# 4.7 Religion as a Force for Political and Social Change: 30-minute Pack

AQA 7192 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

**Answer ALL questions. For short answer questions write in full sentences where asked. The final evaluation requires full paragraphs. Spend about 30 minutes on the whole paper.**

**1** Explain one reason why religion can legitimise political power in a state, with a brief development and example.

**(Total for Question 1 is 2 marks)**

**2** Explain how charismatic leaders such as Martin Luther King can turn religious beliefs into effective political action, giving two developed points and reference to the Black Church example.

**(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)**

**3** Describe how religion can act as a conservative force and how it can act as a force for social change. Develop each role with reference to politics or social values.

**(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)**


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**4** State one criticism that sociologists make of Bruce's account of the New Christian Right's political mobilisation in the United States.

**(Total for Question 4 is 2 marks)**

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**5** Identify and explain two ways the New Christian Right sought to influence education policy in the United States, using Bruce's account and general examples.

**(Total for Question 5 is 4 marks)**

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**6** Item B: Short extract on religious nationalism in India. "Political actors have used Hindu symbols, festivals and historical narratives to mobilise voters and justify policies privileging majority groups." Using Item B and your sociological knowledge, evaluate the view that religion is always a conservative force in society. Make sure you refer to Item B in your answer.

Evaluate the view that religion is always a conservative force in society, applying material from Item B and your knowledge.

**(Total for Question 6 is 12 marks)**


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# Mark scheme · 4.7 Religion as a Force for Political and Social Change: 30-minute Pack

## Question 1

identifies reason, e.g. religious symbols and narratives can be used to claim divine sanction for leaders or policies **B1**

development and example, e.g. invoking sacred history or ceremonies can persuade followers that policies are morally right, for example using national religious festivals to endorse state actions **B1**

**Answer: Religious symbols and narratives can be used to claim divine sanction for leaders or policies; invoking sacred history or ceremonies can persuade followers that policies are morally right, for example using national religious festivals to endorse state actions.**

## Question 2

identifies one way, e.g. leaders provide persuasive framing that links religious beliefs to political goals **B1**

develops this with reference, e.g. MLK used Christian language of justice and love to broaden appeal beyond local congregations **B1**

identifies second way, e.g. leaders can mobilise followers through personal authority and reputation **B1**

develops this with reference, e.g. as a trusted figure within the Black Church, King coordinated strategy, sustained morale and attracted national support **B1**

**Answer: Leaders provide persuasive framing that links religious beliefs to political goals, for example MLK used Christian language of justice and love to broaden appeal. They also mobilise followers through personal authority and reputation, with King as a trusted figure coordinating strategy, sustaining morale and attracting national support from the Black Church and beyond.**

## Question 3

identifies the conservative role, e.g. religion reinforces social stability and existing norms **B1**

develops this, e.g. through rituals and institutions that legitimise authority and social roles **B1**

identifies the social change role, e.g. religion can inspire collective action to alter laws or policies **B1**

develops this, e.g. by mobilising supporters, framing injustice morally and lobbying political actors **B1**

**Answer: A conservative role sees religion reinforcing social stability and existing norms, for example by rituals and institutions that legitimise authority and social roles. A change role sees religion inspiring collective action to alter laws or policies, for example by mobilising supporters, framing injustice morally and lobbying political actors.**

## Question 4

identifies a recognised criticism, e.g. that Bruce may overemphasise cultural concerns and underplay economic or class factors that also drive mobilisation **B1**

brief development, e.g. campaigners may also be reacting to social and economic insecurity rather than only to moral issues **B1**

**Answer: A criticism is that Bruce may overemphasise cultural concerns and underplay economic or class factors; mobilisation by the New Christian Right may also reflect social and economic insecurity rather than only moral issues.**

## Question 5

identifies one way, e.g. campaigning for school prayer or voluntary religious activities in schools **B1**

explains how this influences education, e.g. it aims to shape school culture and values in line with conservative religious beliefs **B1**

identifies a second way, e.g. pushing for changes to curricula such as promoting creationism or restricting sex education content **B1**

explains the effect, e.g. altering what students learn about science or sexuality to reflect movement values **B1**

**Answer: One way was campaigning for school prayer or voluntary religious activities to shape school culture and values; another was pushing for curriculum changes, such as promoting creationism or restricting sex education content, to alter what students learn about science or sexuality.**


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## Question 6

**Level 1** Basic assertions about religion as conservative or as a source of change, with little application to Item B or limited sociological support. **1-3**

**Level 2** Some relevant knowledge of religion and politics, with at least one developed point. Limited application to Item B or limited use of sociological perspectives. **4-6**

**Level 3** Good knowledge of how religion can be conservative and how it can promote change, including relevant perspectives such as functionalism and examples. Clear application to Item B and argument development. **7-9**

**Level 4** Detailed and balanced evaluation, drawing on several sociological perspectives and examples. Explicit, sustained application to Item B and a supported conclusion about whether religion is always conservative. **10-12**

**Indicative content:**

- AO1 knowledge that functionalist views see religion as conservative, promoting social cohesion, consensus and the status quo.
- AO1 knowledge that religion can mobilise for change, for example the Black Church in the US civil rights movement and the New Christian Right in the US.
- Application to Item B: examples of Hindu nationalism show religion being used to justify policies that entrench majority power, which supports the conservative argument in a political sense.
- Counter-evidence: religious movements can challenge inequality and promote rights, for example Martin Luther King drawing on religious rhetoric to campaign for civil rights.
- Sociological perspectives: functionalism emphasises stability; Marxist conflict perspectives see religion as maintaining class or power relations; feminist perspectives note religion can both oppress and empower; interactionism highlights the role of leaders and framing.
- Evaluation could note that religion 'conservative' depends on context, actors and social structure: the same religion can be used conservatively or progressively, and outcomes vary by political opportunity structures.
- Supported conclusion weighing evidence, noting that religion is not always conservative but often used conservatively by dominant groups while also having potential to drive progressive change.


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