

UNIT TWO

SECTION B: CHRISTIANITY: ORIGINS AND CONTEMPORARY EXPRESSIONS

PART ONE: THE RETURN TO ORIGINS

Syllabus Objectives	<p><i>Knowledge</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• recognise and identify images of Jesus in contemporary culture. <p><i>Understanding</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• have an understanding of the importance of origins in understanding the present and offering insight into future situations• be aware of the historical nature of Christianity and the role of the cultural context in the shaping of belief and practice from ancient times to the present day• understand the relationship between faith and culture• have an insight into the nature of Christian community life and ethical vision. <p><i>Skills</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• recognise moments of adaptation and reform in the Christian tradition• analyse these moments in the light of Christian origins. <p><i>Attitudes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• appreciation of the place of cultural context in the preaching and development of the Christian traditions.
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Topic: 1.1 *The pattern of return*

Procedure

Description of content: *returning to origins as a pattern in secular and religious institutions the purpose and effect of rediscovering the founding vision*

Research Assignment: Research the locality for signs of Christianity today i.e. historical or contemporary signs.

Take feedback and discuss:

Is there evidence of continuity with the past in the signs of Christianity in our locality?

Is there evidence of change in the signs of Christianity in our locality?

Or

Research the founding vision of an organization / group - secular or religious

(e.g. GAA and renewal of Gaelic games; United Nations and a world order based on law and democracy; the European Union based on law and democracy with a view to restoring stability, peace and economic prosperity after the destruction of WWII See websites such as www.europa.eu.int. etc).

Take feedback and discuss:

Is there evidence of continuity with the founding vision in this organization / group today?

Is there evidence of change from the founding vision in this organization / group today?

Brainstorm Activity or Interpretation of data:

Write the term 'Returning to Origins' on the chalkboard and brainstorm students as to its meaning.

Take feedback and note suggested meanings on the chalkboard e.g. discovering your roots, family history, medical records etc.

Conclude that in terms of human institutions 'returning to origins' implies a return to the founding vision of the group or movement with a view to rediscovering the original founder(s) vision. For Christians 'returning to origins' is about starting again from Jesus Christ who is not trapped in history but whose message has relevance for every age.

Or

Read extract from a novel / watch a segment of a video about a person 'Returning to Origins' e.g. Roots etc.

Written assignment: Explain how this story is about someone 'Returning to Origins'.

Discuss: Why do people / groups find it necessary to return to origins?
What effect could rediscovering the founding vision have on an organisation / group?

Take feedback and identify possible points such as the following:

- in order to deal with a crisis (a situation where things hang in the balance, where old ways come to an end but room for new possibilities open, a time for decision)
- in order to re-ignite enthusiasm
- in order to get away from over- reliance on established structures in a group
- in order to plot a direction for the future
- etc.

Description of content:	<i>returning to origins as a pattern in Christianity as expressed in two of the following:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">o <i>Céili Dé</i>o <i>the Mendicant orders and their founders</i>o <i>Luther</i>o <i>the Evangelical movement in early 19th century Protestantism</i>o <i>the Second Vatican Council</i>o <i>liberation theology</i>
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Research Assignment:

Pick two of the following and research it for evidence of it trying to re-discover the founding vision in Christianity

- For the Céili Dé see Maher, Michael (1981) *Irish Spirituality* Dublin: Veritas pp. 22-3 and O'Dwyer, P. 'Celtic Monks and Culdee Reform,' in J. P. Mackey ed. *An Introduction to Celtic Christianity*, pp. 140-171
- For the Mendicant Orders and their founders, see *Oxford Dictionary* (and consult history teachers).
- For Martin Luther see, McGrath, Alister (1998) *Historical Theology* Oxford
- For the Evangelical Movement in early 19th century Protestantism, see book on Anglicanism, see McGrath, Alister (1998) *Historical Theology* Oxford
- For Second Vatican Council see Sullivan, Maureen (2003) *101 Questions and Answers on Vatican II* Paulist Press
- For Liberation Theology, see writings of Gustavo Gutierrez, Leonardo Boff and Hans Kung.

When students have completed their research give them time to present their findings to the rest of the class.

Discuss: What evidence is there of trying to re-discover the founding vision in Christianity in the story of this group / movement / person?

Written Assignments:

- a. Describe what you understand by the phrase 'returning to origins'.
- b. Why do people make an effort to return to origins?

- c. Give an example from secular or religious institutions of how returning to origins might have affected the group / organisation.

Outcomes:

- provide two examples of the contemporary trend of returning to origins in secular and religious traditions
- in the examples above state the purpose of returning to the founding vision and explain the effect of rediscovering the founding vision
- briefly outline returning to origins as a pattern in Christianity as expressed in two of the following: Céili Dé; the Mendicant Orders and their founders; Luther; the Evangelical movement in early 19th century Protestantism; the Second Vatican Council; liberation theology.

Topic: 1.2 Jesus and his message in contemporary culture

Procedure

Description of content: images of Jesus in contemporary culture (music, art, film and literature) analysis of these images in terms of their inspiration and relevance to contemporary culture and society.

Group work / Research Assignment: Jesus and his message today

Give students time to research music, art, literature, film, IT etc.

Or

- View extracts from
- Film e.g. The Passion of Christ etc.
 - Art e.g. Section A3.3 Handout with different images of Jesus of Nazareth
 - Contemporary billboard signs
 - Etc.

Discuss: What is this image saying about Jesus?
What would have inspired this image?
What is the meaning of this image for society today?

Take feedback

Written Assignments:

*I saw Christ today
At a street corner stand,
In the rags of a beggar he stood
He held ballads in his hand.'*

Street Corner Christ by Patrick Kavanagh

- a. What kind of image of Jesus does the poet Patrick Kavanagh display in these lines.
- b. Give another example of an image of Jesus from contemporary music, film, art or literature and explain what has inspired this image and how does it relate to contemporary culture and society.

Outcomes:

- give one example of an image of Jesus from two of the following: contemporary music, art, film and literature
- provide a brief analysis of these images in terms of their inspiration and relevance for contemporary culture and society.

Resources which teachers have suggested include:

Chester Beatty Library or its website