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## OUTSTANDING SCHOLARSHIP EXEMPLAR



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY  
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

QUALIFY FOR THE FUTURE WORLD  
KIA NOHO TAKATŪ KI TŌ ĀMUA AO!

Tick this box if you  
have NOT written  
in this booklet

☐

### Scholarship 2021 Religious Studies

Time allowed: Three hours  
Total score: 24

Check that the National Student Number (NSN) on your admission slip is the same as the number at the top of this page.

**You should answer ONE of the questions in this booklet.**

Check that this booklet has pages 2–20 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

**YOU MUST HAND THIS BOOKLET TO THE SUPERVISOR AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION.**

Question	Score
Analysis and critical thinking	
Integration, synthesis, understanding	
Development, precision, clarity	
<b>TOTAL</b>	

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## RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

### INSTRUCTIONS

Write an essay about religious diversity in response to ONE of the questions below.

Space for planning is provided on page 4 of this booklet. Begin your answer on page 5.

### ***EITHER: QUESTION ONE***

“Bless our beautiful land, O Lord, with its wonderful variety of people, of races, cultures and languages. May we be a nation of ... peace and unity, of compassion, caring and sharing.” (Archbishop Desmond Tutu)

“... [Islam] recognizes all [people] as believers. It accepts all human beings as equal before God, and as equal members in the Human Family of Mankind.” (Malcolm X)

There are many passages from the sacred texts and other authoritative sources of the world’s religions that can be interpreted to support inter-religious harmony and ‘love of your neighbours’. Why then might some groups, both religious and secular, have difficulty finding commonality and harmonious coexistence?

Examine this question in light of the knowledge and insights you have gained from studying religious diversity.

### ***OR: QUESTION TWO***

“I truly believe the only way we can create global peace is through not only educating our minds, but our hearts and souls.” (Malala Yousafzai)

“It is time to break these habits of hate and create new habits: habits of the heart that will awake within us the causeless love of redemption and peace.” (Rabbi Rami Shapiro)

It might be argued that it is both challenging and fulfilling enough for a person to find their own purpose and life direction within their own faith tradition. Is it possible for a person to come to appreciate and live alongside people from other faith traditions without threat or compromise to their own faith?

Examine this question in light of the knowledge and insights you have gained from studying religious diversity.

## PLANNING

1) core pluralism: why is it important to find the differences in other religions?

- DOD 1
- how does living alongside people of other faiths complement your own faith?
- Clifford Geertz.

2) examples: areas in which religion differs:

- narrative and myths → abraham → pop & ord reorg! → creation story. *Quran 29:13*
  - practices and traditions: Shabbat, 5 pillars, Christmas. → challenges & fulfillment
  - ethics → kosher vs Halal
  - ~~material~~ material: verses from Bible & Quran → ~~creation~~
- why do these all complement each other in terms of appreciating other faiths without feeling threatened by difference?

3) Areas in

4) Mosque shooting

- Mahzar Syed Ahmed + Tyrone Smith.

\* → Islam 3.

Catholic 2

Judaism 1

4) Areas in

3) Areas in which religion is the same

→ COP26 faith & science: towards Cop26

↳ creation.

→ how we can live along side and complement our religion / impact we can make with it using shared values to make most impact.

→ \$10 billion → Anglican + Christian in NZ

↳ 7 step plan w/ investments

↳ NZ → Dave Moscovitz 1 + 2

↳ NZ → Amy Ross 1, 2, 3, 4?

Select (✓) ONE essay question to answer.

☐ Question One ☒ Question Two

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"I truly believe the only way we can create global peace is through not only educating our minds, but our hearts and souls" Malala You Safzai.

As Malala stated, one of the most important features of a harmonious society is one in which the people have opened their hearts and souls to the different opinions, ethics, and values of mankind. Though it could be argued that one's own religion is fulfilment enough for the soul, we do not fully expand our horizons in terms of both our faith and practices until we learn to embrace and acknowledge other faiths. Clifford Geertz, an expert on culture believes that, while culture is a mix of symbols and actions that convey meaning, religion is ~~the~~ one aspect of this system of meaning which holds the utmost importance - it explains human existence by giving it an ultimate purpose. Being so deeply integrated into one's culture and identity, it is therefore easily understandable that many feel their own system of beliefs challenged by the encounter with another. However, in many cases, evidence has shown that the greatest way we can create impact through our religious beliefs and practices is to come to appreciate and live alongside people of other faith traditions, opening up to their way of life in order to appreciate the common principles rather than those that contradict our own. //

There are seven areas of religious life in which many different religions differ. While holding our own religious beliefs, it can often be extremely beneficial to analyse the beliefs of other faiths using a core pluralist approach. This approach deems all religions equal in the foundations and essence of the religion. For example, many

religions are founded on the idea of explaining human existence, and, as Clifford Geertz stated, giving it an ultimate purpose. It is through this lens on religion that one can not only come to the appreciation of another religion, but can in fact be enlightened into the way in which this religion reflects their own. In many cases, we can encounter ideas and beliefs that resonate with our own, allowing us to come to a deeper and more fulfilled understanding of our relationship with our Supreme being. Jonathan Sacks, ~~etc~~ in his book titled 'Dignity & difference: how to avoid the clash of civilisations' summed this idea up perfectly: "we encounter God in the face of a stranger... God creates difference; therefore it is in one who is different that we meet God." From Sacks' perspective, the revelation that comes from meeting one of another faith is God's way of <sup>emphasising</sup> ~~showing~~ many of his principles and values, and by understanding that ~~each of these~~ another religion can in fact have much to teach<sup>us</sup>, allows a person to deeper appreciate their own ideas and values, as well as those of another faith.

So is it possible to enjoy and understand the principles of another faith without compromising one's own? In the essence of core pluralism, you can analyse the aspects in which religions differ in the search for where the core principles are the same. One of the main differing aspects of many religions is myths and stories, where a religion conveys morals and values in the form of parables in order to teach its people. In looking at the Christian religion, the creation story depicts God creating the world in ~~seven~~ six days, each day creating more species and specimens to build to his perfect and balanced world. This creation story is one in which we begin to understand human existence, as the bible tells us that God created man in his image.

Giving humanity an ultimate purpose; to be the hands of God on earth. This story also gives way to one of the foundational beliefs that God is the Creator of the universe and all animals, plants, and societies are gifts from God. If you compare this to the Judaism creation story, you begin to understand the similarities between religions. In fact, both Christianity and Judaism share the creation story which can be found both in the Christian bible and the Jewish Torah. Again the principles of this story give way to the fundamental Jewish belief that God reigns supreme, and that he had an ultimate purpose on earth for each of his people. The similarities between both creation stories are commonly overlooked by exclusivists. Many people of Jewish religion adhere to the belief that the Jewish community were God's chosen people and that those of Christian denomination were lead astray by the arrival of Jesus. Many Christians feel a similar way - the Jewish community rejected the son of God and have therefore become diminished in the eyes of God. However looking at each of these creation stories through a Core pluralist lens allows one to understand that the principle of human existence was for the purpose of doing God's work on earth allows many other beliefs such as Core for the poor and seek justice for those who cannot seek it themselves are in fact shared principles stemming from the idea that we, as God's people, must protect the human family as a whole. In addition to the Christian and Jewish creation stories, the Islamic Qur'an states; "O mankind, indeed we have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another." This verse of the Qur'an can be shown to draw parallels ~~but~~ to the Christian and Jewish idea that mankind was created by Allah for an ultimate purpose - to do the work of Allah on earth. The second section of this quoted passage also states that humans should know one another; know their strengths

Mitgliedsbeitrag 2019: € 10,- (inkl. MwSt.)



not observed. This feeling is such that one may feel unwilling to participate in interfaith dialogue in order to expand their horizons ~~by~~ and come to a deeper confirmation or understanding of their beliefs. However if you compare this practice to the 5 pillars of Islam, one can acknowledge that the core fundamental principles that define these practices in fact allow the believer to express their deep belief and faith in God. The ~~five~~ pillars of Islam include the declaration that ~~Allah~~ Allah is the one God and that Mohammed is his prophet, the ~~five~~ five daily prayers, the zakat or alms to the poor, <sup>and</sup> the pilgrimage to Mecca ~~and each of these pillars must be observed during ones lifetime. Just as the Jewish festival of the passover signifies their belief and gratitude to God, the Islamic pillars depict a muslims great faith and trust in Allah, as they submit to him through each of the practices. Other than the symbolic meaning of each practice, both traditions of the pillars and the pass over are both also essential in tying people of both religions to a sense of whole and community - for Jewish people, by observing passover, they, and each of the members of the Jewish faith are binding together to remember the struggles of the ancestors, and the pillars of Islam give each muslim a shared sense of purpose and community as they undergo their practices to display their beliefs in their faith. Therefore, while it is arguable for a member of the Jewish faith or the Islamic faith to believe that the struggles of obeying the rituals of the passover or the pillars of Islam may be fulfillment enough, by coming to appreciate the origins of another religions practices, they reaffirm the necessity of displaying their faith in an ultimate being as well as coming to understand that their shared sense of purpose is essential for the thriving nature of their religion.~~



A third differing aspect of religion is the difference in ethics. Each religion (through a core pluralist lens) can be seen as having many principles that define the morals of a society. For example, in the Jewish Faith, the principle of kosher describes the ethics and beliefs behind what is acceptable in terms of the Jewish faiths and custom. In terms of food, the slaughtering of certain animals (for example pigs, horses, and camels) is prohibited as these animals could be understood to be more important than for digestion in terms of ~~their~~ their religion. More importantly however, is the idea that all animals being slaughtered for human consumption must be done by a kosher butcher — someone who has been trained in the practice of slaughtering according to Jewish laws and is able to slaughter the animal using kosher knives in order to inflict the least pain and suffering possible. The Jewish ethics behind this principle of kosher align with many principles of other faiths. For example the Catholic plea for caring for the poor and vulnerable can also be described to depict caring for the animals in which one prey to the human race. The practice of Halal in Islam is also very similar to the Jewish ~~pro~~ belief in kosher slaughtering, as again an animal must be inflicted with the least pain and suffering possible for it to be considered halal. Each of these three ideas, while differing in practice, can be compared in the idea that their core essence is the same — each of the three faiths use these practices to emphasise the benefits <sup>and ethics</sup> that we must care for creation and those that are more vulnerable than ourselves. As each of the three faiths is monotheistic, you could also describe them as ~~re~~emphasising the need to do God (or Allah's) work on earth by protecting and preserving his creation.

Maori spirituality can also be compared to each of the three faiths as the principle of Mana (or life force) states that all living species contain a soul, and their soul (or mana) is sacred and should be protected. Just as the term kosher or halal could be applied

to this ethic of caring for those species around us, the Maori term tapu (defined as sacred) is applied to many objects containing mana, depicting the belief that life is sacred and should not be deliberately harmed, that spans over each of the four religions.

Thus, if <sup>one</sup> ~~you are~~ is able to come to an appreciation or understanding of other faiths through comparing their practices using a core pluralist approach, <sup>you</sup> ~~you are~~ can see the principles and ideal way of living that expands across each of the three religions. While a closed minded, exclusivist approach may allow people to feel fulfilled and challenged enough in their faith and life purpose, it is not until you open up that you can fully appreciate how widely accepted your ideas and values are. This, in <sup>turn</sup> ~~them~~ can allow you to appreciate other faiths and live alongside them in harmony without feeling threatened or compromised in your own faith as, by appreciating the practices and values of another religion, you are in fact coming to a deeper appreciation of your own values reflected in the face of ~~the~~ another religion.

While looking at each religion through a core pluralist approach will provide one with gained knowledge ~~and~~ of their own values, it is not until interfaith dialogue is put into action that one can see the enormous benefit and impact that can be created through an appreciation of another faith.

In 2021, several extremely impactful events occurred throughout the world and within New Zealand that demonstrated just how fulfilling interfaith dialogue can be for carrying out one's own practices. As many religions and secularists believe, ~~there~~ the biggest global impact is created by each person taking one small step towards change. If each person (the five billion world population would simultaneously <sup>undertake</sup> ~~take~~ this change, no matter how minuscule, it could change the course of a world event.

The ~~2020~~ 26<sup>th</sup> annual United Nations Climate change conference (often referred to a Conference of the parties, or COP26) occurred between the 31<sup>st</sup> October and the 12<sup>th</sup> November 2021, where global representatives gathered to discuss the actions undertaken by world leaders ~~to do~~ in the attempt to go carbon neutral. An extremely impactful example of ~~that~~ the global impact of interfaith dialogue occurred just 27 days before this event, when Pope Francis asked leaders of many different religions to come together using the shared ideology of protecting the creation we call earth. ~~He stated 2019 Pope Francis and SPIRITUAL~~ This event, named; 'faith and Science; towards Cop 26' ~~was~~ had representatives from almost every major religion throughout the world, from Christians to Jews to <sup>people of the</sup> Sikh religion, Muslims, <sup>and</sup> Hindus, <sup>or</sup> Buddhists. Alok Sharma, president of COP26 in Glasgow stated 'The faith leaders who have come here today represent around three quarters of the world's population ... that's why their voice matters so much.' Just as taking a Core pluralist approach allows one to further understand and acknowledge their beliefs, coming to this understanding of other religions and acting on it allows one to fully understand and appreciate the actions within their religion. For example, Maori Spirituality teaches that ~~they~~ <sup>the living</sup> the dead and the land are ~~very~~ <sup>inter</sup> connected; when one dies, they will return to the place where they were born as this piece of land is where their spirit is connected to. Actions such as protesting to preserve Maori land are practices that can be further appreciated and understood in observance of Pope Francis' appeal to COP26, which stated 'Our faiths and spiritualities teach a duty to care for the human family and for the environment in which it lives.' People who identify with Maori Spirituality will feel their efforts to preserve the land aided and supported by representatives of each religion present at the appeal. The Islamic idea of zakat (alms to the poor) is another action

and by preserving our environment, a Muslim will feel they are carrying out the ~~prophet~~ and supporting ~~the action~~ the action of Zakat.

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which is amplified through the action of this interfaith conference; Caring for the environment is one of the most effective ways in which we can aid those in third world countries. Around 3 million children die each year due to the pollution of the water and air in Third world countries. Another ~~second~~ <sup>similar</sup> appeal produced by an interfaith conference was the 'Religious traditions: call to climate action' ~~which~~ produced in 2009, which stated "Recognising that Climate change is not merely an economic or technical problem, but at its core is a moral, spiritual and cultural one, we therefore pledge to teach or guide the people who follow the call of our religions". Again this statement indicates the fulfilment of one who is religious, bonding together with those of all other religions. While we still practice our own faith, taught and guided by our faith leaders, an appreciation of other faiths and an understanding of shared principles and ideals allows a person to carry out that small change with around 3 billion other members of the earth, creating a global scale impact through this appreciation and connection between people of other religions. As the word Jewish Congress ~~the~~ states; "Discussion... [between] brethren who share a common root will lead to the ~~shared~~ realisation that shared ideals aspirations and values far outweigh any differences".

Bringing tCOP26 and its ideas closer to home, on <sup>the weekend of</sup> June 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> in 2021, members of the three abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) gathered in Wellington for a conference on how New Zealanders religious could do their part for Pope Francis' COP26 appeal and to create the most impact to move New Zealand towards a carbon neutral ~~negative~~ society. This conference not only allowed <sup>(through</sup> interfaith dialogue) <sup>or</sup> ~~to~~ go beyond appreciation of a shared ideal and value between each of the three religions, but it also allowed the New Zealand members

of each of these three faiths to ~~execute~~ be able to act on a seven step, ~~then~~ ten year plan, carrying out their faith while creating impact through communication and dialogue of other faiths. ~~This~~ Again, this event would allow people to feel increasingly challenged and fulfilled in their own religion as they are able to see the change and influence their small actions have on New Zealand's society. One of the biggest steps involved in this 10 year plan was around Church or ~~investments~~ ~~the characteristics~~ the religious community investments. While members of a faith can practice their ~~faith~~ beliefs through their usual donations and zakat, the ~~these~~ religious leaders can band together to use these donations and current shares to invest in climate friendly products and companies. The Anglican and Christian Churches combined are an estimated \$10 billion in New Zealand through Assets and investments alone, hence if the church was able to remove their shares from gas-emission heavy companies such as petrol or oil companies, the church community would have a large sway in the direction New Zealand's economy turns to in regards to responding to this global climate crisis. \* Dave Moskowitz, one of the members of this event stated 'Our Jewish teachings tell us that one of our primary purposes on earth is to prepare the earth to the state it was when God gave it to us.' He then went on to state "All religions, and especially the three abrahamic faiths can work together to the challenges posed by... modern society." ~~Again~~ Thus, just as the teachings of Judaism, Christianity and Islam declare a deep need to care for the earth, we can also see that together, this shared idea can allow us to create the largest impact <sup>one of the biggest</sup> on the challenges posed by modern society - climate change.

while a personal approach to religious diversity may be that one feels their beliefs conflicted by those of another faith, many do not fully grasp the implications of projecting this exclusivist approach to ~~religion~~ <sup>the community</sup>. On March 15<sup>th</sup> 2019, 51 muslim members of the Christchurch Islamic community were murdered by the acts of one gunman, during a mosque shooting. Evidently challenged by the differing beliefs in culture and religion, the gunman felt so threatened by this community and difference that he resorted to fatal violence. However since this event, many members of other religions have reached out to the Islamic community, enabling some of the most effective interreligious dialogue and harmony ever seen in New Zealand. It is through analysing this <sup>inter</sup> religious dialogue that one can see that living in harmony or a acceptance of another religion is binds together shared principles and allows kindness and caring to spread throughout a community similarly to the impact of interfaith acts for climate change, interfaith dialogue between religions in the sense of the mosque shooting has allowed a merge of culture and beliefs between New Zealand's indigenous Maori spirituality and Islam. <sup>241</sup> An article in Te Ao Māori room stated "plans have even been made to build a mosque marae hybrid in Christchurch which brings together Islam and Te Ao Māori". Essentially, religious and interfaith dialogue between Maori spirituality and Islam has allowed for a community merge; the Linwood Islamic Centre, one of the two targets of the 2019 gunman is being rebuilt and repurposed as an icon of ~~religious~~ <sup>moslim</sup> religious diversity appreciation. Two architects, ~~the~~ <sup>member of the</sup> Maori Iwi - Tyrone Smith designed the mosque to depict and harmonise the shared aspects of both religions, with a multicoloured silver fern at the dome to represent the merge of culture and identity. This mosque-marae is an incredible example of how two religions can live and thrive along side each other, feeding

off shared principles such as love of the landscape and care for ~~the environment~~ the environment. The plans even included 4 wind-turbines on each of the <sup>main</sup> ~~surrounding~~ <sup>mirrored</sup> the dome and large solar panels to not only create the least carbon footprint possible, but also power the surrounding neighbourhood. This hybrid religious meeting place is a prime example of how one religion can be complemented by the acceptance and appreciation of another, hence it is possible for a faith community to come to appreciate other religions with complimentary rather than compromising beliefs.

Thus, while it is understandable that one may feel their religion is fulfilment enough for their own life purpose, evidence has shown that ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> maximum membership and embodiment of a religion can be found in the appreciation and acceptance of another religion. The ~~apparent~~ threat of another religion to one's own religion is merely a surface level understanding of that <sup>faith</sup> ~~religion~~; by engaging in interreligious dialogue, one can soon see that the shared fundamentals under many conflicting practices can bring people of different faiths together rather than push them apart, <sup>hence</sup> allowing large scale impact such as leading the way for Climate change ~~and the~~ Evidence of complimentary beliefs merging faiths can be found through the plans for the mosque-mosque, New Zealand's new Symbol that depicts religious harmony ~~and~~ that occurs when our population of religious stands together, bound by our shared values of compassion and kindness. As Pope Paul VI wrote in his encyclical *Nostra Aetate*: 'The Church... [understands] that through dialogue and collaboration ~~et~~ with followers of other religions... [they] promote the good things, spiritual and moral...'. Thus, it is possible for a person to come to appreciate and live alongside people from other faith traditions without threat or

Compromise to our own, so long as <sup>we</sup> as ~~not~~ said, ~~we~~ educate our hearts and souls on the shared beliefs and principles that draw all religions towards a shared purpose. //

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## Outstanding Scholarship Exemplar 2021

Subject	Religious Studies		Standard	93603	Score	21
Q	Score	Annotation				
2	21	<p>This essay stood out definitively with the way it demonstrated highly developed knowledge, skills and understanding around the context of religious diversity in the discipline of Religious Studies, and in the sophisticated integration and independent reflection in its synthesis and application to the complexity of the question and prompt material.</p> <p>The wide range of source material from Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders, authoritative texts and historical examples, including interfaith expression in New Zealand, was knowledgeably, empathetically and strongly integrated into the essay's argument. An up-to-date reference to the religious diversity input at Cop26, and specifically the Wellington Cop26 conference, was referred to and strongly substantiated. (See skill 2 criteria – score 8.)</p> <p>The essay was held together convincingly throughout, with a novel argument, clearly held on to, extensively and thoroughly exploring the interfaith perspective on religious diversity, and its challenges and benefits. (See skill 3 criteria – score 7.)</p> <p>In terms of analysis and critical thinking, while there was strong examination of key assumptions and alternative points of view, the essay needed more depth in the analysis of these alternative points of view. (See skill 1 criteria – score 6.)</p>				