

UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
FACULTY OF THEOLOGY

May/June 2010 SESSION OF ASSESSMENTS

PLC2820 – Religion Psychological Aspects/
PLC2821 – Psychology of Religious Maturity

Wednesday 23rd June 2010

Time: 10.30 – 12.30pm

SECTION A

Answer ONE Question:

1. "To say that both theology and the clinical psychologies are interpretative disciplines is to identify another commonality between them. The clinical psychologies try to interpret *individual lives*: theology tries to interpret *life* - life as a whole, in its entirety. And if this is so, both disciplines must face the question of the framework of meaning from which they make their interpretive judgment" (D.Browning, 1987,p.7). Comment.
2. Many scholarly and academic attempts to define or describe religion can be classified into one of two types: *substantive* or *functional*. Each represents a very distinct perspective on the nature of function of religion. Although it is possible for a person to accept both types as valid, in reality most people will tend to focus on one type to the exclusion of the other. For those who focus upon substantive or essentialist definitions, religion is all about content. For those who focus on functionalist definitions, religion is all about what it does. Elaborate.
3. Defined as attitude, religion is not a matter of any one 'department' of psychic life, but involves the whole person. It includes *feeling, belief, and will*. Elaborate.

SECTION B

Answer ONE Question:

1. According to William James (1902), religion is a universal phenomenon in mankind, therefore not an aberration due to disease or any other abnormality. This despite the abnormal character of some religious leaders and followers. Comment.
2. While Freud viewed "illusions" clearly as a prejudicial term, as dead end, an obstruction to reality, Winnicott saw the maintenance of illusions as an indispensable process of transition to reality. How does this apply to religion?
3. While producing some very optimistic and attractive views about human destiny, in reality the Humanistic school puts forward metaphors and paradigms that it could be easily considered as an alternative religion in itself. Elaborate by giving examples from the authors studied.