

## 2c. Content of Developments in Christian thought (H573/03)

In this component, learners have the opportunity to undertake a systematic study of key concepts within the development of Christian thought. Learners will explore religious beliefs, values and teachings, their interconnections, how they have developed historically and how they are presently discussed.

The first section explores human nature in the context of the purpose of life, the self and immortality. Learners will explore Augustine's ideas regarding the human condition, as well as different Christian interpretations of the promise and nature of the afterlife.

In *Knowledge of God*, both natural and revealed theology will be studied, including the relationship between faith and reason. This will enable discussion of how Christians may understand their relationship with God.

Learners will also explore historical and theological understandings of the person of Jesus Christ. They will consider Jesus as the Son of God, teacher of wisdom and a liberator, which will give them an insight into both traditional and contemporary Christian theology.

In the topic *Christian Moral Principles*, learners will consider the Bible, Church and reason as sources of wisdom and authority. Through considering the use of these in shaping Christian moral values and practice, this topic will allow learners to investigate the principles that shape and express religious

identity, and the diversity of practice within Christianity.

In *Christian Moral Action*, learners will undertake a detailed study of the ideas and impact of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. This study of Christian moral principles in action will place moral principles in a real-world context, making the study of Christianity more tangible for learners.

A significant development in Christian thought studied is that of pluralism, a vital concept in this age of migration and multi-cultural societies. The two topics which explore this concept enable the consideration of the ways that Christian traditions view other religious and non-religious worldviews. This raises issues of the nature of salvation, religious tolerance, respect and recognition of opposing views.

The changing roles of men and women, and feminist approaches to theology, form the basis of the two further topics. These topics encourage learners to reflect on issues of gender identity, equality and discrimination and the social influence of religious institutions, and provide the opportunity to compare the works of two key scholars.

Finally, this component explores the challenges posed by secularism, and a range of responses to this. These topics enable the study of how developments in beliefs and practices have, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in philosophy, politics and studies of religion, as well as an investigation into the diversity within Christian practice.

### Technical Terms

While the majority of non-English terms (which are not names of texts, philosophical schools, or particular religious approaches) within the specification and assessment materials will be accompanied by a translation, there are some which are considered to be key technical terms that learners are expected to recognise and understand without a provided translation.

For this component, the following are considered technical terms and will not necessarily be accompanied by a translation:

- *agape*.