GCE A LEVEL MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2019

A LEVEL
RELIGIOUS STUDIES - COMPONENT 1
OPTION A: A STUDY OF CHRISTIANITY
A120UA0-1

INTRODUCTION

This marking scheme was used by WJEC for the 2019 examination. It was finalised after detailed discussion at examiners' conferences by all the examiners involved in the assessment. The conference was held shortly after the paper was taken so that reference could be made to the full range of candidates' responses, with photocopied scripts forming the basis of discussion. The aim of the conference was to ensure that the marking scheme was interpreted and applied in the same way by all examiners.

It is hoped that this information will be of assistance to centres but it is recognised at the same time that, without the benefit of participation in the examiners' conference, teachers may have different views on certain matters of detail or interpretation.

WJEC regrets that it cannot enter into any discussion or correspondence about this marking scheme.

Marking guidance for examiners, please apply carefully and consistently:

Positive marking

It should be remembered that candidates are writing under examination conditions and credit should be given for what the candidate writes, rather than adopting the approach of penalising him/her for any omissions. It should be possible for a very good response to achieve full marks and a very poor one to achieve zero marks. Marks should not be deducted for a less than perfect answer if it satisfies the criteria of the mark scheme.

Exemplars in the mark scheme are only meant as helpful guides. Therefore, any other acceptable or suitable answers should be credited even though they are not actually stated in the mark scheme.

Two main phrases are deliberately placed throughout each mark scheme to remind examiners of this philosophy. They are:

- "Candidates could include some or all of the following, but other relevant points should be credited."
- "This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives."

Rules for Marking

1. Differentiation will be achieved on the basis of candidates' response.

2. No mark scheme can ever anticipate or include every possible detail or interpretation; examiners should use their professional judgement to decide whether a candidate's particular response answers the question in relation to the particular assessment objective.

3. Candidates will often express their ideas in language different from that given in any mark scheme or outline. Positive marking therefore, on the part of examiners, will recognise and credit correct statements of ideas, valid points and reasoned arguments irrespective of the language employed.

Banded mark schemes

Banded mark schemes are divided so that each band has a relevant descriptor. The descriptor provides a description of the performance level for that band. Each band contains marks. Examiners should first read and annotate a candidate's answer to pick out the evidence that is being assessed in that question. Once the annotation is complete, the mark scheme can be applied. This is done as a two stage process.

Banded mark schemes stage 1 – deciding on the band

When deciding on a band, the answer should be viewed holistically. Beginning at the lowest band, examiners should look at the candidate's answer and check whether it matches the descriptor for that band. Examiners should look at the descriptor for that band and see if it matches the qualities shown in the candidate's answer. If the descriptor at the lowest band is satisfied, examiners should move up to the next band and repeat this process for each band until the descriptor matches the answer.

If an answer covers different aspects of different bands within the mark scheme, a 'best fit' approach should be adopted to decide on the band and then the candidate's response should be used to decide on the mark within the band. For instance if a response is mainly in band 2 but with a limited amount of band 3 content, the answer would be placed in band 2, but the mark awarded would be close to the top of band 2 as a result of the band 3 content. Examiners should not seek to mark candidates down as a result of small omissions in minor areas of an answer.

Banded mark schemes stage 2 – deciding on the mark

Once the band has been decided, examiners can then assign a mark. During standardising (at the Examiners' marking conference), detailed advice from the Principal Examiner on the qualities of each mark band will be given. Examiners will then receive examples of answers in each mark band that have been awarded a mark by the Principal Examiner. Examiners should mark the examples and compare their marks with those of the Principal Examiner.

When marking, examiners can use these examples to decide whether a candidate's response is of a superior, inferior or comparable standard to the example. Examiners are reminded of the need to revisit the answer as they apply the mark scheme in order to confirm that the band and the mark allocated is appropriate to the response provided. Indicative content is also provided for banded mark schemes. Indicative content is not exhaustive, and any other valid points must be credited. In order to reach the highest bands of the mark scheme a learner need not cover all of the points mentioned in the indicative content, but must meet the requirements of the highest mark band.

Awarding no marks to a response

Where a response is not creditworthy, that is it contains nothing of any relevance to the question, or where no response has been provided, no marks should be awarded.

A Level Generic Band Descriptors

Band	Assessment Objective AO1 – Part (a) questions 20 marks
	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including: • *religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching* • *influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies* • *cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice* • *approaches to the study of religion and belief.*
5	**17-20 marks** - Thorough, accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. - An extensive and relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set. - The response demonstrates extensive depth and/or breadth. Excellent use of evidence and examples. - Thorough and accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. - Insightful connections are made between the various approaches studied. - An extensive range of views of scholars/schools of thought used accurately and effectively. - Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
4	**13-16 marks** - Accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. - A detailed, relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set. - The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth. Good use of evidence and examples. - Accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. - Purposeful connections are made between the various approaches studied. - A range of scholarly views/schools of thought used largely accurately and effectively. - Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
3	**9-12 marks** • Mainly accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. • A satisfactory response, which generally answers the main demands of the question set. • The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth in some areas. Satisfactory use of evidence and examples. • Mainly accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Sensible connections made between the various approaches studied. • A basic range of scholarly views/schools of thought used. • Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.

2	**5-8 marks** • Limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Basic level of accuracy and relevance. • A basic response, addressing some of the demands of the question set. • The response demonstrates limited depth and/or breadth, including limited use of evidence and examples. • Some accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Makes some basic connections between the various approaches studied. • A limited range of scholarly views/schools of thought used. • Some accurate use of some specialist language and vocabulary in context.
1	**1-4 marks** • Very limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Low level of accuracy and relevance. • A very limited response, with little attempt to address the question. • The response demonstrates very limited depth and/or breadth. Very limited use of evidence and examples. • Little or no reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Little or no use of scholarly views/schools of thought. • Very few or no connections made between the various approaches studied. • Some grasp of basic specialist language and vocabulary. **N.B. A maximum of 2 marks should be awarded for a response that only demonstrates 'knowledge in isolation'**
0	• No relevant information.

Band	Assessment Objective AO2- Part (b) questions *30 marks* *Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief,* *including their significance, influence and study.*
5	**25-30 marks** • Confident critical analysis and perceptive evaluation of the issue. • A response that successfully identifies and thoroughly addresses the issues raised by the question set. • Thorough, sustained and clear views are given, supported by extensive, detailed reasoning and/or evidence. • The views of scholars/schools of thought are used extensively, appropriately and in context. • Confident and perceptive analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied. • Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
4	**19-24 marks** • Purposeful analysis and effective evaluation of the issue. • The main issues raised by the question are identified successfully and addressed. • The views given are clearly supported by detailed reasoning and/or evidence. • Views of scholars/schools of thought are used appropriately and in context. • Purposeful analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied. • Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
3	**13-18 marks** • Satisfactory analysis and relevant evaluation of the issue. • Most of the issues raised by the question are identified successfully and have generally been addressed. • Most of the views given are satisfactorily supported by reasoning and/or evidence. • Views of scholars/schools of thought are generally used appropriately and in context. • Sensible analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied. • Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.

2		**7-12 marks** • Some valid analysis and inconsistent evaluation of the issue. • A limited number of issues raised by the question set are identified and partially addressed. • A basic attempt to justify the views given, but they are only partially supported with reason and/or evidence. • Basic use of the views of scholars/schools of thought appropriately and in context. • Makes some analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied. • Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
1		**1-6 marks** • A basic analysis and limited evaluation of the issue. • An attempt has been made to identify and address the issues raised by the question set. • Little attempt to justify a view with reasoning or evidence. • Little or no use of the views of scholars/schools of thought. • Limited analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied. • Some use of basic specialist language and vocabulary.
0	1.	No relevant analysis or evaluation.

A Level Component 1: A Study of Christianity

MARK SCHEME

To be read in conjunction with the generic level descriptors provided.

Section A

1. (a) **Explain how the filioque controversy could create different views about the doctrine of the Trinity.**   **[AO1 20]**

    Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

    - The doctrine of the Trinity was necessary to define the relationship between the three Persons: Father (Creator); Son (Redeemer); and, Holy Spirit (Sustainer).
    - The Filioque controversy was the final debate that highlights the need for the Trinity. This centred on the Holy Spirit as proceeding from Jesus, again reasserting the relationship between the Trinity.
    - The filioque (the term "and the Son") appears in the phrase "proceeds from the Father and the Son" in the Nicene Creed in Western Christianity, but both the phrase and the teaching are rejected by the Eastern Orthodox Church.
    - As such, Western Christians will normally include "and the Son" in the recitation of the Nicene Creed (but do not insist upon it).
    - Western Christianity teaches that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son as well as the Father; Eastern Orthodox Christians may see this as undermining the role of the Father.
    - The Eastern Orthodox Church understands the three persons of the Trinity to each have a unique quality: 'fatherhood' is unique to the Father; begottenness 'is unique to the Son; 'procession' is unique to the Holy Spirit.
    - The Western Church emphasises the divinity of the Son and the unity of the Trinity by having the Holy Spirit proceed from both the Father and the Son.
    - The Eastern Orthodox Church emphasises the "monarchy of the Father" and teaches that this results in unity between the three persons of the Trinity – since both the Son and the Holy Spirit come from the Father, there is one 'source' for all three persons, and the unity of the three can also be represented by just one of the three (the Father).
    - The issues of the wording of the Nicene Creed and the doctrinal understanding were historically separate, but the issues became linked when the insertion of the wording was used by Pope Benedict VIII.

    Answers may note that there are diverse positions within the Eastern Orthodox Church: some hold that the teaching that the Holy Spirit also proceeds from the Son is serious doctrinal error; others consider the divergences within Christianity to be primarily due to misunderstandings and different emphases.

    This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

(b) **'The monotheistic claims of Christianity are not compatible with the doctrine of the Trinity.'**

Evaluate this view. **[AO2 30]**

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- The first line of argument would be to suggest that an idea of 'three in one' is a logical inconsistency. If there are three distinctive identities then there must be three separate deities? Jewish and Islamic scholars have suggested that the Trinity is incompatible with monotheism.
- A counter-argument against this is that this is a misapprehension in that whilst we speak of three in one, the three is only a matter of theological differentiation in purpose, and not in identity. Therefore, the doctrine of the Trinity is absolutely monotheistic.
- In response to the arguments from Judaism and Islam, the idea of separate aspects of a universal deity, is, however, not new. Indeed, it is consistent with the Hindu concept of Brahman (the One true ultimate Spirit) and yet the many incarnations of Brahman through countless deities or avatars.
- Other lines of argument propose that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are similar to pagan gods. Although this is strongly rejected as a very simplistic view, there are some Christian denominations (e.g. the Unitarian Church) who would agree, arguing that the Son and the Spirit are not God.
- The fact that the Trinity emerged from several disputes and heresies does suggest that there has been some confusion within Christianity about monotheism.
- Another problem is that even if the Son was God, for the three decades that he lived on earth, he and the Father must have been two separate beings.
- Finally, it may be simply the limitations of language that causes logical inconsistency. This argument proposes that there is an inherent misconception that the 'three' is referring to separate 'being' when speaking of the immanent Trinity.
- The doctrine of the Trinity has caused confusion, argument and misunderstanding both within Christianity and beyond. On the one hand, debate and confusion does not mean that the Trinity is incompatible with monotheism; however, on the other hand, it does suggest that it is not clearly defined and understood.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

2. (a) **Examine different responses to the issue of male language about God.**
[AO1 20]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

NB It is possible to answer this from the work of Sallie McFague alone in that the first response deals with the problems of male language and a different response is to consider God as female.

- The traditional view is that Jesus since constantly referred to God as 'Abba', the affectionate term that children in Palestine would use for their father, then male language about God is the norm. In addition, Paul writes that those who believe in Jesus can also now call God 'Abba' (Romans 8:15) and can have a personal relationship with God.
- However, a more neutral response has been to point out that all language about God is metaphorical. Depictions of God and titles for God are simply ways in which we think about God and do not tell us much, if anything, about God's true nature. 'Father' does not mean God is male. Likewise, 'Mother' would not mean God is female.
- Feminist theologians have argued that masculine language has meant abuse of the world and dominion of women by men. If God is called 'Mother', the world is part of God's body or womb. McFague argues that maternal images of God 'giving birth, nursing, comforting, and caring' highlight humanity's complete reliance on God.
- Sallie McFague pointed out that keeping to a single gender metaphor for God creates problems. Metaphors can become 'idols' for worship and to focus on God as male is misleading. Metaphors become outdated with time. Today we do not live in patriarchal society and need to embrace more matriarchal images for God.
- McFague suggests an alternative that the image of 'mother' highlights certain characteristics of God (such as love for the world) and she develops a metaphor of the world as God's body. She proposes three metaphors for God's relationship with the world that correspond to three Christian doctrines, three ethical elements and three types of love.
- **Mother:** corresponding to the title, 'Father'; the doctrine of creation; the ethical element of justice; and *agape* love (pure love), the love God has for the world.
- **Lover:** corresponding to the title 'Son'; the doctrine of salvation; the ethical element of healing; and *eros* (desire), the way in which God's love works in the world.
- **Friend:** corresponding to the title 'Spirit'; the doctrine of eschatology; the ethical element of companionship; and *philia* (companionship), human interaction.
- God should be imagined in female, not feminine terms because feminine refers to qualities conventionally associated with women. McFague is against sentimentalisation: we cannot assume that mothers are 'naturally' loving, comforting or self-sacrificing because these are socially constructed qualities.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

(b) **'If God has no gender, then God as female is not problematic.'**
Evaluate this view. **[AO2 30]**

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- The question depends on whether or not one considers the model of God as Father as adequate. Some Christians would say that it is. It conveys God's character and purpose for humankind. It describes one who creates or founds something. God is the creator of everything that has life and also the founder of truth and love. It expresses all the characteristics of a God who loves his children, rewards those who seek God, communicates with them through the Bible and disciplines them when necessary. In the Bible God chose to reveal divine identity in masculine language, which tells us something about God's nature and character as creator, provider.
- The main challenge to all this, however, is the question, 'why are all such characteristics of God seen as belonging to the male gender?'
- In addition, Jesus constantly referred to God as 'Abba', the affectionate term that children in Palestine would use for their father ('Daddy'). Paul writes that those who believe in Jesus can also now call God 'Abba' (Romans 8:15). They can have a personal relationship with God that goes beyond acknowledging him as creator.
- Once again, the question emerges in response to this, 'why cannot a Christian have a personal relationship with God as Mother and creator?'
- There is a strong argument that the use of 'Father' should be seen in the patriarchal context and is not really a strong argument to use on its own because the Bible appears to have been written by men for men. Some would argue that God as Father is patriarchal language and shapes our image of God which in turn shapes our relationship with God and other people. It could follow that if men think of God only in terms of 'fatherly' characteristics, such as power and authority, they are likely to exploit women and to abuse the earth.
- Indeed, a further development of this argument would be that the Bible conveys a violent, militaristic, male God and has led to male domination of women. It ignores the biblical use of female images for God, e.g. the personification of God's Wisdom as a woman (Proverbs 8), and fails to convey the motherly, nurturing characteristics of God.
- Moreover, the Father–Son bond between God and Jesus is a relationship that excludes women and it must be remembered that God's nature has no gender, but it also embodies feminine characteristics, such as compassion, grace, love, which are equally important as the masculine characteristics of redeeming, administering justice, and establishing peace.
- In addition, the Bible contains several female images of God. In the Old Testament, Isaiah describes God as a comforting mother. In the New Testament, Jesus compares God to a woman searching for a lost coin. This image of God as sustainer and healer is not just scriptural: it is part of people's life experience.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

Section B

3.   (a)   **Explain Crossan's view that Jesus was a social revolutionary. [AO1 20]**

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Crossan does not see the birth and resurrection narratives as having happened in history. Rather, they are later additions that express the importance of Jesus for his followers and, in the case of the resurrection, establish community leadership after the crucifixion.
- He intended a social revolution. It appears that Jesus may have begun as an apocalyptic preacher, following John's example, but that he did not stay this way. Instead of staying in the desert and living as an ascetic, calling for God's judgment on the world, Jesus became known for sharing meals with others – even the gossip about him reflects this: 'look at him, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.' (Matthew 11:19)
- He advocated a kingdom lifestyle. Crossan believes that Jesus turned from an apocalyptic future to the idea that the Kingdom of God can be experienced now through a wise lifestyle that even peasants could live out. This will lead to an open community without distinction of gender status. Jesus had a dream of a just and equal world.
- He served at an open table. A study of the ancient Mediterranean world (or almost any culture) reveals that sharing food involves a complex set of rules that have do to with maintaining and reinforcing social boundaries. Jesus' pattern was to disrupt those boundaries by eating with people regardless of gender, rank or social acceptability; this is preserved in his teaching about inviting those off the street to the table.
- He performed miracles of social healing. Rather than seeing Jesus' miracles of healing as having to do with medical cures, we should understand that the people Jesus healed were viewed as impure and were socially ostracized. Jesus healed illnesses without curing the disease by welcoming outcasts back into society and encouraging his followers to do the same. In this way he challenged traditions both within his religion and wider society – and awakened criticism and fear about this 'Kingdom of God.'
- He practised an itinerant lifestyle. Jesus kept on the move to prevent individuals and villages from profiting from his activity (by becoming brokers between himself and the people that he taught and healed). In fact, Jesus wanted others to become itinerant teacher-healers as well, encouraging them to stay on the move and introduce others to the Kingdom lifestyle.
- He can be compared to the Cynics. Cynicism was a Greek philosophical movement pre-dating Jesus that flouted basic human social codes and ordinary cultural values. Cynics went out of their way to reject a materialistic orientation, were often itinerant, carrying as few possessions as possible. However, Cynics operated in urban centres and were, on the whole, individualistic. Jesus, by contrast, was active in rural areas and was dedicated to growing a community with like-minded values.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

(b) **'The apocryphal gospels are not a valid basis for understanding Jesus.'**
Evaluate this view. **[AO2 30]**

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- The debate will centre around whether the four Gospels are adequate or whether or not other documents can add to the traditions of Jesus.
- Against the use of material outside the four Gospels is the argument that there is simply is no direct evidence for the Gospel of Thomas before the 2nd century. We are on much more certain historical ground accepting the Gospels and there is no mention of the Gospel of Thomas in the earliest discussions of the canon – this is evidence that it simply didn't exist at that time.
- However, Crossan would question if it is indeed true that we are on certain ground with the Gospels. Weren't they written long after Jesus' life? Aren't there enough differences between them to question if they provide a straightforward account of Jesus life?
- In contrast the argument from N. T. Wright might say that we do indeed have four different Gospels and their differences are precisely what we would expect of people looking at the same event from their own points of view. The early church recognised that these accounts stem from eyewitnesses and were trust worthy. No historical doubts are expressed about the four Gospels in the earliest discussions about the canon.
- Another challenge to using the apocryphal Gospels as sources has to do with their date. All of them are dated from the 2nd to the 4th centuries, much later than the books of the New Testament – this should caution historians from the outset. Furthermore, many of these 'Gospels' are merely fragments, or quotations in the later writings of the Church Fathers; why would we turn to them as sources for Jesus' life rather than to the earlier and more complete work of the four Gospels?
- However, in support of their use Crossan raises several points. Even though these Gospels are dated after the writings of the New Testament, they may contain traditions that are independent of the New Testament. Therefore, they shouldn't be overlooked simply because of their date.
- Furthermore, not all of these sources are fragments. The Gospel of Thomas is a complete document of 114 sayings attributed to Jesus. Even though the Gospel of Thomas is from the 4th century, there is direct evidence that it existed in earlier versions. The discovery of fragments (some from the early second century) of portions of the Gospel of Thomas, suggest that this Gospel circulated widely.
- What is also significant for Crossan is that the Gospel of Thomas doesn't have birth or resurrection narratives. This fits for our contemporary study of history which is guided by the notion that supernatural events do not occur. The image of Jesus as a wise teacher rather than a miracle worker is much more believable than the view of Jesus given in the Gospels

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

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4.   (a)   **Examine the evidence for claiming that the UK can be called a 'Christian country'.**   **[AO1 20]**

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- The first line of argument is the still extant church community in Britain - the Anglican churches, Roman Catholic churches and a variety of other non-conformist churches from Baptists, Methodists, Quakers and Unitarians.
- A strong argument is the fact that that the entire geography of Britain is divided up into parishes in which the church played a central role in governance. Even the English language itself has been shaped by the King James Bible and the Book of Common Prayer!
- 30% of all primary and secondary schools in some regions have a Christian affiliation and that 26 Bishops sit in the House of Lords, one of the main decision-making bodies in the United Kingdom.
- TV, literature (J. K. Rowling has shared that her plot from the final book in the Harry Potter series draws on the Christian gospels) and BBC Radio 4 (Thought for the Day) all support the argument that the United Kingdom continues to be a Christian country.
- Against this would be church attendance. The 2011 census indicated that 54% of the population affiliated with Christianity. But that does not mean that 54% of the population actively participates in church? The British Social Attitudes Survey shows that less than 15% report attending religious services on a weekly basis. Some estimate that Christian attendance in churches is less than 5%; attendance in the Church of England has recently fallen to under 2%.
- In addition, the decline of Christianity can be seen dramatically in terms of those participating in rites such as baptism, marriage, and funerals. In the Church of England, for example, 67% of the population were baptised in 1950 but only 12% in 2011. In 1957 72% of all marriages in England and Wales were conducted in churches; by the year 2000 this had dropped to 36.3%. Whilst religious funerals remain quite common, many families now choose to have a 'celebration of life', perhaps conducted by a representative from the British Humanist Association.
- Against this is the argument that Christianity is resurging in Britain. Some studies have shown that numbers are growing at cathedrals amongst worshippers, pilgrims, tourists and visitors. It is relatively rare for someone to die without some form of religious ceremony. There is a Christian presence though chaplains in many areas of our social life: health care, the prison service, the armed services and higher education etc.
- However, over the last several decades, there has been a dramatic shift from what one cannot do to what one can do on Sundays, with increasing participation in sports, shopping and work. Churches are being turned into commercial spaces, dwellings, temples and mosques. Atheism and humanism are now presented more widely in British schools.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

(b) **'The Christian response to the challenge of secularism has been effective.'**
Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- One might conclude that Christian responses to secularism have not been effective given the fact of church decline. The increase of the 'no religion' category which (British Social Attitudes Survey of 2013) could be more than half of the population. Accompanying the growth of this group is a corresponding decline of those who believe and practice Christianity.
- However, Christians might argue that this is not true as there are many signs of vitality including the growth of charismatic churches and Cathedral worship and each offer different experiences that are attractive to those new to Christianity. Also there are social initiatives that seek to address issues of poverty, welfare and well-being. So, there is evidence that complete secularisation is not a certain outcome.
- However, a secularist could respond that these activities may not prove that the church is actually being strengthened. Immigration is the reason for the creation of new charismatic congregations and social initiatives may simply be a 'stop-gap' and will disappear as society introduces more changes.
- Looking at those aspects of the Christian tradition that are in decline, Christians might argue that traditional church structures and rituals continue to be a resource to society from baptisms and marriages to funerals.
- Not all people use the church as a public utility however the church does provide a presence that many make use of in times of life change and crisis. Also, the media gives so much attention to the views of Christian leaders e.g. Rowan Williams has observed that the church is a place where unsolved issues in society are debated and discussed.
- One way that the established church has attempted to respond to secularism is to promote itself in public venues. One example of this is the recent attempt to promote a one minute film of the Lord's prayer in cinemas that were showing Star Wars Episode 7: The Force Awakens. The Church was prevented from doing so but several high-profile leaders attempted to defend its rights e.g. David Cameron and Sadiq Khan, a Muslim, expressed his dissatisfaction with the decision saying, 'This is a prayer that is 2,000 years old and informs our whole culture'.
- A strong argument for Christianity not being able to respond to secularisation is that society is creating new ways for people to access the kind of support that the church used to offer e.g. humanist weddings and funerals etc. Continuing technological and scientific solutions to human problems means that the church will continue to decline.
- However, one could make a case that 'scientific' and 'technological' solutions have created waste, unhealthy consumption, and inequality of wealth in the world. Christianity needs to challenge science and technology when there are moral issues generated.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

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5.   (a)   **Explain how South American liberation theology has responded to the issues of poverty and injustice.   [AO1 20]**

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

Theological
- Liberation theology is a radical movement that originated in South America in the 1950s. Leonardo Boff's statement that 'we can be followers of Jesus and true Christians only by making common cause with the poor and working out the gospel of liberation' i.e. the Christian/Catholic faith must apply that and meet the needs of contemporary societies (many of whom live in poverty).
- The reinterpretation of biblical texts (particularly the gospels) to demonstrate Jesus' particular concerns for the poor – as well as being poor himself, the gospels portray Jesus as defending the poor and outcast.
- Gustavo Gutiérrez Merino is credited as one of the founders of liberation theology – for him, true 'liberation' encompasses political and social liberation (i.e. the elimination of the causes of injustice and poverty); the freeing of the poor, oppressed, and marginalised from 'those things that limit their capacity to develop themselves freely and in dignity'. He argues that the Bible, and particularly the gospels, demonstrate a 'preferential option for the poor'.
- Chief concern of liberation theologians is the suffering caused by poverty and economic exploitation. This area is also of vital concern for the Vatican; Pope John XXIII declared that the Church is called to be a Church of the poor.
- Gutiérrez identifies three kinds of poverty: (1) Material poverty. This kind of poverty is consistently condemned in the Bible as being outside of God's plan for humanity. (2) Spiritual poverty. This is the inner attitude of being completely ready and available to do God's will. Traditional interpretation of 'Blessed (or, 'happy') are the poor' Matthew 5:3; Luke 6:20 meaning poor people are more spiritual because they are less distracted by material things and closer to God simply serves the interests of the rich minority. The true interpretation is that since Jesus saw his task as liberation and the promotion of justice, their poverty was about to end. (3) Voluntary poverty. This is the act of the Church choosing to be poor so as to identify with the poor.

Practical
- The phrase 'preferential option for the poor' began to be used by liberation theologians in the 1970s and became embraced by some Catholic bishops in Latin America and then by the Vatican when Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI also used the term. It is now viewed as an integral aspect of Catholic social teaching.
- While the Vatican has not accepted the political and economic analysis of Gutiérrez and other liberation theologians, it has embraced the idea that the poor must be prioritised in the commitment to social justice.
- Base communities developed in the 1960s as a result of at least two factors: A movement in populist education across Latin America which brought together small communities for literacy and skill building. Some governments viewed this with suspicion as this education enabled the poor to vote and take a more active interest in their future.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

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(b) **'South American liberation theology is more political than it is religious.'**
Evaluate this view. **[AO2 30]**

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Pope John Paul II responded negatively to liberation theology (LT) in the 1980s, criticising it for having become highly politicised. Pope John Paul II was opposed to communist regimes and could not sympathise with priests in Latin America who were working with communist revolutionaries.
- Similarly, LT views social justice as the main aim of the church, which was understood as a partly secular goal. Although the Roman Catholic Church values social justice, Pope John Paul II asserted that some of these secular goals rob the Christian faith of its power to free all human beings from sin.
- LT did succeed in its aim of causing debate in the Roman Catholic community and creating new ways of approaching social justice issues.
- LT is the creation of Roman Catholic priests, trained in Catholic seminaries, committed to Church ministry, administering the sacraments etc. Gustavo Gutierrez and Leonardo Boff hold PhDs in theology and are concerned that the Church develops religious approaches to oppression and poverty that reflect the attitude of its founder, Jesus Christ.
- Yet one aspect of their teaching that has been criticised is the notion of 'praxis'. Gutiérrez, Boff and other liberation theologians stress that it is action rather than intellectualising that must come first in their work. What they have in mind is the distinction that Karl Marx made between merely philosophising about the world and changing the world. LT's stress on praxis has been seen by some in the Catholic Church as an abdication of religion.
- It is true that liberation theologians speak of 'orthopraxy' as coming before 'orthodoxy'. However, once we examine their reasons for doing this, it is clear that they have no intention to reduce God and their beliefs to Marxist ideas, but to redress an imbalance in the Church.
- On the other hand, LT takes place in a context of suffering; to proceed on an intellectual basis seems to lack love. Thus, the phrase 'liberation theology' doesn't reflect a decision to place God or religion in second place but a decision to put the task of rationalising and reflection in second place – one should be moved first by a living faith in the face of suffering.
- Further evidence that LT is informed by religion as much as politics is found in their heavy reliance on the Bible. Gutiérrez, Boff and others take inspiration for their theology across the entire Bible, from the Exodus where God liberates 'his' people from suffering to the creation of the Church, an egalitarian community devoted to prayer, teaching, common meals and mutual support – including the distribution of goods. In between these are the prophets who fought against social injustice and Jesus whose first sermon was on the theme of liberation (Luke 4: 16–30).
- However, the Church has accused liberation theologians of politicising these passages. For instance, Cardinal Ratzinger (later Pope Benedict XVI) says that to see the Exodus merely as a political liberation misses several aspects of the narrative e.g. theological theme of God's people becoming close to God and God providing spiritual and emotional sustenance for suffering.
- The Vatican is also concerned about the Marxist tone of the proposals - the Vatican recalls the Soviet Union where Christians were banned from expressing their faith. From this perspective, Marxism is synonymous with oppression and atheism.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised