Jesus in the New Testament. The candidate interprets controversy in terms of contradiction without really providing any sophistication in their analysis. The result is that the response addresses the task to a reasonably mature level. An attempt is made then to link this to their other area of study, namely Ethics, with analysis of utilitarianism and the death penalty. This link is not particularly strong but does provide some connection to moral difficulties highlighted in scripture. The response would have benefitted from a clearer example of controversy within scripture and some mature discussion on its inevitability. This may have provided a more successful route in to a more sustainable link to the other area of study.

Q4b

"Religious morality seems outdated, whereas secular morality is much more progressive." Critically evaluate this view. You must refer to other aspects of human experience in your answer. [30]

Student's response

More and more individuals are adopting a secular approach to morality and so many are of the view that religious morality is outdated and secular morality is much more progressive.

Religious teachings such as a natural law, used in the Catholic Church, are deontological, and actions are intrinsically right or wrong apriori. Thus meaning that rules and beliefs will not change for different situations. For example in the case of abortion it is viewed as murder and under no circumstances should abortion be performed. In the case of Savitta Halappanarar, she became very ill and was pregnant in a hospital in Galway and was denied an abortion as it goes against Catholic beliefs and died as a result. Moreover although the Catholic Church use the doctrine of double effect, where only the initial result is responsible i.e. surgery to save pregnant women and losing a baby is justifiable as abortion was not intended. If this is so why have there been various cases in Ireland where cancer treatment has been stopped because a woman has fallen pregnant. In May 2018 the Republic of Ireland voted to repeal the 8th amendment, allowing for abortions.

In secular society people look at each individual case for abortion e.g. rape cases etc. Homosexual relationships is another controversial issue including religious morality, the act of homosexuality is seen as immoral in the catholic church as it can not lead to procreation, and therefore a Catholic same sex couple cannot have a wedding in a Church as it is not acceptable in the eyes of the Church. People with secular viewpoints however will view this as if the couple is in love then whats the issue. A homosexual couple may infact be more loving in a family situation than a heterosexual couple e.g. Barry and Tony Drewitt who have had a number of children through surrogacy and IVF and although the children are their own and they have met procreation religions still frown upon IVF and surrogacy as it is viewed as adultery and murder as some embryos may have to be killed.

Another huge issue in both religious and secular morality is the place of women, Pope Francis claimed the women priests or married priests is not something we can see happening in the near future. Easy Jet Stats come out saying females get paid significantly less than male staff. Therefore both religion and secular morality struggle with different issues, however it can be viewed that secular society is more understanding and is progressing e.g. in the case of LGBT rights as most churches and religions are not accepting of transgenders, but throughout society awareness being spread on the topic e.g. Victoria Beckham does not label her daughter with gender stereotypes and many people view this as empowering. However this the church may not have on issue with, its just the act of physically changing genders.

In the context of other aspects of human experience, this demonstrates a very good response to the task and provides a series of well-structured and balanced arguments comparing and contrasting the progressiveness of secular morality against the evaluation that religious morality is outdated. The response provides some very good critical analysis beginning with abortion and the recent change to the law in the Republic of Ireland contrasting perceptions about the progressive nature or otherwise of Catholic Church teaching. There is a good understanding of how secular morality can be more relative than religious morality, judging each case on its merits. In general there is a very good understanding of church teaching. The response also deals with the issues of surrogacy for homosexual couples and the place of women in ministry within the Catholic Church. The response shows a very good ability to evaluate religious morality in the spectrum of secular morality thus enabling a sophisticated answer to some extent with clear and coherent structure. The response may have benefited from a greater critique of secular morality or some personal insight.









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