



Government of **Western Australia**  
School Curriculum and Standards Authority

## **Western Australian Certificate of Education ATAR course examination, 2016**

# **RELIGION AND LIFE**

## **SOURCE BOOKLET**

Question 1 Sources

Read Sources 1A and 1B and then answer Question 1 in the Question/Answer booklet.

Source 1A



**Source 1B**

A widely accepted definition of health that was used in the constitution of the World Health Organisation in 1946 is 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity' (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2014, p.3).

How might religion play a role in health? There are several possible ways. The first is that religion might motivate people to behave in ways which minimise risks to health. The general teaching of religion that one should take care of one's physical body might motivate people to eat healthily, to take regular exercise, and avoid practices which reduce health, such as smoking and drinking alcohol immoderately.

Secondly, religions generally contribute to a sense of hope and purpose. They provide comfort in the face of disappointment and tragedy (according to sociologist Rodney Stark, 2012, loc.1552). The Abrahamic faiths of Judaism, Christianity and Islam do this by teaching that people are part of a world that has been created by God, and that each individual has a place in that world. The Eastern religions of Hinduism and Buddhism also provide a view of the world and of the individual's place in it and ways in which the individual may, over many life-times, reach higher statuses within that world. More specifically, most religions teach that there is help available from God or saints through prayer.

A third way in which religions may support people is through religious communities. Religious communities reinforce a sense of belonging: the belief that each individual has a place and is of value. They can also provide support in practical ways, especially during the challenging times of life. Within the religious community, there will often be people with whom to share one's problems. Sometimes, there are people within the religious community who are able to offer practical assistance in such forms as meals or advice.

**Question 2 Source**

Read Source 2 and then answer Question 2 in the Question/Answer booklet.

**Source 2**

A Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church has been scheduled for 2016. In March of 2014, the leaders of all the independent Orthodox Churches<sup>1</sup> met in Istanbul, the sacred See of the Ecumenical Patriarchate<sup>2</sup>, which historically (since at least the fifth century) coordinates such assemblies, facilitating unity while serving as a centre of appeal among these churches. Arguably the foremost decision unanimously agreed upon at that assembly of church heads was the convocation of a Great Council in 2016, tentatively planned to be held in the Church of Hagia Irene – the site of the second ecumenical council of 381, which completed the ‘creed’ recited by most Christians today.

The council of 2016, which has been on the table for discussion and preparation since at least 1961 (although there were earlier proposals for such a council in the 1920s and 1930s), will for the first time ever gather representatives from all fourteen independent Orthodox Churches. The very conception, let alone the convocation of such a great or general council, is entirely unprecedented. It will be attended by patriarchs, archbishops, and bishops<sup>3</sup> from the fourteen independent Orthodox Churches.

The process in the Orthodox Church may undoubtedly not appear as orderly or organised as that in some Western churches precisely because it involves a consensus among all churches, rather than the imposition of one church or leader. However, it is naive to dismiss disagreements among various churches sweepingly, implying that these merely result from rivalries of power. While such a perception may not be entirely erroneous<sup>4</sup>, and while such a process may be frustrating to those inside as to those outside the Orthodox Church, it is in some ways a profoundly – even if often painful – democratic method than frequently perceived.

The issues for discussion and decision at the Great Council have been painstakingly determined since the early 1970s, with some of them going back to the early 1960s. The topics and texts include some minor items, such as the ranking of churches and discussion about a common calendar; but they also include more significant problems that emerge from adapting an ancient faith to a modern reality – like precepts of fasting and, in particular, regulations of marriage in a multicultural and interreligious world.

However, there are at least two issues up for discussion at the Great Council that encompass universal and unparalleled authority. The first is the way in which the Orthodox Churches will respond to religious fundamentalism and fanaticism ... The second is the Great Council’s deliberation and determination regarding the organisation and administration of the Orthodox Church throughout the world.

Time will show just how much the Orthodox want to realise the Great Council of 2016 and how the status of this council will be received by the Orthodox Churches themselves.

<sup>1</sup> Orthodox Churches – a grouping of Christian churches

<sup>2</sup> Ecumenical Patriarchate – the foremost centre of the Orthodox Church throughout the world

<sup>3</sup> patriarchs, archbishops, and bishops – titles of key leadership roles in Orthodox Churches

<sup>4</sup> erroneous – incorrect

**Question 3 Sources**

Read Sources 3A, 3B and 3C and then answer Question 3 in the Question/Answer booklet.

**Source 3A**

A gold-shrouded dialysis patient levitates in a field of flowers, Santa holds the Southern Cross aloft and a Beatles song provides the soundtrack for the tumultuous paths of young Muslims in this year's Blake Prize. The winner of the \$25,000 prize, one of Australia's longest-running art competitions, will be announced tonight in Sydney. The prize is in its 62nd year and is designed to encourage artists to explore the religious and spiritual through art.

Dr Jay Johnston, a lecturer in art theory and education, has said 'Religion is not always an easy theme for reflection for artist or viewer; but as several works here attest, such reflections can at times result in inspiring and gentle works, as well of course as more confronting pieces'.

Artist Liam Benson is one of the finalists with his portrait Santa, which depicts Father Christmas as a religious icon holding a Southern Cross sceptre. 'The portrait draws parallels between Santa as an icon of celebrated humanity at a time of spiritual festivity and the notion of how Christmas contributes to the national identity within Australian culture,' Benson says of his entry. Another shortlisted entry is Alia Mahmoud's performance poetry piece Cotton Summer Dresses, which tells a story of war and migration in her homeland of Eritrea. 'I tried to convey the story my grandmother tells of a massacre in a neighbouring village and the suffering of families during and after the 30-year conflict,' Mahmoud said. 'Faith and a belief in something bigger is still often attributed to the survival and sanity of many of my family members. This is our story'.

**Source 3B**

The politics of Islam in Australia is a story in itself. The significance of the small and diverse Islamic community in Australian politics has largely followed September 11, 2001. During the last four or five years the emphasis in government pronouncements about the place of Judaeo-Christianity as the centre-piece of Australian values and identity may have served to increase the isolation and alienation of that community from other Australians.

Apart from matters of security the Muslim community has made few interventions in public policy at the national level. Nevertheless, they share common conservative social values with Christians. They also share common interests with low-fee Christian schools and welcomed Labor's education funding plan in 2004. These common interests and values may become more significant in the longer term as they join other religions in national political debate.

**Source 3C**

In December 2008, the Australian Government released a White Paper on Homelessness, in which it set itself a target to halve homelessness and to offer supported accommodation to all rough sleepers who need it by 2020. Historically, the Christian churches in Australia have been at the front line in tackling social issues, such as homelessness. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, many denominational institutions preceded government departments in setting up services for the homeless. Today, collectively, all denominations together form the largest non-government provider of community and welfare services in Australia. The Australian churches and its associated service organisations continue to play an important role in working alongside government and private industry in reducing the prevalence of homelessness and assisting those who find themselves without a place they can call home.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### Question 1

#### Source 1A

Heller, J. (2006). *They're fighting over which is the most peaceful religion* [Cartoon]. Retrieved May, 2016, from <http://9gag.com/gag/81347/they-re-fighting-over-which-is-the-most-peaceful-religion>

#### Source 1B

Hughes, P. (2014, September). Does faith give you better health? [Bulletin report] *Pointers: Bulletin of the Christian Research Association*, 24(3), 1–5.

### Question 2

#### Source 2

Adapted from: Chryssavgis, J. (2015, March 3). At last, a council for the ages? The Great Council of the Orthodox Church in 2016. *First Things*. Retrieved May, 2016, from [www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2015/03/at-last-a-council-for-the-ages](http://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2015/03/at-last-a-council-for-the-ages)

### Question 3

#### Source 3A

Adapted from: MacBean, N. (2013, October 17). *Artists explore religion and spirituality in 62nd Blake Prize*. Retrieved May, 2016, from [www.abc.net.au/news/2013-10-17/artists-explore-religion-and-spirituality-in-62nd-blake-prize/5026922](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-10-17/artists-explore-religion-and-spirituality-in-62nd-blake-prize/5026922)

#### Source 3B

Adapted from: Warhurst, J. (2006, December). *John Warhurst 'Religion in 21st century Australian national politics\*'* (Papers on Parliament No. 46). Retrieved May, 2016, from [www.aph.gov.au/senate/~/~/~/~/link.aspx?\\_id=EF9C91705EC24F04B6E8D1ECC120DBD8&\\_z=z](http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/~/~/~/~/link.aspx?_id=EF9C91705EC24F04B6E8D1ECC120DBD8&_z=z)  
Used under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Australia licence.

#### Source 3C

Adapted from: Homelessness. (2012, June). *Pointers*, 22(2), 7–8. Retrieved May, 2016, from <http://cra.org.au/homelessness/>

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