

GCE



CCEA GCE A2
Exemplifying Examination
Performance
Religious Studies

**A2 4: Themes in the Early
Church and the Church Today**

This is an exemplification of candidates' performance in GCE A2 examinations (Summer 2018) 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 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: A2 Religious Studies

ARE41: Themes in the Early Church and the Church Today

Grade: A Exemplar

Section A

Q1a Explain **two** of the main features of Montanism. [20]

Student's response

Montanism was set up by Montanus who had pagan tendencies and was the priest of Cybele. He was accompanied by Maximilla who predicted the coming of Christ and the last things (Eschatology) and Priscilla who was seen as the mouth-piece of Montanism due to a woman coming to her in a dream in wisdom and telling her that the new Jerusalem will descend on Pepuza. Montanus and the prophetesses both used prophetic and direct utterances which were the gifts of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues.

Montanism was a protest against the laxity of the church and the urbanism, intellectualism and institutionalism of the church. Montanism's main feature was emphasising the power of the Holy Spirit as they replaced the age of Christ with the age of the Paraclete. Therefore due to the Montanists emphasising the role of the Holy Spirit, they then engaged in a charismatic ministry using the gifts of the Holy Spirit and rejecting an ordered leadership and ministry.

Montanism was also very ascetic as they did not agree with marriage, reproduction, eating certain meats as they believed that due to eschatology there was no point due to the new Jerusalem descending on Pepuza. Therefore they didn't marry or reproduce due to their belief in Montanism.

Montanism encouraged women to be prophetesses such as Priscilla and Maximilla and therefore they included women in their ministry. As well as this Montanism favoured martyrdom due to their teaching on the last things and that martyrdom showed how they honoured their belief the examples of martyrs and Perpetua and Felicitas.

Montanism was a prophetic 'heresy' which Montanus believed he was a true prophet and that his prophecy was true due to the eschatology and the importance that he felt the age of Paraclete was in ministry. Montanus emphasised the need for prophetic utterances and the gifts of the Holy Spirit through which he believed this was how he prophesied the Bible. Montanus criticised the church for not having enough emphasis of the Holy Spirit especially within their ministry.

To conclude, these are the main features of Montanism, his charismatic prophetic ministry and his ascetic views that were very rigorist.

Examiner's comments

This response demonstrates awareness of Montanism and aims to engage with the question. The opening paragraph introduces the key figures involved but is also targeting the main feature of prophetic utterances in relation to the end times. The candidate explains Montanus' reason for this emphasis on the Holy Spirit and how this led to a charismatic ministry in contrast to the more ordered ways of the Church. A second feature which is highlighted is asceticism. This is explained and the link with eschatology is identified although the comments about Pepuza and the new Jerusalem could have been more fully developed. The information on the role of women as prophetesses could also have been expanded on earlier in the essay. The structure of the answer could have been improved on as the candidate returns to the prophetic aspect of the Montanists towards the end of the answer. Some attempt is made to compare these two features with the Church. The concluding paragraph highlights the two features which the candidate has sought to deal with.

Band 4

Q1b “Montanism was a schism in early Christianity but not a heresy.”

Critically evaluate this view. [30]

Student's response

Many believe that montanism is a schism rather than a heresy. This is due to the idea the montanism did not target or corrupt the Christian orthodoxy and therefore did not present a challenge to their scriptures. Although, on the other hand, many believe montanism was a heresy as although montanism did not target the Christian orthodoxy, Montanism still challenged the ministry of the church as montanism emphasised charismatic ministry such as the gifts of the holy spirit being used in ministry is better, which challenged and undermined the role of the bishop and apostolic succession in authority. Montanism therefore also targeted the popes dogmas and infallible statements. Although, in contrast to this some people still believe that it was just a schism as it was a protest against the laxity, urbanism, institutionalism and intellectualism of the church.

Furthermore, many believe that montanism was just a schism of the church as it was still very ascetic and even stricter than the Christian church. This presents that it was a schism as it developed stricter views than the church, so therefore montanism was a very moral belief. In opposition to this others believed that it was a heresy as all other heresies such as Gnosticism and Marcionism where still very ascetic and strict but just because they had strict views did not mean their beliefs and teachings were not heretical. However, in contrast to this some individuals still believed that montanism is still only a schism of the early church as montanism was an emphasis on the role of the holy spirit in led worship which meant they were more enthusatic to worship and praise.

Montanism was also viewed by others as a schism of the early church as its belief was going to be accepted by the bishop of Rome victor, which leads us to believe it was a schism if it was tolerated by the Roman bishop. However, alternatively some deem it as heretical as when praxeas told the Roman emperor of its believe he banned their books and condemned their belief. In contrast to this others view montanism as a schism of the early church as it had Christian sympathisers such as Tertullian who was a early Christian writer and he helped set up schismatical sects and developed a stricter asceticism. Therefore, if it was a heresy then how could it attract Christian writers such as Tertullian which shows that it was a schismatical church that was created.

Montanism was viewed as a heresy of the early church due to its pagan roots which is what church fathers such as Hippolytus deemed heresies to come from – pagan philosophy. However, in opposition to this Tertullian was also a church father who said that heresy came from pagan philosophy and he wrote against heresies such as marcionism and developed the Rule of faith for to defend against heresy to church but yet he was a montanist. This shows it was a heresy as he didn't refute it. However, contrasting this view it was seen as a heresy as Tertullian was human and

he does make mistakes and also montanism died out in the 300's AD which is evidence that it was a heresy.

To conclude, this the evidence to why montanism was viewed as a heresy and how montanism was viewed as a schism.

Examiner's comments

The candidate engages with the quotation from the outset and refers to it throughout the response making points for and against Montanism as a schism or a heresy. The initial paragraph highlights how Montanism did not challenge the orthodox Scriptures, but its emphasis on the charismatic ministry did undermine the role of the bishop and apostolic succession. The growth of Montanism in response to the laxity and intellectualism of the church is also highlighted. In the second paragraph the candidate contrasts the strict asceticism of the Montanists with the church and also links this asceticism with other heresies such as Gnosticism and Marcionism. This point could have been more fully developed and further contrast with these two heresies could have made the response much stronger – for example, how Montanism did not corrupt Scripture by adding to it or taking away from it, but on the other hand how some believe that Montanist utterances were regarded on a par with Scripture and how Montanus spoke in the first person when giving utterances – ‘I am the Lord God almighty dwelling in man’. The response also refers to how church leaders reacted to the heresy. Reference is made to Victor of Rome and to Tertullian. Further comment on the Church's response would have supported the view that it was a heresy – for example, reference to Hippolytus' views. Overall, this is a very good attempt at critical analysis although a wider range of points could have been offered on whether Montanism was a schism or a heresy.

Band 4

Q2a Examine Cyprian's views on unity. [20]

Student's response

Cyprian was the next major figure in Carthage after Tertullian. He was greatly influenced by Tertullian, for example, Jerome reports that Cyprian read Tertullian's writings daily. Cyprian was born into a wealthy pagan family in AD 200 and was well-educated. By profession, he was a lawyer and teacher of rhetoric. Converted to Christianity by a Presbyter called Caecilius, whose name he adopted in AD246, he began to share some of his wealth with the poor. Cyprian became the bishop of Carthage in AD249, and following the Decian persecution of AD250, he had to deal with the problem of lapsed and various schism such as the schisms of Novatus and Novatian. Cyprian's theology and writings give us his views on unity.

Firstly, in Cyprian's theology he deals with the Church. He explains that the Church is one, founded as it was on one man, the apostle Peter. However, even though the Church was founded on one man, Cyprian emphasises the equality of the original apostles. He then explains that the equality of the original apostles is why the Church's bishops are equal and share in the totality of the episcopate. Therefore, Cyprian's theology explains the unity and oneness of the Church.

Furthermore, Cyprian's writings give us an insight to his views on unity. Cyprian's most important writing was 'On the Unity of the Catholic Church'. It was a response to schisms following the Decian persecution of AD250, in particular the schisms of Novatus and Novatian. In this writing, Cyprian states that schism is the work of Satan, and that unity of the Church stems from its original foundation on the apostle Peter, although the original apostles were all equal in power. He then reiterates his theology by writing that the Church's unity is demonstrated by the unity of its bishops, since they are equal and share in the totality of the episcopate. Furthermore, in Cyprian's writing 'on the lapsed' he confirms that those who lapsed during the Decian Persecution may be restored to the Church, but the discipline will be determined by the bishops. This again highlights Cyprian's views on unity, he wanted the Church to be united, regardless of the fact that many Christians lapsed during the persecution, rather than fleeing as Christ commanded. These are Cyprian's views on Unity.

Examiner's comments

The candidate begins their response by setting the context, although the initial biographical detail is unnecessary. Towards the end of the first paragraph the candidate begins to touch on the issue of unity in Cyprian's writings. Throughout the essay the candidate raises the main points such as the Church being founded on one man, the apostle Peter; all the apostles being equal and so all bishops sharing in the totality of the episcopacy; Cyprian's rejection of schism as the work of Satan and the importance of the role of the bishop in administering discipline towards the lapsed. Although the main points are covered, there is some repetition throughout the answer. This could have been avoided if points had been more fully developed such as his view of schismatics, and if some quotations had been added to indicate the strength of Cyprian's views.

Band 4

Q2b Critically assess the view that Cyprian's writings on "the lapsed" were extremely significant in their own time, but irrelevant now. [30]

Student's response

Many see Cyprian's writings on 'the lapsed' as significant at the time, but irrelevant now, whereas others disagree and believe that there is still relevance for today. 'The Lapsed' were those who complied with the decree to sacrifice to the gods during the Decian persecution, rather than fleeing from persecution. I will outline points for and against, and come to a conclusion on whether 'On the lapsed' has relevance for today or not.

Firstly, some agree with the statement that 'On the lapsed' was significant in its time, but irrelevant now. They take this viewpoint because when it was written, the early Church had just experienced the Decian persecution, and during this persecution, many lapsed. Therefore, it was necessary that Cyprian wrote 'On the lapsed' to provide teaching about whether the lapsed could be readmitted or not. However, today, 'On the lapsed' is irrelevant because people have freedom to enter the Church whenever they please, regardless of their past. Therefore, a writing on whether they are permitted to rejoin the Church is irrelevant, as they can do as they please. Furthermore, in 'On the lapsed' Cyprian explains that the Decian Persecution was a divine judgement and test by the Church, since the preceding period of peace had led to moral laxity. However, some argue that today there are no divine tests from God, rather Christians are taught that all they have to do is believe in God to be saved. For this reason, people argue that 'On the lapsed' is irrelevant for today.

However, others disagree, and see Cyprian's writing 'On the lapsed' as having relevance for today. For example, for many, 'On the lapsed' affirms that those who have turned against the Church can convert back to Christianity. C.S. Lewis is someone who did this. After his mother died of cancer when he was 9 years old, even though he had prayed for her healing, he turned against Christianity and became an atheist. However, later in life after studying philosophy at Oxford University he converted to Christianity, and therefore 'On the lapsed' has relevance for today.

Overall, I see Cyprian's writings on 'the lapsed' as significant for its time, but irrelevant for today. I take this view because I believe 'On the lapsed' was a response to a specific situation (the Decian Persecution) and there is no parallel situations today as the modern world has religious freedom, so Christians don't find themselves being as persecuted as Christians during the Decian persecution.

Examiner's comments

In the opening paragraph the candidate explains reasonably accurately who the lapsed were. The response continues with the assessment that the writings were relevant at the time because of the necessity to provide teaching about whether or not the lapsed could be readmitted to the early church. A contrast is made with the church today and how people have individual freedom to enter the church regardless of their past. This point could have been developed more fully, for example, reference to how the church today has lost its power to discipline or to the multiplicity of churches enabling a lapsed Christian to simply move on to another. Discussion of what constitutes a 'lapsed' Christian today would also have been helpful. Using the example of C.S. Lewis the candidate makes a good attempt at showing how Cyprian's writings are relevant now. In the closing paragraph, the candidate makes the point that the modern world has religious freedom. This could have been further explored and a distinction made between different parts of the world and levels of persecution experienced by various Christians and how this might lead some to lapse. Overall the candidate has made a very good attempt at addressing the question.

Band 4

Q3a “The issue of religious leadership is a central problem for the Church today.”

Present a case for this statement. [20]

Student's response

The issue of religious leadership is an extremely prominent issue for the Church today. For example, many different denominations have conflicting ideas on leadership. For example, the Roman Catholic Church consider the head of the church to be the Pope, who resides in the Vatican in Rome and then after this comes priests. This can be compared to the Protestant denomination, which is an umbrella term for many other churches. For example, the Presbyterian Church have a minister and then after this, they have elders who take care of personal matters such as visiting the sick and elderly. The Baptist church leadership system is different as they have a pastor as their leader. Furthermore, the Brethren denomination or Gospel Hall do not have a leader and instead, their meetings are led by saved men in the congregation.

Leadership is a central problem for the Church of the twenty-first century as today we don't like being told what to do, especially in such a secular age. It can be hard to follow a religious leader as they too are imperfect just as we are. Therefore, it is an issue as trust is hard to gain.

The Catholic Church believe in the apostolic succession and present Peter as the rock upon which their faith is based. Peter, however, assisted Jesus in his ministry on earth and therefore was a reliable leader. In today's society, we have no leaders who were around during Jesus' life and ministry and this presents a problem as people start to doubt whether or not they can rely on them.

There are often arguments over religious leadership and who is worthy of this position, which therefore presents a further problem as people don't want to put their trust in a leader who is bickering with their fellow brothers/sisters in the faith. To conclude, I believe that leadership is a central problem for the Church today and its one that will always exist.

Examiner's comments

The candidate engages with the set task from the start highlighting how many different denominations have conflicting ideas on leadership. The response proceeds to give examples of these although could more fully focus on the problems which each type presents. The issue of apostolic succession is mentioned later in the essay but could have been more fully developed in terms of why some traditions do not accept it. The response combines the ideas of how people in our secular age do not like being told what to do and the problem of imperfect leaders. For both of these valid points it would have been helpful if the candidate had offered evidence or examples. In the final paragraph the candidate refers to the issue of what makes a worthy leader. This is a valid point but lacks discussion and exemplification. The response could also have explored the word 'central'. In doing so the candidate could have referred to other possibly more central issues which the Church today faces, such as secularisation, challenges regarding same sex marriage or issues such as poverty or the environment.

Band 4

Q3b With particular reference to C.S. Lewis, critically evaluate the view that defending the faith in a secular age is extremely difficult. [30]

Student's response

Yes, I agree with this statement that defending the faith in a secular age is extremely difficult. I believe this because there are so many distractions in the twenty-first century which blind people from the true gospel. People are more focused on social media, technology and worldly things such as sex before marriage and alcohol which means that they simply do not want to listen when you try to defend the faith.

C.S. Lewis, however, was an example of someone who was excellent at defending the faith in a secular age. He is known as the 'best theologian of the 20th century' by many scholars. C.S. Lewis was so successful in defending the faith because his writings were from personal experiences and therefore they were heartfelt. An example of this would be in his book 'A grief observed' which details his experiences of his wife dying of cancer. He discusses how he questioned God throughout this experience but then he realised what Jesus had done for him and the sacrifices God had already made on his behalf – therefore defending the faith by explaining it. People were able to relate to this as maybe they too had gone through such a traumatic ordeal.

Furthermore, C.S. Lewis was successful in defending the faith through his book 'Mere Christianity'. This was broadcasted on the radio during an interview with the RAF and Lewis defended the faith by explaining the gospel and the need for mankind to be saved.

People were able to relate to him through this piece of work as he was humble and described himself only as a layman.

Lewis was very engaging with people in a secular age and further defended the faith by producing more books such as 'Miracles', 'The Problem of Pain' and 'The Screwtape letters'. He also interacted with people through his tales of gallantry, for example, the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. Lewis saw it as his responsibility to show people the 'hallway' e.g. the Gospel and they could pick their 'room' e.g. their denomination based on this.

People in today's secular age don't want to hear the Gospel being preached as they don't like being told they are wrong and are often too stubborn to turn from their ways which makes it hard to defend the faith. Others believe that the Bible is simply outdated and won't listen.

To conclude, I believe that defending the faith in today's secular age is very difficult e.g. because of distractions. However, if we adapt C.S. Lewis' methods of engaging people whilst defending the faith, then it should be an easier task to carry out.

Examiner's comments

The answer aims to engage with the task throughout, both by referring to 'C. S. Lewis' and to 'a secular age'. The opening paragraph mentions some of the distractions in the twenty-first century which prevent people from engaging with the faith. These could have been discussed more fully. The next three paragraphs deal with C. S. Lewis and offer good reasons why he was successful in defending the faith. The focus is on Lewis' ability to engage with people in various ways. The candidate does not just give facts about Lewis and his writings, but makes a very good effort to deal with the question. Towards the end of the answer, the candidate returns to 'today's secular age' and offers some comments on how people's attitudes make it difficult to defend the faith. These could have been expanded on and/or exemplified in order to give a fuller response.

Band 4

Section B

Synoptic Assessment

Theme: Faith, Morality and the State

Q4a “Religious thinking only advances because of controversy.”

With reference to **one** example, present a case for this statement. You must support your answer with reference to at least one other unit of study.
[20]

The above question could not be exemplified as the candidate’s permission could not be obtained.

Q4b “Religion acts as the conscience of the State, especially in times of conflict.”

Critically assess this view. You must refer to other aspects of human experience in your answer. [30]

The above question could not be exemplified as the candidate’s permission could not be obtained.

