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## 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  
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☐

### 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.

Select (✓) ONE essay question to answer.

☒ Question One

☐ Question Two

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The religious pluralist would argue that all religions lead to Salvation and that all religions are good and can co-exist. The religious exclusivist suggests that their chosen religion is the one true context to Salvation and to God. The primary reason ~~that~~ behind difficulties in the co-existence of different ~~to~~ religious groups is the fact that so many are exclusivist. Furthermore, the secular groups within society find it difficult to exist alongside religious groups because the ~~adjectives / such / debates are~~ that secularist is unable to understand the religions. In essence, these groups are all fundamentally opposed to each other and as such feel driven to act against each other and this ideological difference at a fundamental level is the primary cause behind difficulties presented in society. One can look at these differences from a practical, logical and philosophical level.

First, one must analyse the incompatibility of religious and non religious groups. These two groups have difficulty finding harmony as the ~~human~~ natural human behaviour forces one to seek the truth and then inform others of the truth. This premise is evident when analysing scientific progression in society and the human tendency to learn. The problem <sup>that</sup> arises is that these two groups believe in completely

different truths. The religious individual knows a God exists and the non-religious individual knows a God doesn't exist. This contradiction results from the fact that, at a fundamental level, the two individuals have different starting <sup>points</sup> and definitions that classify something as true. The non-religious turns first to the Scientific method and will find that the Scientific method cannot prove the Supernatural, or the 'God'. In contrast the religious individual does not turn to the Scientific method, often turning to Scripture or simply real world experiences. A person can claim they have felt God's presence with certainty and thus, He exists, however, there is no way the non-religious can understand or relate to this opinion. One cannot prove or disprove something (God) if it exists outside of the physical world and as such these two groups are incapable of coming to a <sup>mutual</sup> ~~total~~ agreement. Because of this difference in base-line or foundation the two groups then will have fundamentally different perspectives. An <sup>obvious</sup> ~~easy~~ example of this is Sodom, or homosexual acts. If the God of <sup>MOSES</sup> ~~MOSES~~, Yahweh, were to exist then homosexual acts certainly should be condemned as they <sup>would</sup> result in eternal damnation. As St. Paul writes in his letters 'no men who have sex with men ... will inherit the Kingdom of God'. From a secular perspective there is nothing wrong with these homosexual acts, assuming one uses protection and the like. There is nothing fundamentally wrong to this person as to the secular individual. Simply being

kind and a good person is the <sup>full</sup> extent of morality. These conflicting opinions clash when they are united under a common <sup>polity</sup> ~~body~~, i.e. a government. When the ~~see~~ religious and non-religious exist within a society under one law, should sex homosexual acts be illegal? This question is difficult and the end result is usually protests, demonstrations and violence in an attempt to uphold moral values that are controversial. There can be arbitrary lines drawn and things done but realistically, these two groups, religious and non-religious, ~~prove~~ <sup>prove</sup> difficult to live harmoniously as they rely on fundamentally different truths to base their moral decisions on. Furthermore, the notion that science is the truest fact of existence is a generally accepted but false claim. Science is simply a model of the universe which is constantly improving, however, we will never obtain a complete grasp on reality. For science also cannot ever prove things that occurred in the past at a logical level. There are always other variables that could be at play that prevent science from being able to disprove things such as the flood in ~~Genesis~~ <sup>Genesis</sup> or the parting of the Red Sea. Because science is also unable to disprove these things the non-religious is again unable to come to terms with the religious. Both groups cannot prove anything and therefore both groups will always differ in moral opinions and thus difficulties will always arise when they are united under a single body - which is the entirety of modern society.

The co-existence of different religious groups is also incredibly difficult for similar reasons but more so to do with the fact that religious pluralism is not unrealistic and by many people, viewed as false. The religious exclusivist believes that only through their religion will salvation be found, e.g. only through faith in Christ will eternal life be granted. Pluralism suggests that all religions can yield salvation, with John Hick the main proponent of pluralism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century saying that "no one religion contest the one and only one context for salvation". Pluralism appears to be a solution to the difficulties presented in religious co-existence, however it is a very weak idea. Firstly, many religions contradict one another. For example Judaism and Christianity have completely opposing beliefs as to what the righteous individual should do. Judaism says follow the law and find salvation in works, while Christianity states that one must simply have faith in Christ to achieve salvation, not through works. Paul writes of this in detail in the letter Epistle to the Romans. This contradiction between religions means that it is clear that there cannot be both salvation through both. One could also dismantle the pluralist argument through 'Reductio Ad Absurdum' by suggesting that religions made up by humans (these obviously make up), like postmodernism, which is a joke religion, would yield salvation to the devout. One could take that further, fabricating an entire belief system and then indoctrinating an aboriginal group who would know nothing else. Thirdly, one

Could move pluralism weakness with questions regarding apostasy and the non-religious. If someone converts from Islam to Christianity are they saved? For apostasy is a grievous sin in Islam. Moreover, would the non-religious receive salvation? Religious pluralism cannot answer these questions indicating that at a philosophical level different religions cannot co-exist, however, at a practical level this manifests itself in <sup>Moral</sup> ~~about~~ differences and the devout's duty to help others. For a particular person adhering to one religion, followers of other religions would not receive salvation, therefore, they would seek to convert that person as salvation would be the greatest thing ever for anyone. Religions do claim that you should 'love thy neighbour' but you are not loving thy neighbour if you are committing them to eternal damnation. This manifests itself in very obvious ways. The crusades, the 9/11 terror attacks, <sup>and</sup> the Christchurch mosque shootings ~~and the~~ are all examples of this. These acts of violence are perpetrated for religious reasons because of the inability of religions to co-exist. Religiously diverse nations also tend towards instability with the likes of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Israel and Palestine. If in fact your religion is the true religion then ~~convert~~ religious war is not only possible but logically correct. The problem is, like ~~the~~ with secularism, each religion cannot prove its truth and <sup>correctness</sup> ~~correctness~~ over others. It is extremely difficult to convert an old and devout follower of one religion and because of this there will always be tension and difficulties. \*

The final two types of groups are those within <sup>religions</sup> ~~religions~~. Different denominations can exist together but often difficulty will arise when harmony is attempted. Different denominations all believe in a core belief but often the way they express this changes and results in difficulty. For the Christian the central pillar of their faith is that Christ died for their sins. This is recognised and accepted as the core principle of Christianity and all denominations <sup>share</sup> state this belief. Because of this ~~the~~ the denominations can relate to each other <sup>and</sup> find common ground. The problem is that a lot can change around this central tenet. The first clash obvious between denominations of a certain religion is their ~~philosophical~~ ideological beginning, from where do they first draw doctrine from? The Catholic Church compared to the Protestant Church explains this perfectly. Protestants believe in 'Sola Scriptura', that the Bible is the first place to turn to in terms of answers. In comparison the Catholic Church first turns to the Church's ~~own~~ tradition of the Church and its teachings existed before the Bible. This proves difficult as the two groups base their objective truths off of different things. The Catholic Church can justify non-biblical things while the Protestant Church cannot. Because of this, the two groups will never be able to agree upon a common idea as a ~~key~~ key principle of the two religions is different. The Catholic treatment of Mary is an example of this. The Catholic Church reveres the virgin Mary above all else, except the trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit).



This treatment of Mary and the four Marian doctrines which are: she was a perpetual virgin; she was free of original sin and sin all together; she ~~was~~ is the mother of God; and she was 'assumed' into Heaven, have no evidence in the Scripture but to the Catholic Church that is ~~there~~ <sup>their</sup> Dogma. A more controversial idea is the Catholic Church's teachings on papal Supremacy, which ~~states~~ <sup>reports</sup> that the Pope has complete authority over the entire Church and that he, as the Successor of St. Peter, is the Vicar of Christ. This, again, has no Biblical foundation and as such the Protestant churches refuse it. This was a key issue in the Protestant Reformation and one of Martin Luther's main gripe with the teaching of the Church. The ideological differences between denominations can result in horrific violence and difficulty. Ireland is a key example, where tensions between Catholics and Protestants have caused wars and suffering beyond belief. Another reason denominational differences cause difficulty is because they can act as an excuse or justification for acts of violence caused by other factors. The East-West Schism of the one true Orthodox Church is an example of this. The Western and Eastern Churches were becoming increasingly dissimilar following the creation of the Holy Roman Empire, with the unification of the Papal States and lands under Charlemagne and the Franks. Tensions were far more because of political and economic reasons rather than any true

theological or religious reasons. The Sack of Constantinople  
 is the most outstanding example of this where  
 crusaders pillaged the Byzantine empire with  
 denominational differences being the cover up reasons given.  
 Furthermore, following such a massive event  
 reunification and reconciliation has appeared impossible. There will  
 forever be difficulties between religious or different  
 denominations because of past events such as the Reformation,  
 or the Sack of Constantinople. Groups often will not be  
 able to live in harmony because of past grudges and  
 conflicts. Despite this, modern society has shown for  
 some, even if a little, reconciliation and harmony between  
 Christian denominations. Christian ecumenism is the idea that  
 different groups under Christianity could work together  
 for a greater purpose. This has been supported by, much  
 denominational, even the Catholics, with Germanus V of  
 Constantinople, the spiritual leader of the Eastern Orthodox  
 church calling for ecumenism. The concept of 'one church'  
 seems very unlikely, however. The ecclesiastical and  
 sacramental differences of the denominations is felt to  
 be too great to overcome despite St. Paul calling for  
 'one church' in his letter to the Ephesians. The mere  
 concept that there would be 'one church' does not  
 really exist in modern Christianity. Different  
 denominations do present difficulties, however despite the  
 lack of unity. They can work together but at  
 a fundamental level difficulty is caused from  
 ideological differences that cannot be overcome,  
 especially if one looks at history.

the final problem that sits at the heart of this essay can be seen in the benefit presented by a single nation united under one religion. Religion is an incredibly powerful tool and it is often the best ideology for a nation to have. In order to unite a nation there must be a common ideology and history has shown that the best ideology is religion. Countries founded on other ideologies, e.g. Nazi Germany on Nazism, the USSR on Communism, ~~had~~ Khmer Rouge on the agrarian communist society, have all failed and been triumphed over by religious nations. The Islamic Caliphates, the Roman Empire and the empire of Great Britain, are all examples of what a nation can do united under a creed. This is because religion provides many answers to unsolvable questions. ~~It~~ Religion creates a common enemy and a common unity. For example ~~if~~ there will always be inequality in society, however, religions, e.g. Christianity, state that wealth does not matter and that one should be content with what one has. Because of the benefits of a single religion it becomes difficult for multiple groups to exist. The existence of a minority that opposes the ideology of the majority within a society threatens the majority. It is beneficial for the majority to attempt to silence the minority as it would lead to a more unified society. This can be seen in modern America's opposition to Islamic influence as the dominant Christian ideology has led to its establishment as the leading world power. ~~It is~~ Religion likes to be dominant these difficulties are caused by the presence of other groups as it may weaken the majority and society. //

\* With the increase in Secularism and Liberalism in modern Society attitudes towards other religions have become more like inclusivists. Inclusivism states that only one religion is correct, however, one can still obtain salvation despite being a follower of another religion, if they are a 'good person' according to the first religion. Certainly, the Catholic Church's modern views express this, with the Second Vatican Council, the 21<sup>st</sup> ecclesiastical council, developing a Catholic dogma which suggested that those from other monotheistic religions would could be granted salvation, namely Jews and Muslims. Furthermore, the increase in Asian influence in Western Society has helped this as Asian religions, e.g. Buddhism or Hinduism, are far more open to religious pluralism. The Dalai Lama, leader of Tibetan Buddhism is a main <sup>propagator</sup> ~~perpetuator~~ of this suggesting that salvation can be achieved by anything if simply relies on the morals of that person. This approach is ~~not~~ opposed by many, and its lack of prevalence is a main factor behind why a lot of difficulty exists between different religions. The <sup>developing</sup> ~~beginning~~ opposition towards China in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will likely lead to more opposition to Asian influence and thus to inclusivism which may result in more difficulties in different religions trying to coexist in harmony. //

The fundamental fact is that different groups, religions, secular or denominational have fundamentally different world views and moral understandings and thus it is logical that there would be difficulties in these groups ~~that~~ trying to find <sup>on the lack thereof</sup> common <sup>ality</sup> grounds and harmonious co-existence. Religion <sup>on the lack thereof</sup> is the primary deciding factor behind one's moral choices and decisions and as such, differences in religious belief creates massive difficulty evident in many historical conflicts, e.g. Ireland, 9/11, the Crusades. These difficulties, however, are currently diminishing with the liberalisation of western society ~~however~~ but it is still unlikely that they would disappear. Makou X's quote is correct "All human beings" are "equal before God" but sadly not all religions can co-exist nor can all ideologies exist together. There is too much difference at a fundamental level for unity among different groups especially as they are forced to live in unity. //

## Scholarship Exemplar 2021

Subject	Religious Studies		Standard	93603	Score	17
Q	Score	Annotation				
1	17	<p>This essay began with a clear and precise interpretation of the question, establishing the parameters of the argument. Regarding analysis and critical thinking, the essay needed to address a number of unsupported generalisations properly. (See skill 1 criteria – 5.)</p> <p>This essay had a good range of sources, showing Religious Studies knowledge, skills and understanding well integrated into the argument. A broader range of sources, particularly around religious commonality, may have given the essay a more perceptive and insightful depth. (See skill 2 criteria – 6.)</p> <p>The argument was clear from the very first sentence and was valid, clear and sustained throughout. (See skill 3 – 6.)</p>				