2007   Religion and Society GA 3: Written examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

Teachers and students need to revisit the study design in order to gain an understanding of the larger context of Units 3 and 4 of Religion and Society. A broad, general understanding of the study of religion and society was absent from many students' exam responses. The particular religious tradition(s) studied are examples of the interaction of religion and society: **a** story of dynamic interaction, not **the** story. The specific examples from within the selected tradition(s) studied for the various Areas of Study are just that, examples; they are not the whole picture for that tradition, let alone for all religions.

Historical and Social Context
There was an absence of accurate knowledge of time, place and circumstances in many students' responses to the 2007 examination. Students need to be familiar with at least a basic overview of the history of the religious tradition they are studying. Students should also be able to place the history of the religious tradition they are studying within a broader historical context. This would help them in their discussion of religion and society, which is the big picture context for all of the Areas of Study in Units 3 and 4.

Concept of Challenge
Many students could not distinguish between internal and external challenges. Again, the lack of knowledge of historical sequence made for some very strange responses.

Many of the particular topics studied for the historical challenge can be approached as both internal and external challenges to the religious tradition. But a sufficiently clear distinction has to be made so that the students can avoid confusion. For example, the periods of the Reformation and the Renaissance have huge possibilities, but many students appear to have a limited understanding of these topics due to its very breadth and complexity. Accuracy and depth of knowledge were missing in many responses.

Core Beliefs
Core beliefs remain an area of confusion every year, although the ability of the 2007 cohort to define core religious belief was markedly improved over previous years' students. Students still need to be able to clearly articulate, in correct theological terms, the actual core beliefs of the religious tradition they are studying and distinguish these from the other beliefs that develop within the tradition.

Choice of Religious Traditions
When deciding which religious tradition(s) to study, it is important to keep in mind the students' background knowledge of the religious tradition and their general knowledge of history. It is also important to ensure the religious tradition can be studied from the perspective of the study design, as set out on page 7. Also, there needs to be an adequate history of the religious tradition recorded. Within such resources, material needs to be appropriate for study by secondary school students. In 2007 there were some very poor choices made which did not offer students an adequate means of fulfilling the assessment criteria. For example, the Jedi Code was not an appropriate choice of religious tradition and the responses of students using this code showed the lack of historical and theological depth and breadth.

Choice of Example Topics for Study
Again, it is important to keep in mind the students' background knowledge of the religious tradition and their general knowledge of history when selecting examples for study. Selection of the films 'Ground Hog Day' and 'The Philadelphia Story' as the detailed example of the interaction of religious belief and significant life experiences was not a good choice. Also, Dorothy Day continues to be poorly done in this section. Many of the individuals or groups chosen for this Area of Study need to be rethought, so that the focus returns to the religious beliefs of the individual or group from an appropriate religious tradition. This Area of Study becomes more manageable if the religious beliefs of the individual or group are grounded in a religious tradition before, during and after the significant life experience. While it is possible to start with a person or group who has no, or vague, religious beliefs, this does make the task more complicated. Students have to demonstrate how life experiences can be interpreted in light of core religious beliefs and show knowledge of the reinterpretation, change and growth in the ways these core religious beliefs come to be understood by the individual or group as a result of their significant life experience. So it is important that the core religious beliefs are clearly identifiable both within the religious tradition and in the life of the individual or group studied. This lack of theological clarity disadvantages students, who often rely on excessive and unnecessary biographical detail spiced with emotive and sentimental description of feelings of the individual or group.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION
Note: Student responses reproduced herein have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

Section A – Short answer questions
This is predominately a generic section where students are asked to show their understanding of key terms and concepts of the study design, as per the lists below.

Key Terms and Concepts

Focus	Current	Reaffirmation
Beliefs	Contemporary	Application
Religious beliefs	Development/develop	Reformulation
Core beliefs	Change	Effect(s)
Religions	Growth	Affect(s)
Religious communities	Implementation/implement	Promote
Religious traditions	Transform	Interplay
Traditions	Distinctive	Impact
Ultimate reality	Insight	Response/respond
Groups	Resolution/resolve	Integrity
Organisations	Issues	Convictions
Society	Social issues	Credibility
Communicate	Moral issues	Impetus
Express	Adherents	Decisive
Aspects (as used in the study design)	Co-exist	Challenge
Relationship	Conjunction	Multicultural
Implications	Signify	Pluralist
Imply	Significance	Democratic
Indicate	Significant	Maintenance/maintained/maintain
Indications	Continuity	Confront
Interpretations/interpret	Strengthened	
Reinterpretation	Affirmation	

Instructional Terms

Explain	Articulate	Identify
Evaluate	Summarise	Conclude
Demonstrate	Explore	Understand
Investigate	Describe	Discuss
Draw conclusions	Outline	
Show understanding	Analyse	

In the short answer questions, the use of specific examples from the religious tradition is unnecessary unless specifically required by the question. Often when such examples were used, the student's attempt at defining or explaining the term or idea was vague and limited by the example used.

Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	13	24	29	34	**1.9**

This question covered Unit 3, Area of Study 1, 'Meaning in religious traditions'.

Responses could be general or specific to a particular tradition. In either case, the explanation needed to convey that beliefs which become core beliefs have a foundational, central and pivotal role within the belief system of religions. Some of the following points could also have been made.
- Core beliefs are essential to the uniqueness of the religious tradition.
- The tradition would not exist as that tradition without its core beliefs.
- Core beliefs are the basis upon which other religious beliefs are developed.
- Core beliefs are given centrality through the physical dimensions/expressions, such as rituals.

- Core beliefs are essentially stable. Once established, which may be a lengthy developmental process, they change only in their expression and in the varied understanding of the religious communities over time.

This question was generally well answered and students showed a sound understanding of the nature of core religious beliefs. Many students offered several coherent explanations for what constitutes a core religious belief.

Following is an example of a high-scoring student response.

Core religious beliefs are those that are essential to the theological foundations of a religious tradition and from where consequential beliefs of a religious tradition are derived. The core beliefs of a religious tradition define the traditions structural pillars regarding moral or ethical beliefs and from where the specific religious tradition establishes its uniqueness.

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	9	27	31	20	13	**2.0**

This question related to Unit 4, Area of Study 2, 'Contemporary challenges and their impact'.

Responses should have been general and relevant to all religious traditions. As such, no example was necessary, and in fact may have detracted from the ability of the response to deal with religious traditions in general. Responses needed to convey an understanding that contemporary social or moral challenges may contradict particular religious beliefs and/or practices, especially in the areas of:

- ethical principles and behaviour
- public religious practice
- the understanding of the meaning and purpose of life
- the understanding of and commitment to justice and right relationships (interpersonal and with the environment)
- the sources of authority.

Contemporary social or moral challenges pose a problem for religious traditions because:

- the challenge often goes against the values and the vision of the tradition
- even dogma or law may be confronted
- there may be a fear of consequences, leading to avoidance of the issue or down playing its importance
- the tradition might be trying to be seen as relevant to the concerns of modern society, leading to compromise.

Most students successfully identified challenges to beliefs and one other aspect. Many students would have had more to write about had they been able to identify that the contemporary challenges engaged more than one aspect of religion. Some students fell into the trap of simply writing about the contemporary challenges they had studied and did not answer the question about the problems posed for the religious tradition by such contemporary challenges.

Following are examples of high-scoring student responses.

Often religious traditions are challenged by changing social or moral norms. This is because religious traditions are often grounded or founded upon ancient biblical theologies that are out of kilt with contemporary Western pluralistic norms. Thus contemporary challenges threaten the religious authority, most notably the sacred texts of religious traditions, one of the eight phenomenological aspects of religious traditions defined by Professor Ninian Smart (1924–) in his taxonomy of beliefs. Contemporary views are often far more liberal than those held by the tradition, posing an existential tension between the two.

Contemporary social or moral challenges can be largely present within society and thus pose a problem for religious traditions. The challenge may have elements, which go against what the Tradition stands for and undermine fundamental components of the Tradition, such as theology, doctrine, practice and expression. They often bring into question core theology as a result of their own ideals and require a response from the Tradition in order to face up to the challenge. If the tradition does not adequately respond there could be fundamental moral and ethical dilemmas that result and negatively impact upon the tradition resulting in followers agreeing with contemporary challenges.

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	10	18	25	23	15	10	**2.5**

This question covered Unit 3, Area of Study 2, 'The continuity and maintenance of religious beliefs'.

A general response was needed for this question; therefore, an example was not required, but may have been helpful. Students had to deal with both terms in the question, even if, for some traditions, the occurrence of reformulation might

be argued against. Responses that showed a more precise understanding through the vocabulary used were awarded higher marks.

Both reaffirmation and reformulation involve a re-evaluation of the belief in considered analysis and theological reflection. Reaffirmation involves strengthening of beliefs. It may involve no form of change, merely reiteration, or it may involve reformulation as a means of reaffirmation. Reformulation may be in the textual expression of the belief and/or other physical expressions.

Many students did not differentiate between reaffirmation and reformulation, instead writing statements such as: 'The meaning of reformulation/reaffirmation is when…' Few students showed understanding of the analytical and theological activity involved in applying these terms.

Most examples used did not help responses to this question as the terms remained under-explained.

A popular claim by students was that religious traditions modify their beliefs to 'suit' the modern world. This is not an accurate understanding of the processes of reaffirmation and reformulation or of traditions 'addressing the signs of the times'.

The best responses addressed both terms and noted that reformulation affected expression of belief. It was delightful to read responses that understood the interconnection between the terms reaffirmation and reformulation.

The student response below is quite sound, but would have been strengthened by a distinction between core and consequent beliefs. Some mention of the nature of the adjustments and how strengthening was achieved would also have enhanced the response.

> *To say that a religious belief has been reaffirmed and reformulated is to say that it has come under challenge or scrutiny and has needed to be reassessed. To reaffirm a belief means to strengthen it and let it be known that a religious tradition has such a belief and that they stand by it. To reformulate a belief is to make adjustments to it, but not alter the belief. This occurs as a part of reaffirmation of a belief, however the beliefs do not change, they are simply strengthened.*

The following response, though quite lengthy, was progressing well in thinking through the nature of reformulation. The response went on to provide a tradition-specific example, which added nothing to the response as it did not show what precise theological belief was reformulated or what form the reformulation took. The time spent on the unhelpful example meant that the response did not touch on reaffirmation.

> *Religious beliefs are reformulated over time meaning that the belief is changed, strengthened, weakened or altered in some way. Beliefs may or may not be reformulated overtime, though this is dependent on factors. In order for a religious belief to be reformulated, a reason must be put forward, whether it be new evidence found through scientific discovery or a social or moral challenge.*

Question 4
4a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	16	13	19	19	34	2.4

4b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	13	13	21	22	31	2.5

This question related to Unit 4, Area of Study 1, 'Historical challenges to religious traditions'.

Responses needed to relate to a specific tradition and provide a clear, succinct and accurate statement of an internal and an external challenge. Students were able to use the same challenge for both the internal and external challenge; however, the differentiation needed to be clearly stated.

Responses also should have contained a statement about which aspects of the religious tradition were challenged. For example, beliefs, practices, ethical principles, authority, religious identity, scriptural texts, interpretations of scripture or of beliefs, theological writings, religious leadership, structure of the religious community or institution, etc.

Generally, this question was answered well, although some students were not clear on what constituted an internal challenge compared to an external challenge. Historical accuracy was lacking in many responses.

Students need to be able to articulate clearly the actual challenge. It can be helpful to identify which aspect is challenged and then state in what way it was challenged. Many students simply gave the name of a person or an event as the challenge.

Below is a high-scoring student response to Question 4a.

> *4ai.*
> *The Karaite Revolt during the 12th century. The Karaites were an internal sect within the Jewish tradition.*
>
> *4aii.*
> *Individuals from within the Jewish tradition revolted against one authority and did not agree with their 'extremist' views. This challenged the leaders of the tradition which resulted in a schism within the tradition. The Karaites rebuked the Halachic and Talmudic Laws and taught to establish more 'liberal' views or interpretations of the core beliefs.*

Section B – Extended response questions

When answering extended response questions, students need to ensure that they read the entire question (all of its parts) before writing. They need to avoid simply writing everything they know about a topic and carefully select the most appropriate information to respond to the particular question. If they pay attention to the whole question, students will see they are building a detailed response in parts. Students need to understand what the instructional terms require, so that their responses are to the point.

Section B, as well as Section C, requires use of evidence. This was not provided in many students' responses.

Question 1

1a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	2	5	19	73	**2.7**

1b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Average
%	4	9	14	15	18	16	11	12	**3.9**

1c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	10	10	9	9	11	12	13	10	8	4	4	**4.5**

This question related to Unit 3, Area of Study 3, 'Life experience and religious beliefs'.

When identifying information in the first part of each question, students could respond with just single words or phrases, but there needed to be more than just a name provided. There is a difference between the instruction to 'name' and the instruction to 'identify'. Identifying requires a distinguishing feature related to the reason for selecting that person or group. For example, naming – Oscar Romero; identifying – Oscar Romero, assassinated Archbishop of El Salvador; naming – Fr Damien; identifying – Fr Damien, Catholic missionary to the lepers of the Island of Molokai.

In part b., while detail was important in outlining the relevant core beliefs, the level of detail required was dependent on the number of related core beliefs.

In part c., the instruction to 'comment on', meant that students needed to show an understanding of the relationship between the individual's or group's understanding of the religious tradition's core beliefs and their significant life experiences. This relationship between the person's or group's understanding of the religious tradition's core beliefs and their particular significant life experience could be positive or negative, or even both in various ways. Existing beliefs can be confirmed, changed positively or negatively, rejected, re-established, rediscovered, accepted or reaffirmed.

There was an expectation that students would use textual references as evidence in this question. An historical date was also appropriate in many instances. Failure to read the questions carefully was the reason many students did not score well on this question.

Too many students named and described events across a broad span of life for their individual or group rather than focusing on a key experience of suffering, pain, joy, happiness, disillusionment, enlightenment, insight, revelation, growth, etc.

A new trend surfaced in responses to this Area of Study 3. Some students used themselves, friends, teachers or family members as the individual focused on for the discussion of the interaction of religious beliefs and significant life experiences. While this is an option that could work, in most cases it was not very successful. Such responses lacked theological depth, preciseness and clarity. There did not seem to be enough content to develop an adequate response.

Generally, a lack of precise knowledge of the religious tradition's religious beliefs, both core and attendant, that were involved with the person or group's significant life experiences, before, during and after the experience was a major obstacle to students' ability to write quality responses to this question. Many students also neglected to provide an historical time for the individual or group. An historical context often could have helped students understand the relationship between the religious beliefs and the significant life experience.

Following are some examples of high-scoring student responses to Question 1.

Example 1
1ai.
Rwandan Bishop Alexis Bilindabagabo

1aii.
Bishop Alexis endured the Rwandan genocide of 1994, the second worst genocide of the 20th century (800 000–1 000 000 people killed). He is of Tutsi ethnicity meaning he was targeted for killing by Hutu militias.

1bi.
The Anglican Tradition, a Christian denomination.

1bii.
The core belief that Christ has died means that Jesus Christ was fully human and suffered a painful death. Anglicans are consoled by Christ's understanding of pain as a human. Life after death is a belief in the afterlife, in the Anglican tradition this refers to heaven and hell and judgement. The belief of the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier and giver of strength means that Anglicans can feel empowered. The belief of an Almighty God means Anglicans feel there is an omnipotent being working over them who has the ability to save them. The belief of God as Father means Anglicans are loved by an omnibenevolent being who can save them.

1c.
There is a dynamic interplay between significant life experiences and religious beliefs. Significant life experiences can be understood by religious beliefs and can change or strengthen them. Beliefs that were strengthened by Bishop Alexis' experience of the Rwandan genocide were life after death, Holy Spirit and Christ has died. The Bishop's experiences matched what he believed in and he drew strength from these beliefs as a result of this – the sanctifying presence of the Holy Spirit, the example of Christ during times of great adversity and 'victory over death' (Quoted from 'Reserved by Angels') from a belief in life after death. However his experiences caused some questioning of his beliefs – leading to a changing and growing. The Bishop changed his belief of God as Almighty due to questioning how God could let such an atrocity occur – leading him to believe God helps individuals through personal miracles not widespread action. The Bishop grew in his belief of God as Father taking on God's example of fatherly love to become 'father to the fatherless of the Genocide's 500000 orphans'.

Example 2
1c.
The death of Lewis' wife Joy had an enormous impact on Lewis' understanding of the core beliefs of the Catholic tradition. Lewis, a Christian apologist, documented this struggle in 'A Grief Observed' (1962) and a comparison can be made to the significance of this impact to another piece of his work 'A Problem of Pain' (1941).

In the 'Problem of Pain' Lewis thought he understood God and his plan for the world but after experiencing the death of Joy, Lewis' beliefs were forced to change and grow as he came to reinterpret his beliefs.

Lewis questioned God's power and his ability to take his wife's life. Lewis argues that God is abusing his power that the taking of his wife's life is an abuse of power. When challenging the notion that 'God is Love' (John 4:15) Lewis says 'go to him when your need is desperate and what do you find, a door slammed in your face, and the sound of bolting inside' (A Grief Observed). However, after Lewis went through the grief process, (anger, denial and acceptance) he was finally able to conclude that it 'is not a locked door but more like a silent certainly not uncompassionate gaze' (A Grief Observed). Therefore the death of Lewis' wife allowed Lewis to successfully reinterpret his core beliefs about the Catholic tradition and conclude that God does love humanity and that he is not abusing his power.

Question 2
This question related to Unit 3, Area of Study 1, 'Meaning in religious traditions'.

2a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	3	6	11	15	18	17	15	9	7	**4.4**

Responses needed to relate to the theme of human existence and state the meaning and significance of the sign in the context of the cartoon.

Each point made needed to be directly connected to a reference point in the cartoon. Nothing related to a religious tradition was relevant to this part of the question.

2b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Average
%	6	5	7	8	10	10	11	11	11	7	7	3	4	**5.9**

Students needed to make a clear statement as to the extent of agreement or disagreement between the student's interpretation of the views expressed in the cartoon and those of their selected religious tradition. Responses should have explained the reason for this agreement or disagreement.

Responses had to show a clear and accurate understanding of the religious tradition's view of human existence and articulate what the religious tradition would say about the messages in the cartoon (according to what had been stated in part a. of the student's response).

There needed to be a clear relationship between the response to part b. and that to part a.

Generally, students handled the interpretation of the cartoon better this year, but many tended to offer an interpretation that was not based on the images of the cartoon. Even those who had matched their interpretation with an image often neglected to state the connection. Pleasingly, a few students also wrote about what was absent in the cartoon and what this suggested.

Many students showed sound knowledge and understanding of the related core and attendant beliefs of their studied religious tradition. However, many failed to selectively use their knowledge in order to match it with what they had written about the cartoon. A few high-scoring students offered scriptural or documentary supportive evidence for their claims.

Following are some examples of high-scoring student responses to Question 2.

Example 1
2a.
The cartoon above grapples with the age old question of the purpose of human life. The cartoon shows everyone driving away from birth and angrily towards death, all traveling the same pointless journey in the same direction, not stopping to connect with those nearby. The individuals depicted are angry or stressed and are all driving furiously towards death. Overall, they appear as a flock of sheep, blindly following the car in front to its destination. No one is concerned for those around them or for the environment. Here human existence has no purpose, no meaning and no specific or divine goal.

2b.
To a large extent, the Jewish tradition would disagree with this view of life's journey. According to the P account of Creation (see Genesis 1:1-2:3) man was created with 'nitzotz elohim' a spark of the divine (Gen. 1:18) and is God's co-partner in creation. He must be an 'oved and shonier', a guard and keeper of God's creation. This is reflected in the laws of 'Baal Tashlia', which commands mankind, to protect the environment. Man is given dominion over the world as he names the animals. Thus, man's purpose according to theologian Issac Luria is to work towards 'tikken dan', perfection of the world and 'tikken adan', perfection of mankind. Thus, the Jewish tradition holds that man's life has a specific purpose, which is not reflected in the cartoon. In addition, mankind, must observe the seven moral laws of the Noahide Commandments (Gen. 9:1-17) and the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5). In keeping with these laws and the 613 mitzvot (divine commandments) found in the Pentateuch, mankind has a special relationship with the Ultimate Reality and to one another which contrasts the message of the cartoon with individuals driving blindly, without a purpose or connection to one another or a greater spiritual reality.

Example 2
2a.
This cartoon depicts human existence as a mad rush (rush hour traffic speeding to the 'grave') from its commencement to the end (cradle to grave). The grave seems to be the only destination. There is no afterlife. The cityscape is the background creates a sense of city life hustle and bustle making the scene seem even more chaotic and potentially disastrous. There is no input from a supreme being during the trip from cradle to grave. All is left to the people as they drive themselves towards the end often taking

others with them – destiny is self-fulfilled. The use of cars and buildings may also be suggesting reliance on materials in order to achieve in life. The people in their cars are all frowning, so they are either disgruntled by going to the grave or by the trip there.

2b.

The Anglican tradition does believe in a linear progression of life but does not believe that death is the end. Although there is a birth (cradle), where a new life begins and life can be short it is not a mad rush to end and the end is a new beginning – life after death. Life on earth is celebrated due to beliefs of Christ as the redeemer (salvation) and a loving God taking part in peoples' lives. This also provides a reason to existence – it is not a random chaotic rush but a peaceful, loving life. This means Anglicans enjoy life and as said in the Nicene Creed (325CE),'we look forward to the life to come' – the Afterlife. This means that the rush and frowns on the peoples' faces would not agree with Anglicans. Neither would the chaotic, people-driven (literally) course of life. Anglicans believe God is actively involved in his creation and loves everybody and Almighty meaning he has an influence on peoples' lives and the events that occur between birth and death are not random but often calculated and determined. Also Anglicans do not believe materials are needed in life, only faith in 'One Lord, Jesus Christ'.

Example 3

2a.

The cartoon portrays the message that human existence involves a one way path from birth to death (cradle to grave). The lack of other roads suggests the insignificance of any other occurrences in between. Each person in the cartoon is in a separate window showing their isolation, frowning which shows their unhappiness and dissatisfaction and is blankly looking straight ahead towards the grave. The idea is that every person is the same going in the same direction and that life has little purpose. The grave also seems to be a finality.

2b.

Although virtually contradicting the catholic Christian tradition's (CCT) views on life's journey, there are several aspects the tradition would agree with. These include the equality of people and the undeniable fact that physical existence starts at birth and ends at death. However, the CCT believes that each person has a purpose in life. This purpose includes stewardship, love of God and other people and most importantly bringing about the Kingdom of God with justice, equality and compassion. The nature of a human person is also unlike that which is shown in the cartoon, with people striving for happiness being basically good but capable of doing evil being intelligent creatures and having special dignity as a result of being created in the image of God. Additionally the CCT does not believe in life simply ending at the grave, instead it is believed that the spirit leaves the body and goes on to live eternal life with God as stated in Matthew 5:8 and Corinthians 3:18.

Section C – Essay and report questions

Question chosen	None	1	2	3
%	2	50	18	30

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Average
%	3	1	2	2	3	3	3	4	6	6	6	8	9	10	9	7	6	4	4	2	2	11.1

Section C responses should consist of analysis, discussion, illustrative quotations and supportive evidence, and address the specific question asked. Whether the response is in the form of an essay or a report, all of the above has to be addressed. The techniques for writing essays and reports should be well established before the examination.

In this section, students may be challenged by questions that offer the possibility of responding from the perspective of a number of their studied areas, such as Question 3 on the 2007 paper.

There was a lack of critical thinking in many students' responses. Rarely did responses acknowledge both the positives and the inadequacies, mistakes or even wrongs on the part of the tradition studied in relation to specific topics; this makes for mostly mediocre to weak responses in this section, regardless of how much factual detail might be conveyed about the topic. For most students, this was the weakest section of the exam.

Question 1

This question covered Unit 4, Area of Study 2, 'Contemporary challenges and their impact'.

The dot points represented the minimum of what needed to be included in students' responses. Students could use their own headings or the dot points provided as their headings. If they used the dot points provided, it was acceptable to change the wording of the dot points. Students needed to be very clear and detailed in stating which beliefs and values were involved in their discussion.

Marks were awarded for detailed coverage of all of the relevant points. This included accuracy of information, appropriate use of relevant examples and evidence, reasoned arguments and realistic claims for the evidence used.

Below are extracts from successful student responses to this question. These responses demonstrate thoughtful consideration of the positive and negative interaction of religion and society. They show sound knowledge of examples from a particular religious tradition. They attempt to discuss the statement provided in the question and to provide an analysis. However, competent and engaging as they are, these responses would have benefited from more detailed, theological statements when discussing the actual challenges and responses. The inclusion of more thorough quotations and textual references would also have enhanced some of these responses.

Example 1

Report Outline
- *Introduction*
- *The Issue Faced*
- *Why the issue is a challenge to the beliefs and values of the Catholic Christian Tradition*
- *The Religious Tradition's Response to the Issue*
- *Effectiveness of the response within the tradition and its contribution to public discussion of the issue*
- *Conclusion*

Introduction
…Many religious traditions co-exist within a secular state and legal system that does not offer them privileges or comply with their beliefs, values and moral vision for society. Societies such as Australia that are multicultural, pluralistic and democratic often confront religious traditions such as Catholicism with issues that they did not have to address in other historical or cultural contexts.

The Issue Faced
The contemporary issue faced by the Catholic Christian tradition is that of the Federal Government's new Work Choices legislation, which came into effect as of 2005.

The Effectiveness of the response within the tradition and its contribution to public discussion of the issue
The response of the tradition cannot be viewed as being very effective, in that it did not achieve the desired effect of changing the government's stand on the Work Choices legislation. The response was effective however in demonstrating both within the Catholic Church and outside it in wider society, the responsibility it has to provide a moral vision for society as a representation of God's presence on earth. Thus the Church maintained a dynamic relationship between the Catholic Christian tradition and wider society. Prime Minister John Howard stated that '…there is no such thing as a Catholic position on employment relationships' in response to criticism of the new laws by Bishop Manning. While there is difference of opinion among Catholics it is important and necessary that Catholic leadership speaks out and this is the 'official' Catholic position. The Church no longer has the power to effect change in government, yet it has contributed to public discussion of Work Choices.

Example 2

Report Outline
- *Overview*   *p11*
- *The Catholic Vision for Society*   *p11–12*
- *The Challenge of Therapeutic Cloning*   *p12*
- *Why does this Challenge the Vision?*   *p13*
- *Why Act?*   *p13–14*
- *The Responses offered by the Church*   *p14*
- *Detailed Response: Mercy Sisters*   *p15*
- *Effectiveness of the Responses*   *p15–16*
- *Evaluation*   *p16*

Overview
In dealing with particular contemporary social or moral issues religious traditions confront beliefs and values which are different to their own. In today's contemporary society many issues confront religious beliefs. For the Catholic religious tradition, the contemporary issue of therapeutic cloning confronts beliefs and values of the Catholic tradition particularly its vision for an ideal society. This challenge has caused the tradition to respond on social and moral grounds to ensure its vision is kept in tact.

Why does this Challenge the Vision?
The contemporary issue of Therapeutic Cloning challenges the vision of the Catholic church, on a number of fronts. Firstly it denies the sanctity of life and human dignity by either killing it (harvesting) or inappropriately manipulating (cloning), which directly confronts the Catholic belief that life begins at conception. It denies the embryo any participation in the common good, by firstly denying it participation in the human community. It creates a sub-class of people destined for death, therefore creating a distorted and polarized view of the common good. It puts man in a position of domination rather than dominion, and takes the creation of life out of the context of love and marriage. This issue also in no way contributes to the bringing of the Kingdom of God or the vision of society of Catholicism.

Why Act?
A common question asked in relation to contemporary issues is why should one act? Why involve religion? For Catholics, salvation theology states that faith without works is dead (James 2:17) and it is upon both which we will be judged. To not act is working against one's purpose to know, love and serve God, so as to achieve the vision for society and to know and love God is to serve him. This also works against the moral good which all people should be orientated towards.

Question 2
This question covered Unit 3, Area of Study 1, 'Meaning in religious traditions'.

Students needed to discuss the statements in the question in relation to one or more religious tradition(s). Students could respond in either essay or report format.

The first statement drew on the conception of ultimate reality held by religious tradition(s). The second statement related to the beliefs of the religious tradition(s) about human life. The third statement was the discerning point in this question. Most responses addressed the relationship of religious beliefs to the way people interact with the rest of the world, while better students asked what the phrase 'beyond ourselves' implies and suggests. They saw that it has a range of possibilities beyond the obvious and considered the interaction of religious beliefs with the way people live their lives. They drew on the ethical teachings of the religious tradition as they relate to interpersonal relationships and to interdependence. Some students chose to draw on the religious tradition's vision of human society.

Following are some examples of high-scoring student responses to this question.

Example 1
The Roman Catholic Church establishes that the origin, purpose and meaning if life is directed by the Ultimate Reality of a Triune and Incarnate God. The view about a higher reality is clarified within the core beliefs of the Trinity and Incarnation. The purpose of humanity consequently extends from these core beliefs, which demonstrate the fulfillment of happiness is obliged through God's free gift of life. The purpose of humanity is then 'extended beyond ourselves' in actions of Sonship, Stewardship and Worship and receiving salvation through actions of loving God. Humanity is obliged to co-create, co-redeem and co-sustain creation as an altruistic action which affirms the Trinity and Incarnation.

The belief in the Trinity is the most fundamental teaching of the Catholic Faith and gives meaning, purpose and direction to humanity as a result. The Trinity is the belief in three persons in one being who actively create, sustain and redeem humanity and befit meaning to life. The relationship of the Trinity is established in the paternity (Father), filiation (Son) and active spiration (Holy Spirit) who act in the perichoreses (eternal movement) of love. The Trinity establishes the immanence of God within creation and motivates humanity to fulfill their lives through living in right relationship with one another…

…Humanity is called to be active co-creators of creation through demonstrating stewardship within their lives. The action of stewardship actively pursues the protection and defence of all life as established to have dignity in Genesis 1:31, 'God saw all that he had made, and it was good.' Humanity is given a purpose outside themselves to serve a larger entity through stewardship, CCC#2402, 'God entrusted the earth and all its resources to the common stewardship of mankind.' The fulfillment of God's open covenant to humanity gives meaning to individuals and communities when they commit to this action…

Example 2
At the foundation of many religious traditions lies fundamental beliefs about a higher being. With the exception of religions in which ultimate realities are not considered 'higher', instead amongst all things (e.g. Pantheism), most religious traditions, whether or not they call it God, have some views about some higher reality.

In particular the Protestant Christian Tradition holds some beliefs about God, their ultimate reality, which are central to their belief system. 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth' (Genesis 1:1). The word used for God here in the Hebrew is Elohim, reflecting a powerful creator God. Consequently, Protestant Christians believe in a God who is transcendent, having all supremacy. This particular nature of God is expressed in Paul's letter to the Colossians where he writes 'God is above all things and in Him all things consist … that He may have the pre-eminence.' God's transcendence is also expressed in the story of Job in which God reveals Himself to Job to rebuke him for questioning His ways saying, 'Where were you when I lay the foundations of the earth?' Job saw God for the powerful, transcendent being that He is and understood that just as Isaiah 55 states, 'God's ways are higher than man's ways'.

The student proceeded to explore God as immanent.
Genesis has given Protestant Christians much insight into the nature of the higher reality, but it has also been useful in deriving beliefs about the purpose and meaning of life…With humanity as God's image bearers, meaning and purpose in life could be derived from exhibiting the nature of God…

Simultaneous to fulfilling their own purpose, Protestant Christians like those in other traditions are motivated by their religious tradition towards purposes beyond themselves. When God created humanity He left very clear instructions on how to associate with the rest of the world, a purpose, beyond ourselves.

In Genesis, God instructs humanity to 'subdue' the earth. Thus implying, consistent with the creation story that humanity is the pinnacle of the earth and thus it has dominion over it. Later in Genesis chapter two God instructs humanity to 'nurture' and 'care' for the earth…Also later in the Bible, the Prominent Protestant text, humanity is given additional instructions…which are believed to be ethics on how humanity should operate, including…give to the poor (1 John), walk in peace (Isaiah 2), speak for those who cannot speak for themselves and defend the needy (Proverbs 31), and live in unity and equality (Romans). These beliefs motivate Christians to act in order to fulfill a purpose beyond themselves…

Question 3

This question covered:

- Unit 3, Area of Study 2, 'Continuity and maintenance of religious beliefs'
- Unit 4, Area of Study 1, 'Historical challenges to religious traditions'
- Unit 4, Area of Study 2, 'Contemporary challenges and their impact'.

Students were required to deal with one or more religious traditions and one or more challenges. Assessors were alerted to the perspective used by the students, and allowed for differences between insider and outsider perspectives.

Students needed to provide some discussion about whether it is true that religions need to be resilient and, if so, why. There should also have been a discussion about the nature of resilience. Some examples that were used involved lengthy periods of time and did not necessarily demonstrate resilience.

Better responses demonstrated clear reasoning, accurate use of relevant examples and appropriate use of evidence. They attempted to discuss the statement provided in the question and to sustain an argument using a clearly stated particular interpretation of 'resilience' that showed understanding and some analysis. They also considered not only the internal impact of response to the challenge but also the external impact.

Responses addressed the impact of the response within the religious tradition itself. Even here, the better responses showed some diversity of impact within the religious tradition. The better responses addressed the impact of the response on the relationship of the religious tradition to the wider society, perhaps including its relationship with other traditions.

Following are some excerpts from high-scoring student responses.

Example 1

As they are a part of society that is made up of unique and different human beings, religious traditions cannot possibly cater to suit the needs, desires, views and beliefs of every member either within their tradition or beyond their tradition in the wider society. As a result of these, often conflicting ideas of what is true, correct and important, religious traditions often find various aspects of themselves confronted or challenged either by people or events that disagree with or oppose some aspect of the tradition. These challenges often place pressure on the tradition to change some aspect of itself so that it is closer in line with the desires or needs of those instigating the challenge. There are various ways in which religious traditions can choose to respond to these issues. The two main reactions being, remaining defensive or open to the challenge, that is maintaining its beliefs or whatever aspects are confronted by the challenge and reaffirming the truth and validity of these or altering aspects of themselves and reformulating beliefs and practices to suit the demands of the challenge. However, if religious traditions are to keep themselves intact and maintain the fundamental aspects of themselves, they need to remain resilient when faced with the challenge of change. This resiliency while often assisting in strengthening the religious tradition, is not always a positive development but in fact sometimes leads to reactions by the tradition that negatively impact both on the tradition itself and wider society, since religion and society are indelibly connected.

In the Catholic Christian tradition the example of the challenge to change that the Reformation presented to the beliefs and practices demonstrates the need of religious traditions to display resiliency if they are to maintain themselves in the face of challenges. The challenge posed by this movement however also demonstrates the negative implications that can result both for the tradition and society as a result of resiliency…

Martin Luther, a German theologian, Augustinian monk and ecclesiastical reformer, epitomizes the challenge to change that faced the Catholic Church and came to be known as the Reformation. Through his study and experiences, Luther discovered that corruption was rife within the Church and that abuses among the clergy were prominent. He realized that the Church was exploiting the sale of indulgences in order to facilitate the building of St Peter's Basilica in Rome. In 1517 in what is often regarded as the start of the Reformation Luther according to traditional accounts nailed his '95theses' to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenburg. This was a standard means of opening up theological debate and Luther's theses condemned greed and worldliness within the Church also asking for a theological disputation on what indulgences could grant…

However, the level of support Luther had, eventually led to the formation of the Lutheran traditions and also the Reformed and Anabaptist congregations. Such a blatant confrontation to the Church required a more substantial response than simply excommunicating members who disagreed with doctrines and practices…

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…The resilience of the Catholic Church ultimately sealed the divisions between Catholic and Protestant faiths, which still exist today. The resilience also set the Church on a path of defensiveness which continued for most of the next 400 years until Vatican II, the encapsulation of the Church's openness, not resilience to change.

Example 2

It is true to say that when faced with the challenge to change, religions need to be resilient. They need to do this in order to maintain their credibility throughout society, to ensure the religious tradition is in tune with society and they also need to be resilient so that the challenge doesn't escalate and create a greater challenge. The Roman Catholic Church's need to be resilient can be explored by looking at the challenge philosophy posed to the Church between the 17th – 19th centuries. In particular by exploring Descartes' philosophy and Rousseau's philosophical ideas, it can be seen how the Church's lack of resilience caused them to lose credibility, be unable to relate to society and how philosophy became a greater challenge to the Catholic Church…

…Rousseau challenged the Catholic Church through his book 'A Social Contract' in which he said, 'Although man is born free everywhere he is in chains.' This challenged hierarchical institutions of which the Church was one. For the Catholic Church, this questioned their core belief in God a God who ruled in heaven through a hierarchy. However, the Church did not respond to this challenge quickly and did not recover easily, instead they ignored Rousseau's challenge hoping it would resolve itself. This caused their authority and credibility to be questioned. And so, in 1864 Pope Pius IX released the Syllabus of Errors, which condemned the 61 errors of modernism. This included both Descartes' and Rousseau's developments in Philosophy. However this was not affective, so in 1869–70 the Catholic Church called Vatican I in which it only increased the Pope's authority and condemned rationalism, modernism and atheism. The Catholic Church was not effective in trying to respond to the challenge of philosophy and in doing so lost much credibility in society. There was a rise in atheism and people were no longer looking to the Church for advice. This demonstrates how important it is for a religious tradition faced with the challenge of change to be resilient to respond to the challenge quickly and easily…

Finally, in 1962–65 Pope John XXIII called Vatican II in the hope of finally resolving the challenge of modernism, including philosophy. The Church had carried these challenges with them for decades and so they were much harder to respond to than they once would have been. At Vatican II, the Catholic Church released two documents in response to the challenge of philosophy. The first was the 'Decree on Religious Freedom', which said the human conscience had to take priority over the Church's teachings. That as long as the Church's teaching had been used as a guide that conscience had the final say. The second was the 'Constitution on the Church'. This document looked at the structure of the Church, thus resolving Rousseau's theory. The Church redefined the Catholic Church as the 'People of God,' which the Pope was now the 'first among equals'. The Bishops still had authority in the Church but during Vatican II, the Church tried to be more in tune with the times and became more democratic. So in some ways Rousseau's challenge was resolved but because of the time it took the Church to find an alternative response the challenge of philosophy had become greater than it would necessarily been, which demonstrates again how important it is for a church to be resilient to respond quickly and easy to problems that face them…

Example 3

When faced with the challenge to change while religions need to be resilient they also need to respond in the appropriate manner. We live in a world that is constantly changing with new things being discovered and different ideas being put forward. For a religion to survive in this world it is a necessity that they while keeping core values are open minded and flexible to new things so that it can adapt quickly to any challenges that arise. Blind and narrow-minded fundamentalism has been portrayed in a number of cases over the past centuries and for religions to keep face in contemporary societies they must divert from this course.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, the Roman Catholic Church while being resilient demonstrated how not to respond to a challenge of their beliefs that could have spelt change…

The response proceeded to discuss the above interpretation of the question with reference to the example of Galileo and his heliocentric theory clashing with the Catholic Church's geocentric worldview. The student articulated the actual response and its effects then considered other possible ways of responding and their potential impact, consistently referring to their interpretation of resilience and appropriateness. The response incorporated relevant, accurately acknowledged quotations and correct historical context.

The world is always being faced with challenges of change that it must adapt to appropriately and resiliently. Religions especially being what they are which is built upon theological ideas should always remain open minded and see challenges as not so much a cause for great concern but a chance for improvement through reaffirmation and reformulation. The more black and white fundamentalism there is the less people will be inclined to take seriously religious teachings. In order to keep face it is this world Religions must recover quickly from challenges but more importantly, that recovery should not hinder the potential for that religion to become more enlightened.