2009 HSC Studies of Religion
Sample Answers

This document contains 'sample answers', or, in the case of some questions, 'answer may include'. These are developed by the examination committee for two purposes. The committee does this:

(a) as part of the development of the examination paper to ensure the questions will effectively assess students' knowledge and skills, and

(b) in order to provide some advice to the Supervisor of Marking about the nature and scope of the responses expected of students.

The 'sample answers' or similar advice, are not intended to be exemplary or even complete responses. They have been reproduced in their original form as part of the examination committee's 'working document'. While the handwritten notes have been typed for legibility, no further editorial change or addition has occurred.
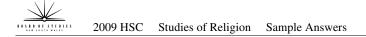
Studies of Religion I and Studies of Religion II

Section I
Religion and Belief Systems in Australia post-1945

Question 11

Answers could include:

- Changing immigration patterns as indicated by the church signs, for example Chinese and Tongan services to meet the needs of the community
- Changing role of women in the church as demonstrated by the gender of ministers in 2009
- Denominational switching and the formation of the Uniting Church as evidenced by the change in the name of the church on the church signs
- Reconciliation with Indigenous Australians
- Inter-faith dialogue

Studies of Religion II

Section I
Religion and Non-Religion

Question 22

Answers could include:

Atheism: rejection of the existence of God. Many ethical approaches are compatible with this. Atheistic ethical systems that guide individuals: eg Freudian ethics; evolutionary ethics; perhaps Confucianism in Asia; Sartrean existentialism; 'Secularism' in ethics; Utilitarianism; Contractarianism.

Agnosticism: more sympathetic to religious approaches to ethics; any of the above ethical systems could be Agnostic: understood in thought that reason or human nature has to guide if we can't be sure whether there is a God or not. (Atheism will say: reason or nature has to guide us because there isn't a God to do so eg Thomas Huxley; Immanuel Kant). Some could argue that without a God, there can be no reasoned ethical guidelines. Others could argue the opposite of this.

Studies of Religion I and Studies of Religion II

Section II — Religious Tradition Depth Study

Question 1 (a)

Answers could include:

Environmental ethics:
- respect for all sentient life forms
- link between environmental degradation and human greed
- belief that all share the Buddha nature and will reach Nirvana
- the link between the commitment to environmental ethics and the achievement of enlightenment and personal inner peace
- relationship between human suffering and environmental degradation
- role of Four Noble Truths in ethical considerations relating to the environment

Question 1 (b)

Answers could include:

Zen Buddhism:
- increased accessibility of Buddhism to the wider community, eg, within China and Japan
- importance of meditation to the achievement of enlightenment
- placing of emphasis on the reality of the present (satori)
- Buddha is inherent in the person's nature rather than in sacred texts and religious structures
- awareness that enlightenment is possible to those fully open to it

Question 1 (c)

Answers could include:

Pilgrimage:
- the practice of pilgrimage assists believers to achieve a better reincarnation in the next life
- the preparation process for pilgrimage and the journey itself acts as a discipline that can assist in spiritual preparation, eg devotions at shrines during the journey, the chanting of mantras and recitation of prayers
- the role of the pilgrimage in both applying the teachings of the Buddha to one's life and a deeper internalising of the meaning of the teachings
- the religious experience at the pilgrimage location – acts of reverence, prayer, offerings, instruction, meditation, chanting
- pilgrimage encourages a greater ownership of the basic beliefs of truthfulness and compassion

Question 2 (a)

Sample answer:

Baptism is an intiation rite accepted by major Christians variants with the exception of variants like The Salvation Army. While some variants only baptise adults, most accept baptism of infants and children as well. The candidate has either godparents or sponsors. The rite involves water which is either sprinkled on a candidate or the candidate is fully immersed in a body of water. This is accompanied by prayers, blessings and Scripture and words in which the candidate, or parents and godparents on an infant's behalf, undertakes to grow in the Christian life. Baptism represents the initial formal and public participation of the candidate in the life of the Church and in Christ's death and resurrection.

Question 2 (b)

Answers could include:

Bioethics

- Areas such as: abortion; contraception and family planning; euthanasia and assisted suicide; medically assisted reproduction; genetic science; genetic modification; embryo sex selection and other genetic technologies including cloning (human, animal); and sexually transmissible infections.

- Sources of ethical teachings in which Christian beliefs are reflected:
  – Scripture (Decalogue, Sermon on the Mount, The Great Commandment);
  – Catholicism: Natural Law, teaching authority of the Church (eg <u>Humanae Vitae</u>, <u>Donum Vitae</u>), informed conscience;
  – Reform Protestant tradition: personal autonomy before Gold, opinion or scholars in Christian ethics, discernment in the believing community, church documents to guide and inform but not oblige adherents; [all reflecting theological views of church in the different variants].

- Connections between ethical teachings and Christian beliefs: eg
  – general Christian opposition to active euthanasia: God as creator creates human beings in God's image – hence, human beings are precious, human life sacred on the human person intrinsically possessed of dignity which must be respected and implies a human being should not be actively killed even if they request to be;
  – Catholicism's opposition to artificial contraception: the Natural Law reflects God's intended meaning of sexuality: for reproduction. This should be honoured in sexual activity and not contravened by the use of contraception;
  – Reform Protestant tradition's permission of contraception: a thoughtful use of freedom in sexual life in marriage leaves the decision to use or not to use contraception in family planning to the informed autonomy of the believer – contraception has no bearing on the 'inherent purpose' of sexuality expressed in creation;
  – general Christian caution about genetic modification: some see this as exceeding proper limits of human authority – as 'playing God' wrongly.
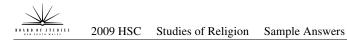
Question 2 (c)

Answers could include:

Development and expression of Christian Beliefs:

- Paul of Tarsus: Apostle to the Gentiles – accepting non-Jewish converts to Christianity without the requirement of circumcision as prescribed in the Torah. Source of moral guidance in the 21st centruy through his lasting letters to the early Church.
- Liberation Theology: solidarity with the oppressed, preaching the Gospel depends on social justice… Gospel as liberation from oppressive social conditions
- Dorothy Day: solidarity with the poor as beloved of Christ, urgency of social justice, radical equality of Christians . . .
- Billy Graham: centrality of confession of Christ as Lord, priority of evangelism over denominational purity, importance of Bible-centre life, use of modern media to reach the un-evangelised is an urgent need (not something to be avoided as improperly non-religions)

Evaluation could be expressed:

- in terms of the chosen person's or school of thought's challenge to traditional Christian thinking on attitudes
- in terms of renewal of Christian community's appropriation of ancient teaching
- in terms of engagement of Christian thought or practical thinking with modern world

Studies of Religion I and Studies of Religion II

Section III — Religious Tradition Depth Study

Examples of annotated student responses from Section III of the examination are available on the Board's website.

Studies of Religion II

Section IV — Religion and Peace

Question 1

Answers could include:

- An examination of Dawkins' claim that religion is a more powerful negative force of disunity and conflict than religious traditions are a positive force for cohesion and unity.

- A demonstration of insight into the meaning of peace within the context of Buddhism
  - Vinaya Pitaka: The set of rules of conduct within the Angha for monks and nuns outlines good relations with one another
  - Sutta Pitaka: Sermons attributed to the Buddha and some of the Buddha's disciples containing the central teaching of Buddhism; also containing the Dhammapada which states 'Hate is not overcome by hate; by love alone is hate appeased. This is an eternal law' Dhammapada 5
  - Following the example of emperor Aoka, of changing war ravaged Ancient India into a peaceful land by promoting the Buddhist concepts of tolerance and virtuous recognition of difference throughout his empire
  - The Dali Lama's world speaking engagements encouraging peace among people of the world
  - The Buddhist Peace Fellowship

- A demonstration of insight into the meaning of peace within the context of Christianity:
  - the early Christians' generally pacifist outlook
  - the adoption in recent times of the Catholic concept of a 'Just War'
  - the contemporary contribution of Christians who view world peace as a work of justice in international relations

- Peace is the central theme of the New Testament
  - peaceful relationships between people (Matthew 5:43–44, 'Love your enemies')
  - all people are equal in the sight of God

- Christians' contributions to world peace could include:
  - participation in interfaith events that promote peace
    (interfaith commemoration services after eg September 11, 2001, Bali Bombing 2002/2005, Black Saturday, Victorian Bush Fires 2009
  - World Conference on Religion and Peace
  - World Day of Peace (instituted by Pope Paul VI in 1968)
  - Pax Christi International
  - work by the World Council of Churches
- A demonstration of insight into the meaning of peace within the context of Hinduism
- The Bagavad Gita states, 'A man who surrenders all desires that come to the heart and finds the joy of God – he alone has indeed found peace.' (BG 2:55)
- The Ramayana states, 'A superior being does not render evil for evil; this is a maxim one should observe.' (Ramayana 6:115)

- – Following the example of Mohandas K. Ghandi who worked tirelessly for the establishment of the independent state of India from Bristish colonisation through the concept of Ahimsa (non-violence)
  - – A demonstration of insight into the meaning of peace within the context of Islam
- The Arabic word 'Islam' literally means 'submission to the will of Allah'. In the Qur'an the word representing Peace is replicated 67 times and most commonly used in relation to Allah
- 'and Allah invites to the abode of peace and guides whom He pleases into the right path' Qur'an 10:25
- The Hadith are filled with the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) about relating to other Muslims
  - – Following the example of Rabj'a al-Adawiyya who after receiving her freedom from slavery, travelled to Makkah as a Hajj pilgrim. Her mystical writings encourage Muslims to 'look everywhere for your (Allah's) love'.
  - – A demonstration of insight into the meaning of peace within the context of Judaism
- The Tenakh is filled with writings encouraging peace
- 'The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blessses his people with peace' Psalm 29:11
- 'Seek good, not evil, that you may live...' Amos 5:14
  - – Jewish Voice for Peace is an organisation which seeks to resolve problems particularly between groups in the Middle East
  - – Holocaust Museums are in every major capital city of the world in an effort to ensure that the Holocaust suffered by the Jews at the hands of the Nazis never happens again