

Examiners' Report

June 2019

GCE Religious Studies 9RS0 4B

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Introduction

There were some notably worthy answers which often demonstrated a good understanding of Christian beliefs, praxis and theology. The overall standard suggests that candidates and centres are increasingly confident with the demands and intent of the specification. Many responses reflected a relevant use of resources resulting in candidates across the ability range having confidence to tackle this paper in an appropriate fashion. Candidates who exhibited the ability to assess and evaluate invariably did well. Some of the best responses were usually from candidates who wrote less, but obviously had planned carefully and set out their argument at the beginning of their answer.

It was apparent that consideration by candidates of the precise wording of the question varied significantly especially for Q03 and Q04 where some candidates lost focus on the issue they were supposed to be engaging with, such as '**clarify**' (Q03(a)), '**assess**' (Q03(b)) or '**evaluate**' (Q04). It was pleasing to note that many candidates used relevant technical vocabulary correctly and effectively. The references to scholars were generally pleasing, however some responses appeared to randomly name scholars that brought little or even no input to the argumentation and discussion being offered.

The majority of candidates demonstrated sound knowledge and understanding such as:

Question 1 - good answers for this question made effective use of Buber. Augustine featured in terms of knowing God personally through a relationship with Jesus Christ. The role of God communicating and having a relationship with his creation particularly through prayer was handled well.

Question 2 - sound answers clearly identified why various movements were a problem for mainstream Christianity. Strong responses gave reasons why problems arose such as taking away adherents from the larger denominations. Many identified the problems with various movements appropriating aspects of traditional Christianity teaching and adopting it to their own understanding and praxis.

Question 3(a) - many candidates were able to untangle the complexities of this passage and identify that Hick was arguing for a broader sense of the term atonement and that he also focused on salvation and dismissed the theories of penal substitution, etc in order to offer Jesus as a moral exemplar.

Question 3(b) - good responses clarified Hick's position and his theory as being suitable for interfaith dialogue. Some managed to develop Hick's position on Jesus as a moral exemplar and explored its strengths and weaknesses as a metaphor. A number of answers saw the problem with Hick as he twisted some of the Bible to suit his ideas, especially by claiming Jesus did not say he was God.

Question 4 - some good knowledge of the Bible as revealed theology and the more able candidates discussed various problems associated with different interpretations. Good answers demonstrated a clear understanding of natural revelation/theology which led on to Natural Moral Law being the obvious synoptic link.

Less successful candidates lacked the ability to develop their answers, especially in questions 3(b) and 4:

Question 1 - some weaker candidates spent too much time on God as transcendent leaving less time and space to discuss God as personal.

Question 2 – weaker candidates focused on brief descriptions of one or more identified movements. Some answers confused the intent of the question and offered material on how significant Christianity was for various movements rather than how significant the movements were for Christianity. Simplistic treatment of this question was a feature of responses at this level.

Question 3(a) - weaker candidates did not understand that Hick was identifying the various approaches to atonement and thus presented Hick as claiming these theories as a reflection of Hick's own views.

Question 3(b) - weaker responses repeated material used for part (a). There was little or even no recognition of 'strength and weaknesses' of Hick's view as the question asked for.

Question 4 – weak answers lacked sufficient knowledge; other than some minimal material on the Bible as revealed theology there was virtually no recognition of the natural theology aspect of the question.

Question 1

Overall this was attempted well by many with some good responses giving an explanation of Buber. Other solid answers drew on a range of aspects of knowing God as personal. Some of the more popular aspects offered were: creation revealing a God who has designed us in God's image for personal relationship, Augustine's argument that we are restless until we find God, God can be seen as personal through the person of Jesus who is God revealed, etc. Other credit worthy material included knowing God as personal in religious experiences and through prayer and/or worship.

Weaker responses that identified Buber's approach did not draw out the material beyond merely stating that the personal relationship was an 'I-Thou' one. Other answers made reference to knowing God personally as part of a religious experience but these needed supporting examples or some relevant development to strengthen the quality of the responses.

1 Explore the concept of the nature of God as personal.

(8)

A key concept in Christianity in regards to the nature of God is God's personal relationship with humanity. As man was made in God's image (Genesis 1:27), there is a personal relationship/connection between God and humanity.

Theologian Martin Buber explores this personal relationship through the comparison of "I-It" and "I-Thou". A "I-It" relationship is an extremely impersonal and static one as it implies a relationship that values someone/something merely for its instrumental value of what can be gained by one person in the relationship. This can often be thought of in regards to God's transcendence, however this is not the case, as the relationship between God and humanity is an "I-Thou" personal one. This means that there is a mutual love and deep understanding between God and humanity that transcends space, time and physical being.

In addition, prayer, religious experiences and atonement all highlight God's personal nature as they are expressions of God's love and grace within the personal, physical realm.



This is a concise and relevant answer. The introduction wastes no time in setting the context and offers a supporting biblical quote. The candidate then immediately engages with Buber's approach to God being personal in a detailed and effective manner. In the final paragraph the candidate points to other relevant aspects of God being personal and these demonstrate some good knowledge and understanding of the topic. Deservedly this answer gained full marks.



Being focused on a scholarly contribution with depth is one approach that will enable a candidate to gain good marks.

The concept of the nature of God as person is presented within Christianity in the belief that God has presented himself through the human form of Jesus. Christians believe this leads to the thought of God as personal as he wanted to have a relationship with his creation. In addition to this God has a personal connection with individuals as we are his creation and should keep ever by his bliss, which is usually presented through the Bible. Furthermore this leads to the concept of the nature of God as personal as Christians believe that God has presented himself as the Trinity which is the father, son and holy spirit. Christians believe that the holy spirit is within each individual and is a general guide for humans, usually known as conscience. However this emphasises a personal nature of God as he is involved throughout our lives and moral history. Furthermore, Christians look to God as being personal through prayer and worship as they believe that through this they can develop the spiritual goal of life for Christians which is to become closer to God. The concept of the nature of God as personal is present in Christian beliefs, as they believe that God sent down his son as an act of love for forgiveness of humankind's sins and wrongdoings, which was shown through a human being which leads us to relate more to God and to encourage his teachings upon people. God's concept of being personal is also emphasised through creation of the world and being loving which leads people to develop further towards God.



This answer offers a range of material that initially is based upon God revealing himself as incarnated in Jesus, and develops a link with God having a personal link with his creation and communication through the Bible, as well as prayer and the Trinity. The candidate has crafted an answer that reflects a thoughtful and competent use of the material and reaches the top marks comfortably.

Question 2

A sizeable number of candidates either offered answers that focused exclusively on 'New movements in theology' or included these movements for discussion along with New Religious Movements such as Pentecostalism, etc. In light of the juxtaposition of 'New Religious Movements' and 'New movements in theology' in the specification (4.2 & 4.3) it was decided that such responses could be deemed as credit worthy. Some candidates did this very well, considering the significance of these theologies for renewal of focus on correct practice and the authentic message of Christianity. Overall, there were some very detailed and focused answers offered and candidates were able to score well with their responses to this question.

Many of the good answers identified 'world affirming' and 'world rejecting' approaches and gave some careful consideration to the significance of these in terms of drawing worshippers to or from the faith, and whether they are in effect so different from key beliefs as to be of no significance, or whether they might have constituted a 'threat' to traditional Christianity. Some good answers focused on 'spirituality' as opposed to rigid doctrine and practice as well as modern secularisation concerns.

Weaker candidates gave answers that identified the significance aspect of the question the wrong way round and considered how significant Christianity was for these movements rather than how significant they were for Christianity. Many weaker candidates were unable to answer the question as set, as many of them gave descriptions of what they knew about various sects such as Westboro Baptist Church, Branch Davidians, Jehovah's Witnesses, and even Mormons, etc. There were also a number that used Scientology. However, many did not offer an explanation of possible significance for Christianity of these sects which is what the question called for.

2 Assess the significance for Christianity of New Religious Movements.

(12)

Secularisation is the decline in Christianity over the past century mainly due to philosophical empiricism and science which is seen to oppose religion on issues such as the Creation of the universe being independent of God through the Big Bang and evolution disregarding *Imago Dei*. However, new Religious Movements such as Pentecostalism and Charismaticism, are developments emphasising the Holy Spirit's gifts given to us and spiritual healing. They are significant to Christianity, as the attendance ~~in~~ has increased by half over ~~from 1980~~ over 25 years. For Christianity, this rejuvenation ~~was~~ re-establishment of Christianity in today's society has popularised the Religion in a way more people are engaged with due to its emotive and non-cognitive nature.

The New Religious movements such as Pentecostalism ~~is~~ have ~~used~~ placed less emphasis on Scripture but more on the religious experience and relationship with God ~~of~~ of the Congregation. This means that Christianity has moved with the time so it is less restrictive and open to interpretation letting individuals decide ~~to~~ how they want to

worship God. ~~Speak~~ However, this has had a negative impact on Christianity as it devalues the absolutist nature of the Christian Church which is emphasised in Scripture such as the 10 Commandments in Exodus. New Movements have strayed so far from the true meaning of Christianity that it has no significance as it is becoming too distinct in itself. For example, in USA some churches have used Bible Scripture "raise the serpents" to mean worship with the Serpents. Members of this movement hold snakes and use them in their worship. Not only is this dangerous but it loses the true teachings of Christianity to "Love God and Love thy neighbour".

After World War II, over 100,000 people joined Charismatic and Pentecostal Churches, due to the methods of worship such as Speaking in Tongues. This is significant to Christianity as this aspect of Christian Worship is being explored more thoroughly and they are using it for the same purpose as the Holy Spirit gave to his Apostles. This emphasises the Apostolic nature of the Church which is significant for Christianity as they are continuing the work of the Apostles to speak in Tongues and spread the Word of God. Therefore, the New Movements

have impacted Christianity in a way that is guiding Christians into a worship driven by faith in the God and by reaching a true understanding of the purpose of the Trinity and role of the Holy Spirit as a guide. However, the view on speaking in Tongues is very judgemental as those who are unable to do so or do not possess this talent are considered lesser than those who can. This approach has a negative significance as it is very inclusive and restricts not reflective of Christian values.

Overall, the New Movements, most notably Pentecostalism and Charismaticism had had an impact in Christianity today. Due to Church attendance rising and the developments of new kinds of non-cognitive worship that focuses on what the individual wants to gain from a relationship with God.



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Examiner Comments

An excellent response to the topic, achieving full marks. The introduction sets the context effectively and the focus on 'significance' is evident throughout the answer.

2 Assess the significance for Christianity of New Religious Movements.

feminism
black liberation
ecumenical
(12)

New religious movements in Christianity have had significant impact for Christianity, particularly in feminist theology. The feminist movement has been significant for Christianity as it has broadened the audience of Christianity as women have become liberated from their traditional 'oppressed' position in Christianity. Feminist theology has supported the role of women in Christianity. Traditionally particularly in the Old Testament the bible was seen as sexist 'women be subject to your husbands' and put forward the role of women as homemakers and caregivers, the feminist movement put these teachings in the spotlight to be challenged against the foundational principle that 'we are all equal in the eyes of God' and has encouraged the role of women in Christianity to be more prosperous. Thus have seen the role of women in church being improved, no longer 'silent' church go-ers but take the position of bishops and vicars teaching and preaching about faith, adopting roles traditionally associated with men. Nevertheless, this impact has been limited, although some women (Libby Lane - first female bishop) have progressed, Evangelical churches reject this and argue only men have the authority to preach in church and point out that Jesus had no female disciples, therefore there is an obvious reason to men holding the position of

teaching in church and passing down the word of God. Therefore the feminist movement has been restricted.

Moreover, another significant movement in Christianity has been the liberation movement. That has also contributed to the expanding audience of Christian believers as it reaches out to the poor and oppressed groups in society. This movement has been particularly successful as there has been a rise in Christianity in areas where economic mobility is more common such as Africa and Latin America, emphasising the significance. The liberation movement emphasises how Jesus is a liberator and saviour for the poor, recognising that there is reference in the bible as to how Jesus was once a poor man and in his inspiration the poor groups should recognise the extent and importance of his faith that allowed him to succeed and be loving. In the same way the poor should be liberated by their connection with the divine. Moreover the liberation movement has been impactful as Jesus was a poor significant in preaching equality and freedom from slavery, in Jesus' miracles where he raises the sick girl from the dead and heals the blind men, there is evidence of him liberating these disadvantaged that connects to these disadvantaged

more so, hence the liberation movement has had significant impact in Latin America. However in contrast to the feminist movement, the impact has not been as substantial as influence has ^{been} geographically constrained to certain areas. In the northern hemisphere there has been a decline in Christianity, suggesting this new religious movement is limited. In addition for some people, their economic deprivation and instability could lead to them losing faith and questioning the omnipotence of God.

Finally, another significance of New Religious movements in Christianity can be found in the ecumenical movement. This has been particularly successful in the UK, where the Church of England has united churches and brought them together after the split of the eastern and western churches in the reformation. Christianity is now more unified and although people have slight differences in faith, they can be compatible and in support of one another. Groups such as the World Council of Churches and Universal Christian Church have been successfully in unifying believers. Particularly the UCC (United Christian Church) that has taken a more liberal approach keeping up with contemporary society.

(Total for Question 2 = 12 marks)



This candidate offered two of the three 'New movements in theology' (feminist and liberation theology) identified in the specification. As indicated in the introduction to this question, the response is credit worthy because the candidate has engaged with the 'significance' of these movements for Christianity. In addition some discussion of the ecumenical movement is deemed credit worthy and so overall this is a thoughtful and at times erudite effort, again scoring full marks.



Remember to note the demands of the question and any key words and focus your answer on these.

Question 3

The extract from Hick's 'The Metaphor of God Incarnate' offered candidates an opportunity to demonstrate Hick's understanding and views regarding the concept of 'atonement'.

For part (a) some good candidates managed to untangle the complexities of the passage, and set out distinctly and clearly the various views of atonement identified in the extract (penal substitution, transaction, etc). At the same time they pointed out that Hick did not agree with these for various reasons (for example Hick considered them 'morally grotesque', etc). Some good answers offered a comparing and contrasting of Hick with Barth's approach to the atonement. Weaker answers simply paraphrased the extract rather than clarify or explain the context or the details of the extract's content. Some answers identified the theories as being Hick's rather than explaining that Hick was describing them and going on to indicate his rejection of them.

For part (b) some very good responses were managed by candidates with some presenting Hick's position clearly on Jesus as a moral exemplar, and assessing Hick's strengths and weaknesses in relation to the concept of metaphor, reductionism of Christ to being a mere man rather than divine, and conflict with Church doctrine. The implications of Hick's position for the authority of the Bible figured prominently in good answers as did his pluralism and inclusivity arguments. Weaker answers presented Hick as being in favour of penal substitution throughout whilst others simply offered a survey of all the positions Hick had rejected without engaging with possible strengths or weaknesses of his view. Some very weak responses were not able to identify Hick's view at all apart from his rejection of other positions.

Read the following passage before answering the questions.

In my view it would be best, in the interests of clarity, to restrict the term 'atonement' to its narrower and more specific meaning. The basic notion is then that salvation requires God's forgiveness and that this in turn requires an adequate atonement to satisfy the divine righteousness and/or justice. This atoning act is a transaction, analogous to making a payment to wipe out a debt or cancel an impending punishment. In the background there is the idea of the moral order of the universe which requires that sin, as a disruption of that order, be restored either by just punishment of the offender or a substitute, or by some adequate satisfaction in lieu of punishment.

I am going to argue that in this narrower sense the idea of atonement is a mistake; although of course the broader sense, in which atonement simply means salvation, is vitally important.

(Source: Extract adapted from 'The Metaphor of God Incarnate', Hick, J., Westminster John Knox Press, 2006, Edexcel Anthology)

3 (a) Clarify Hick's view on atonement as illustrated in this passage.

You must refer to the passage in your response.

(10)

In this passage Hick understands that the basic notion of atonement is "to satisfy the divine righteousness". To clarify, Hick is referring to Satisfaction Theory which is mostly supported by Barth, which argues that Jesus' death on the cross was satisfactory in reconciling the relationship that God had with man because Jesus ^{is} the most divine being who is wholly innocent and free of blame.

However, Hick believes that all transactional theories ^{of atonement} are a "mistake" because they are morally unacceptable. Hick finds it inconceivable that an omnibenevolent God would be willing to sacrifice a wholly innocent being to save the

guilty humanity who should serve the punishment for their sins, because it is only morally fair. Hick also believes that transactional theories of atonement would not be morally accepted in modern society as the main theories of atonement which is ransom theory, that is "analogous to making a payment" and Satisfaction theory would display an angry vengeful God who is only concerned with the ^{committed} sins that humanity have ~~made~~ in the past such as Original Sin.

Alternatively, Hick believes that we should only be concerned with the "broader sense" of atonement which he believes is moral exemplar theory. Moral exemplar theory allows humans to be atoned of their sins through transforming their individualistic characters to become good people. Just like Jesus was. For Hick, ~~this~~ this theory of atonement is acceptable to society because it presents Jesus as a martyr who refused to renounce his moral truths.



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Examiner Comments

This is a strong part Q03(a) response that demonstrates a clear understanding of Hick's position and 'clarifies' cogently and concisely Hick's views...a good example of doing what the question asks for! The candidate does not 'waffle' but gets straight to the heart of the matter and achieved top marks.



Don't be tempted to regurgitate the exact but do '**clarify**' relevant aspects of the passage.

(b) Analyse the strengths and weaknesses of Hick's position on atonement.

Hick's own atonement theory is based on ~~the moral~~ moral exemplar-
the idea that through the teachings and understanding that we
have of Christ, salvation may be achieved. This is done through
participating in the loving principles ~~which~~ on which a life is based
upon and living a life which would satisfy the divine. However, he
still maintained that salvation ~~was~~ was achieved not
in human merit, but through the willingness of the divine which
somewhat leaves inconsistencies in his theory. The claims that goodness
and salvation should be achieved through ~~the~~ following the news of
Christ and his disciples and yet, salvation may only be a product
of God and not human merit. Hick needs to be more specific in
his theory about how human goodness translates to salvation. The
ambiguity of his argument makes the idea of atonement unclear.

However, the moral exemplar theory does have its merits in the
respects and living in this life which the other atonement theories
fail to do. This makes it a more attractive position in principle.

it differs greatly from the satisfaction ~~and~~, substitution and ransom theories which demand that the sinful humanity needs ~~to be~~ restored through the death and suffering of Christ. Nick's theory differs in that it is painful and promotes that we should aim to live in the likeness of Jesus and 'become the child of God', instead of allowing Jesus to take the full human blame we are ~~to~~ taught to act morally. ~~This makes the theory~~ This strengthens Nick's view on atonement.

By criticising other theories of Atonement, Nick makes his own argument stronger. He criticises the traditional models ~~for~~ respectively and also Luther's model of atonement. Nick claims that the transactional views of sacrifice and ~~Jesus~~ salvation are contradictory and thus one and cannot be correct. He explains how the ~~of~~ great suffering of a divine creature can compensate for the mass sinfulness of humanity and maintains that there is no winning model other than his own. By rejecting these narrow views of atonement and opening for the broader approach that Christ died to replenish humanity is ~~is~~ much more appealing and allows for a much more ~~universal~~ universal understanding.

~~The~~ Nick's ideas of moral example have been criticised by traditional church and Christians, who have differing views on the interpretation of atonement. It can be said that the idea of participating in the will of Jesus is unclear

and how it can directly link to salvation is too ambiguous to be accepted. Many have pointed out that salvation is an action of the divine and cannot be reduced to such a simple human interpretation. Because atonement is a divine act, we cannot conclude that salvation may be achieved ~~that~~ through acting morally and we therefore cannot accept Hick's theory of being atoning in any sense. There is no evidence to suggest that atonement and salvation can be achieved through anything other than divine and we cannot accept his position. However, it could also be said that we have no understanding of how atonement may take place in divine terms, consequently being unable to make conclusions about God's willingness to atone humanity. This links to Hick's idea of the ~~epistemic~~ epistemic distance and how because God is at such a distance, we cannot have a full understanding of his ways. It also links to his idea that like effects don't necessarily demand like causes, thus we cannot make any definitive conclusions about God and all we can do is apply the odds given work.

It could also be said that ~~the~~ Hick's atonement lacks a biblical basis which is fundamentally important in Christian theories. There are a few passages which point to salvation being achieved through the mercy exemplar theory. This backs up the idea that his model cannot directly lead to salvation. ~~However it also~~ it is further supported by the evidence of Jesus sacrificing himself for the sake of humanity, supporting contrasting models of atonement. ~~However~~

However, it is clear that Jesus' role as a teacher and as a moral example is extremely significant & through the adoption of a situation ethics. Therefore, although the moral example theory has with explicit presence in the Bible, the continuing teaching of Jesus and the effect of his teachings with his views.

Nick makes the inference that many religious beliefs ~~are~~ should not be interpreted in a literal way and should instead be interpreted as metaphors. He claims that although Christ did die on the cross, his relationship with God may be nothing more than symbolic. The fact that Jesus is viewed as the son of God is not in his actual nature, but his willingness to accept the will of God. Nick also claims that many fundamental ideas of Christianity may only be metaphorical including the Trinity and the resurrection of Christ. He believes this is the case because we cannot accept what we don't know as a theological truth.

This is a strong idea because it opens up the concept that not everything in the Bible should be taken literally. However, some have said that the concept strips religion of meaning and reduces the influence it can have.

Karl Barth presented very different views on atonement.

Claiming that the finite nature of humanity demands ~~that~~

that we should be bound to hell. However, Christ prevents this as taking on the guilt of the humanity and absorbing moral sin.

Many find this more convincing than Hick as there is more of a basis in scripture and the Bible as well as being better - aligned with the idea of Christ dying for humanity's sake, and not solely redeeming the action as a metaphor. The human sinfulness is compensated by through the sacrifice of Christ and for many, this is a more convincing stance.

Hick succeeds in maintaining the currently - accepted view on atonement as being logical and not comparable with the traditional ideas of God. In work, it is clear that his own theories on moral example and metaphors do not fully convince there are new faith in the traditional interpretations. Barth's view may be seen as a compromise between the two stances.



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Examiner Comments

A confident and effective engagement with Hick's position on atonement and its strengths and weaknesses that offers some apposite analysis. The comparison with Barth is explored well. Justly deserving of full marks.



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Examiner Tip

Try and come to a justified and reasoned conclusion as this response has done.

Question 4

This question invited candidates to evaluate the relationship between the Bible as revealed theology and natural theology.

Strong and focused responses identified relevant material, including the nature of direct revelation and the various approaches to interpreting the Bible such as literal or metaphorical. Good answers also addressed the implications for what can be acknowledged as from God and/or interpreted by human beings. Some candidates offered material that referenced doctrines that could only be found in the Bible and how the Bible was/is the main source of the self-revelation of God in Jesus. Good responses engaged with argumentation about the relationship between natural theology and aspects such as reasoning, the role of the conscience, the natural world and Natural Moral Law, etc. Really strong answers showed how one can be seen to provide evidence to support the other (eg Teleological argument) or challenge it through the problem of evil. Dawkins and the emergence of science disputing religious truth from the Bible gave some fruitful material for some candidates. There were also some good synoptic links and better candidates showed a clear understanding of natural revelation which led on to Natural Moral Law being the obvious synoptic, with discussions of the implications for Ethics of the status afforded to the Bible as direct revelation, eg modern dilemmas on sexual ethics and medical ethics, and 'absolutes' or principles/guidelines to be interpreted alongside revelation in nature.

Some weaker candidates lacked sufficient knowledge to do anything other than the Bible as revealed theology. Some of these weaker responses read the question as the Bible's relationship to nature and so lost attention on the immediate demands of the question. Some offered a whole science *versus* religion essay thus lacked giving due focus to the nature of the Bible as a source of authority.

Luther-identity ✓ ^{Augustine}
 Barth - anthropomorphic ^{Agustin}
 catechism ^{SECTION C}
 Barth - God reveals himself. ^{Barth}
 Write your answer in the space provided.

4 Evaluate the concept of the Bible as revealed theology and its relationship to natural theology.

↳ special revelation
 ↳ natural revelation

In your response to this question, you must include how developments in Christianity have been influenced by **one** of the following:

- Philosophy of Religion - design argument / pain.
- Religion and Ethics.

romantic poets.

(30)

The concept of the Bible as revealed theology can also be seen as special revelation. Special revelation is inspired by the holy spirit and takes place during and in church and sacred texts such as the Bible.

Firstly the Bible can be seen as revealed theology as it holds ultimate truths about God's nature. If the Bible is also considered as inerrant of it then seen as self-revelation of God. This is supported by Barth who advocates for special revelation as he believes "God reveals himself, through himself, he reveals himself" within the Bible as the revealing God, whilst Jesus is the self-revealing God as he is God in carnate and spreads God's message through parables such as the

'the good samaritan' within the Bible. However a weakness of this is if the Bible is interpreted incorrectly. Augustine and Aquinas (Summa Theologiae) both state that the Bible must justify what the Church teaches. However if ~~that~~ the Church misinterprets God cannot be revealed through special revelation in the Bible. This is a strong weakness as it will mean people may mishear the word of God and the therefore won't be revealed to humanity.

Secondly natural theology or natural revelation cannot be seen within the Bible as its belief is that God is revealed through natural moral codes or natural law which require philosophy & reason to be revealed. ^{Gods codification} A strength of this is William Paley as he used natural revelation to create his argument for God. However a weakness to natural revelation is that Butler said that without the Bible natural revelation creates idolatry. Therefore humans will manifest their own Gods into

existence. This is a strong weakness as in the Ten commandments it says do not worship any made objects. Since the Ten commandments is the breathed word of God it creates a large downfall for natural revelation and also makes it unreliable. ~~However a~~ ~~strength for~~ Thirdly, a special revelation is inspired by the Holy Spirit which seals a persons faith, therefore when the Bible is being used it inspires the reader of Gods nature and they can read the sacred texts breathed by God. A strong strength of this is that the Bible is direct from God and can create a understanding for the reader of Gods love for humans for example in Genesis as he was creating ex nihilo, he created humans out of love. However a stronger weakness is that the Bible can be seen as dated as it has different views on slavery and gender compared to the modern times and since the Bible was written for a different society it may not be ~~accept~~ applicable for today's society.

This is a strong weakness as if time has changed, has Gods views changed. If not it may be difficult for God to be revealed to humanity through the Bible. However a weakness of this is that because of apostolic succession, the church has authority to ~~interpret~~ interpret the Bible. ^{For many} ~~Thereby~~ natural revelation can be experienced anywhere as it does not require special interpretation. i.e. special theology. This is supported by the romantic poets who said "I feel closer to God walking through a forest than I do at church". This argument proves people feel closer to God whilst being in his creation. However a weakness of this is that Bavin said if you see natural revelation to see God it will create anthropomorphic Gods, ~~this~~ This is a strong weakness because it removes Gods qualities of being divine if he is limited to humans. Therefore its believed that special revelation is the only way to truly know God, and this is ~~at~~ only possible through

sacred texts such as the Bible.

This is strengthened as the Catechism says the Bible holds eternal truths about God, without this God cannot be fully known.

Fifthly the teleological argument rests on natural theology, as Paley used moral codes from the word to show the ~~irreducible~~ irreducible complexity in the world. He uses the revelation of nature to point towards a divine creator. The argument ~~is~~ is based off Aquinas' *Summa Theologica* of how he compares God to an arrow and archer as the purpose of the world. A strength of this argument is that it's a posteriori as we can see this evidence in the world and since it's continuously changing we can change our world view of God's creation. However a strong weakness of this link to philosophy is that Hume broke down the argument and it's been heavily criticised since, for example Dawkins said "mistaken as it is elegant" and that evolution is a far simpler explanation. Therefore

When revealing the existence of God it cannot be done ~~freely~~ ~~freely~~ through natural revelation. Instead God should be revealed through the Bible as it contains the timeless word of God as well as eternal truth once demythologised according to Bultmann.

Overall special revelation is more likely to give an accurate revelation of God because it highlights the gap of knowledge between humans and God (epistemic distance) therefore the Bible can bridge together some of this knowledge and create a revealing God. However Barn does say we can't use ordinary, ~~to~~ language or symbols to know God exactly, so there only so far the Bible can reveal true knowledge about God. To conclude humans will never know full knowledge of God as humans are not as capable as God, but since the Bible is a fundamental doctrine in the church it is needed to specialise teachings about modern day so it keep the eternal and

timeless word of God according to Boethius. Since God is eternal and omniscient his word should correlate to all of societies changing views with help from careful interpretation.

* If the people is seen as liberal it makes the Bible a human document. This is proven from the copying of man by Matthew and Luke as well as the contradiction by Matthew & Luke. If the Bible was the ultimate truth it would not have these mistakes.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

A substantial response to this question. The answer is well-structured and argued: it offers a close focus that is maintained on the intent and demands of the question itself. Some critical analysis augments the quality of the candidate's answer and thus they have achieved full marks.



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Examiner Tip

Remember for this question responses need to make the link to either Philosophy of Religion or Religion and Ethics, and this should be an effective link rather than just a passing reference.

4 Evaluate the concept of the Bible as revealed theology and its relationship to natural theology.

In your response to this question, you must include how developments in Christianity have been influenced by **one** of the following:

- Philosophy of Religion
- Religion and Ethics.

Religious experience

(30)

The Bible can be argued to reveal the divine nature of God through its scriptures and stories, this highlights the idea that humanity must have the person of Jesus/God revealed to them in order for them to understand his nature. This can suggest the limited capacity of humans to understand things beyond their personal experience. C. S. Lewis supports this idea by emphasising that humans cannot understand an alternative dimension or reality without it being revealed to them first, highlighting God's unknowable nature. This can again be supported by the idea that God cannot be reduced to mere human language as he is ^{much} too complex and important for this, despite the fact that this enables people to understand him a little better through analogies such as the Trinity analogy of an Egg or complex person or the idea of a being 'that than which nothing greater can be conceived' and therefore must exist in reality like a painter or gardener.

Revealed theology can provide a link to the philosophical concept of religious experience, with God revealing himself to

humanity in a difficult time or when hope is needed. A religious experience may act to convert ~~an atheist~~ an atheist to Christianity, giving the individual 'evidence' that a divine figure or entity exists. Furthermore, this figure may 'save the individual's life' or they may feel a presence that encourages them to believe in a supernatural realm or at least a greater power at work.

Revealed theology ^{and religious experience} can be met with criticism, for example how is it ~~omni~~-benevolent for only some people to have God revealed to them. In addition, it can be questioned by atheists such as Richard Dawkins where the evidence of this is, highlighting that the belief in something that cannot be verified or falsified through empirical testing is 'irrational' and 'delusion', acting as a 'virus' or 'drug (opium)' that clouds the mind, preventing rational thought.

Natural theology suggests that God's nature is revealed to us through nature and the natural world. This highlights that the perfection and beauty of nature reflects the qualities of the designer/creator. It may be said that the order, complexity and regularity found in the universe suggests a supernatural designer. For example, if we found a watch in a natural environment we would be able to infer that it had a designer even if it was faulty as a result of its complex nature. Furthermore, it can be said that the eye or lacteal system or even 'the thumb

alone' can convince people, such as Isaac Newton of the existence of a designer. Furthermore, the existence of machines such as the Pinocchio's Frog, whose nose extends when it senses fear, can allow people to infer ~~to~~ a designer.

Natural theology can act to support revealed theology, emphasising the good qualities of a divine figure who created the universe. It may be suggested that the earth is an artistic expression of God's nature, reflecting a greater ability as a 'designer or engraver' that is possessed by God but mirrored to an extent by his creation, who seek to develop into his perfection. It can be suggested that God is showboating his skills and talents just as humans do. Furthermore it may be said that the earth is not just an expression of God's nature, but it is an extension of it although arguably this is an unvenifiable idea, and much like the majority of revealed and natural theology, it would be deemed as meaningless by the logical positivists.

Revealed theology can provide a link to the idea that the Bible is the literal word of God, 'breathed into' the writer. This idea suggests that we must follow the Bible's every word as this is what God wants of us. However, this can lend itself to extremism such as the Westboro baptist Church, believing that 'God hates fags' as a result of the words of the Bible which they interpret literally. It can be argued

that the Bible was not written for this purpose, seeking to enhance the lives of religious believers and reveal God's nature to them while providing comfort and reassurance in the form of secure moral guidelines. Furthermore, the Bible was written in a different time period and therefore cannot be applied exactly to society today.

In conclusion, the Bible can be seen as revealed theology revealing the true nature of God and providing moral support for its followers. Furthermore, it can be supported by natural theology and the things we find in nature. The Bible may be understood as the literal words of God or a human document with mistakes either way it has great significance for its followers through its meaningful stories that provide moral guidelines as emphasised by Nina Rosenzweig. Furthermore it enhances the lives of believers, therefore its word is arguably true and that of God to improve the lives of his followers.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

This response demonstrates some appropriate detailed knowledge and understanding. The answer is coherent, logically structured and well developed. There is a consistent use of appropriate vocabulary along with an ability to evaluate and awareness of different perspectives. The response is concise and yet the candidate engages with all the elements of the question effectively. This answer received marks in the top level band.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Take time and care to consider the precise demands of the question by engaging with the relevant trigger words such as '**assess**', '**clarify**', '**analyse**' and '**evaluate**'.
- Make use of scholars to support the argument being made and not to aimlessly drop into the answer.
- Try and come to a judgement or take a position especially in the conclusion.
- Ensure effective time management so as not to run out of time before completing Q04 and consequently lose the potential to earn 30 marks.
- Select relevant examples to support the points being made without drifting into anecdotal narrative.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

