



**2011**

**Religion and Society GA 3: Examination**

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

The questions on the 2011 Religion and Society examination contained many different emphases that required careful reading and analysis. Students who did well used their reading time wisely and noted these different emphases, which allowed them to select appropriate parts of their studied material for each question. In general, however, students need to make better use of the reading time to determine which parts of their knowledge from the various areas of study best relate to the questions asked. This may also help students to avoid unnecessary repetition. Some questions may require reference to a previous response, especially in Section B, but there should not be exact repetition of the same points.

The *VCE Religion and Society Study Design* is underpinned by the eight aspects of religion stated on page 7 and the areas of study are interconnected, so it is inevitable that questions in the examination will have some overlap. However, each section of the paper contains a different type of question and requires a different style of response. Even if the same area of study is used in both Sections B and C of the paper, the questions sample different sets of key knowledge, and students are required to select appropriately from their study in order to answer the particular focus of each question. Too many students used the same information for two different questions about the same area of study.

Students need to answer the question asked, and this requires them to have a thorough understanding of the question. Throughout the year, students need to practise analysing questions to determine what is being asked. It is important that they understand how to respond to questions that ask them to 'identify', 'explain', 'outline', 'discuss', 'evaluate' or 'show to what extent'. Students also need to know how to determine what is an appropriate amount and level of material in their responses to avoid writing too much or too little. Generally, students also need more practice in interpreting visual and written stimulus material. Students need to write plainly, directly and succinctly. They need to incorporate correct terminology from the study design and from the theology and history of the religious tradition they have studied. Weaker responses lacked this terminology or used it incorrectly. Some of the more competent responses were undermined by unusual forms of expression, including attempts at impressive vocabulary that was often incorrect. While students should aim to use an extended vocabulary, they must know the correct meanings and use terms correctly.

Accuracy is required in facts, dates, names and references. Where quotations are used, including those from a scripture, they should be exact rather than paraphrased. Paraphrasing is accepted, and does allow for more flexibility, but such paraphrasing should not be written as a direct quote. Many students struggled to establish the historical context for their tradition; correct dates should be provided when students are writing about events, people, organisations and texts from the past. A basic familiarity with the history of the religious tradition they are studying (which is part of Area of Study 4.1) would help students to place the history of the event, movement or person they are studying within a broader historical context. This would also help them in their discussion of how religion and society interact, which is the 'big picture' context for all areas of study in Units 3 and 4.

Some students had difficulty clearly articulating the beliefs of their religious tradition. This was particularly evident when they tried to explain what was being challenged in a belief. Things that may help students better understand this area include:

- wider reading, which will help to develop a more thorough understanding of the beliefs. Few students showed evidence in their responses of analytical research and thinking
- regularly practising both oral and written expression of the beliefs. This could be developed through all the areas of study, as in some way they are all exploring beliefs.

Many students seemed unclear about the concept of challenge when applied to the history of traditions, which is the focus for Areas of Study 3.2 and 4.1. A lack of knowledge of historical sequences of events and developments within the religious tradition resulted in responses that were underdeveloped, over-generalised, vague and lacking in supportive evidence. Distinguishing between internal and external challenges and factors was also difficult for many students.

Although many of the topics studied for the historical challenge can be approached as either internal or external challenges to the religious tradition, there needs to be a sufficiently clear distinction made so that students can avoid confusion. For example, the periods of the Reformation and the Renaissance have huge possibilities, but their very breadth and complexity make them topics that many students appear to understand poorly. Many responses lacked the accuracy and depth of knowledge that was required to receive high marks.



High priority should be given to the students' background historical and theological knowledge and understanding of the chosen religious tradition when choosing the topics for special detailed investigation in the areas of study. There are still too many overly complex topics being chosen. Exam responses showed that many students had not understood these complex issues. Their simplistic and unsubstantiated responses showed their confusion and often contained very incorrect claims.

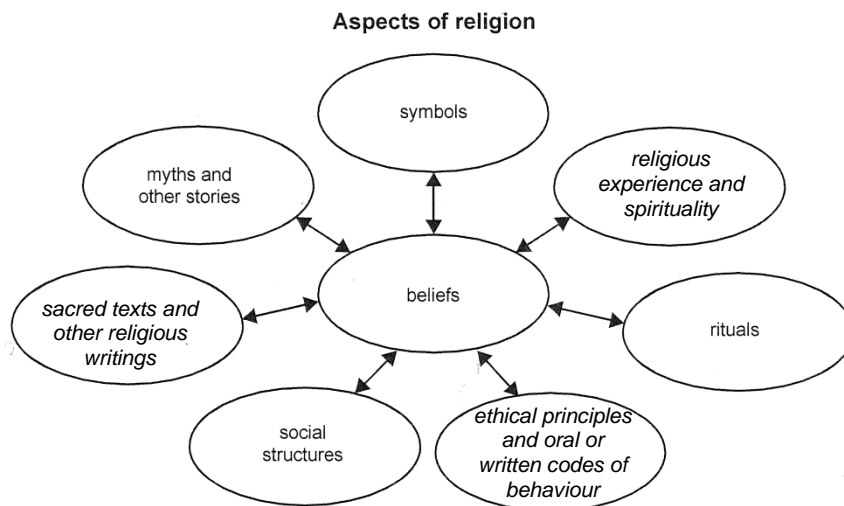
**SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

**Section A**

Section A deals with contexts, concepts and terminology. Students need to consider the study of Religion and Society from a general perspective, in the past and present, and consider religion within both predominately single-religion societies and in multi-faith societies. Teachers should familiarise themselves with the study design, and carefully read the introductions to each unit and Area of Study, as well as the key knowledge and key skills dot points.

**Question 1a.**

<b>Marks</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Average</b>
%	11	35	46	8	<b>1.5</b>



Although most students answered this question, few received full marks. The eight aspects of religion are basic to this subject and are addressed repeatedly in the study design. They need to be known, not just as names, but as functional and interactive characteristics of religion.

The aspects named needed to be precise (although 'ethics' was permitted on its own). For example, 'experience' was not sufficient for 'religious experience', nor was 'religious experience' sufficient if 'spirituality' was missing. It was not necessary for responses to include the bracketed material in the aspects list from the study design.

**Question 1b.**

<b>Marks</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Average</b>
%	6	28	41	25	<b>1.9</b>

'Relationship' was the focus of the question. The arrows were two directional, therefore responses needed to show that the aspect of 'beliefs' relates to other aspects and that other aspects relate to 'beliefs'; it is a dynamic interaction.

Basic responses made one or both of these points by simply saying that they relate to each other.

The most successful responses included some of the following points:

- the aspects are interconnected – they add meaning to each other
- the aspects provide understanding and support for each other, especially when beliefs are challenged
- the aspect of beliefs is the basis for the other aspects

# 2011 Assessment Report



- the aspect of beliefs is central to the other aspects
- the other aspects stem from and express the beliefs
- the other aspects in turn influence the observance of the beliefs, express or demonstrate meaning of the beliefs, and contribute to the understanding of the beliefs
- the other aspects act as a protective shell around beliefs.

Full marks were given to responses that gave three valid points, or one or two valid points that were explained well and covered the two directions of the relationship. There were no connecting arrows between the outside circle aspects, so responses that spoke of such connections were not relevant to the question and were not rewarded.

Many students did not answer this question fully. Many ignored the diagram symbols and thus did not identify the relationship depicted in the diagram.

Following is an example of a successful response.

*Beliefs are the privileged insight into the nature and purpose of ultimate reality. Other aspects are manifestations of belief which allow the adherent of a tradition to bring themselves closer to the tradition. This diagram suggests that there is a dynamic relationship between beliefs and the other aspects shown by the arrows which suggest that beliefs and the other aspects rely upon each other and hence gain from each other to strengthen a tradition's faith.*

## Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	16	17	24	23	20	2.1

Two of the four maintenance methods named in the study design needed to be clearly identified and explained:

- the reaffirmation of religious beliefs
- the application of reaffirmed religious beliefs to new circumstances
- the reinterpretation of religious beliefs to address new circumstances
- the reaffirmation of religious beliefs through reformulation of their expression.

Single-word statements of ways for maintaining continuity were not sufficient for full marks. Students should note that:

- religious traditions might reflect upon, discuss and decide to reaffirm the beliefs as they are, or reaffirm the essential part of the belief and adjust the non-essential parts
- traditions maintain continuity through reinforcing the belief via exact reiteration in all its expressions
- traditions also maintain continuity by reformulation of the belief in some or all of its expressions, which might change the focus or emphasis in the belief, therefore providing better understanding of the belief
- some beliefs accrue developments that detract from the essential belief. In these cases, maintaining continuity of the belief may involve trimming these extras to reinstate the credibility of the main belief
- the process behind the method of maintenance that is the theological review, examination of circumstances, or conciliar discussion.

Some very detailed explanations with evidence were given for this question, although some of the responses went far beyond what was required. Supportive examples from a religious tradition were not necessary and did not always help the response. These methods of maintaining the continuity of religious beliefs need to be understood in general definitional terms across religions. Weaker responses did not differentiate between the two named maintenance methods.

Following is an example of a successful response.

*One maintenance practice by which religious traditions maintain continuity of their religious beliefs is through a straight reaffirmation of the belief. When a belief is reaffirmed it is subject to debate and discussion however its meaning is simply restated and its original understanding confirmed. Another maintenance practice is the application of a religious belief to new circumstances whereby the situations have changed, sometimes within the context of changing times and the way the belief is therefore applied to life needs to be changed to fit the new situation and environment.*

# 2011 Assessment Report



## Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	4	12	19	25	21	17	3.0

### Question 3a.

Aspects are the features, characteristics and elements that work together to make religion what it is.

There was a wide range of expressions given that successfully captured this understanding.

Following is an example of a successful response.

*The aspects of religion are the pillars and the constituent elements that make up a religious tradition. In addition the aspects are what distinguish each tradition from each other.*

### Question 3b.

This question required students to think about their studied material from a different angle and select the appropriate parts of their study.

Two aspects had to be clearly and correctly named, and students needed to explain the aspects' role in assisting religious traditions to meet challenges. For example:

- sacred texts can be translated into new idioms/language to provide inclusiveness of those challenging the tradition on the basis of exclusion or neglect
- other writings can reinforce, expand, develop, encourage, inspire or criticise; they contain the beliefs and understanding of the members
- rituals can change in word, action or through the use of different symbols to reflect new understanding of the human condition
- the social structure of religious traditions through the authority of the groups and individuals within the tradition can stabilise the tradition when in crisis. Exercising authoritative guidance, including the ethical systems of the traditions, can reassure adherents and can discipline, limit or curtail dissidents
- ritual, devotional practices and religious symbols can unify members of a challenged religious tradition, providing encouragement and security and reinforcing confidence in the beliefs of the tradition.

Following is an example of a successful response.

*Two aspects that have assisted religious traditions to meet challenges throughout history include beliefs and sacred texts. Beliefs are the ideas and concepts present within a tradition, providing meaning and purpose for existence and all that exists. It provides a source of religious integrity, stability and uniqueness. Essential beliefs remain constant, although expression may change. As a tradition meets a challenge it can call upon beliefs to provide answers to existential questions that the challenges may pose or provide a frame of reference to help cope with challenges. As such beliefs are constant they ensure a solid foundation that adherents of the religion can use to help them find meaning in a challenge that has arisen at any point in history. Sacred texts are the legal or authoritative texts that are a repository of spiritual and intellectual concepts, experiences and/or interpretations of the religion. As they are believed to have divine authority, hence sacred, when faced with a challenge in any period in time a member of the tradition may refer to their sacred texts for direction in how to meet the challenge.*

## Question 4

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	7	20	28	25	13	6	2.4

Possible reasons why religious traditions are confronted with types of challenges today that they did not have to face in the past include:

- the change from a 'religious' society, where rules and practices were based on the religious beliefs and historical values of a particular tradition, to a multicultural, multi-faith and secularised society has meant changes to many of society's beliefs, values and laws
- new knowledge and understanding are creating potential for human creativity that was not previously possible, raising questions of whether it is morally right to use the potential in certain ways
- within multi-faith societies, the existence of pluralism in belief systems, ethical principles and moral values means that there is potential for conflict between these systems, with no single system having supremacy within the pluralist society



- today, even within societies that are predominately of one religious tradition, the potential access to communication with other systems of belief and behaviour brings opportunities for different types of challenges
- today's societies differ from when societies were mainly of one religion: 'an official religion of the state'. The level of communication and travel was very limited, reducing the influence of other ideologies and practices. The attitude to authority was more unquestioning and the power to exercise authority was less restrained or regulated
- the very nature of modern, pluralist societies means that challenges are complex. The complexity of such societies transfers to the questions confronting religious traditions. No single, straightforward rule of God answer is going to suffice in a pluralist society
- religious traditions today may experience more direct challenges to their concept of ultimate reality, and to the role played by the tradition in the everyday life of adherents and to the right of religion to have a voice in public debate.

There were some excellent responses to this question that were thoughtful and well expressed, demonstrating the students' understanding of the interconnectedness of religion and society across time in general terms. Weaker responses tended to refer to scientific and technological changes only and made sweeping over-generalisations.

Following is an example of a successful response.

*Unlike in the past when religion and politics went hand in hand, the rise of individuality allows for the individual to make their own decisions about what is best for them. This relativist mindset eventually leads to challenges to the ethical principles and codes of religious traditions. The rapid development of science poses ethical and theological threats to religions, even to questioning the place of God. In pluralist societies diverse opinions, beliefs and values exist, very different to the past when most societies were one religion. Atheism is increasing and along with competing social values and standards threatens the membership of religions.*

## Section B

### Question 1a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	3	13	25	30	19	10	<b>2.8</b>

Some responses referred to the two directions of the views, but either of the two below was adequate:

- the relationship of the ultimate reality to humanity
- the relationship of humanity to the ultimate reality.

From either perspective, the relationship could be seen as personal, with the caption showing a sense of intimacy, personalised concern, interest or need. The caption also suggested recognition by the ultimate reality that humanity faces trials, and a willingness of the ultimate reality to be a part of human existence. Ultimate reality was helping out, at least for 'today'. It may not be that ultimate reality is involved regularly or beyond 'today'.

Alternatively, the caption could be interpreted such that people are at the mercy of the ultimate reality, which is authoritarian, a controller and disempowers humanity. Such responses spoke of humans feeling helpless about their own ability and about life, seen in the stance and expression of the human in the image: non-responsive, bemused and possibly even a victim.

The most successful responses dealt with the images within the picture and noted what they suggested about the relationship between the represented characters. However, some responses only used the cartoon to outline beliefs of a religious tradition about God, while others expressed their own beliefs. Neither type of response was appropriate to the question asked. Some weaker responses commented about the cartoon without attempting to relate the student's interpretation to any part of the image. Responses that dwelt on the type of God or on the nature of humanity did not address the question unless they tied the comments to the images in the cartoon appropriately.

All responses needed to be argued with reference to elements in the cartoon. The relationship language needed to be clear in order to get full marks.

Following is an example of a successful response.



*The cartoon primarily insinuates (ultimate reality) God's immanence and the person's relationship of reliance, dependence and trust with God, as indicated by God's assistance in 'handling' the man's 'problems'. This 'friendly' attitude in which God says 'Good morning', suggests God's benevolence. Though it could also be an expression of control,(tone of voice) but light usually suggests something positive. Furthermore the upturned expression of the man indicates that God is transcendent, above and apart from this world, yet can interact with the world. As God is presented as 'rays of light' the cartoon portrays God as an incorporeal being. Therefore the cartoon suggests that despite God's benevolence humanity is ultimately subordinate to God.*

**Question 1b.**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Average
%	7	10	18	20	18	14	9	5	3.4

This question was generally better handled than Question 1a., and there were quite varied responses. The most successful students supported their belief statements with scriptural or religious writings references. They also noted similarities and differences between the ideas of the cartoon and those of the studied tradition.

Many students who had incorrectly interpreted the cartoon still managed to successfully articulate the beliefs of the studied tradition about the relationship between God and humanity. Some even drew comparisons with the cartoon, making observations they had missed in their answer to Question 1a. This should have led students to revise their responses to Question 1a., but this rarely happened.

The points made about the cartoon in Question 1a. should have been addressed with some degree of agreement or disagreement from the perspective of an identified religious tradition. The theological view of the tradition should have been given, not just a claim made that the tradition would agree or disagree. At least two beliefs of the tradition needed to be articulated correctly.

Following is an example of a successful response.

*The Jewish tradition mostly agrees with the views of the cartoon. A belief sacrosanct in the Jewish tradition is the belief in one benevolent God, who is the creator and sovereign of the universe. This view is affirmed by the cartoon as seemingly only one God is present and suggests that this God has the power to handle all things, such as Judaism's creator God. Further, Judaism posits that God is a transcendent and eternal force as the prayer 'Adom Olam' asserts, God is 'the eternal Lord who reigned before any creature was created'. The cartoon emphasises this belief as God is portrayed as 'above' the earth and as in Judaism, transcendent. In Judaism this belief in a transcendent God underpins how humanity is subordinate to god and ultimately is 'God's servant and witness proclaiming God's sovereignty and unity' (Eddbeig and Reyner). This is depicted in the cartoon by the man's upturned expression exemplifying how he is subordinate to god. However in Judaism God's transcendence is paradoxically fused with his immanence. Judaism posits that God transcends time and is therefore able to permeate it, establishing God's active presence in the mundane world where 'there is no place devoid of divine presence' (Talmud, Exodus Rabbah). So it is not just 'today' that God is actively engaged in the concerns and problems of humanity.*

**Question 1c.**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	5	6	13	18	21	15	12	6	5	4.0

The most successful responses saw that, whatever the particular significant life experience, it was related to beliefs about ultimate reality and the meaning and purpose of human existence, although other beliefs may also be involved.

Responses could have related to the particular beliefs of the tradition identified in Question 1b., but could have ranged beyond these. Responses could have also included general claims about religion but must have referred to a particular example. Responses could have argued negative or positive impacts or both.

Some significant life experiences allow affirmation and even strengthening of the particular beliefs of the tradition, but other such experiences might weaken or even provoke abandonment of the particular beliefs as they are found to be unhelpful or contradicted by the significant life experience.

Weaker responses either dwelt on largely unnecessary biographical detail, or gave an extensive and repetitive definition of a significant life experience without an example.

Following is an example of a successful response.

*A significant life experience can have a major impact on the way an adherent of a religious tradition might respond to and interpret distinctive beliefs of the tradition. Cardinal Joseph Bernadine (1928-1996) of the Roman Catholic Christian tradition was diagnosed with terminal cancer. This significant experience saw him turn strongly to prayer, asking his God, the Trinity, for*



*guidance. After this intensive period of prayer and reflection Cardinal Bernadine's beliefs in the Trinity and the doctrine of the Incarnation (God become human) were reaffirmed and even strengthened. Bernadine also reaffirmed his belief in eternal life. His interpretation of how to attain eternal life was clarified as a result of his reflective prayer on how to deal with his impending death. He came to the conclusion that as a Catholic Christian he was obligated to die with dignity. Part of dying with dignity for Bernadine was giving of himself even when suffering, for Bernadine understood that Catholic Christians believe that to attain eternal life one may go through 'redemptive suffering' on earth. 'The suffering of the present is nothing compared to the glory that is to come' (Romans 8:29) Bernadine became an unofficial cancer chaplain ministering to those in need as taught by Jesus 'love God and serve your fellow man' (Matthew 20:39).*

**Question 2a.**

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	7	27	66	<b>1.6</b>

The specific religious tradition and issue needed to be identified. Students needed to clearly state what in the religious tradition was challenged by the named issue. For example, if it is the aspect of beliefs that is challenged, then the specific belief or beliefs needed to be stated.

Responses generally were clear and accurate. Weaker responses did not establish exactly what in the religious tradition was being challenged.

**Question 2b.**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	9	12	22	26	18	12	<b>2.7</b>

Responses needed to articulate the vision as well as state the nature of the challenge to the vision. The best responses articulated the particular beliefs underpinning the vision for society of the religious tradition.

Students struggled to discuss in detail the vision for society of the religious tradition studied and few offered textual support for general claims. Blanket statements such as 'establishing the kingdom of God' were inadequate for this question.

The vision for society of a religious tradition will have particular characteristics that stem from the distinctive beliefs of the tradition. Students need to be clearer about the social teachings of the tradition studied and the beliefs, ethical principles and codes of behaviour upon which they are based.

Students needed to explain the connection between the vision for society of a religious tradition and the tradition's beliefs about ultimate reality, as well as the nature and purpose of human existence and all it means for human relationships to each other and the world. They needed to articulate how particular beliefs of a tradition lead to views about how society should operate, how people should be treated and what is to be valued by society.

**Question 2c.**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	9	15	22	25	18	11	<b>2.6</b>

Many students listed how the religion tradition had responded to the contemporary issue, and implied that these responses came from the whole tradition. The most successful responses dealt with both how the religious tradition had responded and ways in which it had done so, differentiating between the responses of interest groups, individuals and officials.

As part of the responses of the religious tradition there may be no wider society public discussion, but students needed to explain why. There may only be internal 'public' discussion.

Some religious traditions have no compulsion to bring their internal discussions to the attention of the wider society, even though the issue is one within the forum of discussion of the wider society.

Responses should have identified the part of the religious tradition that is responding.

Responses should have established if there is diversity of response within the tradition and whether there are groups and individuals within the tradition that are not responding.



**Question 2d.**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	11	11	15	16	16	13	9	5	3	3.4

The emphasis in this question was on what happened in the religious tradition as a result of the tradition's responses to the issue. There should have been recognition of any diversity of impact within the religious tradition and also upon the wider society. Responses could have drawn an overall evaluation, claiming that the religious tradition contributed little or nothing to the public discussion.

There were some excellent discursive responses that showed students had thought critically about the positive and negative immediate effects and potential consequences of the ways in which the tradition had responded to the contemporary issue. There was evidence of wide research as students referred to the evaluative opinions of different groups and representative individuals within the tradition. They were even able to discuss why there may have been no impact.

However, in general, students' answers lacked detail and supporting evidence. They showed little understanding of how to evaluate the impact of the ways in which the religious traditions had responded to the contemporary issue.

**SECTION C**

Question chosen	None	1	2	3	4
%	2	16	49	22	12

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Average
%	4	2	4	3	4	5	5	7	9	7	8	8	8	8	6	5	4	2	2	1	1	9.4

**Question 1**

Very few students chose this question. Students who did attempt it ignored the cartoon and instructions and appeared to write a prepared response for Area of Study 3.3.

A clear statement of the tradition used in the response needed to be included. Consistent reference to the cartoon was required in order to show similarity or difference between the experience of the character in the cartoon and the example from the religious tradition studied.

Responses needed to outline the tradition's system of beliefs and to demonstrate understanding of the connection between the tradition's beliefs that make it a system. For example, the overemphasis of one belief or some beliefs could lead to distortion and create misunderstanding. Unawareness of the connectedness of beliefs could also lead to misinterpretation.

Discussion of what is meant by meaning and purpose was also required. For example:

- Are meaning and purpose distinct?
- Does purpose contribute to meaning?
- Does meaning establish purpose?
- Are meaning and purpose synonymous?
- Can there be meaning without purpose?

Following is an example of a successful response.

*A framework of beliefs allows the individual to overcome challenge and to face the world/life with a heightened and strengthened belief in the religious tradition. Conversely it can work in the opposite way where the individual is lead to a loss of faith, stress and confusion and possible a rejection of the entire belief system. The accompanying cartoon has depicted an adherent who initially has a strong faith in the total package of beliefs of his religious tradition, represented by the box, and is in fact praying. However when the system is demolished and shown to be 'hollow', the individual, initially distraught, shows persistence and faith allowing him to rebuild his tradition out of the same materials that were previously knocked down and tread upon. In the last image the individual is seen praying to the reconstructed tradition, yet it is not the same, it appears tattered and down-trodden. The cartoon can be compared to the individual Esther Wachsman whose beliefs stayed intact throughout a significant life experience. Her strong faith in the beliefs of her religious tradition allowed her religious conviction to become stronger and to see with more understanding the meaning and purpose of life contained in the system of beliefs of the Jewish tradition. This experience of Wachsman differs from the cartoon individual's experience, where his reconstructed system of beliefs seems weakened, patched together, yet not entirely shattered.*





## Question 2

This was the most popular question and it produced some excellent and many good responses. Clear identification of the tradition and of the historical challenge was required.

Marks were awarded for thoughtful discussion of the evaluation of the effect of the responses on the religious tradition, on its relationship with other religious communities and on its relationship with the wider society.

Competent responses quickly outlined the various responses of the religious tradition to the historical challenge and why those particular responses had been made. The body of these essays then developed a discussion of the different effects of the responses.

Weaker responses spent most of the essay outlining the historical context and the nature of the actual challenge, giving little or no attention to what the question required.

Following is an example of a successful response.

*In response to Luther's challenge, Pope Leo X, who was used to dealing with reformers and heretics, responded slowly to Luther, 'with great care as is proper'. Over three years he deployed a number of papal theologians and envoys against Luther which only served to harden the reformer's anti-papal theology. Luther has been quoted as saying 'I am certain the pope is the anti-christ'. Thus this slow, authoritative response proved to be a weak attempt by the Church to deal with the arguments of Luther and maintain its dogmatic theory. In June 1520 the pope issued a warning for Luther in the papal bull, 'Exsurge Domine' which threatened to excommunicate Luther unless he recanted in writing his 41 statements, including his 95 Theses, within six days. Luther publically burnt the papal bull and consequently was excommunicated in January 1521. Such a blatant confrontation of the Church required a more substantial response than simply excommunicating members who disagreed with doctrine. Indeed Luther's controversial ideas about the doctrine of justification for salvation were spreading widely throughout Europe with the help of the Gutenberg Printing press so the Church had to take more and stronger action to counter this. Yet this too was slow in coming.*

*Finally Luther was declared an outlaw, his literature was banned and his arrest required by the Emperor, Charles V.... Luther went into exile in Wartburg Castle where he translated the Bible from Latin into German. ... Hence Luther's exile from the Church did not silence him, it positively allowed members of the Church greater access to the sacred scriptures and a newly emerging idea of individual spirituality was elicited.*

*In a further attempt to settle the increasing amount of support that Luther was gaining, an ecumenical council, the Council of Trent, was held in 1543 which addressed contentious issues of papal abuses of authority including the sale of indulgences. The Council firmly maintained the doctrine of justification, reaffirming that faith needed to be accompanied by active works of charity as 'Faith without works is dead' (Epistle of St James). The Council further rejected all compromise with the protesting Christians and condemned Luther's theology.*

*On the level of foundational doctrine and theology the Council was able to maintain this element of the tradition. However the Council also agreed that some of Luther's criticisms were valid, such as the growing divide between priests and laity. Thus the Council held that henceforth the priests were to be better educated and thus were to educate the faithful in the value and meaning of religious art and liturgy. The Council also forbade the sale of indulgences as a means of gaining funds for the Church. Other responses of the Council of Trent positively enabled the reorganisation of religious institutions with tighter discipline and the Parish was emphasised to nurture the laity.*

*But in terms of the effect of the Church's responses to Luther, his theology and his followers there developed a significant division between Christians. The Council of Trent had established that the pathway of reform was not open to the Protestors. So a new Christian denomination, Lutheranism was created. Then further new Protestant congregations were established, such as the Calvinists, the Anabaptists. Thus an animosity was created between the Catholic Church and other Christian Protestant communities which still exists today in various forms, despite the efforts of ecumenism to build communication and empathy between Christians.*

## Question 3

Very few students chose this question and those who attempted it did not address the stimulus statement. Clear identification of the religious tradition was required. Responses needed to define the terms of the statement and determine how they were to be interpreted in the response.

For example:

- What does it mean for a religious tradition to be true to itself?
- Does this mean integrity?
- What is it?



- How is it demonstrated?
- What is involved in confronting challenges?

The question required consideration of the possibility that the statement, in part or completely, may or may not always be true for religious traditions.

The following is an example of a successful response.

*Religious beliefs provide relevance and stability to traditions, ensuring continuity and maintaining identity. In turn a tradition renders beliefs continuous through expressions such as symbols, sacred texts and rituals. However when external factors intervene the religious tradition may undergo a process of internal development in order to ensure continuity through not only confronting the challenge but by maintaining its distinctive identity. This process could include reformulation or reinterpretation whereby the expressions of the challenged beliefs are adjusted to adapt to change. Whilst some suggest that this could lead to a break within the tradition, in most circumstances, these two maintenance processes enable an reaffirmation of the beliefs to occur. Thus even against the backdrop of challenging external factors, religious beliefs may be preserved and even strengthened, and the tradition's identity is maintained. Such has been the situation with the belief in divine revelation within the Jewish tradition. Belief in divine revelation has been continuous within Judaism. Even when confronted by external factors such as the end of prophecy, the destruction of the first and the second temples (586BCE and 70CE) and the Koraires, the identity of Judaism has been maintained through the processes of reaffirmation and reformulation of the belief in divine revelation to ensure continuity.*

*After the destruction of the second temple (70CE) and the loss of the priestly leadership associated with the temple, religious autonomy was cemented under the guidance of the rabbis, thereby maintaining the identity of the tradition. They established a Yeshiva, a religious academy in Yavneh. What followed was the canonisation and systematisation of rabbinic texts into one body of Jewish Law, Halacha (a comprehensive guideline to all areas of life). Divine revelation was thus rendered continuous for 'God resides in Halacha, constricted but still in touch' (Rabbi Lichtenstein) and in the words of rabbi Elliot N Derff 'Jewish authority does not diminish as it is applied anew in every generation'. Indeed rabbinic texts and legal codes continued to emerge out of the need to address new circumstances of living outside the land of Israel. The period in Babylon after the destruction of the first temple had been an early paradigm for this post 70CE exile which was characterised by the recognition of Halacha as the definitive expression of Jewish existence and the vehicle through which the continuity of divine revelation was renewed and expressed.*

#### Question 4

The few students who attempted this question did so poorly. Many students reused content from their answers to Section B questions and were unable to expand on them to address this question. Many students ignored the stimulus quote.

Some of the points raised by the statement for consideration were:

- Does it mean any change, certain types of change or change to particular aspects of religion?
- What benefits a tradition? In what ways?
- What does it mean for something to be necessary?
- Is change necessary to anything? To religions?

When applying the statement to a specific contemporary social or moral issue impacting upon the named religious tradition, students need to consistently refer to the discussion points arising from the statement.