UNITS 1-4 FOR VCE

Religion & Society

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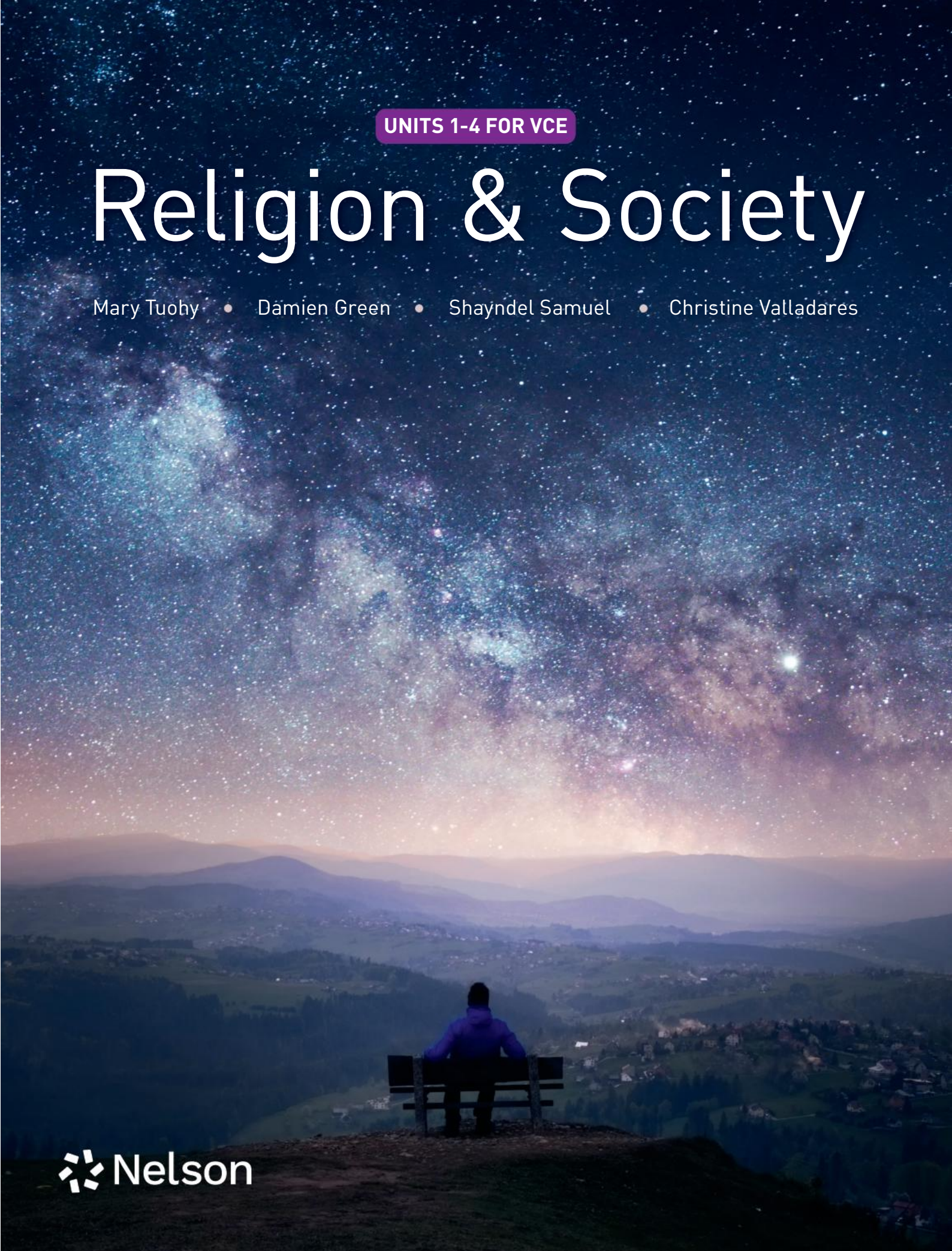

Nelson

UNIT 1

The role of religion in society

Area of Study 1.1
The nature and purpose of religion

Area of Study 1.2
Religion through the ages

Area of Study 1.3
Religion in Australia

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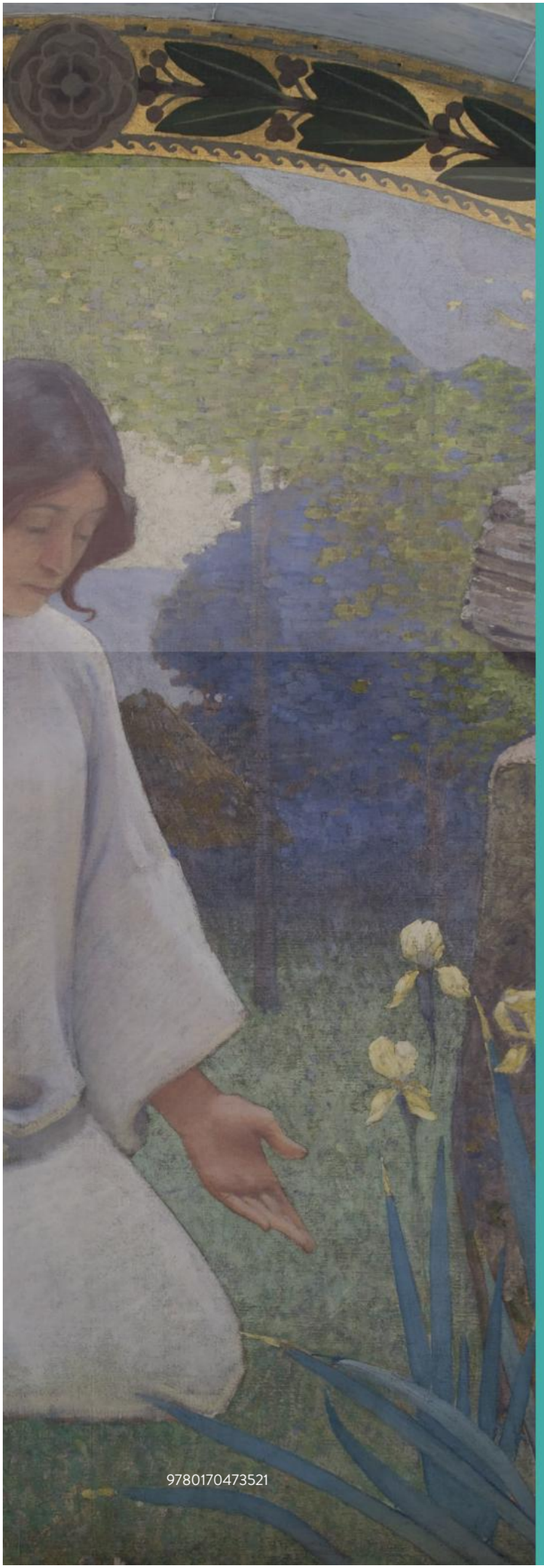

Chapter 1

THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF RELIGION

Outcome to be demonstrated

Discussion of the nature and purpose of religion and examination of the aspects of religion applied to selected religions

Focus questions

- Why religion?
- What are the questions to which religions respond?
- What needs of the individual and of society does religion fulfil?
- What is the purpose of each of the aspects of religion?
- What is the relationship of these aspects to each other?
- Do the aspects vary in importance across different spiritualities and religions?

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Worksheet
Terminology

WHY RELIGION?

Among the world's billions of human beings, the majority are involved in some type of religion, spirituality or philosophy. These have developed throughout history in every society and with many similar ideas and practices. There are many theories why this is so, but it remains a mystery how similar ideas, practices and organisational structures emerged in human societies which were disparate or had no contact with each other at all.

Spirituality, religion and philosophy may have developed as a means of achieving social cohesion; this includes forming a person's identity, the identity of family and community. Or is it that spirituality, religion and philosophy are innate in the cognitive features of the human brain?

Whatever the origins of religion, in all human societies there is a similarity in the questions prompted by observations and experiences that developed into these religious ideas, practices and ways of organising communities and societies. So when humans observed their environment what were their questions?

As humans experienced awe, wonder, mystery, excitement, fun, adventure, love, celebration, fear, agony, frustration, sorrow, loss, birth of children, illness, pain, injury, death and environmental crises, what questions and imaginings arose for them? What religious ideas did they develop as a way of answering those questions?

People were trying to make sense of their existence and their world, to find a purpose for living and appropriate ways to live safely and comfortably. Over time the process of questioning and imagining led to the development of practices that became rituals, ideas that became beliefs and ways of organising communities that provided purpose, direction and comfort for humans.

This process of questioning and imagining continues to engage – to some degree – each person as they develop understandings of who and why they are. It can lead also to the establishment of new or revived types of spirituality, religious movements and philosophies. The continued influence of religion on different societies across time and cultures prompts the question: Why do so many people in the world today continue to find meaning in religion?

Religions vary. They can be about one god, many gods, spirits, **totems**, magic or no god at all. They can focus on rituals and communal participation or on strict ethical living. They can insist on separation from the rest of society or on outreach work to the wider community. However, at the heart of every religion is its capacity to provide answers to life's 'big questions'.

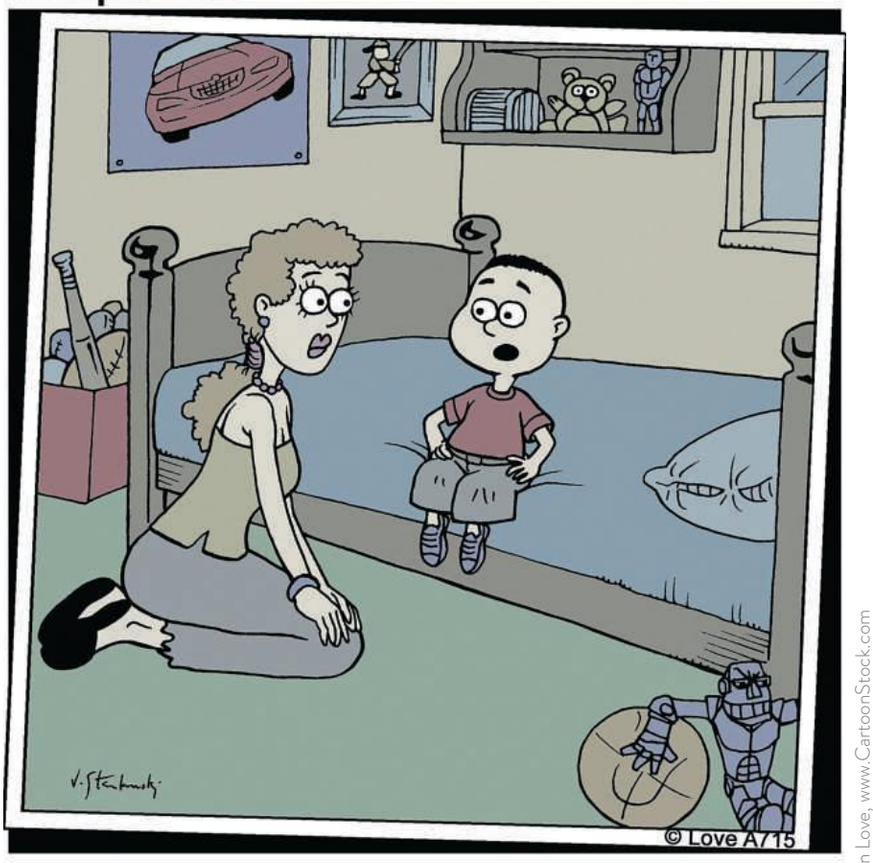
iStock.com/xijian

FIGURE 1.1 'Pondering mystery'. Which of the existential questions might arise for this person?

EXISTENTIAL QUESTIONS

- Who am I?
- How did humans come into the world?
- How did the universe come into existence?
- Why am I here – is there a purpose to my life?
- Is there some overall plan for all that exists?
- Why are people sometimes evil?
- Why do bad things happen to good people?
- Is there an afterlife?
- If there is an afterlife what is it?
- If there is an afterlife how does a person get there?

Snapshots



"I understand *how* I was born; I want to know *why*."

Jason Love, www.CartoonStock.com

FIGURE 1.2 How would religion answer the child's question?

YOUR BIG QUESTIONS

Skills: research, identify, describe, explain, interpret, synthesise

1 Draw a table with four columns. Head the columns as follows:
- Big Questions
- My Answers
- One Religion's Answers
- Scientific or Philosophical Answers

2 a Use the list of existential questions as a guide to form your own existential questions. Insert your list of existential questions into the first column of the table.

b Undertake research in order to complete the remaining columns of the table. Where you are unable to find an answer, leave this blank.

c Participate in a class discussion filling in any gaps in your table.

3 Research another religious tradition to find the answers it provides to the 'big questions' on page 4.

Dr Miriam Rose Ungumerr Baumann

FIGURE 1.3 'The River' by elder Miriam Rose Ungunmerr Baumann, 2021 Senior Australian of the year. An artistic expression of her spirituality which she speaks of as *dadirri*. 'A belonging *into* nature … The deep spring that is inside us … We can call on it and it calls to us. This is the gift that Australia is thirsting for. When I experience *dadirri*, I'm whole again. I can find my peace in this silent awareness' (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 July 2021). Look closely at the picture and find evidence of what Rose is describing.

THE NATURE OF RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

Spirituality can evoke powerful emotions and insights that come from the experience of a connection between oneself and something that is beyond human knowledge or understanding, always or at least at that time. Such reactions and realisations can form beliefs that become a basis for a **religion**. These beliefs become expressed in practical ways such as sacred stories, various types of texts, rituals and symbols, structure of membership, ethical teachings, special places, spaces and times and in artefacts, all of which represent something about the meaning of the belief.

Defining religion and spirituality is challenging because they are understood in a variety of ways in different cultures and societies. Some definitions of religion can be overly complex, while others may seem too simple. This is due partly to the wide variance in the features of world religions, but also to the difficulties of translation and interpretation. The attempt to define religion from a discipline outside it may be at odds with the manner in which the religion perceives itself (e.g. Buddhists may view Buddhism as a **philosophy**; and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples may view their **beliefs** as spirituality rather than a religion). However, a definition can be critically important legally, and in terms of funding, as exemplified in the following case study.

THE LEGAL DEFINITION OF RELIGION IN A PLURALIST SOCIETY

In 1983 the High Court of Australia ruled on the case *Church of the New Faith* v *Commissioner for Pay-roll Tax (Vic)*. The outcome of the case, also known as the Scientology Case, determined that the Church of the New Faith (Scientology) was a religion and so exempt from payroll tax.

The five judges in the case were divided in their definition of religion but collectively were of the opinion that 'the test of religion should not be confined to **theistic** religions'. Among the different understandings of religion reached was that of Judges Mason and Brennan, who argued that:

> For the purposes of the law, the criteria of religion are twofold: first, belief in a Supernatural Being, Thing or Principle; and second, the acceptance of **canons of conduct** in order to give effect to that belief, though canons of conduct which offend against the ordinary laws are outside the area of any immunity, privilege or right conferred on the grounds of religion.
>
> *Church of the New Faith v Commissioner for Pay-roll Tax (Vic)*, 1983

Note the way in which the High Court ruling pre-empts any potential conflict of laws between a religious moral code and Australian civil laws. In other words, an **adherent** of a religion cannot break Australian laws and justify their actions with the claim that they were following religious laws instead.

Another definition of religion is from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), which partially derives from the legal definition:

> A religion is regarded as a set of beliefs and practices, usually involving acknowledgment of a divine or higher being or power, by which people order the conduct of their lives both practically and in a moral sense.
>
> Australian Standard Classification of Religious Groups, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2011

The social impact of these definitions of the High Court of Australia and the Australian Bureau of Statistics cited above has implications for the claims and conduct of all religions in Australia, and further consequences in the form of funding and tax considerations. The definitions also mean that adhering to religious morality is not a defence for carrying out offences against Australian civil law. The definition provided by the ABS can assist the precise calculation of census survey data that directs the Australian Government's investment in community projects. Both definitions try to reduce religion to four main parts: beliefs, **rituals**, **ultimate reality**, and **ethics** and **morality**. They also indicate some connection between religions and society.

RELIGION DEFINED BY LAW

Skills: describe, define, identify, interpret, synthesise, research

1. According to the High Court ruling quoted above, what are the two main features of a religion?
2. What features of a religion are ignored by the High Court's definition?
3. a. Working on your own or in pairs, create a 'word cloud' by brainstorming key words linked to religion and showing their relative importance.
   b. Use this word cloud to write your own definition of religion.
4. As a class, brainstorm a final definition of religion.
5. Research to find examples of religions that would meet each criterion in the High Court's definition of religion; that is:
   a. religions with a 'belief in a Supernatural Being, Thing or Principle' (those with a single god, gods, spirits or ancestors)
   b. a religion with canons of conduct (ethics) that have offended the ordinary laws.

Different perspectives on religion and spirituality

Getty Images/Adam Berry

FIGURE 1.4 Amma

What are religion and spirituality? When love overflows and is expressed through every word and deed, we call it Compassion. That is the goal of religion. The nature of the mind is like water. It'll always flow down. Consciousness is like fire, it'll always rise up and bring us to God.

Mata Amritanandamayi Devi (Amma) (1953–), Indian Hindu spiritual leader

Alamy Stock Photo/ ZUMA Press, Inc.

FIGURE 1.5 Sam Harris

A kernel of truth lurks at the heart of religion, because spiritual experience, ethical behaviour, and strong communities are essential for human happiness. And yet our religious traditions are intellectually defunct and politically ruinous. While spiritual experience is clearly a natural propensity of the human mind, we need not believe anything on insufficient evidence to actualize it.

Sam Harris (1967–), American neurologist, philosopher and author

Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture/ Eastern Washington State Historical Society, American Indians of the Pacific Northwest Images, L89–268.

FIGURE 1.6 Morning Dove

Everything on the Earth has a purpose, every disease an herb to cure it, and every person a mission. This is the Indian theory of existence.

Morning Dove–Christal Quintasket (1888–1936), first Native American author

Getty Images/David Levenson

FIGURE 1.7 Karen Armstrong

True religion has little to do with self-righteousness, which is often simply a self-congratulatory form of egotism. The discipline of compassion is the safest way to lay aside the selfishness and greed that hold us back from God and from our best selves.

Karen Armstrong (1944–), British author and commentator on religion

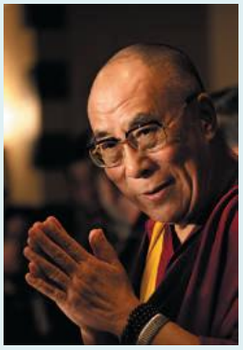
>

Courtesy of ALPA

FIGURE 1.8
Rev. Dr Djiniyini Gondarra OAM

The land is my mother. Like a human mother, the land gives us protection, enjoyment, and provides our needs – economic, social and religious. We have a human relationship with the land. Mother, daughter, son. When the land is taken from us or destroyed, we feel hurt because we belong to the land, and we are part of it.

Rev. Dr Djiniyini Gondarra OAM (1945–),
Uniting Church Minister and Aboriginal
leader from Easterm Arnhemland, Australia



Alamy Stock Photo/Jeremy sutton-hibbert

FIGURE 1.9 Dalai Lama

Within the scale of the cosmos, a human life is no more than a blip. Each one of us is a visitor to this planet, a guest, who has only a finite time to stay. What greater folly could there be than to spend this short time lonely, unhappy, and in conflict with our fellow visitors? Far better, surely, to use our short time in pursuing a meaningful life, enriched by a sense of connection with and service toward others.

Dalai Lama (1935–), spiritual leader
of the Tibetan Buddhists

Alamy Stock Photo/Marco Campagna

FIGURE 1.10 Pope Francis

It is important to show that we believers are a factor of peace for human societies and, in doing so, we will respond to those who unjustly accuse religions of inciting hatred and causing violence.

Pope Francis (1936–), Head of the Catholic Church

YOUR DEFINITION OF RELIGION

Skills: identify, define, interpret, synthesise

1. Identify the different purposes of religion presented in these perspectives.
2. Which is your preferred quotation? Why does this one appeal to you?
3. Identify any quotations with which you disagree. What are your reasons for disagreeing?
4. Research to find three more perspectives on religion and spirituality. Discuss with the class why you chose them.
5. In small groups, individually or as a class, brainstorm as many purposes of religion as you can. Represent these purposes graphically with symbols and signs, as well as labelling them.

RELIGION AND TRUTH

Religious truths are assertions about the answers to existential questions that have been discovered through human observation, imaginings, creative thinking and spiritual experiences or through divine revelation. These claims are affirmed in faith by religious adherents. Religion may not meet the criteria of truth used in other disciplines (branches of learning), such as science, but for many adherents, religions do offer certainty and structure for understanding and living in a complex world. For others, religion is a starting point to question and seek confirmation or alternative ways of understanding the world and humanity's role within it.

Each branch of learning has its own **truth claims** that contain knowledge that is essential to it. Some truth claims are proven by repeatedly verifiable factual evidence. Other truth claims are merely theories that seem to be the truth because they have stood the test of time, while other theories may over time be replaced by a more plausible theory.

The 'truth' within religions has been internally and externally debated since ancient times and has increased in importance as many societies become religiously pluralistic. For a long time there were two basic questions for people to consider about religious truth: the truth of religion in general and truth of a particular religion. But today, people in societies with many religions have not only to decide whether to be religious at all, but also decide between conflicting claims to religious truth. The claim that one religion has the truth or more truth than another has caused and continues to cause conflict between religions and their societies, and even the establishment of new religious movements and denominations.

Various branches of science have also challenged the 'truth' claimed by religions. Conflict with religions arose between the scientific observations and subsequent theories in astronomy, archaeology, biology, botany, physics, genetics, palaeontology, geology.

The moral and universal truths of religious stories, explanations and experiences inspired scribes to commit the oral histories of their ancestors into **sacred** texts which record their **truth narrative,** that is, the ongoing story unfolding the lessons learned by religion in the search for meaning. Rituals enable adherents to experience at a personal level the spiritual truth of a sacred story. Within the wisdom and the moral lessons of each story the reader can perceive the 'truth'. This has led to the conclusion that there are universal truths that are relevant to all people in all times. This is explained in a passage from the **Talmud** in the following way:

> An individual must imagine that he [or she] is alone in the world with the Creator. The various characters and stories in the Bible signify the different qualities of one person and of all people and the different stages of this person's spiritual path.
>
> (Talmud *Kiddushin* 30)

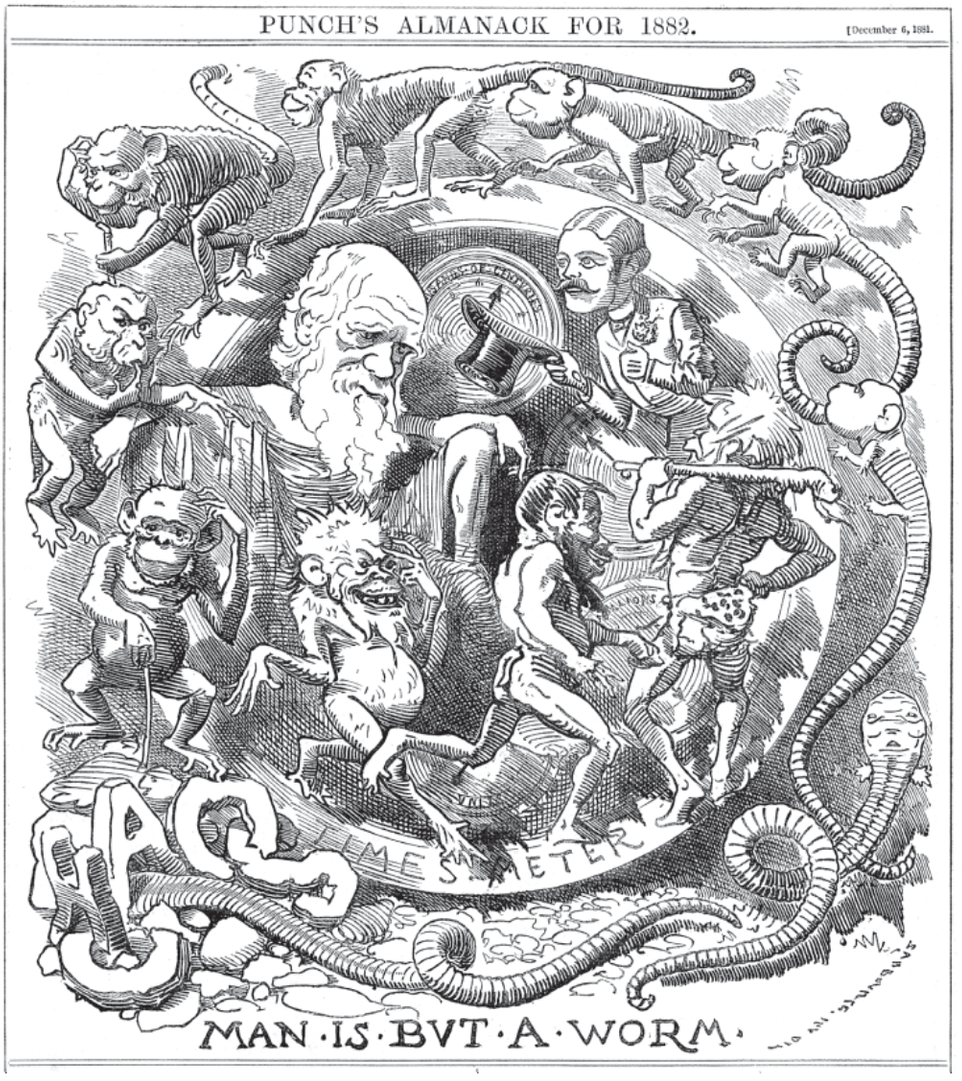
TYPES OF TRUTH

Skills: identify, describe, explain, interpret, synthesise

1 There are many ways of knowing to arrive at 'truth'. Consider what is meant by the following statements and explain how 'know' is being used differently in the statements:
   a I know that we need oxygen
   b I know that I am sick
   c I know that I like.....
   d I know that today is.....
   e I know that is beautiful
   f I know that there is a god.

2 What is the difference between religious or spiritual truth and scientific truth?

3 Provide a personal definition of truth.



Getty Images/Ann Ronan Pictures/Print Collector

FIGURE 1.11 In 1882 *Punch* magazine published this cartoon making fun of Charles **Darwin's theory of evolution**, from his book *On the Origin of Species* published in 1859. The cartoon which would be offensive by today's standards, gives an indication of the hostile views of society at the time over the 'truth' of the theory of evolution.

IDEAS OF DARWIN

Skills: research, summarise, analyse

1. How is Darwin being presented in this cartoon?
2. What would have been funny to the original audience of the cartoon?
3. Why would this cartoon be seen as offensive today?
4. Research Darwin's theory of evolution.
5. Identify (research if required) how hostile attitudes towards Darwin's ideas in this cartoon have been maintained or changed in today's society? By whom?
6. Research how and why another scientific theory has come into conflict with religion.
7. Research how science and religion were involved in the Scopes Monkey Trial Case.

THE PURPOSES OF RELIGION

Below are listed some of the many purposes of religion:

- to allow people to experience a source of potency and optimism beyond their situation and resources
- to protect the individual and groups from the forces of nature
- to bring blessings for good harvest, rains, hunts, herds, births
- to enlist divine support in a battle or a war campaign
- to enlist divine support in environmental or health crises
- to provide sacred law to affirm the identity of the religious individual and community
- to provide ethical principles and moral values to regulate the behaviour of the religious individual and community
- to tell sacred stories to portray and give access to the spiritual dimension
- to tell sacred stories to communicate the beliefs, ethics and history of the religion to sustain the religious community
- to access, interpret and interact with visions, epiphanies, the afterlife, prophecy, spirit beings, ancestors, totems
- to enable sacred texts, rituals and individuals with authority to communicate with the sacred
- to ordain certain locations, objects and times with sacred meaning for communication with the divine.

Another purpose of religion is to facilitate religious socialisation. For the children of religious adherents this religious socialisation begins almost immediately after birth in the **rite of passage,** a ritual which establishes their identity as belonging to a particular religion. At other stages of their life an adherent may make conscious commitment to the religion when they internalise (develop personal understanding, acceptance and engagement) religious beliefs, moral values and ethical principles. Religion's ability to convey an identity to an individual adherent and a community of followers is one of its main purposes. A religion can be so interwoven within a culture that it is seen as 'the way of life' and part of the national character and identity.

THE ROLES OF RELIGION IN SOCIETY

Scholars have claimed that religions have sustained society over millennia in multiple ways. Two of those ways are through providing ethical principles and moral teachings to support and promote justice in society and by defining and protecting the sacred. Below are some ways that religion has been called upon to support the existing structures, standards and behaviours of society:

- to initiate social changes to encourage a better society
- to support social changes proposed by others to improve society
- to be a source of inspiration for people to change the direction of their lives
- to provide a source of comfort and social cohesion during tragedy
- to be a source of communal, even national identity
- to provide services for education, healthcare and charity (today these religious services are in addition to those of the state but in the past religion has been the only source for these social services) to give hope to those living in poverty and
- to suppress social dissent
- to fan revolutionary flames to achieve an ideal society as yet unattained
- to assist empires to rule their world by contributing to conformity and control of beliefs and behaviour.

Another role of religion in society is its contribution to the Western legal systems. These legal systems are underpinned by the Ten Commandments (in Exodus 20:1–17 and Deuteronomy 5:4–21) of the Jewish and Christian traditions. This set of commandments provides a framework for appropriate behaviour towards God and in human interactions.

Alamy Stock Photo/Israel images

FIGURE 1.12 Replica of the Ten Commandments in Hebrew (Exodus 20:1–17; Deuteronomy 5:4–21). Why was having 10 laws such a great innovation as opposed to having 9 or 11? How could people of all ages and education remember the 10? Do you know the 10?

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS EXPLORED

Skills: research, identify, analyse

1. List the Ten Commandments.
2. Identify the commandments that outline an individual's relationship with God.
3. Identify the commandments that outline an individual's relationship with one's fellow humans.
4. Explore the parallels between Australia's legal code and the Ten Commandments.

Below is a flow chart of numerous roles of religion, although not exhaustive. What others could be added?

FIGURE 1.13 Roles of religion in society

RELIGION AND SURVIVAL

Skills: explain, summarise

1 In your own words, but using the concepts in Figure 1.13, explain how spirituality and religion have helped humans to survive.

INTERPLAY BETWEEN SOCIETY AND RELIGION

Society is comprised of groups of people interacting at various levels such as national, state, local and family levels. These groups share common space and culture. Religions are within the larger society, variously participate in it and are subject to the law of the society, although at times society can be subject to the laws of religion as it often provides an authoritative or symbolic foundation for the law. In prehistory, oral traditions place the Magus or religious figure of the group alongside the chief. When catastrophic events occurred the Magus was often called upon to mediate what the cosmic meaning of the events, good or bad, which were unfolding. History shows that religion may provide authority for a monarch and be embedded within the constitution of a nation.

Religion has inspired both positive and negative world events or chosen to remain idle or actively participate in them. Sometimes a religion is blamed or given credit for a situation when the real catalyst is something else, such as an abundance or lack of land or resources; claims of ethnic or cultural superiority or inferiority; or the use or abuse of power.

Interplay between religion and society also impacts on individuals within a tradition; society produces the circumstances that can challenge an individual's beliefs, thrusting them into the public arena in defence of their religious beliefs. The religious person may then shape the views of society, be dismissed as irrelevant, or be condemned or restricted as harmful. In the interplay between religion and society, there is interaction at the national, communal, group and individual levels, which can be positive or negative.

The following are some examples of the interplay between religion and society.

Cultural benefits

Religion is one the major vehicles by which a society passes on culture, values, knowledge and skills from generation to generation. For the individual this occurs through a person's socialisation by family, community of religious affiliation, school, clubs and the media.

Extremism

Fundamentalism is a form of extremism characterised by a religious individual or group which has strict beliefs, rigid practices and a literal interpretation of religious texts. Adherents of such viewpoints may be seen as fanatics or zealots. **Martyrdom** can be a form of extremism. It has a powerful psychological effect, which may promote religion to non-believers and reaffirm the beliefs of adherents for generations. The negative impact of extreme vows and beliefs may isolate the religion, community or cult from the mainstream community. Another type of extremism is the suppression of a religion by forced conversion to another religious tradition.

Health

Studies show that religious people live longer than non-religious people. This could be due to religious prohibitions on the consumption of certain foods and alcohol or the reduction of stress and loneliness as a result of belonging to a community.

Political influence

When British people sing 'God save the King/Queen', they are expressing the belief that God has brought certain individuals and societies into a position of prominence and power as a 'divine right'. The sessions of Australian parliaments, at federal and state levels, open with the Lord's Prayer. Historically, Christianity was a tool of the Roman Empire under Emperors Constantine and Theodosius I to consolidate the empire at a critical point (the 4th century CE) when it was in decline. Christianity substantially benefited from its central role in Roman society.

Popular culture

Religion can be so embedded in culture that it becomes a dominant theme in the way we tell stories that shape society's values. Many stories in text and film portray the super hero as the saviour of a threatened world, whether it is Earth, or another Planet. These heroes often represent ancient religious traditions from their world. They are characterised by their steadfast faith in carrying out their duty or mission, their ethical principles and moral behaviour as they pursue the conquest of good over evil, and their readiness to sacrifice themselves for the good of others. Spirituality has also influenced numerous types of therapy, energy healing, life coaching and well-being theories and practices.

Secularisation

Rates of membership of the majority of religious traditions in many countries show that religion does not have the same influence as it once did. The Australian Bureau of Statistics' census figures show regular increases in participants identifying themselves as having 'no religion'. However, it is not clear from this response whether this means that they are anti-religion, **atheist** or **agnostic**, began life within a particular religion that has become dormant in terms of the influence it has on their lives, or simply did not wish to answer that question. Despite this secular trend in Australia and other developed countries, the religious membership of people in developing countries is much higher and, through high birth rates, is increasing.

Social stability

Some argue that religion promotes social stability by providing ethical principles, such as the 'Golden Rule' ('Do unto others as you would have them do unto you'), which underpin charitable works and actions that create a more compassionate society. This is evidenced in Australia through the reliance of the government on religious institutions for much of the provision of health services, educational institutions, services for the homeless, drug addicted and disenfranchised, and even overseas aid.

War

One of the major reasons for going to war is often claimed to be religion. Certainly religion has been a cause of some wars, such as the Crusades. What is often left out of the discussion are other more prominent reasons. Religion can be seen as merely one of a number of factors such as territorial expansions, empire building, resource wrangling, political alliances, trade deals, mercantile capitalism, supply and demand, irregularities in supply chains and other factors. How religion is used in each war requires an investigation of these factors as well. As well as being part of the reasons for war, religion was often used as a primary means of diplomacy. Religious leadership was often drawn upon for counsel and recording of major events, to broker deals and to compel heads of state and kings to observe agreements and truces.

FIGURE 1.14 What does this cartoon suggest is the relationship between religion and war? Why is this an over-simplification?

REFLECTING ON INTERACTION OF RELIGION AND SOCIETY

Skills: identify, explain, interpret, synthesise

1. In what ways can these examples of the interplay between religion and society be seen as positive or negative? For whom are they positive or negative?
2. Using the above interactions between religion and society as a guide, discuss how religion has interacted with you as an individual, as part of a family and on a community level.

CULTS

A cult is a group or sect that greatly venerates a particular person, idea or thing expressed in their sacred rites and symbols. The ancient world was full of cults. Some were local and related to the environment of a particular town, others were widespread across countries. The word 'cult' was originally used to refer to ritual actions that were carried out as part of worshipping different gods. These cults were all part of a larger framework of religion within a society but were followed in varying degrees by individuals who found meaning in a particular god. Today the word 'cult' has a different meaning. It refers to a charismatic leader who requires unquestioning obedience from a group of followers who assign near total responsibility for themselves to that leader. The views and behaviour of the group may be extreme, unorthodox or unscientific. Cults often live outside conventional society, in location and in beliefs, and practices and in dress.

In the latter half of the twentieth century there were some extremely negative events involving cults. There was the Peoples' Temple cult in Jonestown, Guyana in 1978; the Branch Dividians cult in Waco, Texas in 1993; Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God, Kanubga Uganda in 2000; Heaven's Gate, California in 1997 – all of which ended in the mass deaths of cult members.

There are also many sects originally branching from mainstream religions that have operated like cults to varying degrees, but with the passage of time and popularity have become

new religious movements. During the 1960s and 70s in Lake Eildon Victoria, Australia, Anne Hamilton Byrne – claiming she was the Messiah – acquired numerous children and adult followers, subjecting them to physical and emotional subservience in her cult, The Family, which she claimed was inspired by love.

CULTS AND RELIGIONS
Skills: identify, describe, explain

1 What is the difference between ancient and modern cults?
2 When does a cult become a religion?

Fairfax Sydnication/John Woudstra

FIGURE 1.15 In the 1960s Anne Hamilton Byrne led The Family, a cult in Olinda Victoria. She claimed to be a living god and the reincarnation of Jesus Christ. Despite being discredited Byrne still retains faithful members of The Family. What in this image is disturbing?

THE ASPECTS OF RELIGION

Religion has certain features, called aspects, that together form the nature of the religion. These aspects also contribute to the particular identity of a religion. Although religions can have many different aspects, there are those that are common to the majority of religions. These aspects are: beliefs; ethics; rituals; sacred stories; social structures; spaces, places, times and artefacts; spiritual experiences; symbols; and texts. These aspects are interrelated in many ways, especially as all the other aspects in some way express the aspect of beliefs.

BELIEFS

Religious beliefs are ideas that are accepted by their adherents as true. For some religions there may be a particular set of beliefs, which could be expressed in an authoritative list (either as **creed** or **doctrine** or **dogma**). In other religions, the beliefs may be selectively revealed to founding

members. The beliefs of most religions develop as the writings of their founders, or based on the teachings and actions of the founders, are reflected upon and applied to contemporary contexts. Without beliefs, a religion would have no internal structure and it would disintegrate, as adherents would not know what to follow or what differentiated it from other religions. Beliefs give a religion its identity. Denominations within a religious tradition interpret and emphasise specific beliefs and related practices differently.

ETHICS

Ethics is the study of decision making about right (moral) and wrong (immoral) in a culture. Guiding ethical thinking and decision making are ethical principles. These are ideals that each theory, perspective, maxim or statement about ethics seeks to achieve. Such visionary ideals offer a picture of a perfect world from which all morality, laws and duties about what adherents people ought to do can be derived. The model citizen is one who possesses that society's desired qualities or values or follows laws or codes of behaviour that would bring about the ideal.

In a religious tradition it is believed that the authority for its ethical principles comes from its god or gods, spirits, ancestors, elemental forces or divine universal principles. This divine authority supports all rule systems, from the level of ethical principles to social etiquette, norms (acceptable standards of behaviour), customs and rules relating to the sacred.

Religious ethical principles and codes of behaviour often dictate the precise details of an adherent's expression of beliefs through rituals, diet, the calendar, personal decoration or clothing, use of sacred texts, use of sacred space, and their thoughts and actions in their daily lives. The living out of ethical principles and religious morality are often additionally supported by a structure of an afterlife of reward and punishment, a perfect world to come, a better reincarnation, joining totem spirits, material rewards in this life, or any similar enticement to live a moral life. Yet, however strong the enticements to live morally, there can be a disparity between the theory and practice of ethical principles and codes of behaviour.

ETHICAL PRINCIPLES IN CONTEMPORARY PUBLIC DEBATE

Skills: research, identify, define, interpret, synthesise

1 Using the current media, identify a public debate in which a religious tradition or denomination has expressed an official view.
   a Which ethical principle or principles did the religious tradition use as the basis for its view?
   b Which laws of society support or oppose these ethical principles of the religious tradition?
   c How would beliefs and texts be used to support these ethical principles of the tradition?

RITUALS

Rituals are ceremonies with a prescribed set of actions and words that have a symbolic meaning and are considered to be sacred. Performing rituals expresses the beliefs of the religion for those involved and any witnesses. There is usually a set procedure that has been passed down by socialisation and there are often strong cultural rules that sanction only initiated members to perform the ritual. Rituals require an adherent to publicly demonstrate a strong commitment to the religion. Members who do not participate in rituals may be denied certain membership rights and privileges.

Rites of passage are rituals that mark a person's passing from one stage of life to another in relation to the religious tradition; for example, commemorating birth, coming of age, marriage or death. Adherents of a religion may not completely follow all the rituals; however, rites of passage are often seen as minimum requirements and may be fundamental to an adherent's identity. After performing such rituals, they are considered to be a fully initiated member of the religious tradition to which they belong and may feel more connected to that tradition. Sometimes a religion may change a belief or the interpretation of a belief, which can lead to changes to the ritual expression of the belief.

ROLE OF RITUALS

Skills: research, identify, explain, interpret

1 In what ways do rituals help religious traditions to remain strong?

2 Illustrate your answer to question 1 by referring to how this can be seen in a specific ritual from a tradition or denomination you have been studying.

SACRED STORIES

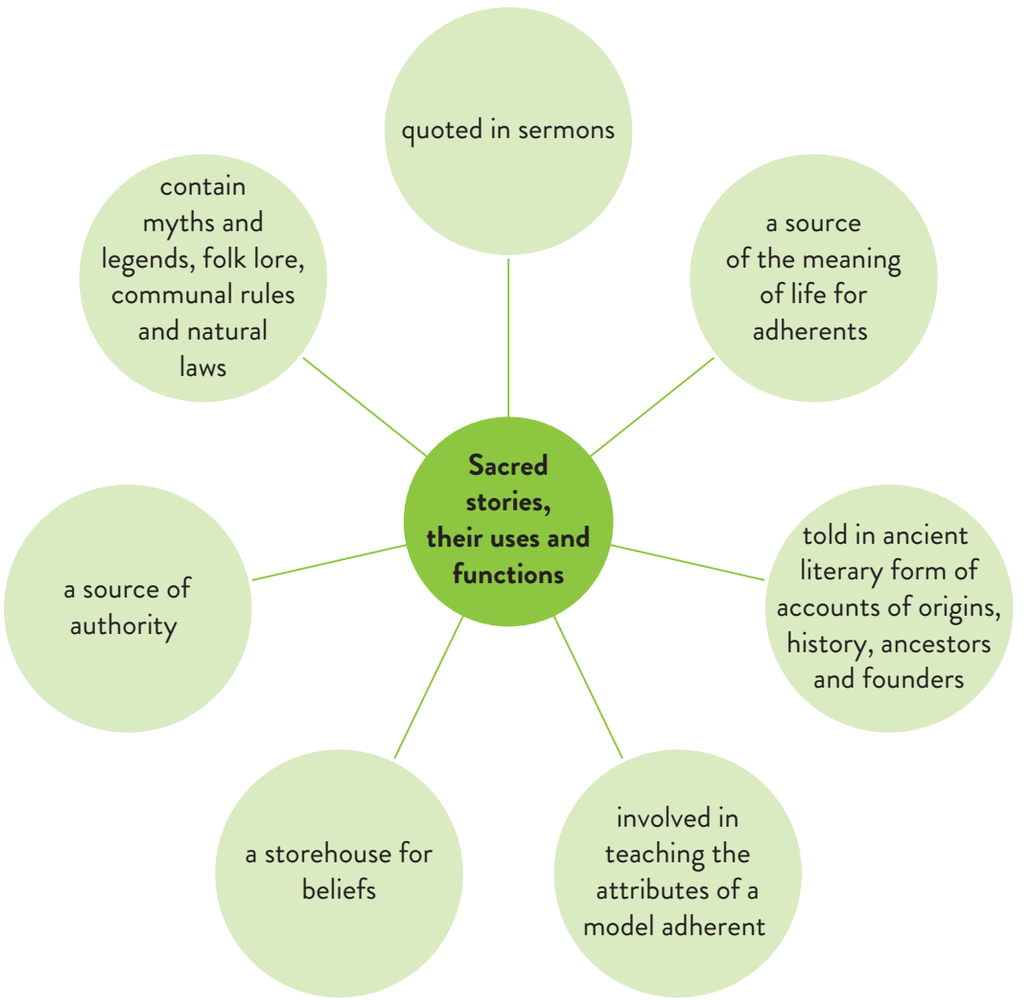


FIGURE 1.16 The uses and functions of sacred stories

Sacred stories are religious narratives that have a setting such as a special place or space, characters and plot developed in a connected way to relate, often with imaginative detail, a believed truth. These sacred stories can be conveyed through oral tradition, enacted in dance or in various forms of literature, such as historiography, myths, legends, parables, folklore and biographies of founders, saints and exemplary individuals. Their purpose is to inspire and instruct the participant, audience, listener or reader about the truths, history and significant people of their religion. For adherents of all ages and levels of education and initiation they transmit knowledge and insight. Many religions in the world developed from oral cultures in which the telling of sacred stories orally or through song and dance was a ritual. Often there were strict **taboos** on the exactness of the telling, chanting and performance of sacred stories without which the story and the universal truths within it would lose their power. During services, some religions read the sacred stories from their sacred texts. Some sacred stories are **myths** and tell the origins of the universe and people. All forms of sacred stories are learnt, retold, painted, sung or danced. Sacred stories often play a role in rituals. Sacred stories can be taught and understood at many different levels.

Alamy Stock Photo/robertharding

FIGURE 1.17 Aborigines, Northern Territory Australia, dancing their story. Which symbols of their spirituality can you identify?

Following are two stories that are sacred to their traditions. The first is from an ancient Persian religion, Zoroastrianism, founded by the Prophet Zoroaster (c. 628 BCE–c. 551 BCE). This sacred story underpins their feast of Sadeh, celebrated annually 100 days after the end of Summer. Zoroastrians regard fire as the symbol of purity, a central value in a world of good and evil. The second sacred story is an abridged account of the testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–1844 CE) upon receiving the Book of Mormon on 21 September 1823.

Zoroastrian Sacred Story

One day, Hushang, the ruler of the world and all the human race, was climbing a mountain when he saw a venomous snake. He attempted to kill it by throwing a stone at it. When he threw the stone it fell on another stone in such a way that fire broke out. Hushang praised Ahura Mazda, the one God and wise Lord who had revealed to him the secret of lighting a fire. Hushang had been taught how to light a fire using flint stones.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons) Sacred Story

While I was thus in the act of calling upon God, I discovered a light appearing in my room, which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noonday, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside, standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor … His robe was exceedingly white, and his whole person was glorious beyond description, and his countenance truly like lightning … When I first looked upon him, I was afraid, but the fear left me. He called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Moroni; that God had a work for me to do; and that my name should be both good and evil among all nations, kindred, and tongues, or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people. He said there was a book deposited, written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the source from whence they sprang. He also said that the fullness of the everlasting Gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Saviour to the ancient inhabitants … A vision was opened to my mind that I could see the place where the plates were deposited, and that so clearly and distinctly that I knew the place again when I visited it.

EXPLORING THE STORIES

Skills: identify, explain, research, interpret

1. Which beliefs of Zoroastrianism are shown through this story?
2. Which beliefs of Mormonism are suggested in this story?
3. How do these two stories show the connection between beliefs and sacred stories?
4. Hushang is shown to start fire in a particular way, but that is all we learn from this story. Research how fire is discovered or used in the sacred stories of another religious tradition. How is it similar to or different from the Zoroastrian sacred story?
5. Many sacred stories include a divine visitation. Research one such story in another religious tradition. What was the message to the hearer in that story? How is it similar to or different from the message to Joseph Smith?

SACRED STORY DEPTH STUDY

Skills: identify, explain, interpret, synthesise

1. Working in groups, select a sacred story that is part of a religious tradition.
   - In two to three sentences summarise the story including its origins if possible.
   - Explain the messages contained in the story that are 'universally true'.
   - Suggest how contemporary audiences can relate to it.
   - Share the sacred stories and what was researched with the class.
2. List the similarities between the sacred stories being told.
3. Discuss what these similarities reveal about the interplay between religion and society.

SOCIAL STRUCTURES

Social structures are all the ways a religious tradition organises itself for membership, participation, exclusion, decision making, for various roles including leadership and for how the religion as a whole and as individual members and focused groups interact with the wider society. Many religious traditions have established social models similar to their wider society. These religions often establish a hierarchy of membership and focus authority and power in the religious leadership. However, this is not true in religions that are organised on a liberal or democratic system. Sometimes a religious tradition has an extra religious level for adherents who wish to become more spiritually focused, such as monastic orders for Buddhist monks and nuns. They may be attached to leadership or may simply be separate from the general community, but not directly connected to leadership in the religion as is the case with **ascetics**. Religion can also be an intrinsic part of society, supporting its structures, nobility, kings, queens and chiefs. Even in secular societies, such as Australia, religious education in schools and school chaplains play a vital role in transmitting the religious message to a wide audience.

RELIGIONS ORGANISING THEMSELVES

Skills: identify, define, interpret, synthesise

1. Identify one religious tradition that has a hierarchical social structure and provide four implications of that structure for the tradition.
2. Identify one religious tradition that does not have a hierarchical social structure and provide four implications of this for the tradition.

SPACES, PLACES, TIMES AND ARTEFACTS

In human interaction with the world around them there were and are experiences that give a sense of awareness of something that was different from the usual experience. The experience may be of serenity, peacefulness, awe, unease, fear, changed perception, receiving a gift, a blessing. These experiences are explained as encounters with the transcendent, the spiritual or supernatural. The related spaces, places, objects, physical phenomena (such as normal weather patterns) and dramatically different phenomena (such as floods, drought, volcanic eruptions, extreme temperature changes), were imbued with sacred meaning, set apart by the community, to be regarded with awe and venerated. Often these spaces and places were marked with signs or

symbols (such as mounds of stones) to show their specialness. Humans also carved and moulded artefacts to remind them of the presence in their world of the transcendent. The encounter with ultimate reality in ancient times could come from human interaction with their environment, the natural world as observed and experienced in their particular geographical area, with its seasonal times, local animals and plants, and special spaces and places, all of which was perceived as an encounter with a transcendent dimension and became sacred to the community.

Spaces

Spaces can literally be anywhere and can be accessed during everyday activities. They can be very personal or shared by a community. What sets them apart as having religious meaning is that they are memorialised in sacred story and used for special purposes. This can be at the personal or

St Michael's Uniting Church

FIGURE 1.18 This sacred space within St Michael's Uniting Church in Collins Street, is in the heart of Melbourne. Why is it important to have a sacred space in the middle of the city?

communal level. If the space has religious meaning for the community, there may be restrictions and rules as to who and how the spaces may be used. A spiritual authority or requirements of a ritual may regulate their use and may restrict access to them at certain times and to certain people. Revered spaces can be separate or within religious places, where an area or artefact is a source of spiritual focus, especially during a ritual or a special religious time.

Places

Some places in the natural environment became sacred to the local population, such as mountains, rivers and forests. As people became inhabitants of cities, the worship of ultimate reality moved into more complex, constructed places – from stone circles and caves to shrines, temples, mosques, synagogues and cathedrals.

In places where the sacred may be experienced, adherents demonstrate commitment to unseen forces by acknowledging spirits or ancestors. This may require them to go through some sort of initiation process. Sacred places tend to be demarcated by some sort of human representation of the sacred or its symbolism through rock art, carvings, buildings, artefacts, ruins and the resting places of bodies of spiritual leaders. Often places remain sacred even after conquest by an opposing group, who may appropriate the sanctity of the site for their own god or gods. This process is called religious **syncretism**.

Shutterstock.com/The Mariner 4291

FIGURE 1.19 Hor Nang Usa Tower. The ancient rock building from prehistoric period at Phu Phra Bat historic park in Ban Phue district, Udon Thani province, Thailand. This place is revered because of the legend of Nang Usa associated with it. Read the story 'The Legend of Nang Usa from Phu Phrabat' on the website, Tim's Thailand and explain why this is a sacred place.

SPACES AND PLACES

Skills: research, describe, identify, interpret

1. Sketch or find an image of a sacred place in a religious tradition you are studying.
2. Identify what it is about this place that demonstrates it is sacred.
3. Research any religious requirements or restrictions that apply to the use of this place.
4. For a constructed place, how does the architectural design represent beliefs of the religious tradition?
5. Do a study of a space, a place and a 'space within the place' which you have attended. Source images of these, clearly identify them and explain why they are sacred.
6. Identify what is present that demonstrates it is sacred.
7. Research any religious requirements or restrictions that apply to the use of this space.

Times

The times of celebrations can be linked to seasons but also to the memory of great people and events in the history of the religious tradition. They can also be linked to the beginning, duration and conclusion of rituals.

Religious calendars are organised around daily, weekly, monthly and annual ceremonies and rituals that form the rhythm of life for adherents and communities. Many of these times mark the rites of passage of adherents' lives from birth to death.

Festivals are often based on the agricultural cycle and link the successes or failures of crops with the relationship with the transcendent. In many traditions there are rituals for the changes of season; prayers for rain; acknowledgement of the gift of food through rituals of thanksgiving. Some modern religious feasts are adaptations of ancient agricultural festivities with local traditional practices.

Getty Images/NurPhoto

FIGURE 1.20 Tamil Hindu priests perform special prayers honouring Lord Ganesh during the Thai Pongal thanksgiving festival celebrating a successful harvest at a Hindu temple in Ontario, Canada on 14 January 2019. How do other religious traditions celebrate successful harvests?

Religious traditions have specific ways of defining time; for example, in Judaism the day is not a 24-hour day but rather starts at sunset when the first stars appear in the night sky and finishes when the first stars appear the following evening. The calendar months may be determined by the moon rather than the sun, as in Islam, while in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures there is a different understanding of months and seasons determined by the changes in the natural environment. The numbering of years in many societies is determined by religious ordinances; for example, in Christianity the year is linked to the life of Jesus Christ, in Judaism it is linked to creation, and in Islam the dates are linked to the al-Hijra – the emigration of Muhammad from Mecca to Medina.

A CASE STUDY OF TIMES IN TWO RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

Skills: research, identify, summarise, interpret

1 Research the origins of a festival from two different religious traditions.
   a Name the place and time of origin of each festival, locating the place on a world map.
   b What was the original purpose behind each festival?
   c What were the original ritual practices and how were they linked to time, space and place?
   d What elements of the original rite are echoed in the current practice?

Artefacts

In the development of many communities, artefacts – objects of human origin – have come to be venerated by members of the community. Many artefacts are a focal point of religious belief and are linked to the practice of adherents. Some artefacts have a special meaning in the spirituality of religious traditions. These artefacts may be ancient stone or more recent plaster statues; articles of clothing or paint used on the body for ceremony; and beads, mats, scrolls or icons used for prayer. These artefacts can be a symbol of identity, a focus for prayer, or a way for the individual to make a public affirmation of their beliefs. There may be strenuous prohibitions on an artefact that is deemed sacred: who may access it, hold it, see it, touch it, play it (if it is an instrument), listen to it being played or dance to it; how it may be used; and what decorations may adorn it.

ARTEFACTS CASE STUDY

Skills: research, identify, explain, interpret, synthesise

1 Identify two key artefacts in each of two religious traditions that you are studying.
   a How are these artefacts used and what do they symbolise?
   b Consider whether the absence of these artefacts would be significant for the religion.
2 Research the following artefacts from traditions you have not yet studied. When are they used? What are the artefacts symbolising?
   a A Tjuringa or a Didgeridoo from Australian First Nations
   b Prayer Wheel or Buddha statue in Buddhism
   c Church altar or cross in Christianity
   d The Diwali Lamp or the Shiva Linga of Hinduism
   e The Topi or Prayer Mat of Islam
   f The Menorah or Ner Tamid in Judaism
   g The Kirpan or Kangha of Sikhism

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES

Spiritual experiences can be had in a religious or a non-religious context. Both participants and witnesses may find meaning in them. A person's religious identity is the sum total of all their religious and spiritual experiences. A positive experience may lead them to want more participation and membership, just as a negative experience can do the opposite or to seek a different religion or spirituality in order to experience the spiritual more intensely. Cultural influences can define spiritual experiences. When a powerful emotion is stirred by an experience, beliefs, emotions and other aspects may combine together to induce spirituality. Not all religious experiences may be spiritual experiences but this is certainly the goal of the rituals and other aspects of a religion. Spirituality can also require things from an individual, hence the saying, 'sincerity is the most important part of any prayer'.

Getty Images/NurPhoto

FIGURE 1.21 Sufi whirling dervish dances (Semazen) is physical meditation that conveys God's spiritual gift to those witnessing the ritual. How is the dance a spiritual experience for dancers and those watching?

EXPERIENCING THE SPIRITUAL

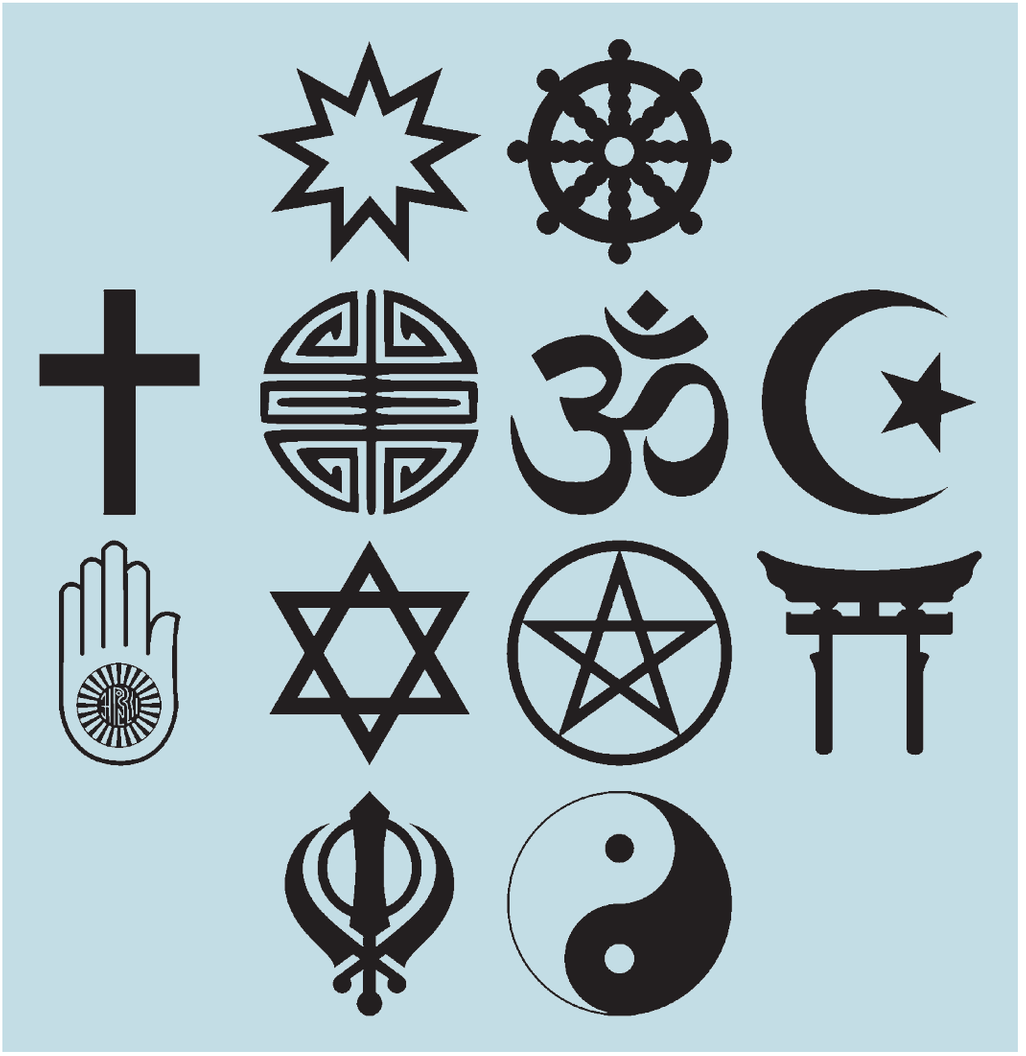
Skills: identify, define, explain, interpret, synthesise

1. In groups, discuss and share your personal story of a moment in which you felt or glimpsed spirituality, had a spiritual experience or had an insight.
2. If you haven't had such an experience, tell a story of someone you know (do not name them) or you have read about.

SYMBOLS

Symbols are used to stand for or represent something else, and often a material object is used to represent something immaterial. They are often signs, objects, people, actions or places that acquire a special meaning or power. The same symbol can vary in its meaning for individuals.

Symbols can sometimes be held to be sacred. The symbolic function is a key element of religious tradition, as symbols can express significant beliefs, be part of rituals and have specific religious meanings and they can even identify an adherent as a member of a particular religion. Below are signs that symbolise something significant about particular religions.



Sowlos/Wikimedia Commons/CC BY SA Unported

FIGURE 1.22 Religious symbols of many traditions. Which of these symbols do you recognise? Research the others.

THE POWER OF SYMBOLS

Skills: research, identify, define, interpret, synthesise

1. Which part of the religion is being represented by the symbols in Figure 1.22?
2. Survey the class. Who wears a religious symbol and why?
3. List the religious symbols around your school. Why are they there?

TEXTS

Texts used by religions can be oral or written or depicted. They are presented as papyrus, scrolls, books, **mantras**, chants, poems, **sutras**, **commentaries**, creeds, songs, hymns, ballads, dances, **hieroglyphs**, pottery decoration, **pictographs**, icons, devotional aids, body decoration or rock art, wall carvings, parables and allegories. Their purpose is to record and to communicate to new generations of adherents the essential parts of a religious tradition, such as the religion's beliefs, sacred stories, ethical principles and moral codes of behaviour, prescribed prayers, history.

Religious leaders and scholars use particular texts that are sacred, to ascertain the will of their Ultimate Reality. Such texts are interpreted by scholars and learned teachers to explain to modern adherents the historical context in which they were written and how to apply them to contemporary times. This is known as exegesis and often occurs in texts such as commentaries. Often texts that are sacred are part of rituals and **liturgies**; being read or spoken at specific times. They may contain a list of rules for the community that are quoted to provide authority in arguments and policy and are referred to as evidence for adherents in debates and discussions.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF TEXT DO DIFFERENT THINGS

Skills: identify, research, explain

1 Select a theme, universal truth or teaching in a religious tradition you are studying.
   a In that religious tradition, find examples of that theme, universal truth or teaching in these different types of text: a sacred text, a commentary, an image, a religious song. Remember to note the source of the examples.
   b How do these texts complement or differ in the interpretation of the theme, universal truth or teaching?

THE ASPECTS OF RELIGION – INTERRELATIONSHIP

Aspects of religion are all interrelated and can strongly impact on each other. For example, the nucleus of a religion is its beliefs. If the beliefs and spiritual experiences in the stories of a founder of a religious tradition are held to be true by the adherents, they may have spiritual experiences when performing the rituals and hearing the stories. For example, a sacred story can be read from a sacred text by a religious leader as part of a ritual in a place, space or time special to the religion and using a religious artefact. The interrelationship of the aspects in this moment might inspire a spiritual experience for an adherent. Furthermore, the approach of a religious tradition towards ethical decision making and in forming moral judgements will depend upon the authority of its beliefs, which are further supported by its sacred stories, texts and social structure.

But in reality, a religion or spirituality may have more aspects than those identified so far and some aspects could be combined together, whereas here they have been separated for the purposes of explanation. Also it is important to understand that spiritual and religious traditions developed long before the idea of using aspects as a critical lens through which to study them. The difficulty scholars have in defining religion is due to diversity, and this extends to whether and to what extent all of the aspects are present in every religion in the world. Aspects can be present in varying degrees and they may have different importance in the tradition. There are traditions that emphasise morality and religious practices more than doctrine. Some traditions enact their sacred stories, whereas others are more intellectual.

INTERRELATIONSHIP OF ASPECTS

Skills: research, identify, define, explain, interpret, synthesise

1 Select a ritual in a religious tradition or denomination you are studying.
   a Construct a flowchart or diagram that shows the relationship between the aspects in the ritual.
   b Write a paragraph outlining the relationship between the various aspects that are represented in the ritual.
2 Apply each of the aspects to your life experience.

CHAPTER 1

REVIEW

1 Define religion.
2 What purposes does religion serve?
3 What is the relationship between religion and society?
4 List the aspects of religion and, in your own words, briefly explain each aspect.
5 Select one ritual from a religion you are studying.
   a Identify the religion and the ritual.
   b Describe the ritual.
   c Which beliefs of the religion are demonstrated in the ritual?
   d How might this ritual enhance an adherent's spiritual experience?
6 How has religion supported the development of society? Has it detracted from society? Provide examples and evidence to inform your discussion.
7 Use the aspects of religion to analyse a religious or spiritual event that you have observed or can observe by researching on the Internet. Remember to check the definitions of the aspects. Answer the following questions in a summarised form.
   a Name the event and the religious tradition or spirituality.
   b What beliefs were referred to directly, implicitly or symbolically in the event?
   c Which sacred stories were mentioned in the prayers or, by tradition, are associated with the event?
   d What spaces, places, times and artefacts were required in order for the event to occur?
   e Which texts were used for the prayers, blessings, readings and explanations during the event?
   f What rituals occurred at the event?
   g Which symbols were incorporated into the event and how were they used?
   h What evidence of the social structure of the religion were present in the event?
   i Explain how the ethics of the religion, shown in the associated rules, obligations, rewards and/or punishments, are part of this event.
   j In what way was the event a spiritual experience? Did being part of this event change participants' lives? Are they more involved or less involved in their religion as a result of participating in the event?

Worksheet
Aspects: Analysis
Aspects: Research

Weblinks
Various for Chapter 1

EXTENSION

1 In small groups or individually research the following festivals and collect images relating to them. Explain why the events occur at specific times and in particular spaces or places and what artefacts are used in the festivals.

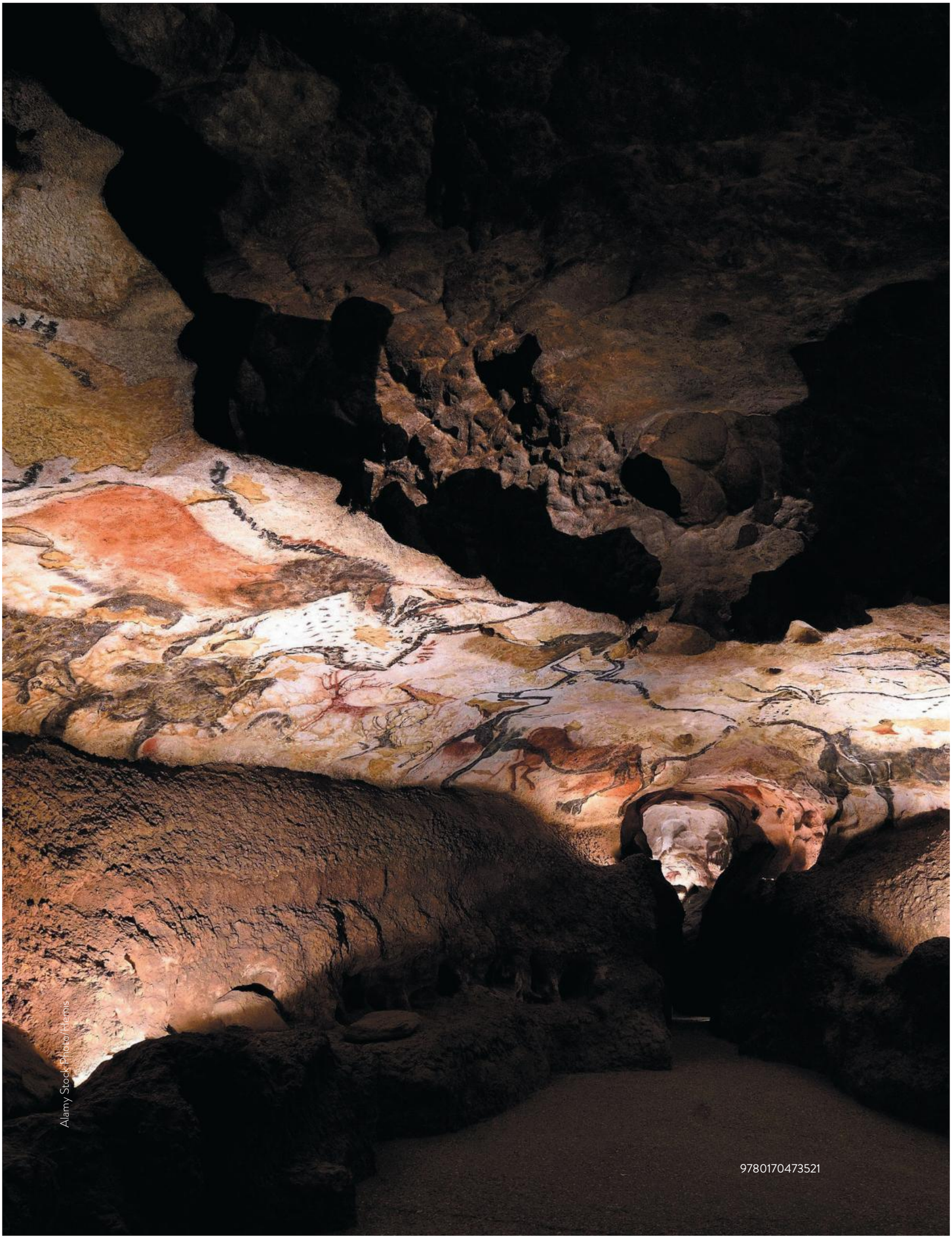
- **a** Native Americans: The Gathering of the Nations
- **b** Buddhism: Waisak Day
- **c** Christianity: Easter at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (Jerusalem)
- **d** Hinduism: The Maha Kumbh Mela
- **e** Islam: Eid al-Adha
- **f** Judaism: The Passover Seder
- **g** Sikhism: Baisakhi

2 Research the Australian community's response to Anzac Day and outline how this memory is preserved through spaces, places, times and artefacts, rituals and texts in secular society.

3 Do the visits to Anzac Cove, and the commemorative services at cenotaphs and memorials, constitute communal spirituality? Discuss in groups and report back to the class.

4 Imagine you are the founder of a new religious movement. It is a religion of your own creation. Present all of your information in a format of your choice and:

- name it
- provide a list of beliefs briefly explained
- write the story of the mythical origin of the religion
- identify and explain spaces, places, times and artefacts of the religion
- name the sacred stories of the religion and explain briefly what they tell about the religion
- develop religious symbols, such as ritual objects, religious clothing and the symbol for the religion
- provide an outline of the social structure of the religion as an annotated diagram
- identify who the adherents are
- write a prayer and devise a ritual to which it relates
- describe any sacred food or drink and explain how it connects to the religion's myths and rituals
- develop one rite of passage and briefly explain the stage of life that it marks
- provide a system of laws, a moral code and a textual foundation
- provide an afterlife structure and explain how it connects to a moral code
- develop a practice of spirituality for the religion.



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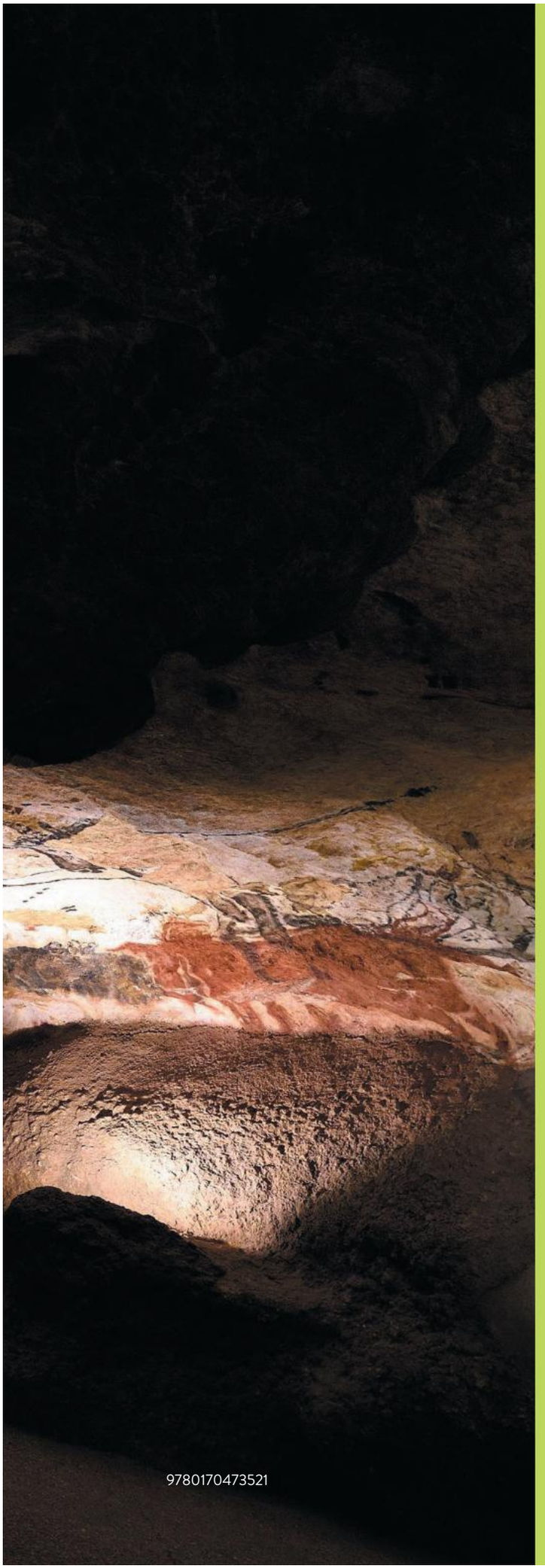

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Chapter 2

RELIGION THROUGH THE AGES

Outcome to be demonstrated

Discussion of the changing roles of religion and the interrelationship between religion and society over time.

Focus questions

- What roles have spiritual and religious ideas played in society over time?
- How are spiritual and religious ideas passed on through generations?
- How have developments, ideas and movements influenced the roles and aspects of religion?
- Why are some spiritualities and religions able to be resilient?
- Why do some spiritualities and religions cease to exist?

Worksheet
Terminology

ROLES OF SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGION IN SOCIETY: OVERVIEW

From its beginnings humanity seems to have sensed and believed they could interact with a dimension beyond human reality. Both spirituality and religion have continuously drawn on this dimension and developed ideas through imagination, reflection and experiences. These ideas contributed to the development of human societies throughout history. Religious ideas had credibility if they successfully explained natural phenomena and events, such as storms, crop failure, herd decline, solar eclipses, rivers changing course. But if the religious ideas were perceived as failing to explain such phenomena then new religious ideas developed or the meaning of earlier ideas and practices was changed.

PREHISTORY TO 6500 BCE

Through the discoveries of archaeology (the study of historic peoples and cultures by analysing their artefacts, inscriptions and remains) and palaeontology (the study of fossils), the past has been brought alive and we are able to perceive something of the lives and environment of the earliest humans (hominins and *Homo sapiens*). These humans and their ancestors lived long before the development of any form of writing so it is mainly material remains such as burials, grave goods, cave artwork, carved artefacts and adornments that provide evidence about their existence, their spirituality and religion.

ASPECTS OF RELIGION IN PREHISTORY

Skills: analyse, interpret, explain

1 Which aspects of religion would have left a trace in prehistoric spirituality and why?
2 Which aspects would not have left a trace and why?

It is difficult to say anything definite about spirituality and religion in this period, thus academics have proposed a theoretical model to explain changes to ideas and roles of spirituality and religions in society. The model is comprised of:

- ideas associated with animism
- ideas about an afterlife
- ideas about spirit ancestors, and later about gods; both seen as interactive with human affairs.

Animism

When society was comprised of hunters and gatherers, ideas developed that all things, animal, vegetable, mineral and natural phenomena, were animated by their individual spirit and could influence humans in positive or negative ways. These ideas of animism were symbolised in rituals, such as the rituals of the hunt. Animal skins and skulls were worn so that hunters could become or think like the higher order predatory animals when hunting. So it was believed that worship could yield a more successful hunt. The spirit of the animal taken was symbolically buried and honoured by the hunter as the animal gave its life to sustain the social group of the hunter. The religious ideas of animism were an intrinsic part of the hunter gatherer society.

ANIMISM

Skills: extrapolate, explain

1 What does wearing animal skins and fur have to do with spirituality and religion?

Alamy Stock Photo/Album

FIGURE 2.1 Traced representation of the Gabillou Sorcier image of a half-animal half-human in a Palaeolithic cave engraving (around 20 000 years old) in Dordogne, France.

José-Manuel Benito/Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain

FIGURE 2.2 Gabillou Sorcier image as it appears in the cave. What may be inferred about the spiritual beliefs of the ancient people who made this cave engraving?

Afterlife

Gradually during this lengthy period of prehistory there developed the ideas of a central role for humanity and of an afterlife. This is indicated in the painted decoration of the body, a more formalised manner of burial, the positioning of the body in the grave and the presence of grave goods, artefacts to protect and adorn the person, designed for use in the afterlife. The placement of numerous pieces of ochre stones and hand axes indicates deliberate burial. This burial practice travelled across the world, and by 50 000 BCE, there is evidence of this practice in the Americas.

BURIAL

Skills: discuss, justify, describe

1 Did hominins have religion and spiritual ideas or were they just sentimental when loved ones died?

2 Describe the evidence that early hominins had burial rites; what beliefs may have accompanied them according to the evidence?

Alamy Stock Photo/Science Photo Library

FIGURE 2.3 A double burial of an adult and a child at Qafzeh Israel from around 100 000–80 000 BCE. What in the placement and colour indicates that this was an intentional burial?

Alamy Stock Photo/Science Photo Library

FIGURE 2.4 This carved hand axe, called Excalibur, from approximately 400 000 years ago, was found at Sima de los Huesos (Pit of Bones), Spain. It is the world's oldest ritual artefact or grave good. Why were valuable tools buried with the deceased?

Ancestors and the gods

Globally, the transition from animism – where plants, objects and natural phenomena were believed to possess spirituality – to veneration of ancestor beings and their believed interaction with the living is evidenced by the decorated skulls of significant ancestors adorning the homes of the living. The associated religious ideas may have included being able to consult and petition the dead for favours or advice. Certainly there seems to have been a restrictive influence of the dead over society until they were contained in special places which became the first graveyards. This meant that the dead could no longer influence the living. This led to freeing society to try new ideas and advance primitive technology. This shift represents the demise of the religious idea of the dead cohabiting with the living in domestic spaces.

ANCESTOR WORSHIP

Skills: interpret, explain

1 What role did interacting with the dead play in prehistoric spirituality and religion?

Portable religion

As the religious use of symbolism grew, there is evidence of portable religion in the form of religious figures, human and animal or combining both. Many such figures were to promote fertility for humans and for the animals of the hunt. Alongside these beliefs there was the value system of respecting the sources of food and only taking what was needed, and not hunting females or young herd members.

Alamy Stock Photo/GRANGER - Historical Picture Archive

FIGURE 2.6 Venus of Willendorf. Only 110 mm in height, from 30 000 to 25 000 BCE. Which features of the statue indicates that it is promoting fertility?

Getty Images/Heritage Images

FIGURE 2.5 'Jericho skull' from around 9000 years ago. A human cranium with a face modelled in plaster and sea shells used to represent the eyes. The ancient people of Jericho buried loved ones under their houses. Sometimes these bodies were complete and sometimes the head was removed and displayed in living spaces potentially being revered as ancestor spirits or portraits. What possible religious purposes might these burial practices serve?

Jochen Jahnke/Wikimedia Commons/CC BY SA 3.0

FIGURE 2.7 *Bison Licking Insect Bite*; 15 000–13 000 BC; *antler*; National Museum of Prehistory (Les Eyzies-de-Tayac-Sireuil, France). Why did ancient people carry portable figurines?

The sacred

Groups came to identify some places as sacred or where the sacred could be experienced. The idea of the sacred promoted the creation of special places and spaces that connected the individual and the group to the dimension beyond the human. These sacred places were natural landforms that represented a spirit being or sites of some spiritual experience. Often cairns and shrines were constructed to mark and honour the sacred place.

Later in this prehistoric period there is evidence that religion and its ritual worship practices became centralised and closely connected to the power and authority of the tribe or coalition of tribes. For example, one of the theories put forward about the colossal construction of a site such as Gobekli Tepe, Turkey, is about the meaning of the carvings on the stones. The animal bones attest to the diet and lifestyle of these people as very much still in the mode of hunter gatherer but there are no prey animals represented on the stones.

This suggests that the predators depicted on the stones could have a totemic or symbolic function. They may have been the sacred symbol of a tribe. The sheer scale of Gobekli Tepe indicates that a number of tribes contributed to carve and haul the stones to the site and contributed to the inscriptions. People would also have offered a supportive function to feed, water and shelter the workers. The stones at Stonehenge, England, have also been suggested to have been installed by tribes, as have other stone circles.

Also from this period comes the oldest evidence for a moral value in society, seen in the care for the elderly and individuals with disabilities. In Georgia – a country bordered by the Black Sea, Western Europe and Eastern Asia – a skull of an old man was discovered. Investigations of the

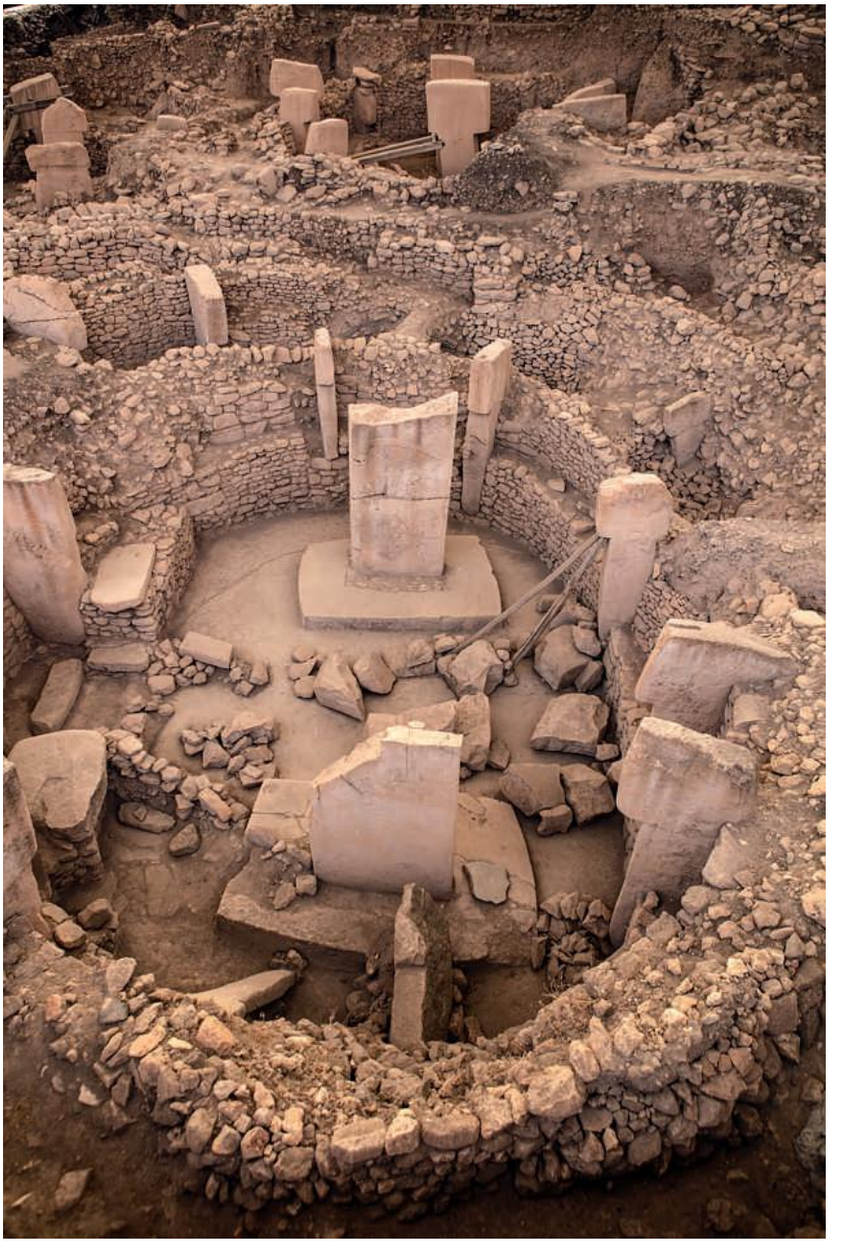

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FIGURE 2.8 Gobekli Tepe, Turkey from around 12 000 years ago. This image demonstrates the transition from worship in caves to a large outdoor sacred site. In a nearby site remnants of ancient wheat were found. What is a possible link between the beginnings of domesticated wheat which first happened near this area and the construction of this site?

skull indicated he had lacked teeth for perhaps a decade prior to death so food was either chewed for him or pulverised with stone. Possible reasons for this care could be that he was a respected older member who knew where sources of food and water were or that he had a leadership or religious function perhaps as a shaman, or both, or that he was kept nourished as he was loved. Certainly it indicates a society that possibly had developed spiritual roles and definitely a sort of compassion.

Later in this prehistoric period there is evidence that religion and its ritual worship practices became centralised and closely connected to the power and authority of the tribe or coalition of tribes.

ORIGIN OF RELIGION

Skills: hypothesise, explain

1 Why is it difficult to determine the origin of religion?

2 Which behaviours in animals may have led to the development of living in larger social groups?

3 What do the burial practices reveal about the role of spirituality in the society of early hominins?

EARLY HISTORY, 6500–800 BCE: OVERVIEW

In many diverse places across the world patterns of a more settled occupation of the land became evident. The first agricultural settlements appear near sources of water, such as springs and rivers and along migration routes of herds.

These small settlements promoted technological and environmental changes to assist food production for increased and less nomadic populations. For example, the deliberate redirection of rivers enabled irrigation for crops in cleared land. Cleared areas of land and feed grown on this land encouraged herds to stay closer. Domesticated animals such as oxen enabled more land to be arable by towing ploughs to work and fertilise the land. It would be reasonable to think that this changed lifestyle would improve health but analysis of skeletal remains reveals that agricultural techniques had not developed sufficiently to make early agrarian people better nourished than those who continued to hunt and gather. Gods which had been petitioned for successful hunts were now petitioned for successful crops and the story of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:1–16) may contain traces of these beliefs about the purposes of gods.

The domestication of fire extended the hours of activity for people, enabling them to gather for cooked food and circles for storytelling after the sun had gone down. In doing this it separated humans from animals, especially as it became a weapon for defence against the threat of beasts, insects and other hominins. Fire became a tool for developing communal myth-making and even enters the narrative of sacred stories. Prehistoric lamps testify to the artistic pursuits, often spiritual in nature, of early artists in deep caverns and recesses of caves.

In these settlements religious buildings were prominent and often close by the communal granary. Within this changing manner of occupying the land and using the natural resources, the role of the spiritual and religious leaders, often shamans, was significant. Such individuals were the contact points for communication and mediation with the spirit beings, the ancestors and the gods of their people. These early religious leaders would petition the gods on behalf of the group for prosperity and to explain crises such as herd diseases and crop failures. They interpreted the meaning of events and experiences and were relied upon to remember and, in various ways, record the history of their communities.

RELIGION AND SETTLEMENT
Skills: describe, explain, analyse

1 How did religion and agriculture interact?

2 How did this interaction affect human settlement?

3 Draw a sketch of a scene from this time and annotate the key features. In it show:
   a how religion and agriculture interacted
   b how this interaction affected human settlement.

Daderot/Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain

FIGURE 2.9 Tokens, clay envelopes, pictographs and cuneiform from Prehistory and Early History periods. They are examples of the earliest pottery clay token contracts between farmers and herders, which were stored in religious buildings. Why might these tokens be baked and enveloped in clay? What is the connection between the tokens, early numerals and pictographic words?

As settlements grew bigger some became towns or cities, making more formal and centralised organisation of the activities of the communities essential. This led to early number systems and the eventual invention of writing in Sumeria. Sumerian cuneiform became the common language between scribes of different tribes, nations and empires. Religious leaders often became scribes, a position of high social status, responsible for keeping the business accounts of prominent community members, recording sacrifices, taxes, divine propaganda about the relationship of the rulers to the gods, and diplomatic correspondence with scribes in other empires. Scribes also acted as librarians, educators, historians, genealogists, tribute recorders, marriage arrangers, masters of ceremonies, and astronomers.

The religious community buildings and temples housed these various activities conducted by the priests for the community. Central to the building complex was a large sanctuary to the gods of the community in acknowledgement of the interrelationship between humans and the gods.

As well as the temples and community religious buildings, people had household sanctuaries with portable statues of their household gods to whom they could privately pray and take with them if they moved location.

Around 1200–1100 BCE catastrophic events comprising earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and military invasions occurred, known as the Bronze Age Collapse. Many prominent cities were destroyed and never reoccupied. Only a small number of ancient empires survived and they were besieged by the military Sea Peoples who wreaked havoc along the Mediterranean coast.

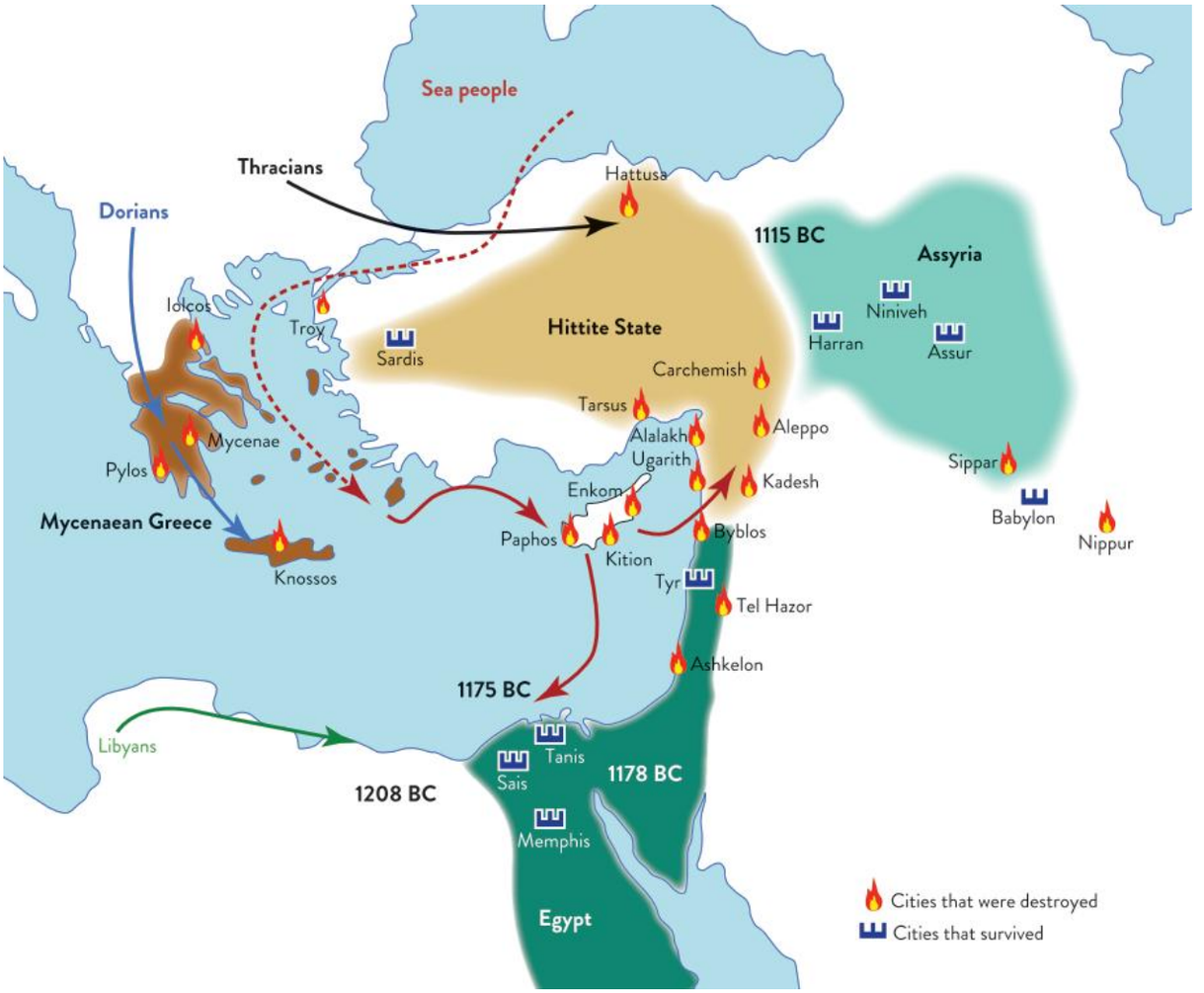

FIGURE 2.10 A map showing the impact of the Bronze Age Collapse on cities/empires. The double black images on the map represent successful invasions by the Sea Peoples. With the collapse of the Bronze Age what impact would the massive changes have on the religions of the peoples in conquered lands?

Around the time of the Bronze Age Collapse and continuing until 500 BCE depending on the region, the technology to smelt iron ushered in the Iron Age. This gave communities with that technology, such as the Sea Peoples or Philistines of the Bible, an advantage over those with bronze and stone tools and weapons. Iron was harder than bronze and was readily available. It was used widely because of its strength and versatility for household pots and dishes, as well as farm tools such as axes and chisels.

Religious ideas at the time include pantheons of deities which were intimately connected to human activities and with which humans could easily interact. Gods were not only patrons of natural elements but now became the patrons of various technologies as well. The religious leaders of this age mediated between the realm of the gods and Earth by various means of divination; for example, they read animal entrails and observed flight patterns of birds. It was into this era that Egyptian polytheism, Vedic religion, Zoroastrianism and the story of the Jewish people is interwoven.

PANTHEON OF GODS

Skills: identify, explain

1 What obligations did humans have to the gods?
2 What role did the gods play in the human understanding of the world?
3 What characteristics of nature, humans and animals did these gods exhibit?
4 Why did humans **anthropomorphise** the gods?

The Bronze Age Collapse was a period of extraordinary environmental chaos caused by earthquakes, drought, mass migrations, ironworking, changes in warfare and raiders, which produced social turmoil. This led to a tumultuous time for the Hebrew people. However, out of this pain gradually emerged the nation of Israel.

The history of the Jewish people began around 1800 BCE. In the biblical book of Genesis, the first book in the Bible, are the earliest stories of the origins of the Jewish people. These stories, mostly in the genres of myths and legends, give narrators and listeners a sense of time and place in the universe. Those memories have contributed to the shaping of Western civilisation.

Their story began with Abram, later renamed Abraham (Genesis 17:5), called by his god to leave his homeland Mesopotamia to undertake a journey to a new land. Abraham's clan was one of many nomadic peoples whose movement may have been precipitated by the collapse of food production. Like other nomads he believed he travelled with the protection of his special deity. During Abraham's journey of trust guided by his god, there emerged two particular features of what would become the Israelite religion. Although the ancient practice of sacrifice remained, human sacrifice was rejected. Circumcision which was practised in ancient Egypt and by other peoples was given a new significance (Genesis 17:10–14); it became the symbol of membership of God's treasured people (Deuteronomy 7:6). Both of these religious features marked the Israelites as different from surrounding peoples.

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FIGURE 2.11 A Semitic language speaking people, possibly Habiru in an Egyptian cave picture depicting a group of nomads from Canaan travelling to Egypt around 1700 BCE. What does this mural suggest about the nature and scale of the Hebrew migration to ancient Egypt?

The experiences of Abraham's family Isaac, Jacob (later named Israel), Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah are the stories of the founding generations of the Jewish people. Their descendants' journey to Egypt during famine in Canaan and Joseph's rise to power there is the prelude to the story of enslavement of the Hebrews. Central to the narrative of the Jewish people is the story of Moses the lawgiver, who led his followers out of slavery and into the desert of Sinai where he received the Torah on their behalf. God's redemptive power as displayed in the Exodus narrative is a foundational theme in Judaism, remembered and expanded upon in daily prayers, on the Sabbath and festivals.

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FIGURE 2.12 A model of the ancient Israelite mobile Tabernacle at Timna Valley Park, Israel. Similar mobile sacred tents were used across the region by other peoples. What does the mobile tabernacle indicate about the ancient Israelites' understanding of their relationship with their god?

The Israelites, like the peoples of surrounding countries, retained early recollections of nomadic existence and traces of the ancient gods El, El Shadai, El Elyon and local sacred sites, groves and altars. There are textual memories of ancient events, poetry and myths, heroes and prophets (male and female). At the same time, the Israelites saw themselves in an eternal Covenant (Genesis 17:7) that bound them to the deity of their forefathers. Their belief in one god over others is implied in the Israelites' song of praise after escaping the Egyptian armies by crossing the Red Sea: 'Who is like You, O LORD, among the celestial beings?' (Exodus 15:10).

During their nomadic existence between leaving Egypt and settling in Canaan, the Hebrews travelled with a mobile *mishkan* (tabernacle or tent of the congregation) and a portable ark of the Covenant, a gold-encased wooden chest containing the two stone tablets of the Ten Commandments, symbolic of God's earthly dwelling place. After the settlement and conquest of the Land of Canaan, 300 years of the tribal era followed. Around 1200 BCE to 1100 BCE the mythical and cultic stories about local gods from the various tribes were combined into epic stories about a people in a special relationship with their deity as the Chosen People (Deuteronomy 7:6). It was also the time of prophets, seers, priests and judges, when a distinct Hebrew language literary tradition emerged, unifying the people with their common religious history.

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FIGURE 2.13 Stele of Pharaoh Merneptah, ruler of Ancient Egypt 1213–1203 BCE. Evidence of the early settlement of the Hebrews in Israel appears on this stone slab monument, 'Israel is no more, his seed is not'. This stele is one of the earliest textual references to Israel. The last three lines of the text deal with Merneptah's victory campaign in Canaan, then part of the Egyptian empire. Israel may refer to a territory, a people, or the two may be simultaneously entwined. Why would ancient kings want to inscribe on a stone tablet? What evidence is there that the text about Israel was not literally true?

The importance of The Land in God's promise to Abraham's descendants was a central motivation to the Israelite tribes' reclamation of the ancestral lands of Abraham and Jacob in the conquest of Canaan. They would earn, retain or lose The Land dependent upon their ethical behaviour (as proclaimed, for example, in Deuteronomy 11) according to their Covenant with their god, revealed at Mt Sinai, also known as Mt Horeb.

Once settled in the Promised Land, initially the Israelites had no monarchy, unlike surrounding peoples. Power was placed in the hands of Prophets and Judges who advised on all areas of religious law and ethics, advising leaders on battle plans and politics. They applied another feature of Israelite religion, developed during this time, the idea of justice which applied to all – even kings were punished under God's Law. Leaders, priests and kings were not divine nor demi-gods as most ancient rulers described themselves. The heroes of the Israelite religion were everyday people who were flawed individuals. A further religious idea was that any losses in war were due to the king or the Israelites abandoning God's Torah teachings, and not that their deity was weaker than their enemies' gods as other ancient peoples believed. The period of the Judges eventually yielded power to kings, but with a significant difference. While other ancient kings were considered to be semi-divine, Israel's kings were recorded as imperfect humans with character weaknesses.

The early kings of Israel emerged between c. 1050 and c. 930 BCE. The first king, Saul, was anointed by the prophet Samuel after the people cried to be like other nations (1 Samuel 8:5–20). The second king, David, founded the Judaean dynasty and unified the empire. King David's son Solomon made Israel a centre for trade and imported goods from around the ancient world. Sparing no expense, Solomon's magnificent Temple in Jerusalem, completed in 957 BCE, was built so that 'all the peoples of the Earth may know that the LORD alone is God, there is no other' (1 Kings 8:60). It became one of the wonders of the ancient world. Thus, Israel under Solomon enjoyed great commercial prosperity, trading with many countries as far as Egypt and South India. He also cemented treaties with neighbouring peoples by marrying foreign princesses, which as a result encouraged foreign influences and prevented them from attacking his kingdom. The expansion and marriage policies of both David and Solomon opened Israel to foreign economic and cultural influences, including pagan religions.

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FIGURES 2.14 AND 2.15 Exterior and interior representations of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem, completed in 957 BCE and destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BCE. Based on the details described in the Bible in 1 Kings 7. What would impress a visitor to the temple of Solomon? What opinion might a visitor form about the God of Israel?

A major religious reformation occurred in 621 BCE under King Josiah with the 'discovery' of a scroll of believed to be of Deuteronomy (2 Kings 22–23; 2 Chronicles 34). He centralised worship at the Jerusalem sanctuary, removed worship of other gods and emphasised YHVH (Yahweh) as the official deity.

Despite the centrality of the Covenant, as the nation developed from a tribal society to nationhood with a central government led by kings, there were numerous times when the Israelites were unfaithful. During those times various prophets such as Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Amos and Micah, emerged to address the betrayal of the Israelites, accusing them of disloyalty to their one deity by worshipping others as well. The prophets offered guidance but they were often ignored and usually resented.

ANCIENT NARRATIVES AND TRUTH

Skills: synthesis, interpretation, extrapolation

1. Although many of the early narratives in the Pentateuch are myths and legends, what lessons or values might the readers of these biblical stories gain from them?
2. What elements of ancient societies influenced or are reflected in early Jewish religion?
3. How has the religious idea of the Covenant influenced the development of the social structure of Israel in this period and the role of the nation's kings?
4. How have historical research and archaeology assisted in understanding the biblical narratives further?
5. Does it matter if the biblical narratives are not literally true? How might it affect an adherent's faith?

AXIAL AGE, 800s–200s BCE: OVERVIEW

During this period vast trade networks developed with various means of exchange including coinage. There was also an explosion of intellectual activity around the world. Reality was subjected to greater critical enquiry. The religious idea of reward moved from the short term in this life, to the long term in the spiritual life. There was a shift from oral tradition to written text.

From the writings of the ancient thinkers in this period modern readers can discern similarities in the matters of concern across a range of cultures and geographic locations at the time, and also see parallels with our contemporary thinking and understanding.

Many of the religions and ideas that exist today originated or developed significantly during this period.

- In India, life and afterlife became interdependent as the idea of karma developed. Life, death and reincarnation became a cycle, with liberation from the cycle dependent on choices made by the individual.
- In China, philosopher Lao Tzu (c. 500 BCE) began teaching what became Taoism. He taught that there exists the Dao (the Way to find balance in times when political conflict causes uncertainty, as it did in times of dynastic change. There are cosmic forces that flow through all things and peace is found by not resisting these forces. The purpose of life is to live in harmony with the Earth.
- In Persia, Zoroastrians challenged the polytheistic worldview by following only Ahura Mazda. They saw the vicissitudes of life as a reflection of a cosmic battle between light and dark, goodness and evil. The human person's challenge was to live a life pervaded by good thoughts, deeds and acts. For those who used their free will to live ethically, their reward was to cross the bridge into paradise.
- In Israel, during this era of judges and kings, they came to understand that their unique Covenant with God was not just a tribal one but a national bond demanding justice and ethics.

- In Greece – an innovative and wealthy nation exploring its role in the world – after defeating the Persians, Greece moved away from war towards solving conflict through rhetoric and reason. This civilised approach was reflected in the development of the arts, mathematics, architecture and philosophy. Instead of observing the whims of the unpredictable gods, the purpose of life was to seek truth and to live ethically. 'The unexamined life is not worth living', taught Greek philosopher Socrates.

All of these were paths to answering essentially the same existential questions that impacted on the relationship between states, the individual's relationship with other community members and the world beyond the earthly. These approaches dealt with moral virtues, ethical principles and the implications for an afterlife. It was the universal scope of these ideas that gave this age its distinctive character.

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FIGURE 2.16 The Greek gods of Olympus, a painting by the school of Raphael. What is god-like about the depicted figures?

DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIOUS THINKING
Skills: identify, describe, explain

1 What shifts in religious thinking marked this Axial Age?
2 How did these differ from the previous eras?

AXIAL AGE, 800s–200s BCE: THE JEWISH EXPERIENCE

During the early part of the Axial Age, Israel developed into a theocracy – a people religiously ruled by judges, priests and prophets. After the establishment of the monarchy, the sovereignty of God was symbolised by the Temple in the holy city, Jerusalem. The power structure of Israel operated under the ideal that 'all are equal under God's law', even the kings. The biblical prophets frequently berated the Israelite kings for their wrongful actions. An example is the prophet Nathan berating King David for his duplicitous pursuit of Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 12:1–13.

Throughout this period the two kingdoms, Israel in the north and Judah in the south, fluctuated between observance of the Covenant and ignoring it in preference for various pagan cults of their neighbours. Both kingdoms fell to foreign invaders, interpreted by the prophets as God's wrath for their lack of faith (see Jeremiah 2 and Hosea 4). Only the southern kingdom would be restored as the homeland and nation.

When the northern kingdom of Israel was captured by the Assyrians in 722 BCE, thousands of Israelites were sent into exile and were lost to history. Judah survived alone until 586 BCE when Jerusalem and its Temple were destroyed and the Babylonian exile began. There was a dramatic difference between the two exiles. The Judean exiles took with them a concept of Covenant and the sacred teachings which would survive that exile.

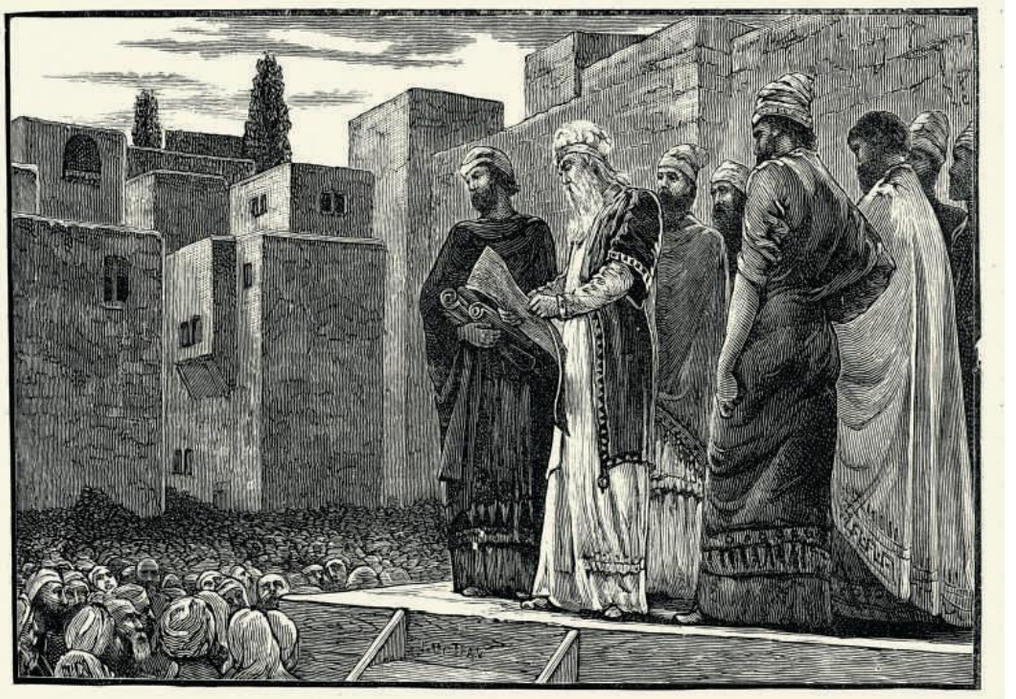
The impact of successive foreign invasions significantly changed the way that the Judeans understood and practised their religion. In 586 BCE the large-scale Babylonian destruction of Judah, Jerusalem and the Temple as well as the exile of many Judeans finally eliminated remaining local and tribal distinctions. Both for the Babylonian exiles and those Judeans remaining in the land, sacrifices were gradually replaced with prayers and communal gatherings.

The influence of Babylonian pagan religion both enhanced and endangered the religious identity of the exiled Judeans. The Babylonian lunar calendar months are still observed by Jews today. Celebrating *Shabbat* (Sabbath) now took on a greater importance than *Rosh Chodesh* (New Moon). The exiles realised that they were still able to worship God in exile and produced a new theology divorced from the Holy Land and its sites. Their possible assimilation into the cosmopolitan Babylonian culture galvanised the scribes in exile to begin writing down the text of the stories of their religious history to ensure its endurance. From this point on, the nomenclature 'Jews' applies to this people rather than 'Israelites' or 'Judeans' since the basic precepts and tradition of Judaism were now firmly in place without being based on residence in the Land of Israel.

FIGURE 2.17 Map of the journeys of the earlier 722 BCE Assyrian captives (in purple) and later 586 BCE Judean exiles to Babylon (in green). Why would the conquerors import foreigners into Israel to replace the Jewish exiles? What might be the result of this mixing of cultures on religious beliefs?

The Written Torah was composed by the scribes from the memorised oral traditions. The biblical books of the Pentateuch were now in written form. Although these texts drew on earlier oral traditions, the scribes also provided discussion and interpretation to assist in their adaptation to their new circumstances as they sought to answer universal existential and moral questions. Now that there was a written constitution – the Torah – the Jewish prophetic era began to come to an end.

After Persia conquered Babylon (539 BCE) circumstances again changed for the Judean exiles. The Persian king Cyrus the Great gave Ezra, a scribe, permission to return with a small contingent of exiles and those who had remained in The Land to re-establish Judean life and rebuild a modest temple in Jerusalem. By now the Jewish religion had moved from the mythical and cultic to a new emphasis on strict monotheism and legal provisions. Ezra innovated public weekly Torah readings in the marketplace and established a religious revival, strictly reminding the returnees of their Covenant obligations as their observance had become lax. He stressed ritual purity, rejecting intermarriage with non-Jews, foreign deities and idolatrous practices. These changes caused friction and ill-will between the returnee Judeans and the monotheistic **Samaritans** who were resident in the land previously occupied by the exiled northern tribes. Ezra refused to allow the new temple to be shared with these non-Judeans contaminated by foreign cults. A century later the Samaritans built their own temple on Mount Gerizim in the north and wrote their independent version of the Torah.



EZRA READING THE LAW TO THE JEWS.

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FIGURE 2.18 Ezra the scribe reading the law to the returnees. What is indicated about the society of that time that Ezra is reading the Torah to the Jews in the marketplace?

CHANGING JUDAISM

Skills: interpret, explain

1 Explain how changing circumstances in this period lead to developments in Jewish law and practice.

AXIAL AGE, 800s–200s BCE: THE INDIAN EXPERIENCE

In the 600s BCE the religious ideas of Buddhism proposed that life was in perpetual change and that humans should accept this flow of life, taking responsibility for their own destiny. To live such a life Buddhism taught compassion, charity, self-sacrifice, truthfulness and control of passions as the ways to achieve a good life and achieve release from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. These ideas offered a dramatic change to the understanding of the human individual and of society in India.

Buddhism rejected significant features of the existing Hindu religion of India:

- the existing Brahmanic idea of the caste system, creating a static society broken into separate social groups based on birth, status and related occupation
- the many and elaborate ideas of ultimate reality
- the many and complex rituals, including animal sacrifice, with the related privileged priestly caste to enact the rituals
- conserving, that is keeping things the same.

Buddhism proposed a society that was totally equal and just. It promoted practical education of the whole person, emphasising attaining wisdom and taking action related to social welfare. Radically for the Indian society of the time, Buddhism included women in such education.

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FIGURE 2.19 Stone Buddha head at the mountain near Gokarna, Karnataka, India. An unusual representation of Buddha, showing an interpretation of him by local rural people. What does this carving suggest about the man and the application of his ideas? Which aspects are at work here?

THE RISE OF BUDDHISM

Skills: identify, explain, analyse

1. Draw a table listing each of the changes Buddhism made to Hinduism (one per line in a column) and in the second column draw conclusions about what impact each of these changes would have had on the expression of religious beliefs for people moving from Hinduism to Buddhism.
2. How would Buddhist ideas alter the role of religious leaders in society?
3. What 'Big Questions' would Buddhism be addressing that made it attractive to people at the time?

AXIAL AGE, 800s–200s BCE: THE CHINA EXPERIENCE

The Axial Age in China (530–221 BCE) shared with other parts of the world the precursor of wars, which brought social, political, economic and spiritual upheaval. In re-establishing their society, the Chinese were guided by an ethical principle from a much earlier age of the Zhou dynasty (1045 BCE), the Mandate of Heaven. This decree claimed that the king, sole ruler of the Chinese people, was the earthly representative of heaven, maintaining harmony between heaven and Earth, which the Chinese believed were co-equal and divine. He did this by strictly following tradition in ritual duties so that stability on Earth and in heaven was maintained.

Social stability was also assisted by the traditional belief that aggressors would be punished by the heavenly spirits whereas those who were moderate, and dutifully adhered to rules and ritual, would be rewarded. The king also had to be morally virtuous and just. The worldview of China was expressed in the worship of ancestors. Now abiding in heaven, all ancestors could still be reached by their earthly relatives through religious practices. This meant that ancestors had an ongoing involvement in earthly lives. When kings died they became supreme ancestors.

This ideal worked when the king's political and military power was dominant. But the system of awarding hereditary fiefdoms to tribal chiefs in exchange for military support gradually led to more frequent military challenges of other chieftains and eventually of the king.

By 500 BCE the ideas associated with the Heavenly Mandate were challenged. The traditional might and spiritual role of the king was diminished as aggressive chieftains seemed to be rewarded with success rather than punished by the heavenly spirits. The collapse of the Zhou dynasty plummeted China into unreservedly brutal warfare. No longer just warriors but whole populations were targeted by the chieftains competing for military dominance of China. The harmony between Heaven and Earth was gone until a new warlord or chieftain achieved the Mandate of Heaven and established a new dynasty. This system operated for over two millennia and facilitated the rise and fall of a number of dynasties.

Certainly the demands of conducting war stimulated the economy and creativity, particularly in developing new weaponry and improved methods of food production. But the general population was also depleted, demoralised and impoverished. The Chinese form of feudalism, which provided security in establishing everyone's place in society, collapsed. The major section of the population, the peasants, were particularly negatively affected. The new irrigation and farming methods combined with loss of land and the protection of traditional chieftains, forced many peasants into indentured labour, contracted to work without pay for a designated period.

During this time of war and dramatic social change the sages and philosophers of China attempted to maintain the ideas of moral virtue and justice by extending them to all the people through emphasis on living as a morally responsible individual, selflessly rather than selfishly. This movement has been called 'The Hundred Schools of Thought', including Confucianism and Taoism. A prominent leader in this attempt to change the worldview of the Chinese people was Confucius (551–479 BCE). He taught a return to the traditional values of the teachings in the Mandate of Heaven, emphasising that development of a personal morality was essential in order to live those values.

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FIGURE 2.20
Confucius, Chinese Axial Age philosopher, conferring with dukes of the Chinese states. Chinese drawing. Despite the chaos of the ongoing military conflicts between the dukes of the Chinese states, what teaching of Confucius might also concern these rulers?

RELIGION IN ANCIENT CHINA
Skills: identify, explain, analyse

1 In what ways did spiritual ideas enhance the lives of people in China in the Axial Age?
2 In what ways did spiritual ideas bring suffering for people in China in the Axial Age?
3 What conclusions can be drawn about the relationship between beliefs and political power from your observations?
4 What was/were the fundamental ethic/s that remain/s consistent in Chinese spirituality throughout the Axial Age and how would these have aided the resilience of spiritual ideas?

AXIAL AGE, 800s–200s BCE: THE PERSIAN EXPERIENCE

The religions of the Iranian peoples who would become part of the Persian Empire, were originally polytheistic. They worshipped Ahura Mazda (Lord of Wisdom) as the chief creator deity and the emperors became his representatives. A major ritual of the ancient Iranians was praising the gods in worship while consuming the mind-altering drug haoma.

In the 500s BCE the mighty Persian Empire replaced paganism with monotheistic Zoroastrianism. This faith was based on the earlier teachings of the prophet Zoroaster (also known as Zarathustra and Zartosht). He held the notion of dualism – that two opposing forces exist – but believed in the goodness of humans to overcome evil forces in the universe.

Zoroastrianism reworked the earlier polytheistic deities into a monotheistic system. Former gods and goddesses were now understood as emanations of the one true god Ahura Mazda. Zoroaster encouraged people to live according to the simple dictum of 'Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds'. As a result of these ideas, the Persian Empire never persecuted those of other faiths. Zoroastrianism was the state religion of Persian dynasties from the 600s BCE, until the Muslim conquest of Persia in 651 CE.

Truth was a vital aspect of Persian culture and the Persian word for truth (*asa* or *arta*) appears in a number of Persian names such as that of King Artaxerxes who ruled from 465 BCE to 424 BCE. The House of Lies was the Persian version of hell. Another feature of the Persian culture was the high value they gave to dogs, such that one's final destination in the afterlife was partly determined by how well or poorly one had treated dogs.

The notion of fatalism, that one faced inevitable death no matter what one did, led to the Persian cultural value of enjoying life while one can and making each day a celebration. This was expressed with a festival honouring the king's birth, but the concept eventually expanded to include everyone having a birthday party. Special

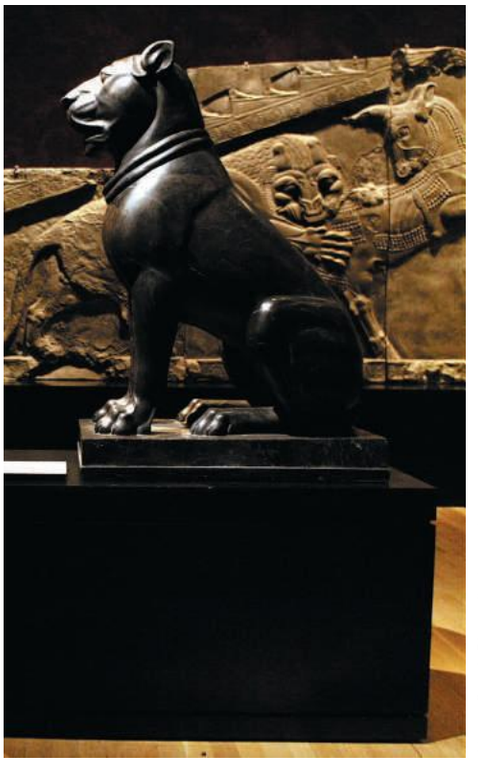

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FIGURE 2.21 Polished black limestone statue of a large mastiff from Persia (c. 300–600 BCE). The ancient Persians used Mastiffs to protect flocks against wolves and jackals and even took the dogs into battle. What does this statue indicate about the mastiff's role in the Persian household?

foods were prepared for the guest of honour including the concept of dessert and a cake served after the meal with lighted candles. This custom was criticised by the conquering Greeks as barbaric.

The Persians had an oral tradition of transmitting information and many of the written records that may have existed were destroyed by Alexander the Great when he burned the capital city of Persepolis in 330 BCE. Much of what we know about the early Persians from the later Greeks and Indo-Aryan peoples.

ANCIENT ZOROASTRIANISM

Skills: research, describe, interpret

1 Zoroastrianism is a living religion found today across many nations. Research:
   a how this belief system was handed down through generations to find its way to India
   b the ideas of a famous Zoroastrian
   c how Zoroastrianism has adapted to survive in the modern world.

AXIAL AGE, 800s–200s BCE: THE GREEK EXPERIENCE

Ancient Greek theology was a polytheistic pantheon of many gods and goddesses, as well as various lesser supernatural beings. There was a hierarchy of deities on Mount Olympus with Zeus as the king of the gods, although he was not all-powerful. The ancient Greeks believed the gods could influence human affairs and responded to acts of devotion and worship. The gods were patrons of the arts and technology as well as controlling the forces of nature and human beings. The religion was personal so not only temples but also the hearth in private homes was regarded as sacred. Formal rituals included animal sacrifices and libations (drink poured out as an offering to a deity). They built sacred sites, grand temples, held city festivals and conducted national sporting and artistic competitions to express their religious ideas in every part of their lives.

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FIGURE 2.22 On this ancient coin from Athens, c. 510–500/490 BCE, is an image of Athena on one side and an olive sprig, owl and initials for Athens on the reverse. In Greek mythology, a little owl traditionally represented or accompanied Athena. What characteristics of the goddess Athena are suggested on this coin?

Their myths explained the origins of humanity and gave the gods a human face. In Greek literature and art, the gods resemble humans in body and character – both good and bad. They married, had children, fought, and in the stories of Greek mythology they directly intervened in human affairs. Gods were patrons of cities, for example, Aphrodite for Corinth and Helios for Rhodes. Deities were called upon for help such as Ares during war and Hera for weddings. Even rivers and springs were personified as the minor female nature deities, nymphs.

The Greeks sacrificed pigs, sheep, goats or cows and always of the same sex as the god that was being honoured. The meat was then either burnt completely or cooked, with part offered to the deity and the rest eaten by the worshippers or taken away to be eaten later. Rituals included examining the entrails of sacrificed animals to determine signs predicting future events. Priests arranged the religious ceremonies and pronounced prayers but were not theological experts. Women could also be priests as sometimes the priest was the same sex as the god they represented. Places could also be considered particularly good to receive signs from the gods such as the great

Marie-Lan Nguyen/Wikimedia Commons/CC BY 2.5

FIGURE 2.23 Etruscan red-figure vase 420–400 BCE depicting Olympian gods, from left to right: Apollo, Zeus and Hera. What indicates that Zeus is the chief deity? What indications are there that these are deities, not humans?

oracles of Apollo at Delphi where a priestess delivered messages from the god Apollo to those who wished for advice. These ideas were adopted by the Romans in their use of Hellenistic culture.

During the 600s–400s BCE there were a number of Greek philosopher scientists who – while not hostile to the polytheistic religion, mythology and practices of their society – sought different explanations for the cosmos. Their ideas and discoveries changed the way of looking at the world for their society and for centuries beyond. Here are some of these thinkers who developed explanations for physical phenomena based on reason and research rather than religious belief and mythology.

- Thales of Miletus (624–560 BCE), Anaximander (610–545 BCE), and Anaximenes (570–500 BCE) proposed theories that could be tested and debated, about how natural causes could explain natural phenomena. Thales proposed that earthquakes were caused by disturbances in the oceans. Anaximander suggested that lightning was caused by the activity of wind in the clouds. Anaximenes held that the rainbow resulted from rays of the sun falling on clouds and moisture.
- Pythagoras (c. 570–c. 490 BCE) proposed mathematical theories that moved numbers beyond the physical into abstract ideas, developing the concept of mathematical proof and linking mathematics with physics.
- Xenophanes of Colophon (560–478 BCE) proposed a divine unity of the world and its connection to one God: 'The all is one and the one is God'.
- Cleisthenes developed Demokratia (570–508 BCE) a democratic system of voting by the masses using coloured pebbles and later coloured shards of pottery.
- Heraclitus (535–475 BCE) proposed that reality is divinely ordered according to the Logos (The Word), that is, it behaves in ways predictable to mathematics and science.
- Hippocrates of Cos (460–370 BCE) rejected magic and proposed the theory that diseases had natural, rational causes and so could be treated but, as Greek society did not approve of human dissection, the Hippocratics had limited knowledge of anatomy and physiology.

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FIGURE 2.24 Hand-coloured woodcut of Pythagoras, an ancient Greek philosopher and mathematician. What do the hand gestures in this woodcut of Pythagoras indicate about his interests?

- Democritus (470–380 BCE) suggested that all matter was composed of atoms, small indivisible particles existing in a void and it was their movement which caused visible changes. He made the distinction between perception and actuality.
- Plato (427–348 BC) took a theoretical approach to science developing the idea of an ordered, mathematically structured universe.
- Aristotle (384–322 BC) took an empirical approach (verifiable by observation or experience) to his investigations into biology, physics, cosmology, meteorology and philosophy.
- Aristarchus of Samos (310–230 BCE) proposed that the fire at the centre of the solar system was the sun. His theory became one of the early models of the heliocentric solar system.

Although many of their ideas have had long lasting influence, in their own time there were few who could follow their thinking and they had little impact on the religious beliefs and practices of the Greek society of the Axial Age.

EARLY PHILOSOPHICAL IDEAS

Skills: identify, research, correlate

1. What new ideas developed under the ancient Greeks?
2. How are the ideas of Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes similar to or different from the powers of the gods Iris, Zeus or Poseidon, who were previously deemed responsible for such phenomena?
3. What is the relationship between philosophy and religious thought in Greece at this time?

CLASSICAL AGE, 300s BCE–500s CE: OVERVIEW

There were significant changes and developments across the world during this period. In China, invading Tartars (nomadic horsemen) broke through the Han Empire's Great Wall. Christianity moved from a clandestine mystery cult to a legalised mainstream religion under Emperor Constantine, later becoming the Roman Empire's official religion under Emperor Theodosius I. The Christian Creeds, such as the Apostles and the Nicean, were developed in this period and gave a structure to the significant beliefs of Christianity, sustaining it to this day. In 476 CE the last Roman Emperor in the West yielded to German Barbarians signifying the end of the Roman Empire, while in the East the Byzantine Empire continued. Judaism spent these

centuries expounding and compiling oral traditions into the volumes of the Talmud, which became vital texts of rabbinic Judaism for the following millennia. In England the pagan Saxon invaders gradually converted to Christianity and their pagan festivals were adapted into the Christian festive calendar. In Asia, Indian administration and Hinduism expanded all the way to Java, Indonesia. Buddhist monasteries spread in China along the routes of the Silk Road.

CLASSICAL AGE, 300s BCE–500s CE: THE JEWISH EXPERIENCE

Under Greek rule from the mid-300s BCE, Israel – called Judea – was strongly influenced by Hellenistic culture and its residents were required to acknowledge the godly status of the Greek kings and worship their deities. The culture of Ancient Hellas or Greece was exciting and intellectually advanced. Many *Ioudaios* (Greek Jews) found it highly appealing, joining in festivals and many sought to give up the Israelite folk culture for a more cosmopolitan Hellenic one.

The intrusion of Hellenism into the Judean society eventually led to the 167–160 BCE Maccabean Revolt against Greek Seleucid rulers governing Judea and their desecration of the Holy Temple by turning it into a temple for Zeus. The Maccabees made a new rule that Jews could bear arms and fight even on the Sabbath in this 'Holy War'. The Maccabees won, eventually restoring Judean religious autonomy. The Temple again became the spiritual and political centre of Judea from 140 to 37 BCE. Judea was now ruled by the Hasmonean dynasty, descendants of the Maccabean family. These kings broke the traditional monarchical link to the House of David and caused societal unrest.

THE MACCABEAN REVOLT

Skills: research, identify, explain, analyse

1. Research the links of the Jewish festival of Chanukah to the story of the Maccabean rebellion in 167–160 BCE against the Hellenistic Seleucid Empire.
2. What features of the Greek Hellenist culture were considered anathemas (detested) by Judaism and its ethics?
3. Which texts, rituals, symbols and liturgy express the teachings of Chanukah?
4. What spiritual experiences enhance the Chanukah celebration of the victorious Maccabean Revolt?

By 4 BCE, as part of the expanding Roman Empire, Judea became a Roman province ruled by King Herod I, also known as Herod the Great, a Jewish ruler (though not fully Jewish) who was an ally and friend of the Romans. He lavishly rebuilt the Jerusalem Temple but also encouraged Hellenistic culture. Herod was hated by the Jews for his cruelty, lack of sympathy for the people of Judea and especially that he and his family were not of the Davidic dynasty, the proclaimed bloodline of the future messiah.

In the Roman period the *Sanhedrin*, a religious council of 23 elders, developed in each city in Judea as a tribunal to decide on local questions of civil and religious legislation. The Great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, a court of 71 elders, was the final authority on Jewish law dealing with religious and ritualistic matters.

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FIGURE 2.25 Ruins of an ancient synagogue in Hamat Gader, Israel. Which details of the synagogue display Roman influence in its design?

The Roman occupation of Judea was a time of ferment during which several new Jewish sects emerged:

- The Pharisees (from the Hebrew 'separatists' or 'interpreters') were a political party, a social movement, as well as a school of thought made up of scholars from among the common people. They put emphasis on analysis of Jewish texts rather than cultic practices, and on study of the Torah for all rather than those of hereditary priestly succession. The Pharisees in their interpretations included the Written Law (the Pentateuch) and the Oral Law (statutes and legal interpretations that were not recorded in the Pentateuch). They developed new religious rituals and practices based on their interpretation of Scripture making it more accessible to all, and met in a synagogue (Greek for a house of assembly), which was their place of worship, study and prayer. The Pharisees believed in resurrection and life after death.
- The Sadducees were the priestly party mainly made up of aristocratic Judeans whose religious practice centred on the Temple, priestly authority and sacrificial practices officiated by the High Priest. They interpreted the Bible literally, rejecting the oral tradition and supernatural notions such as afterlife and the messiah.
- The Zealots opposed the pagan, polytheistic Roman rulers of Judea and were uncompromising, fanatical enforcers of Jewish law. They used incited violence against the Roman Empire to meet their goals, even killing those Jews whom they deemed sinful by following a Hellenistic lifestyle and not circumcising their sons. Extremists among the Zealots known as Sicarii (from the Greek for 'dagger men') turned to terrorism and assassination.

- The Essenes, 'the modest ones' or 'the silent ones' in Hebrew, were a mystic, monastic sect, who sought refuge in the desert at Qumran, refusing to participate in public life and fastidiously observing the Torah, Sabbath and ritual purity. They believed in immortality and divine punishment for sin. They were sustained by their messianic belief in a promised *Moreh Tzedek*, Teacher of Righteousness, who would bring future salvation. Portions of their library have been found in caves overlooking the Dead Sea and include 2000-year-old scrolls preserving biblical manuscripts and previously unknown psalms, letters and a community code of conduct.

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FIGURE 2.26 The Dead Sea Scrolls collected by the Essenes were found in these caves at Qumran in a remote part of the Judean Desert. Why did they choose to isolate themselves from Judean life?

JEWISH SECTS IN ROMAN JUDEA

Skills: research, identify, explain, create

1 Write a dialogue between four Judeans – a Sadducee, a Pharisee, an Essene and a Zealot – in the era of Roman dominance, discussing how to deal with Rome's oppression of their beliefs, each arguing their religious and political views. This could also be role-played in front of the class.

The catastrophe of the total destruction of the Second Temple and Jerusalem in 70 CE by the Roman army under Titus was a major turning point in the Jewish religion. Over one million Jews died and many survivors were scattered throughout the Persian and Roman Empires. The dispersion of the Jews into other countries became known as the **diaspora**. The destroyed

Temple could no longer be central to Jewish worship. The region was renamed Syria Palaestina by Emperor Hadrian after the ancient enemies of the Jews, the Assyrians and Philistines. Long-held ideas about God's everlasting covenant relationship with His people, the eternal divine pact of the Promised Land and the inviolability of Jerusalem as God's dwelling place were abruptly overturned, although throughout Syria Palaestina and the world Jews continued to orientate their prayers to Jerusalem and pray for their redemption to Eretz Israel (the land of Israel) and the restoration of the Temple. Traditions were put in place so as to never forget Jerusalem and Israel. An example of such a tradition is the Jewish groom smashing a glass underfoot on his wedding day to recall the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and to demonstrate that marriage holds sorrow as well as joy.

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FIGURE 2.27 Engraving of the destruction of Jerusalem carved into the Arch of Titus in Rome. It displays triumphant Roman soldiers carrying off sacred objects from Herod's Temple. What impact would the removal of these sacred objects have upon the spirituality of the Jewish people of that time?

As Jerusalem was destroyed and Jews forbidden to set foot on the Temple Mount, the focus of Jewish life for the survivors who remained in The Land became the south-eastern town of Yavneh where a religious council, led by Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai, tried to adjust to the loss of Jewish authority. This shift began the rabbinic era when prayer and study of the Torah literally replaced the Temple and sacrifices.

Both in Greek and Roman times Jews of the Hellenistic Empire spoke and wrote mainly Greek and took on Hellenistic names and culture. Whereas Jews in the land of Judea, Egypt and Babylonia (Persia) spoke Aramaic, a language similar to Hebrew. Greek language and culture became the dominant influence of the educated classes while Hebrew, became the language of scholars. Over three million Jews lived throughout the Roman Empire, which allowed them freedom of religion and other special provisions such as administering their own finances. Although social, legal and political conditions varied across the Roman Empire, Jews could establish their own academies of learning, places of worship and conduct internal legal autonomy. Each Jewish community had its own civil and religious officials. When local authorities restricted these activities, the Jewish community

would appeal to Rome. They were even absolved from emperor worship, which was compelled on the pagans under Roman rule.

Many Jews in the diaspora made pilgrimage to Jerusalem, but for those who could not travel so far synagogues were created. The community gathered in a specially dedicated building, praying facing Jerusalem to recite psalms and prayers and study sacred texts. An Ark would remind worshippers of the long lost Holy of Holies in the Temple. The synagogue would be decorated with mosaics on the floor and murals on the walls. There were synagogues in Jerusalem and in the north of Israel as well as throughout the Jewish diaspora. Thus the development of the synagogue outside Judea contributed to making the Judaic worship of God universal.

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FIGURE 2.28 A synagogue ark. The holy scrolls of the Torah are housed in an ornate ark inside the synagogue. The design of the ark, its structure and the scroll coverings can vary greatly across communities and time. How is the importance of the Torah scrolls emphasised by placing them in an ark?

THE DEVELOPMENT OF JUDAISM IN THE DIASPORA

Skills: identify, explain, analyse

1 What religious rituals and laws could no longer be practised outside the Holy Land?

2 How did the Jews adapt their religious practices in the diaspora?

The Septuagint, the earliest Greek translation of the Hebrew Torah (Pentateuch) was made for the Jewish community in Egypt around the mid-200s BCE when Greek was the common language throughout the region. A century later the rest of the biblical books were also translated into Greek. Its name, from the Latin *septuaginta* meaning 70, was derived from a legend that there were 72 translators, who worked independently yet ultimately produced identical versions. But when the early Greek-speaking Christians began using the Septuagint to locate the prophecies they claimed

were fulfilled by Jesus, the Jews felt this was a misuse of the holy text and stopped using the Septuagint altogether. With the spread of Early Christianity, this Septuagint was translated into Latin.

The Jews' reliance on the Bible unified them, enabling them to maintain their common monotheistic identity, ethics and rituals. Most of the books of the Bible were collected and formalised into the Jewish Bible in the Hellenistic period. This was a major factor in ensuring the survival of a distinct Jewish identity in their cosmopolitan environment. Many laws and rituals that related specifically to the Land of Israel itself, and conduct of the Temple, were no longer relevant or able to be observed.

All the changes mentioned above influenced the way Judaism evolved, especially the **Oral Torah**, both in exile and Judea from 0 to 500 CE. The scattered Jews now centred their religion on study of the Torah, adapting holy days, festivals, prayers, Jewish civil and ceremonial laws to suit their new environments and ensure their continuity. Long-held rabbinic oral interpretations of the Torah's religious laws and narratives were collected in Palestine, Alexandria in Egypt and Babylon to be recorded in the **Midrash**, c. 200 CE, the **Mishnah**, c. 200 CE and later in the **Talmud**, c. 500 CE. Rabbis in these different communities made local decisions based on their interpretation of the Torah and oral teachings. These were collected both in Judea and Babylon, forming the many volumes of the Jerusalem or Palestinian Talmud and the Babylonian Talmud, which often have different opinions and rulings yet are both seen as legitimate understandings of God's Law. As Jewish life spread to other countries and was influenced by new ideas from wider society, and as Christianity grew in influence in the Roman world, the rabbis felt the need to clearly define Jewish beliefs and practices; so these texts became the major basis for the interpretation and application of Jewish law and practices.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF JEWISH LAW

Skills: explain, interpret, analyse

1 Examine the following two sources on *Kedoshim*, the Holiness Code.

Bible: 'You shall not insult the deaf or place a stumbling block before the blind' (Leviticus 19:14 in Hebrew).

Rabbinic text: Sifra Kedoshim 3:13–14 (in Aramaic from c. 200 CE) interprets the above biblical verse to mean someone who has a blind spot.

2 Describe a scenario to demonstrate how the Leviticus 19:14 law might play out in real life.

3 How does the reference to 'a blind spot' further the meaning of the biblical verse? Give an example of how a person may be blind to something or someone.

4 Connect this ancient law to contemporary laws about accessibility for all beyond the deaf and the blind.

5 How does the specific injunction in Leviticus 19:14 fit in with the meaning of 'holiness' for the Jewish people?

After the fall of the Western Roman Empire (476 CE) Jews lived under Christian rule as Jewish settlement spread alongside Christianity from Rome, migrating to Germany and beyond. Jews were now living across North Africa, Egypt, Greece, Sicily, Sardinia, Italy, Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Syria, Lebanon and in the regions of Galilee and Judea ruled by the Byzantines.

Jews from Central and Eastern Europe, known as *Ashkenazim*, and Jews from Portugal, Spain, the Middle East and Northern Africa, called *Sefardim*, developed independent rabbinical schools of thought to deal with their varied circumstances. In most places they had freedom and generally prospered but usually had to pay special taxes. Judaism was mainly practised in private to avoid prejudice or mistreatment by government or church authorities. In some places they were nevertheless persecuted or were forced to convert to Christianity for their lack of acknowledgement

of Jesus as the messiah. For example, in 339 CE Roman Emperor Constantius II forbade Christian intermarriage with Jews. In 439 CE Emperor Theodosius II forbade Jews from building new synagogues or holding important positions in society.

While retaining their beliefs and traditions, these Jewish communities were nevertheless influenced by the cultures of the places in which they settled. But whatever vernacular they spoke, Hebrew remained the universal language of Jewish prayer and the Torah teachings were observed by adherents in all these places.

THE JEWISH DIASPORA

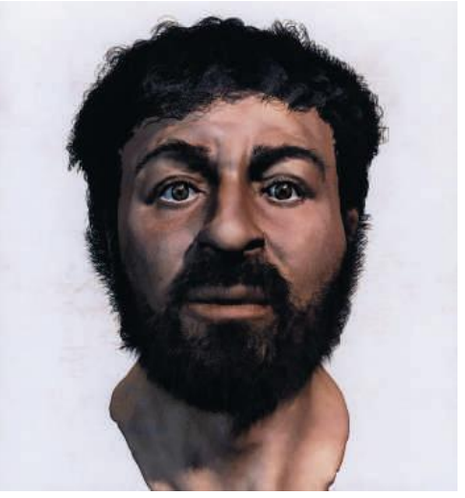
Skills: describe, explain, analyse

1. How did the Jewish diaspora become so widespread after the Roman destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem?
2. To what extent were Jews accepted in the lands they settled in?
3. What restrictions did Jews face in some lands?

ANCIENT HISTORY, 300s BCE–500s CE: THE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

In Judea, in the late 20s CE, there appeared an itinerant preacher who was seeking to reform Judaism in the tradition of the prophets. Jesus of Nazareth entered history at the time of the Roman occupation of Judea. His teachings appealed to an oppressed community yearning for the promise of a messiah to be realised. His central teaching was that God's Reign would be fulfilled in him and that God's Kingdom would be one that welcomed the poor, sick, ostracised and needy. This message brought him into conflict with the Temple authorities, the Judean power elite and the Roman overseers as his popularity grew among the disaffected in the society.

Eventually, the powerful may have seen Jesus' claim to be the Messiah as politically dangerous. His arrival at the Temple at the time of heightened religious observance for the feast of liberation, Passover, was a source of major tension. Roman authorities recognised Jesus as a problem because he was destabilising an already rebellious region. The Roman Procurator of Judea, Pontius Pilate, acted swiftly. Jesus of Nazareth was arrested, tried and executed under Roman Law and via the Roman punishment of crucifixion.



Getty Images/ Bob Collier

FIGURE 2.29 A modern image of Jesus constructed by a forensic anthropologist from a skull consistent with the period of Jesus. How does this differ from traditional Christian depictions of Jesus? Why might these artistic changes to the appearance of Jesus, have been made?

FOUNDING A RELIGION

Skills: research, explain, analyse

1. From your reading of this text so far, what qualities are required of an individual who initiates a religious movement?
2. What aspects of Judaism was Jesus of Nazareth aiming to reform?
3. What was Jesus' vision for society and how was it linked to a belief in God?

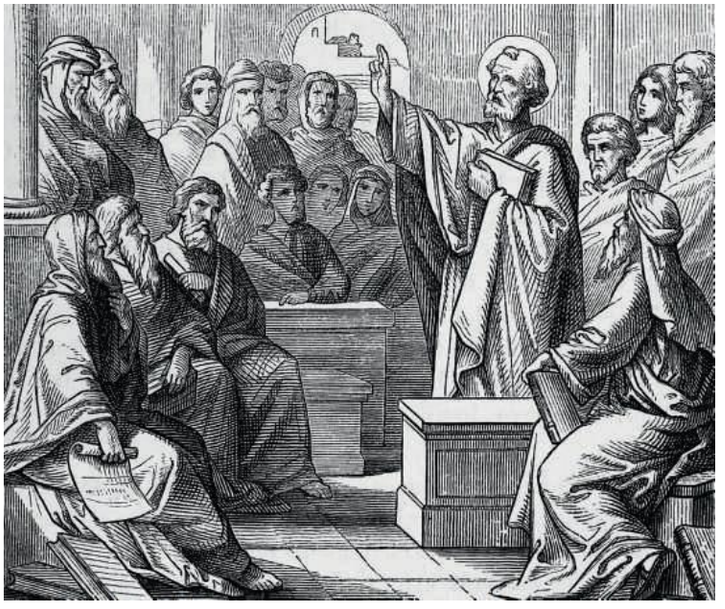
It was expected that his death would end the movement of Jesus and his followers but it grew rapidly. This sect of Judaism became known as 'The Way', 'Fishers of Men' or Nazarenes. The spread of Christianity was aided by infrastructure provided by the Roman Empire in terms of roads and shipping routes. These had also been used by diaspora Jews who had already set up synagogues around the Mediterranean in which the early members of this Jewish reform group could find a community.

VALUE OF ARCHAEOLOGY

Skills: research, create, analyse, interpret

1. Working in groups, create a list of five questions you would try to answer if you were a time traveller on a journey back to Palestine in the time of Jesus. Use the Internet to see if archaeology has already provided an answer to your questions.
2. How has archaeology aided Christians to come to a greater understanding of the world of Jesus? You could refer to the article 'What Archaeology Is Telling Us About the Real Jesus' on the History section of the National Geographic website. You could refer to the story, 'What Archaeology Is Telling Us About the Real Jesus' on the History and Civilisation page of the National Geographic website.
3. Explore the origins of the 25 December as the date of Christmas celebrations. What does your exploration show was a strength of Christianity enabling it to be resilient and able to spread its message from generation to generation across different cultures?

Between 36 CE and 64 CE Paul of Tarsus became a significant figure in defining the central ideas of the group and their relationship with society. His letters came to identify the followers of Jesus as ecclesia, meaning a formal gathering of believers coming from the ancient word for the gatherings of the Athenian Democracy. It gave adherents a sense of identity. Paul insisted on communities treating all people as equal in Christ, an idea that was attractive to those who felt downtrodden in the strictly hierarchical Roman Empire. Gentiles came to be at home in the group seeking guidance, salvation and eternal redemption, and the sacred text was in a language many spoke, Koine (Ancient Greek). Paul's letters emphasised that love, in particular sacrificial love, was the primary value and law for the follower of Christ. Prior to this, religious affiliation was largely bound by family, ethnic ties or geographic location. Paul's teachings appealed to citizens in cities that were ethnically diverse due to the mobility of Roman citizens.



Alamy Stock Photo/Wolfgang Diederich

FIGURE 2.30 This is an artist's impression of the Apostolic Council of Jerusalem. What does it suggest was the process for decision making in the early Church?

A central moment for achieving Paul's vision for the community was in 49 CE at the Council of Jerusalem. Fundamental questions of identity for followers of Christ were debated. Paul taught that salvation was for all people 'Gentile or Jew' (Galatians 3:28). Up to this point the main impediments to conversion were the requirements of circumcision and submission to dietary laws. Unwillingness of gentiles to submit to these was causing divisions in communities. Paul's claim was that unity was an essential feature of this new movement and it could only

be achieved if these Levitical laws were removed. Paul was successful in establishing this.

The communities that grew in the following years developed welfare services that gave dignity to people from all classes of society. Educational services were developed that allowed Christians, as they came to be called in the second century, social mobility.

During the first 400 years of the Common Era, Christianity brought an upheaval to the values of both Greece and Rome. These societies saw physical strength and courage as defining manliness and authority, but Jesus taught selflessness that leads to loving service of others, especially those rejected by society. This movement was counter-cultural as it taught humility and modesty and that bodies were to be treated with respect and dignity. It rejected hedonism and superstition, which were common in the polytheistic world. In keeping with its Jewish origins, it treated marriage as sacred but unlike Judaism it opposed divorce. Women were prominent from the earliest days; Paul comments on how women held services and led churches in their homes. These features made the group attractive to many, but an irritation to those in power who were aggravated by the willingness of members of this community to disobey imperial edicts, ordering members to engage in emperor worship and, at times, to pay the taxes that were offerings to the gods.

FIGURE 2.31 These two young women who died together as martyrs in the 200s CE. Perpetua was educated and from a wealthy family; Felicity was a slave. What in Christianity might have appealed to women of such diverse backgrounds?

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This made Christians easy scapegoats when tensions between authorities and the general populace were high. Sporadic persecution of Christians, varying in severity and location, was the result. Many believers submitted as martyrs, confident that they were following the example of Christ. Their reward would be in the afterlife, a belief inherited from their Jewish roots.

Emperors Diocletian and Galerius, who ruled between 284 CE and 311 CE, wanted to re-establish order to the Roman Empire. Part of this was to restore traditional religious practices and to wipe out the disruptive Christian sect. Their edicts aimed to deny Christians all civil rights, burn all places of worship, sacred texts and symbols, and imprison priests in order to end all public worship. Some communities of Christians were martyred. Their resistance, however, led in 311 CE to Emperor Galerius promulgating the Edict of Toleration after falling ill and believing it was due to the revenge of the Christian God.

SPREAD OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY

Skills: research, explain, analyse

1 What infrastructure in the Roman Empire allowed Paul to spread Christianity?

2 Given that Christianity was a persecuted religion, what explains its continuous growth in the period before 310 CE?

Emperor Constantine's Edict of Milan (313 CE) enforced religious tolerance and in 380 CE with the Edict of Thessalonica, Emperor Theodosius I made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire. This marked a change in the nature and structure of the State. In the subsequent remodelling of society, the pagan religions were victimised as the Christians had been. The State provided many civic buildings, including temples, as basilicas for Christian worship. The Emperor appointed bishops who also became ambassadors for the state and priests were given civic duties such as conducting marriages. Christianity was legal and supported by the authority of the State but the Emperor still ruled.

During the 300s and 400s CE, as the Western Roman Empire was in decline, a prominent Christian leader, Augustine of Hippo, argued that humans need governing and so Christianity must support those with political authority. Augustine shifted the definition of ethical thinking away from the virtues of the Greek and Roman world towards the belief that ethical action was defined by the Christian God for the purpose of establishing the Kingdom of God. Augustine's reflection on cultural change provided a vision of a universal Christianity shaping the civic order through a religion that accepted equally all social classes from emperors to beggars. He argued the aim of civic authority was to assist citizens in achieving their goal of being inhabitants of the 'City of God'. He taught that those in the 'City of Man' must be sceptical of the actions of the state as they are subject to evil. So the role of the citizen is to demand Christian ethical principles and moral behaviour on the part of their leaders. His teachings on sin, free will, freedom and grace shaped the understanding of the human person throughout the Middle Ages. His perception of humans as subject to sin shaped his view that there would be times when violence was acceptable. The impact of his ideas can be seen in his Just War Theory, which remains a cornerstone for debates about justification of war. This interrelationship between Church and State under a Christian vision became a fixture in the eventual development of the **feudal** system of the Middle Ages (800s–1400s CE).

DIFFERENT WORLDVIEWS – DIFFERENT VALUES

Skills: explain, analyse, synthesise

1. Create a graphic that shows the most important values for the Roman Empire before Christianity was adopted.
2. Create a second graphic that shows the most important values if St Augustine's vision were accepted.
3. List the three key differences in values between the two graphics.
4. Examine the operation of Western societies today – are they more Roman or Christian?

Christianity in the East was a different story from the experience of Western Christianity. Theodosius I consecrated Constantinople as the capital of the Byzantine Empire in 330 CE. Both the East and West of the divided Roman Empire were self-governing. While Rome was overrun in 476 CE by Germanic invaders, the East continued. Christianity in the East became the Eastern Orthodox Tradition led by the Patriarchs who were appointed by the Emperor. The highpoint of the Byzantine Empire for State and Church was with Emperor Justinian, who ruled between 527 and 565 CE. He reorganised Roman Law, establishing a Code of Law used for over 900 years in the Byzantine Empire. It was the basis for legal codes rooted in Christian ethical thinking across Europe, that still exist today. Many of the laws were intended to regulate religious practice and

secure Christianity as the State religion, unifying Church and State. The Code denied citizenship to anyone not connected to Christianity. Justinian was also the Emperor who built what was the greatest church of the time, Hagia Sophia, a very public statement about the interconnection between Church and State.

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FIGURE 2.32 Hagia Sophia in Istanbul. This building is today encompassed by turrets. Which religion is represented by this architectural feature? What does this say about how the Byzantine Empire ended?

SEPARATION AND SPLIT OF CHRISTIANITY

Skills: describe, explain, analyse

1 How did Christianity move to distinguish itself from both Judaism and paganism?
2 What contributed to a split between Western and Eastern Churches?

MEDIEVAL TIMES, 500s–1300s CE: OVERVIEW

Medieval times or the Middle Ages covers over a thousand years between the fall of the Western Roman Empire and the beginning of the Renaissance – the rediscovery of the knowledge and skills of ancient Greece and Rome. It was a period characterised by invasions and large-scale migration of peoples with all the devastation and upheaval of existing social structures that accompanies such population changes. There were many infectious illnesses that decimated populations. There was dramatic climatic change – the 'Little Ice Age', leading to widespread famine and redistribution of populations, human and animal. Life for most people in medieval times was hard work, insecure and short lived.

Yet there were also opportunities for entertainment and relaxation in the festivals, seasonal and harvest fairs, and the productions of plays by travelling troupes of performers (mummers). Many of these events had a basis in religion.

By the late Middle Ages cities and towns were expanding along with the businesses and professions that serviced the needs of urban dwellers. This was accompanied by intellectual growth as universities developed, and the insights of ancient philosophers and scientists retained by Arabic intellectuals filtered back to Europe via the returning Crusaders traders. Rural life, though hard, was varied in the benefits and profits it brought. There were peasants, free or bonded, who were poor and oppressed but they were not the majority. This was also true of the cities and towns. There were the poor and the destitute but they also were not the majority. The growth of trade ultimately led to the development of a comfortable middle class.

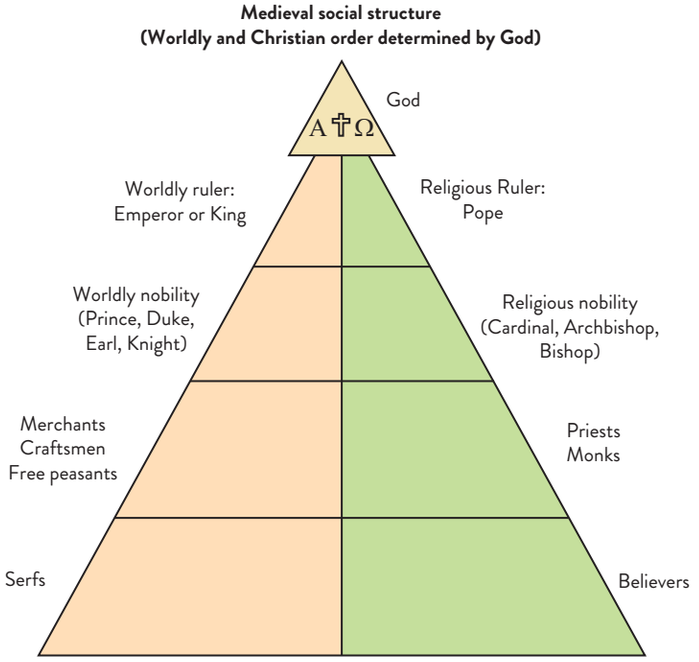


FIGURE 2.33 A diagram indicating the feudal structure of society in the medieval period. What would be the strengths and weaknesses of such a social structure? Which large group in society and the church is unmentioned in this diagram? Why? What evidence is there that parts of this social structure remain in society today?

MEDIEVAL TIMES, 500s–1300s CE: THE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

Monasticism protected the remnant of faith when the Catholic Church lost political influence with the fall of Rome (476 CE). It was a rejection of the world and a retreat into spirituality by its members. In 540 CE Benedict of Nursia wrote his 'Little Rule' for monastic life based on a humble way of living revolving around work, prayer and study of the Scriptures. Monasticism gave women an alternative to getting married and becoming mothers so that they could enjoy the benefits of religious education. Some became famous scholars and musicians who achieved renown, such as Hildegard von Bingen.

Socially the monasteries became a haven to small agricultural communities under threat in a time of sporadic war and pillaging. They became a centrepiece of life in the early Middle Ages and kept the Christian message alive through providing a resource for prayer and by handwriting and illuminating the Gospels so that they would be treasured and not lost.

From these monasteries came people who, through the life they modelled and the words they preached, converted kings, queens and warlords throughout Europe to Christianity.

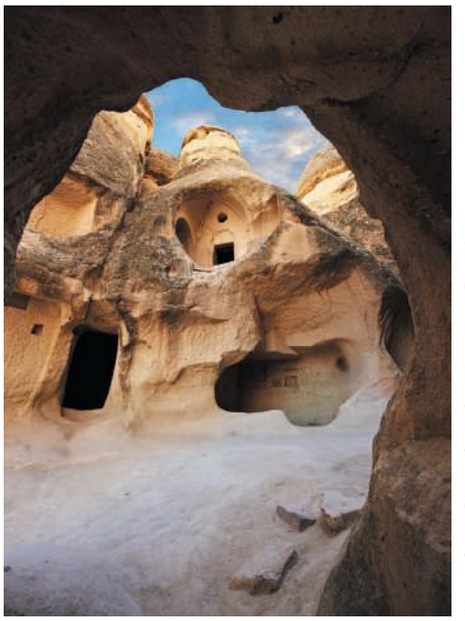
Their influence supported the papacy and Pope Gregory the Great established the Papal State (590 CE) making the Catholic Church a nation state in its own right.

The monastic movement saved the Catholic Church in this time of major upheaval in Europe and developed relationships with rulers that eventually shaped the establishment of **Christendom**.

MONASTIC LIFE

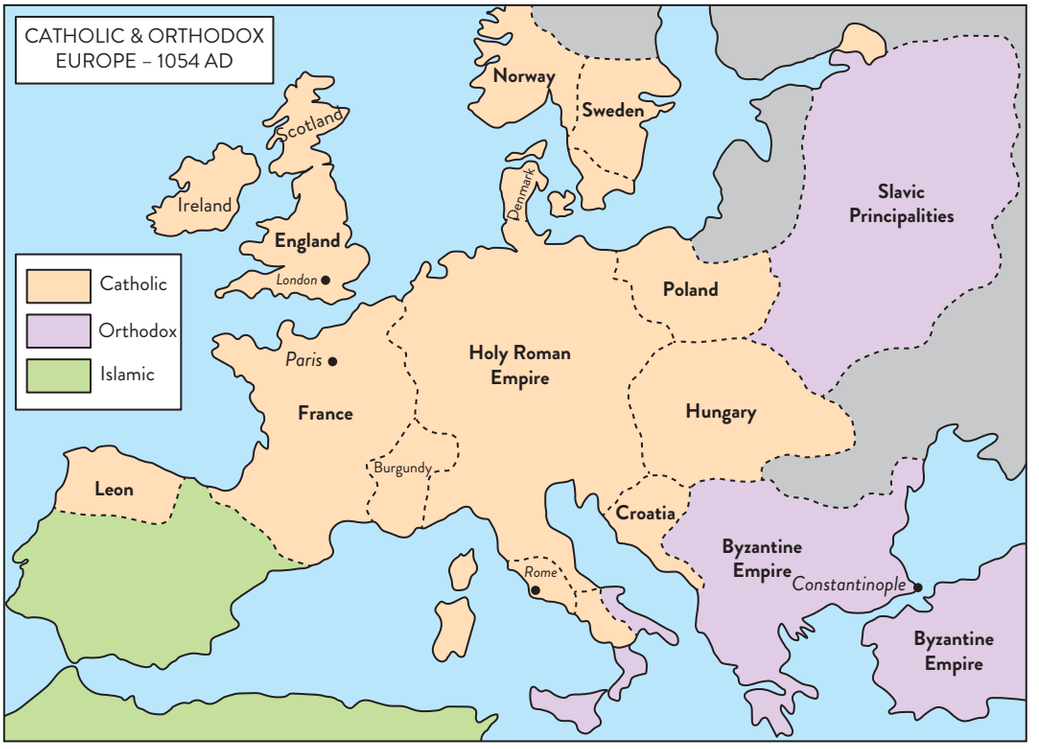
Skills: research, explain, interpret

1. The monasteries of Europe were places of community, learning and innovation. Research to find out what life was like for the monks and nuns in the monasteries of this period.
2. What qualities and activities of monastic communities would help the people of the period maintain their religious beliefs?
3. What other activities of monastic communities would help the well-being of people in the period?
3. See if you can visit a monastery in your area and interview one of the monks or nuns about why they are willing to live an enclosed life away from the rest of society.
4. As a class discuss: Can a life of prayer change society?



Alamy Stock Photo/funkyfood London - Paul Williams

FIGURE 2.34 Early Christian church in the fairy chimney rock formations and rock pillars of 'Pasabag Valley' near Goreme, Cappadocia, Nevsehir, Turkey. As the Roman Empire collapsed why might people retreat to remote areas to live and worship in caves?



Source: Patrick Gray, Flickr, CC BY NC 2.0

FIGURE 2.35 Map of Christendom, 1054 CE. What were the advantages and disadvantages of the capitals of the two Christian traditions, Rome and Constantinople, for effective rule of their territories?

By the 700s CE the Christian West faced another foreign invasion: this time from the spreading power of Islam. But the invaders were defeated in 732 CE at the battle of Tours in France stopping the progress of Islam across northern Europe.

The grandson of the defending hero Charles Martel, also Charles, was crowned Holy Roman Emperor (800 CE) by Pope Leo III in an alliance between Church and State that benefited both parties. He became Charles the Great (Charlemagne) and provided military might to protect the pope and the papal states, while the pope gave Charlemagne's rule legitimacy. As Holy Roman Emperor he not only ruled by might, but also through strengthening the religious and cultural life of Europe, including financing and promoting the importance of education. A system of handwriting was established that led to the protection of classical texts and a means of uniting Europe through effective communication.

Charlemagne built a Christendom in which the Holy Roman Emperor ruled the State through God's authority – a system that lasted until 1806. The social structure of both Church and State was hierarchical, represented in the development of the feudal system. Europe prospered intellectually, artistically, architecturally and economically. For some this was the Golden Age of Christianity as it was a time of geographic expansion and significant social influence.

By the end of the 900s CE it had become obvious that there were distinct differences in ideas between Eastern and Western Christianity. In the East there was an emphasis on the protection of the patristic period (early Church Fathers) teachings of the first century. It was believed that the authority of bishops and ritual practices were sacred and needed to avoid change so that the believer could turn to them confidently for security and to find God, whereas Western Christianity believed that change was essential in order to engage politically and socially with the world.

The use of different languages, Greek and Latin, exacerbated their conflicts over theology, liturgy and governance. There were theological arguments over the wording of the Creed about the relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit, which came to a head at the third Council of Toledo (589 CE). In the 700s CE there was the iconoclast controversy, an argument about whether it was appropriate to venerate God in art. There were also political arguments as the papacy in Rome offended the Patriarch in Constantinople in 800 CE when he appointed Charlemagne as Holy Roman Emperor without the traditional approval of the Patriarch. Finally, in 1053 CE there was a liturgical controversy over the use of leavened or unleavened bread in the liturgy that led to both leaders, Patriarch Michael I and Pope Leo III, excommunicating each other in 1054 CE. This instigated a distinct division between the traditions called 'The Great Schism'.

CHRISTIAN SCHISM

Skills: research, explain, interpret

1. Why does a division between different major groups such as Western and Eastern Christianity become an important concern for the global community at the time?
2. Which aspects of religion were involved in the controversy between Patriarch Michael I and Pope Leo III?
3. What does the schism between the Orthodox and Catholic Church teach leaders about the importance of the aspects of religion to adherents?

Pope Gregory VII (1022–1085 CE) was a reforming pope especially with regard to the system for appointing bishops. At this time, it was the secular ruler who appointed bishops; the Holy Roman Emperor appointed the pope; and the pope anointed the emperor. This led

to corruption within the Church and the State as individuals used their wealth and influence to gain power. There was a confrontation between Gregory and Emperor Henry IV. It was initially resolved by Emperor Henry IV being humiliated due to the lack of support of his nobles. He begged the pope for forgiveness. However, he took his revenge some years later by invading Rome. He lost the battle, but it led to the removal of Gregory VII as pope. The interference of the state in church appointments was not resolved and remained an issue until 1122 CE when the Concordant of Worms limited the authority of secular officials in the process of church appointments. This was a major example of the tension between Church and State in the Middle Ages. It formalised the idea of secularism through Pope Gregory ruling a separation between Church and State. Another reform of Pope Gregory VII to limit the power of the State in Church matters was to introduce a pledge of celibacy for ordained priests. However, this idea was not widely adopted in parts of Europe until after the Council of Trent in the 1500s CE.

Alamy Stock Photo/The Granger Collection

FIGURE 2.36 Henry IV of Germany and Holy Roman Emperor (1056–1106). He is kneeling in the snow with his wife, the Empress Bertha, and their young son outside the fortress at Canossa, Italy, 1077, seeking absolution from Pope Gregory VII. What does his action indicate about the relationship between the Church and the State in early medieval times?

THEOCRACY OR SECULAR STATE

Skills: research, explain, analyse

1. Define theocracy.
2. Define secular.
3. Research to identify two countries in the world today that are theocratic and two countries that are secular. Briefly describe or illustrate their social structure.
4. Why would a religious adherent support a theocracy?
5. Why might a religious adherent support a secular state?

The High Middle Ages (1000–1250 CE) saw an increase in the intellectual life of Christianity with the establishment of universities. The separation of Church and State led to a need to develop **canon law** as the Vatican wanted to manage its own governance of the Church instead of its previous reliance on the State. This led to the University of Bologna being established in 1088 CE. A benefit of this institution was that it provided a forum for increased theological debate, which enriched the intellectual life of society. Other institutions, for example Oxford (1096 CE) and Paris (1150 CE), were soon established, with theology being Queen of the Sciences. These universities contributed to the flourishing of society, for example in 1234 CE a scholar, Gratian, developed the first definitive statement on Canon Law that went on to underpin legal codes in Western Europe.

It was in this environment that St Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274 CE) developed his theology based on natural law and reason. His thinking was shaped by texts of ancient philosophers that had been recovered during the Crusader period. These had survived thanks to Islam's interest in philosophy. His theology was also enriched through his exposure to Jewish literature. Aquinas' way

of thinking and teaching knowledge, known as scholasticism, shaped the theology of Catholicism until the 1900s CE. Universities controlled by the Church became the seedbeds for ideas linked to mathematics, medicine and astronomy, which ultimately changed the way the world saw the operation of the cosmos.

While this intellectual life was flourishing for an elite minority, the majority of the population of Europe was engaged in various ways in the **Crusades** (1096–1291 CE). These were a series of eight campaigns by combined Christian forces from across Europe to wrest the Holy Land from Islamic control. They are a powerful example of religion playing a major role in historical events and illustrate the extent to which the political power of the Catholic Church had grown. The first crusade was a papal response to the request of the Patriarch of Constantinople for military aid to help him retake lands that had been lost to Islam, thereby securing the safety of Christian pilgrims visiting sacred places. In the popular mind of Christians, the Crusades were holy wars fought to secure control of sacred sites. But it was also perceived by many crusaders as opportunities to gain wealth through looting and holding hostages for ransom. Even before arriving in the Holy Land to do battle with the Muslim occupiers, the Crusaders did devastating damage to the lands and people along their travelling routes. The conduct of the Crusaders included ruthless and widespread slaughter of Jews, Muslims and other non-Christians in their campaigns. The Crusades also extended the breach between Eastern and Western Christianity when the Crusaders sacked Constantinople (1204 CE). This weakened Christianity's defences in the East and ended with the Holy Land under Muslim control.

However, in the West two other impacts of the Crusades were felt: a renewed interest in pilgrimage to Jerusalem and other sacred sites and an increased interest in Islam from an academic point of view that helped to fuel the rebirth of philosophy and the arts in the following centuries of the Renaissance.

RELIGION AND SOCIETY INTERACT

Skills: research, summarise, analyse

1 Explain how the Crusades affected the relationship between:
- the Catholic and Orthodox Churches
- Islam and Christianity
- Judaism and Christianity.

The European aristocracy had long resented paying taxes to the Church. When England and France entered the '100-years war' (1337–1453 CE) the need to finance armies made this a significant cause of tension between earthly and spiritual power brokers. King Phillip VI of France challenged Pope Boniface VIII arguing that the King had the right to tax the churches in his country. King Phillip used trade embargoes to stop any money from France going to the papacy. Pope Boniface attempted to depose Phillip as king by arguing he was not morally fit to have the Divine Right of Kings that allowed him to rule. Phillip's army captured and imprisoned the pope who died shortly after his release as a result of injuries from torture. His successor gave in to France's demands and during the period 1309 to 1378 CE seven popes chose to take up residence in Avignon in France rather than in Rome. A papacy that supported French, English or Italian interests was restricted in its independence. Ultimately during the years 1378 to 1417 CE the self-interest of these State and Church authorities resulted in three men ruling as rival popes at the same time. Such fragmentation of Church authority diminished the reputation of the papacy. This Western Schism was resolved by Pope Martin V through a theology of conciliarism, deeming that a general council of the Church had greater authority than the pope

and may, if necessary, depose him – which shifted authority from the pope to the council of bishops of the Church.

Another direction taken by Christianity in medieval Europe was in spiritual reform. As the institutional church moved more towards political and economic interests during the 1100s to 1200s CE, there arose individuals who sought to find a more personal, mystical relationship with God. Their teachings and popularity in local communities challenged the tradition of hierarchical religious authority in the Church. They offered ways for the Church to reform itself by returning to its spiritual origins. Such spiritual reformers as Francis of Assisi and Catherine of Siena dared to advise members of the Church hierarchy and were successfully the source of some reforms that produced a more unified and humble church. While others like Meister Eckhart were found guilty of heresy.

UNITY AND DISUNITY

Skills: analyse, draw conclusions, research, create

1. Why is unity so important in religious traditions?
2. What are the consequences of disunity?
3. Research Catherine of Siena to find what skills and wisdom she showed in her dealings with the papacy. Write a brief resume for Catherine of Siena as an application for a leadership position in your school.
4. Draw some conclusions about the operation of the social structure of the Catholic Church in this period.

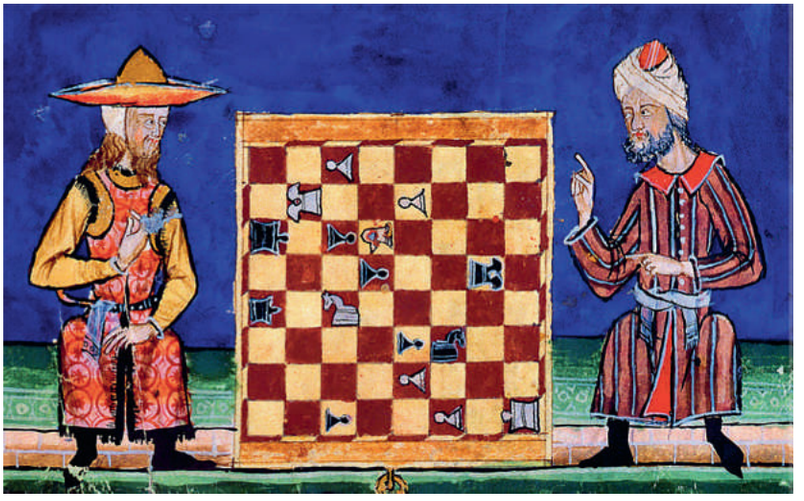
Alamy Stock Photo/The Picture Art Collection

FIGURE 2.37 Sciarra Colonna (1270–1329 CE), member of a powerful Roman family, slapping Pope Boniface VIII in the face. How have colour and light been used to show the artist's idea of the difference between spiritual authority and earthly power? Compare this image with Figure 2.36. How has the relationship between Church and State changed?

MEDIEVAL TIMES, 500–1300 CE: THE JEWISH EXPERIENCE

From the mid-700s CE most of the Jewish world lived in the Islamic Empire territories of Spain, North Africa, Arabia, Egypt and into Asia Minor and thrived under Muslim rule. Across the Muslim Empire Jewish merchants, professions, businesses and communities flourished all the way to India and China.

Jews were permitted to trade between Christian Europe and the Muslim world. Mostly, Jews were free to study and practise their religion as long as they paid *jizya* tax ensuring their protection like other *dhimmi*,



CounterTime/Wikimedia Commons

FIGURE 2.38 A Muslim and a Jew playing a game of chess in Castile, Spain, in a book commissioned by Alfonso X the Wise (1221–1284 CE). Madrid Escurial Library, fol. 63 recto. What does this picture demonstrate about the relationship of the Muslim King Alfonso X with the Jews at this time? Which features of the picture show this relationship?

non-Muslim believers in God. But under particular rulers Jews as well as other non-Muslims were at times subjected to the requirement to wear distinctive coloured clothing and badges and to place a derogatory sign on their doors. The order for distinctive Jewish clothing can be traced both to Islamic law and to the 1215 Fourth Lateran Council to differentiate Jews from the Christian population. Rabbinic literature did not necessarily see this rule as counter to Jewish ideals. For example, in German towns in the 1200s CE, the rabbinical councils ruled that adherents should not cut their hair or shave their beards in a non-Jewish fashion nor wear Gentile styles of clothing. Retaining Jewish distinctiveness was seen as a religious imperative to ensure Judaism's survival. Despite some restrictions and repeated persecutions over time, they were never as frequent or cruel as experienced by Jews in Christendom.

Throughout the Mesopotamian and Islamic worlds the Jews established yeshivot, academies, which were the centres for Jewish scholarship and the development of **Halakhah** from 589 CE to 1038 CE. Jewish scholarship was mainly based in these rabbinic academies. Initially founded under Persian rule in the mid-200s CE these yeshivot continued to flourish under the later Muslim rule. The Geonim, heads of academies, started compiling both the Babylonian and Jerusalem, called Palestinian, Talmuds. These 65 or more texts covered diverse topics from the perspectives of Halakhah (laws, morality, spirituality) and Aggadah (inquiry into the meaning behind stories, legends, values and beliefs). Following generations expounded further upon these teachings until the Talmud was finalised around 700 CE. Their scholars and academy heads were the undisputed authorities whose decisions were studied and accepted normatively by Jewish communities throughout the diaspora. These academies ordered the prayers into a siddur, prayer book, for the Jewish year which was extensively circulated in Spain, France and Germany. Their responsa, written replies by rabbis and Talmudic scholars to an inquiry on some matter of Jewish life or law, contained practical halakhic decisions and additional comments on the Talmud to advise adherents wherever they lived. The Talmud used interpretations of Scripture and later commentaries as precedents for religious laws.

Between 950 and 1150 CE the Jews experienced a Golden Age under the Islamic rulers. Jewish communities thrived. Through Muslim translations of ancient Greek texts, Judaism was shaped by ideas on astronomy, mathematics, science and philosophy, while Muslim poetry influenced Jewish literature. Many great Jewish scholars emerged at this time such as the scholar Saadiah Gaon, poet Judah Halevi, scholar and philosopher Moses Maimonides and Samuel Ha-Nagid who became a high-ranking political advisor of Granada, Spain whilst also writing inspiring Hebrew poetry. When Moses Ben Hanoch was appointed Chief Rabbi of Cordoba, Spain, in the latter part of the 900s CE, a centre for Talmudic study was founded there which attracted the greatest minds at the time and became very famous.

One example of Jewish intellectual life under medieval Islamic society is in the contribution of Egyptian born Saadiah Gaon (882–942 CE) who became a great Jewish scholar, explaining Hebrew grammar and compiling a Hebrew dictionary. Saadiah translated the Bible into Arabic, wrote biblical commentaries and liturgy and contributed to Halakhah.

Maimonides (1138–1204 CE) is another example of the mutual beneficial interaction between the Jewish religion and the wider Muslim society. He codified Jewish law and applied reasoned thinking to his analysis of the Torah and Jewish law. Maimonides wrote in both Hebrew and Arabic, studying secular subjects such as astronomy, mathematics, medicine and Greek philosophy. He was also a highly respected court physician to the Muslim ruler of Egypt and widely consulted in medical matters by both Jews and Muslims. He developed a number of treatises explaining Judaism and developed his famous 13 Principles of Faith which are recited in daily prayer to this day. Like other religious scholars at the time, Maimonides wrestled with the contradictions between philosophy and religion, writing *A Guide for the Perplexed* in order to enlighten scholars. He wanted to reconcile Greek philosophy with Rabbinic Jewish theology by providing rational explanations

for many events in the Bible. He has been likened by Jews as a 'second Moses' in acknowledgement of his impact on Judaism then and now.

But there were also Jews dissatisfied with their diaspora existence and longing for the Messianic Era to arrive. In the Byzantine and Muslim world from the late 700s CE emerged the Karaites, Jews heavily influenced by the Quran and Islam in their understanding of the sacred text being the literal word of God. They rejected rabbinic Judaism and the legitimacy of the Talmud with its emphasis on the authority of Oral Law and empowering rabbinic interpretation. Instead the Karaites advocated returning to Jerusalem to hasten the Messianic Era rather than accepting the inevitability of the Jewish exilic status as the medieval rabbis upheld. Although they had early success in attracting adherents, the Karaites never gained full acceptance by the wider Jewish world.

JEWISH LIFE UNDER MUSLIM RULE

Skills: describe, analyse, explain

1. What were the advantages of the positive mutual relationship between Jews and Muslims in the medieval period?
2. What were the restrictions on Jews under medieval Muslim rule? Were they severe?
3. What developments in Judaism occurred under Muslim rule?
4. What ideas contributed to the rise of the Karaites?

Alamy Stock Photo/The Picture Art Collection

FIGURE 2.39 An illuminated manuscript from the Royal Library in Copenhagen of a Hebrew translation of Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* (originally authored in Arabic). Cod. Heb. 37. Maimonides teaches about the 'measure of men' showing how compared with the Earth and the universe, men are very small. How does this image show the link Maimonides makes between the Bible, science and philosophy?

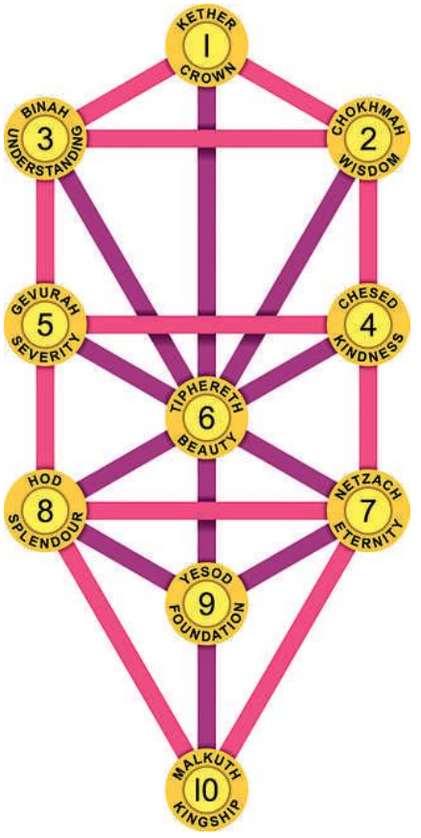
Jewish messianic hopes were further kindled by the suffering caused by the Crusades and medieval oppression both under Muslim and Christian rule. These persecutions led to the rise of individuals whom the rabbis labelled false messiahs as they fraudulently foretold imminent Jewish redemption often leading to disaster for the community. In trying to cope with these turbulent times these false saviours added to the distress of the Jews who became their followers. Among the early false messiahs was David Alroy (also known as Menahem ben Solomon Ibn ar-Ruhi) in Kurdistan (1100s CE) who led a failed messianic revolt against the Muslim rulers hoping to redeem the Jews and lead them in a return to Jerusalem. In encouraging the Jews to reject their repression under the Muslims he weakened the relationship between the two religions.

During these medieval centuries wherever Jews resided in Christian states, they were at first welcomed for the trade and commerce they brought. In 590 CE Pope Gregory the Great improved toleration of Jews and opposed their forced baptism. But there were spasmodic attacks and ultimately widespread and officially sanctioned oppressive restrictions of the Jewish population. Over time the Catholic Church lost touch with its beginnings. By the Middle Ages the focus of the

Catholic Church had shifted from conversion of the Jews to the conversion of the pagan peoples of northern Europe, distancing itself from its Jewish roots.

Although allowed to practise their faith, Jews were restricted in the form of their places of worship. Synagogues had to be built lower than local churches with modest architecture on the outside so as not to attract attention. These constraints turned Judaism into a privately practised religion that had to be protected from hostile societal forces and survived guided by their strong faith in divine providence and with the belief in the unity of God.

Also restricted were their role in society and their work options. In many places Jews were forbidden to work in the government or serve in the army. They were also prevented from owning land and joining trade guilds. The only fields of employment available to them were being artisans and craftspeople, merchants, money lenders, tax collectors and pawnbroking. If a Jewish market stall holder was successful selling a particular product one year they may find that in the following year, the sale of the same good was legally restricted from being sold by Jews. As money lenders and tax collectors some Jews acquired wealth and others were highly proficient civil servants known as *arendas*. But when some nobles became indebted to Jewish money lenders and tax collectors, in order to negate their debt, they incited riots and massacres against the Jews. After such massacres loan documents were often destroyed and to add further injustice, Jewish property was confiscated.



Source: Patrick Gray, Flickr, CC BY NC 2.0

FIGURE 2.40 This Kabbalistic 'Tree of Life' diagram depicts the ten *sephirot* or godly attributes in a shape which demonstrates the link of earthly roots to heaven and the divine spark. Each *sephira* has a number, attribute, emanation and Hebrew name. Each sphere is a symbolic description of the requirements to move from one *sephira* to another. *Malkhut* at the bottom represents the earthly dimension. How does this 'Tree of Life' diagram reveal the spiritual path needed for humans to ascend in godliness?

From the 1100s CE many **blood libel** accusations arose against Jews in England, France, Germany and Italy, where they were repeatedly falsely accused of killing a Christian child for ritual purposes. These allegations often arose at Easter, the celebration which remembers Jesus' death and resurrection and coincides with the Jewish festival of Passover. This slur that Jews used the blood of Christian victims to bake *matzah*, their special unleavened bread, was used to justify vicious Christian crimes of torture, murder, mob attacks, unfair trials, steep fines against Jews and expulsions from towns and cities throughout the medieval period.

The stubborn refusal of the Jews to relinquish their beliefs and practices or to convert to Christianity led to the forced conversion or expulsion with confiscation of money and property of Jews from many Christian ruled states and cities across Europe throughout the medieval centuries. These Jews mainly headed for Italy, Holland, North Africa, Turkey, Palestine and South America where they flourished for a while, able to freely practise their religious beliefs and rituals and re-establish their communal social structure.

Despite the negative experiences and the insecurity they created, their isolation led to strong communities. The decentralised power structure of the feudal system was reflected in the Ashkenazic Jewish communities who were outside the Christian medieval structure. They were independent and self-governing, run by their community council (*kahal* or *kehillah)* with its own rules and courts. The threat of *herem*, excommunication from the social life of their Jewish community, served as a strong deterrent from flouting these regulations.

The forced separation of Jewish communities due to their rejection from and persecution by their Christian hosts led to Jewish learning flourishing untouched by the culture of wider European medieval society. One influential French Jewish scholar Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo ben Yitzhaki, 1040–1105 CE) is considered the greatest Jewish scholar of medieval times. Rashi wrote a comprehensive commentary on the Bible and Talmud and founded a *yeshiva*, an academy, at Troyes, France, where he taught many disciples, including his daughters. He presented a straightforward, concise Jewish **exegesis** of the

Bible in contrast to the Christian emphasis on **allegory**. His skill was defining individual Hebrew words and explaining points of grammar to interpret biblical passages. He provided punctuation for the, until then, unpunctuated Hebrew texts. He explained complicated Talmudic tracts in clear simple language, making it accessible to non-scholars. Rashi also addressed a wide variety of Jewish legal issues in *responsa,* written answers to contemporary questions from French and German communities. To this day his works are universally studied by Jewish scholars.

During the 1200s CE an ancient area of learning and spiritual experience that was revived and further developed was the *Kabbalah*. This mystical source for ancient Judaism was drawn upon to assist with the hardship of medieval Jewish life. *Kabbalah* is a form of Jewish mysticism about gaining knowledge and understanding of God's hidden nature. The Jews established their own way to transcend the pain of daily life and to gain contact with the Ultimate Reality. The *Kabbalah* taught that the Hebrew numbers and letters (*sefirot*) were linked to the basic elements of the divine universe, lifting the veil from Scripture to allow sacred insights and give those who study it access to the divine.

EXEGESIS AND MYSTICISM

Skills: describe, research, analyse, explain

1. Why did Jews move to new countries?
2. How did Rashi influence interpretation of the Bible?
3. What circumstances influenced some Jews to turn to mysticism?
4. Research some kabbalistic ideas and stories to share with the class such as the deeper meaning derived from the letters of the Hebrew alphabet and elaboration of stories in the Bible.

MEDIEVAL TIMES, 500s–1300s CE: THE ISLAMIC EXPERIENCE

Within the Arabic tribal territories there were numerous religions, mostly pagan, but also Christian, Zoroastrian and Judaic tribes. There was also an ancient group of monotheists tracing a direct lineage from Ibrahim (Abraham), Hajar (Hagar) and Ismael (Ishmael). Arabian polytheism had existed for millennia. The original *Kaaba* in Mecca was a sacred place believed to have been built by Adam and rebuilt by Ibrahim. By the 500s CE it had come to house some 360 idols.

As in Europe, the pre-Islamic medieval period in the Middle East was turbulent with considerable inter-clan warfare as tribes vied for control of land and lucrative spice and trade routes. The deities of the pagan Arabian religions were local and tribal. Animal sacrifice and other offerings of fealty (devotion) were made in exchange for safe passage through territories for traders and travellers. Adherents would petition the gods for favours such as ending conflicts, granting pregnancies and rain for crops to grow. Some tribes even had specific gods as their protectors. Arabs believed in Djinn, spirits who were perceived to be the source of magic, bad luck, demonic possession, illness and collaboration with devils. They could also be manipulated by humans for benefit.

Shrines and temples to these localised deities had *haram* (restricted access) precincts bounded by marker stones where enemies could sit inside the precinct and safely negotiate peace terms with each other. Gods were depicted in human and geometric human representations. People made pilgrimages, or Hajj, to certain pagan shrines. Such pilgrimages were lucrative for businesses servicing the pilgrims. There were pre-Islamic collections of poetry that preserved an elaborate culture of oral history in which great deeds were committed to collective memory, recited exactly and performed. So the world from which Islam emerged was one in which spirituality was profoundly present through the sacred being found in history, stories and the physical environment.

These traditions were in the cultural milieu before the revelations of Muhammad were committed to memory by himself and his followers and then recited to the scribes who recorded the Quran. As the religious tradition of Islam developed so did the scripts in which it was written and gradually the written letters of Arabic encapsulated more of the sounds of the language, becoming more representative of its richness.

In 570 CE, into this tumultuous environment of the Arabian Peninsula, came the man, Muhammad ibn Abdullah, who would become known as the Prophet Muhammad. He cited his family lineage to an ancient Arabic tribe and its monotheistic beliefs, earning the title of Hanif, which meant to follow the example of Ibrahim in his piety and monotheism. This was seen as the basis for his authority as a prophet. His participation in the family trade business between sites of Mecca, Yathrib (later Medinah) and other places, put him in contact with Jewish and Christian merchants. The language and rituals of trade would have necessitated intercultural and religious dialogue over meals, games and cups of tea.

In the year 610 CE Muhammad left the city during pagan festivals including sacrifices, preferring to meditate in a distant cave, and had his first vision of the angel Jibrīl (Gabriel). Muhammad's visions revealed to him religious beliefs and practices that addressed the needs of the vulnerable in his community. The society was generally one which offered little formal assistance to the poor and oppressed. The truths that were revealed to Muhammad required a community that would be focused on submission to one God, Allah, who demanded a society that would be respectful and generous to all.

Muhammad's monotheism was in conflict with the polytheism of the region, even threatening local economic interests reliant on pilgrimage tourism to the shrines and income from the sale of statues. Consequently, he and his early followers were forced from Mecca to Yathrib which became Madinat al-Nabi (the city of the Prophet or Madinah/Medina) when it converted to Islam in 622 CE. Muhammad was invited by the community to become their leader. His role was jointly as religious leader and civic leader.

PRE-ISLAMIC ARABIA

Skills: research, analyse, summarise

1. Research the pantheon of pagan gods in pre-Islamic Arabian Peninsula. List the gods and their roles?
2. How does this pantheon reflect influences from ancient Egypt, Persia, Nabatea and Greece?
3. What were the challenges facing the society into which Muhammad was born?
4. Why would monotheism provide answers to these challenges instead of polytheism?
5. Research, and then summarise how *jinn* turned into Disney genies.

In the next decade, Muhammad and his followers dramatically changed the society of the Arabian Peninsula. Each loss by Muhammad's opponents won support for him. The absolute belief of his followers in their mission and purpose enhanced their fighting ability. People's acceptance of Islam was fuelled by the desire to avoid the heavy taxation imposed by existing rulers to finance their regular conflicts. By 630 CE Muhammad was in a position to challenge Mecca, where he completed the prescribed pilgrimage of seven times around the Kaaba, smashed the idols within it and dedicated it to Allah. Muslims do not worship the Kaaba, but it is Islam's most sacred site because it symbolically represents the house of God and *Tawhid*, the oneness of Allah, in Islam. Observant Muslims around the world turn toward the Kaaba during their five daily prayer times.

Although at times extreme violence was used in self-defence and preservation and in initial expansion and consolidation during the establishment years of Islam, Muhammad had strictly banned inter-clan violence, which was endemic in the region. He also respected the believers in Judaism and Christianity.

Within two centuries Muhammad's small Community of Believers, under the leadership and expansionist policies of the first four caliphs, had become an empire. But within Islam a number of schisms over the right of leadership had emerged, causing numerous civil wars that eventually led to a fracturing of the Islamic Empire. It also led to different ways of being Muslim.

As Mohammad instructed, women in Islam were able to be educated and held many important roles in society. They were rulers, merchants, mystics, scholars and leading authorities on the Quran. They were patrons of public buildings such as mosques, libraries and universities. Throughout the high period of the Islamic Empire women played significant roles. Once the centre of Islam moved to Baghdad in 762 CE there developed a cultural practice of women, who had wealth and influence and did not need to leave the home to support families as they would have in an agricultural setting, remaining at home, wearing clothing that covered more of their person. They could use their time to study the Quran through private study groups. They could run their own businesses from home.

During the medieval period, the ideas of Islam travelled with the Islamic traders and their goods along the Silk Road, major ancient land and sea trade routes linking the medieval European kingdoms, the Middle East and China. The coins they used in trade were stamped with the word, 'Bismillah' (In the Name of God). They also removed the heads of statues, in keeping with their ban against idolatry. This rapid and forceful transformation of existing societies led to control over the lucrative trade networks of the Silk Road accompanied by new ways of conducting financial transactions.

The rise of Islam was accompanied by new models of governance with a parliament, police, courts, a pension system and universal medical care for all in public hospitals. A management system called *Diwan* (late 600s CE) was instituted, which organised the collection of taxes used to finance public works and the payment of those in the service of the caliph. The main developments made by Islam seem to be in the area of agricultural and civil engineering – dams and irrigation channels for example. Their skill led to them building beautiful places of worship with water as a central feature.

Coming from the Prophet's humble house in Medina, which was an enclosed mud courtyard with rooms coming off it, masjids or mosques developed along this model in the early centuries of Islam. The Prophet would share his revelations to his followers in the courtyard. **Qibla** walls and **mihrabs** indicated the orientation of prayers towards Mecca. This practice and others – such as a strict prayer regime of five times daily – mentally orientated people for whom knowing cardinal directions and astronomy meant survival. Cities formed around oases and within them mosques developed important roles with minarets as 'light houses' for people who rode their caravans in the cool of the night. To hear the Call to Prayer Hymn miles away and see the minarets would have been very reassuring for weary traders and travellers.

CHANGES IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA

Skills: identify, interpret

1 Which beliefs in the Arabian Peninsula became less prominent with the advent of Muhammad and his followers? Which beliefs became more prominent?

2 What changes to society occurred in the Arabian Peninsula as a result of the revelations to Muhammad?

3 How did the establishment of the Islamic Empire impact on the societies within Western Europe?

RENAISSANCE AND ENLIGHTENMENT PERIODS, 1300s–1700s CE: OVERVIEW

The Renaissance was the rebirth of ideas and skills of classical ancient Greek and Roman civilisations in the new context of medieval Western civilisation. In Italy and other places people could see ruins of architecture and other wonders of a glorious ancient past and pondered their meaning. The human person was viewed with wonder and awe as science and arts both investigated what it was to be human, as seen in the works of artist and inventor Leonardo da Vinci.

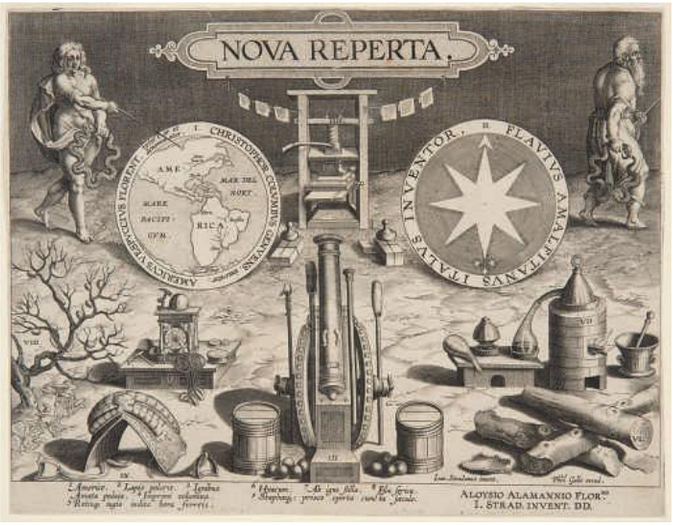
The Renaissance began in Italy as a movement based on revolutionary developments in ideas linked to mathematics, science, philosophy, theology and the arts. The threat of Islam to Constantinople at the start of this period led to an influx into Italy of Greek scholars with their translations of ancient classical texts. Great thinkers like Petrarch (1304–1374 CE) and Erasmus (1409–1526 CE) led the revival of interest in the ancient classical ideas of Cicero and Virgil. History was no longer viewed as a continuum from Christ, but as a continuum from Ancient Greece and Rome.

The Renaissance period held education to be essential with a curriculum shaped by Latin grammar, rhetoric and the study of the virtuous life. But education was still for a minority of the population. The educated elite were no longer reliant on dogma, doctrine and rulings from authority – they were educated to have opinions of their own. The flowering of this can be seen in the characters of Shakespeare's (1564–1616 CE) plays, which explore human experience in order to understand a person's civic, religious, familial duties and their duty to themselves in a world of change.

The Renaissance was also a time of inventions like the magnetic compass, telescope, gunpowder, printing press and the clock that gave Europeans the sense that they were like gods able to spread their worldview to civilise an ever-expanding audience in the New World. The wealth from these explorations, and the new spirit of intellectual freedom that

accompanied it, contributed to a period in which there was a love of ideas, beauty, patronage and material goods but also contributed to the horrors of forced conversion of First Peoples in the lands designated the New World.

Merging with and expanding the developments of the Renaissance were the ideas and inventions of the period called the Enlightenment or the Age of Reason. It was an intellectual and philosophical movement, led by rationalists and scientists, that dominated the world of ideas in Europe during the 1700s CE and into the 1800s CE. It advocated a revival of Athenian democracy, individual liberty, freedom of expression, rational thinking and the eradication of religious authority. Such advocacy was often supported by force, including the extreme violence used in the French Revolution.



Alamy Stock Photo/SBS Eclectic Images

FIGURE 2.41 The title page for a collection of prints depicting Renaissance inventions. Identify the inventions in this picture. How does this inventiveness take the human person away from a belief in God?

RENAISSANCE AND ENLIGHTENMENT PERIODS, 1300s–1700s CE: THE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

During the 1300s CE across Europe, the medieval feudal structure of society and traditional structures of religious authority were undermined by the ideas, developments, inventions and methods of observation of the Renaissance combined with the devastating effects of plague, famine and fear. During this time, although sources of ancient and contemporary knowledge were preserved in fortress-like monasteries they were for the sole provenance of Church scholars. The wider Christian society was ignorant of such knowledge and fell into a period of ignorance and superstition. Prominent in the demise of the medieval structures and authority of society and Church was the impact of the Black Death, a series of plagues that ran rampant in Europe and Asia between 1347 and 1352 CE. People questioned how rulers and God could allow such suffering. Religious leaders were no longer trusted as the traditional beliefs and rituals they taught to have faith in were not protecting people against the horrific plague. Many people turned to personal prayer or superstition to provide answers to their questions. This breakdown of the existing structures and trust eventually contributed to the large-scale disillusionment with the Catholic Church expressed in the Reformation movements during the 1400s–1500s CE. It also led to dramatic changes and reforms in society as the reduced population meant that peasants could negotiate pastoral contracts and could leave if a Lord was unjust or did not pay them properly.

By the 1500s CE there were differing views on the role of Christianity. But it was clear to increasing numbers of people that the Catholic Church needed reform. The conservative view held to the traditional understanding that the Catholic Church was the City of God working together with earthly governments as God's authority on Earth building God's Kingdom. Reformers argued that the Church's role was spiritual only and that involvement in the temporal world had led to corruption. The public's collective memory of the Black Death and the overt malpractices of many priests and bishops meant the time was right for reform as the people were disillusioned with the Church and the opulent lives of the clergy, which began to draw the ire of people in many walks of society. The princes were also resentful of taxation paid to the Catholic Church.

Importantly, the development of Gutenberg's printing press (1450 CE) assisted this reform as it made mass - produced documents affordable and thus ideas could spread widely and quickly.

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FIGURE 2.42 Part of the frescoes in the church of St Mary, Croatia, of the dance macabre. According to this image, which social classes were impacted by the Black Death?

Getty Images/DEA/G. DAGLI ORTI

FIGURE 2.43 Burning of heretics' books, detail of painting, San Domenico and the Albigenses, by Pedro Berruguete (c. 1450–c. 1504). What role did the Church believe it was playing in society by burning books of heretics?

The first book printed in this fashion was the Bible in 1456 CE. The development of the press was initially financed through the Church as all of the early publications were religious. However, this shifted to pamphlets for the works of reformers, poets and philosophers. It was the success of this invention in spreading ideas that led the Catholic Church to instigate book burning and then an 'Index' (1500s CE) of banned publications in order to try to control the ideas that were transforming society.

Following are brief accounts of some individuals and groups who contributed to the reforming of Church and State during the Renaissance and the Enlightenment periods:

- **Peter Waldo** (1140–1205 CE) of Lyons, France, leader of the Waldensians, who made a vow to absolute poverty and argued: that there were only two sacraments, Baptism and Eucharist; that lay people could lead the community as Christ was their only bishop; that the saints should not be venerated and that there was no scriptural basis for purgatory. This group were declared heretics and suffered severe persecution. This is an example of a religious movement that died out. Those who survived eventually followed a later French reformer, John Calvin (1509–1564), whose teachings strongly reflected their own.

- **John Wycliffe** (1330–1384) was an English priest and biblical scholar at Oxford University who wanted a humble Church that followed the teachings of the Scriptures. He argued against the State paying taxes to the Church in Rome; against the idea of indulgences; and for the translation of the Bible into the language of the people, which the Church saw as dangerous. He was called to Rome to face charges of heresy, but never went. He was found guilty of heresy in 1415 CE, years after his death.
- **Jan Hus** (1369–1415 CE) was an influential priest and preacher in what is now Prague. He was a biblical scholar who was a follower of John Wycliffe. He argued the Bible was his primary authority, not the bishops of the Church including the Pope. Hus taught against the use of indulgences to pay for crusades and was declared a heretic. He was burned at the stake in 1415 CE.
- **Niccolo Machiavelli** (1469–1527 CE), in Italy, was an atheist who counselled that the State be controlled and manipulated ruthlessly for the benefit of the individual and that the key attribute of a political leader was their ruthless effectiveness rather than their observance of religious morality and ideals. He proposed a new civic morality and an understanding of the craft of politics that did not incorporate the authority of a just God or any reference to an afterlife.

Getty Images/DEA/G. DAGLI ORTI

FIGURE 2.44 Machiavelli promoted the ethical principle of the end justifies the means. Should a bank note have on it the image of someone who justified ruthlessness?

- **Martin Luther** (1483–1546) was a biblical scholar angered by the exploitation of the poor in Germany through the Church practice of selling documents of indulgences to all so as to finance the building of St Peter's Basilica in Rome. These documents, the people were told, would save them and their family members from time in purgatory after their death. Luther reviewed the theology of salvation and found answers in St Paul that allowed him to reject the institutional church as the means of salvation. The Church eventually excommunicated him, hoping to stop the popularity of his criticisms. But Luther's beliefs led to a schism within the Catholic Church through the establishment of the Lutheran Church.

Luther's ideas led to civil conflict as peasants adopted his ideas of freedom of conscience. A hundred years of wars followed, fought over religion, but also over land and power, between Catholic countries and the regions that adopted **Protestantism**.

- **King Henry VIII of England** (1491–1547 CE) established himself as the head of the Church of England in 1534 CE, which was made legal by the English Parliament passing the Act of Succession and the Act of Supremacy. This created a schism between Rome and England. Henry's action removed the separation of Church and State, as the monarch was anointed as both head of Church and State. Henry also sacked the lands, churches and monasteries belonging to Rome in his country, reclaiming almost a third of his country for him to grant to his supporters. This not only gave Henry the ultimate authority in this Church, it also gave this Church legislative power as 26 bishops sat in the House of Lords and voted on legislation. This religious tradition is now called the Anglican Communion.

Alamy Stock Photo/Tom Taylor

FIGURE 2.45 King Henry VIII of England proclaiming the dissolution of the monasteries, 1536–1541 CE. Given what you have read about the importance of monasteries, what did Henry hope to achieve by taking this action?

- **The Anabaptists** were a reform group who separated in 1523 from the followers of a Swiss reformer Ulrich Zwingli (1484–1531 CE). This group believed that baptism must be freely chosen and so can only be administered to mature individuals not infants. Because of the social importance of baptismal records within the administration of the state in this period, no state adopted the Anabaptist cause or protected it. The Anabaptists believed in a radical separation from the state. Their members were not allowed to accept positions in the service of the government as this would compromise their commitment to Scripture. When authorities moved against them, the Anabaptist movement weakened and was virtually destroyed except for those who migrated to America. However, the Anabaptists' radical rejection of the material world can be seen today in the surviving groups of the Amish, Mennonite and Bruderhof communities.

- **John Calvin** (1509–1564) was a French reformer who found a home for his ideas in the city of Geneva, Switzerland. He was a Renaissance man, trained in theology, law and the classics, which made him a reformer who understood how to teach his evangelical Protestant doctrines, and how to incorporate these into the running of a society. He rejected the doctrine of free will that was part of both the Catholic and Lutheran traditions. Instead, Calvin argued that salvation comes from God's grace and that this is predestined. Once you are part of the Elect, God's grace would not be withdrawn. Calvin's religion demanded high, even severe, moral standards and the community could intervene in the life of a citizen to remind them of their Christian duty. Geneva became a model city for Christianity with Calvinists running social welfare programmes and hospitals. His views were adopted by the Puritans who escaped persecution in England to settle in America. Calvin's theology supported the rise of capitalism and democracy, strongly influencing America's Christianity through the Protestant work ethic – that is, that people work hard with thrift and efficiency now to enjoy eternal salvation after death. Worldly success was deemed a sign of an individual's election. Although no longer a separate denomination, Calvin's ideas are seen today in the Presbyterian, Reform and Baptist Churches.
- **Galileo Galilei** (1564–1642 CE) was an Italian astronomer whose work brought him into conflict with the Catholic Church. His improvements to the telescope and astronomical observations supported radical claims about the nature of the universe previously made by Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543 CE) and Johannes Kepler (1571–1630 CE) who proposed that the cosmos was heliocentric (revolving around the Sun) not geocentric (revolving around the Earth). It was an example of the conflict that was to increasingly occur between the teaching authority of the Church and the freedom of thought that science was to demand in Western society. Galileo demonstrated that the Church's teaching on the nature of the cosmos was inaccurate and in so doing planted the seed of doubt concerning all other teachings of the Church undermining its teaching authority. Galileo's ideas, which emphasised observation and reason, provided a social tool for seeking answers to big questions. Science gained authority and religion lost its influence on such matters.
- **Rene Descartes** (1596–1650 CE) was a French Roman Catholic whose primary contribution to the search for the nature of truth, was to throw out all ideas that had previously been taken for granted about God or religion. Descartes advocated observation and a critical examination of the evidence of the senses, life experiences and reason. Descartes proposed that all philosophising begins with the principle: I think, therefore, I am (*Cogito ergo sum*). This was a radical idea because it denied authority to the Church and religion to say what was true. Instead it promoted the role of the individual in developing a philosophy

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FIGURE 2.46 An engraving (1747 CE) of Galileo demonstrating his telescope and ideas to the Doge and Venetian senators 1609 CE. Although the Church deemed heliocentrism heretical, what does this image made at a later date suggest about the reception of the idea?

of life. From then on subjective truth would hold a more important place than objective truth.

- **Jean-Jacques Rousseau** (1712–1778 CE) a French thinker, argued that under the medieval feudal system there had been an unwritten social contract that the aristocracy would provide protection and the basic needs of food, clothing, housing and use of land. The other side of the contract was that the workers would provide the goods and services for society to operate. This contract recognised the Christian duty of both parties. Rousseau's view was that this contract had been broken as the rich in France were obscenely wealthy and the poor were destitute. This contract had implied that the governed agree to be ruled so that their rights, property and happiness would be protected by their rulers. Once the rulers ceased to protect the ruled, the social contract was broken and the governed were free to choose another set of rulers. Rousseau said, 'Man is born free but everywhere is in chains'. He believed in the importance of liberty. He saw traditional religion as a major hindrance to the liberty of humanity.

The revolutionary movement that followed in France between 1789 and 1799 CE, heightened tensions across Europe and demanded that governments should be based on the equality of everyone giving the impetus for modern democracies. The revolution led to the persecution of the Catholic Church, the official religion of the French state. Under the medieval feudal structure in France the Church was aligned to the monarchy. The Church, very wealthy and a large landholder which collected taxes, was seen by the people to be an oppressor. After the revolution in 1789 CE the new French Republic took control of all the assets of the French church, closed all churches and banned public worship. Much of the Catholic clergy fled France, many who stayed were killed, others took a vow of loyalty to the state. There was now absolute separation of Church and State. However, there was a rebirth of the French Catholic Church under Napoleon (1799–1806 CE) who accommodated religion because of its useful social roles in supporting governance, reducing opposition and running schools and hospitals. The acceptance of the restoration of the Church additionally showed that the people did not want the State putting restrictions on their spiritual beliefs. Napoleon also liberated the Jews who had been living in separate walled parts of cities known as ghettos since Pope Paul IV's Papal Bull in 1555. Napoleon further agreed to allow Jews to participate in many levels of French society in 1808 CE if they renounced their nationality and loyalty to ancient Israel, and swore allegiance to France.

EFFECTS OF REFORMISTS

Skills: summarise, interpret, analyse, draw conclusions

1. Which aspects of religion were the Waldensians attempting to reform? Why would the Catholic Church resist such changes?
2. Why were Wycliffe and Hus willing to die so that the Bible could be translated? Why would the Catholic Church resist such changes?
3. Which parts of the social structure of the Church and of society allowed Luther to be more successful in disrupting Christianity than the earlier reformers?
4. Why was the Anabaptists' expression of their beliefs ultimately not attractive to the people of the period?
5. How did the Reformation influence the expression of the beliefs about the Christian God?
6. After reading the material on reformers complete the following questions in paragraphs that use a TEEL structure (Topic sentence, Exploration of the idea, Evidence and Link back to the topic).

a) Which of these reformers had the greatest impact on the social structures of the Catholic Church?
b) How did these reformers use sacred texts to justify their actions?
c) To what extent were rituals and symbols impacted by the Protestant reformers?
d) In what ways was Calvin's community different in structure from the Catholic Church?
e) How would the marriage of clergy impact on the social structure of a religious tradition? List positive and negative impacts.

7 How has the shift in rituals and symbols impacted on the architectural design of places of worship in Christianity today?

RENAISSANCE AND ENLIGHTENMENT PERIODS, 1300s–1700s CE: THE JEWISH EXPERIENCE

In the post-plague restructuring of society, ghettos were set up by European rulers as compulsory residential quarters for Jews to prevent their interaction with wider Christian society. Thus Jews were not influenced by the intellectual and cultural developments of the Renaissance until nearly three centuries later than in Christian Europe. In 1516 the first **ghetto** in Christian Europe was established in Venice, Italy. Later the cities of Florence, Rome, Prague, Frankfurt, Vienna, Berlin and many other Western European cities also established ghettos. They were often located within the worst part of the town surrounded by a wall shutting it off from the rest of the city or under the more lenient protection on the property of the local ruler or archbishop as in Avignon and Notre Dame. Conditions and rules varied. In some places Jews had to wear peaked hats or a Jew badge and were subject to extra taxes. Jews could now only deal in second-hand goods and pawnbroking as Christians took over the profitable professions. To deal with this segregation and accompanying limitations Jews relied on their prayers, psalms and dreams of messianic restoration to sustain them.

Alamy Stock Photo/PRISMA ARCHIVO

FIGURE 2.47 Rome ghetto established in 1555 CE. What conditions in the ghetto are shown in this illustration?

Jewish communities in Europe became scapegoats even though they too suffered from the plague. Building on the existing anti-Semitism, Jews were falsely blamed for bringing God's punishment in the form of the plague. This led to persecution, expulsions, violent attacks and massacres such as in Strasbourg, 1349 CE where 2000 Jews were rounded up and burnt alive if they refused to convert to Christianity. Immediately following the mass executions, the contracts of loans owed to the Jews held in churches were also burnt.

Renaissance Spain is a case study for exploring the importance of power structures by examining the relationship between religion and society and the relationship between different religions. For hundreds of years Spain had become a place where all the people of the book, Jews, Christians and Muslims, could live together in creative and peaceful coexistence. All religious groups had flourished. However, this contrasts with the tone of the society from 1479 CE after Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand ruled unifying Spain. Both Muslims and Jews had to convert to Catholicism or

be expelled. The State's role included policing the religious practice of the citizens. If the converted were suspected of practising rituals other than Christian, people were brought for judgement before the Spanish Inquisition – a Church authority to question, torture and execute Christians suspected of heresy which was established in 1478 CE (one of the many offices of Inquisition operating from the 1100s through to the 1800s CE). Jews and Muslims refusing conversion or suspected of false conversion were tortured or expelled if uncooperative. The Church Inquisition removed freedom of religion and used fear as a weapon against beliefs. The Spanish in this period took their enthusiasm for conversion to the New World. Spain exemplifies how powerful a religion can become when it is enthusiastically supported by the resources of the State.

Outside Europe Jewish claimants to being the messiah arose in these difficult times, such as Shabbetai Tzvi from Turkey and Nathan of Gaza in the 1600s CE, and Jacob Franks from Poland in the late 1700s CE. They encouraged their followers with messianic promises that the redemption and restoration of the land of Israel and the Jewish people was on its way. Some followers even sold up their homes in anticipation of this great event. Since Jewish suffering and exile continued, these false claims were rejected by most Jews, and messianic claimants eventually ceased to exist in later times.

This period also gave rise to great Jewish scholars such as Spanish-born Rabbi Yosef Karo (1488–1575 CE) who lived and died in Turkish-ruled Safed. He spent 20 years compiling *Beit Yosef*, an enormous guide to Jewish law, then wrote a more concise guide, the *Shulkhan Arukh*, that became the standard law guide for Jews everywhere that is still consulted to this day.

The technological development of printing by mechanical press in Venice from 1511 was a giant leap forward in conserving and distributing Jewish knowledge. Books in Hebrew included the first rabbinic Bible, *siddurim* (prayer books), *responsa* (rabbinic answers to contemporary questions), codes of law, works of philosophy, ethics and commentaries. The printed version of the complete Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds set standards in the pagination of the Talmud and universal layout of the commentaries of Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki) and *Tosafot* (medieval commentaries on the Talmud). Soon Jewish texts were also being printed in Poland and Safed (under Ottoman rule).

The Enlightenment – a radical European intellectual and philosophical movement emphasising reason and individualism rather than tradition and the separation of Church and State – led to the eventual political and social emancipation of all peoples in Western Europe affecting their social, cultural and religious life. But it did not immediately affect the Jews who were isolated and removed from interaction with wider Christian society. It was only after their political and social emancipation from the European ghettos in the late 1700s CE and early 1800s CE that these new ways of thinking infiltrated Jewish thought and practice, having a radical effect on Jewish life. The new ideas that reason is the primary source of authority and legitimacy challenged many Jewish beliefs and practices.

The new ideas of the European Enlightenment took a while to come into the Jewish world. It was the German-born philosopher Rabbi Moses Mendelssohn 1729–1786 CE who founded the *Haskalah*, the Jewish Enlightenment, by bringing the ideas discussed in the courts of German royalty into the **ghettos** by writing about them in a Hebrew newspaper he founded. By translating the Hebrew Bible into German, Mendelssohn bridged the gap between the isolated ghettos and the wider German society. He endeavoured to demonstrate that Jewish faith was compatible with good citizenship, and that traditional Judaism was a rational religion, consistent with the values of the Enlightenment. He has been praised by reformers for facilitating Jewish modernisation and progress but has also been criticised by traditionalists for encouraging assimilation and the breakdown of Jewish tradition in the following generations.

Jewish emancipation in Europe began with Austrian Emperor Joseph II in 1782 CE whose Edict of Toleration allowed Jews some religious freedoms but restricted their access to Jewish autonomy, expecting loyalty to their country and king ahead of their obligations to God and their own community. The 1789 CE French Revolution led to equality under the law for Jews who were

expected to show unswerving patriotism. Jews now had to find a way to negotiate the divide between their religious and wider societal obligations.

Unlike Western Jews, those of 1700s CE Eastern Europe were not touched by the intellectual developments of Western Europe. They had their own adjustments in response to the poverty and persecutions of the pogroms. They lived mainly in the Pale of Settlement, an area encompassing parts of Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine and Russia. In these *shtetls*, small rural villages, Jews lived in poverty under oppressive conditions. They had legal, religious and commercial autonomy within the *kahal*, their own community, but little contact with the unfriendly wider Christian society. Jewish culture and learning thrived despite frequent attacks from the peasants and the Cossacks. Within their closed communities the Yiddish language was spoken by Jews in their daily life while Hebrew remained the holy language of their prayers.

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FIGURE 2.48 Jewish Shtetl Russia/Poland border. What are the positive developments that can come with isolation from the broader society and what would be the negative developments of this?

Hasidism emerged in the mid-1700s CE among Eastern European Jewry as a way to rise above the poverty, pogroms and persecutions they endured. The *Hasidim* (pious ones) were inspired by the teachings of Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov who advocated that along with commitment to the teachings of Torah everyone can find spiritual connection to God without being a scholar. The *Hasidim* were led by a revered *Rebbe*, a dynastic leader who decided any religious issues within their closed community. Adherents revere the *Tanya*, the great work of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the founder of Chabad Hasidism, first published in 1796 CE. It gives insights into understanding and overcoming the struggles of everyday life and lays down the practical and mystical basics of the Chabad philosophy which is still an active part of Judaism today.

Napoleon Bonaparte's conquest of Central and Western European lands during 1806–1808 CE, brought civic emancipation to those Jews. Napoleon liberated the Jews who had been up until then living in separate walled parts of cities known as ghettos since Pope Paul IV's Papal Bull in 1555. In 1808 CE Napoleon agreed to allow Jews to participate in many levels of French society if they renounced their nationality and loyalty to ancient Israel, and swore allegiance to France. These political and social changes had a huge impact on Jewish life. They struggled to find ways to combine their Jewish way of life and teachings with the rapid societal changes they were experiencing.

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FIGURE 2.49 Napoleon grants freedom to the Jews, 1806 CE. What does this image suggest is the response of Jews to their emancipation? To what extent is this accurate?

JEWS DURING THE RENAISSANCE AND ENLIGHTENMENT
Skills: identify, explain, analyse

1 What were false messiahs and why did they arise in some Jewish communities?
2 What religious beliefs motivated the Christian authorities to focus on converting Jews and other non-Christians?
3 Which ideas of the Enlightenment were seen by Jews as a possible threat to Judaism?
4 How was Moses Mendelssohn influential on the question of the compatibility of Judaism with the new ideas of the Enlightenment?
5 In what ways was the experience of the Jews in Eastern Europe different from that of Western European Jews?
6 What was Napoleon's motivation to emancipate the Jews in the lands he conquered?

RENAISSANCE PERIOD, 1300s–1800s CE: THE ISLAMIC EXPERIENCE

By the 1300s CE the influences of Islam upon the societies of Europe, Africa and Asia had contributed to a readiness for the Renaissance. Arabic translations of preserved ancient texts had provided access to ideas in philosophy, mathematics, navigation, medicine, astronomy and mechanics that had been lost after the collapse of the Roman Empire. This set the stage for a blossoming of thought among great thinkers within Islam and from the non-Muslim communities, assisted by patronage from the Islamic political elite.

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FIGURE 2.50 Cifte Minareli Medrese, an Islamic place of worship commissioned and paid for by the Mongol Empire. Why is religious tolerance more desirable for an empire than religious intolerance?

The integration of philosophy which at that time included a study of almost all phenomena (including mathematics and science), was not always easy to integrate with the legal traditions of Islam. It can be argued that a number of inventions and academic disciplines such as astronomy and mathematics were encouraged in order to orientate *qibla* walls with their *mihrab* towards Mecca with greater accuracy, or to define daily prayer times with greater uniformity in a world which had not yet resolved longitude. Scholars such as Persian Al-Ghazzali (d. 1111 CE) noted that material proofs for phenomena can lead to irreligious explanations and condemnations of religious explanations of phenomena. Other Islamic scholars disagreed, such as Ibn Rushd (Averroes) (1126–1198 CE), proposed a synthesis, arguing that philosophy, particularly Aristotelian, can add layers of meaningful explanation, including religious ones, to all phenomena if commentated carefully. His thinking led to a liberalisation in Spain of Islam which saw him exiled and his books burned; however, his thinking inspired Jewish scholars in Spain and Christian scholars in Western Europe. The most prominent and influential Islamic thinkers wrote commentaries reconciling ancient thinkers such as Aristotle with the Quran. Such works later inspired Christian thinkers such as St Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologiae* and possibly Dante Algieri in his masterpiece *The Divine Comedy*.

At times the intellectual movement clashed with conservative factions within the ruling elite and could make life difficult at court.

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FIGURE 2.51 Alhambra Palace, Granada, Spain. What features of Islamic architecture can you see in this image that would inspire a spiritual response from adherents?

Along with the intellectual and technological developments were the architectural achievements of Islam. While the relationship between religious beliefs and architecture was being explored in Gothic design of cathedrals in Christianity the building of the Alhambra Palace in Granada in Spain, mainly between 1238 and 1358 CE by the Nasrid Dynasty, shows the sophistication of Islamic designers in incorporating spiritual aesthetics into civic structures for the benefit of the people by giving expression to their beliefs. An example of this is the use of the number four in the design: the access by four gates, the flowing water in the Jannat al-arifa (paradise) garden reflecting the afterlife, the plan to have four palaces on the site. Four is the number of the cardinal qualities of Allah and the number that reflects stability and order in the universe. Throughout the Alhambra are found the words 'No conqueror but God'.

In Eastern Europe the rapid rise of the Ottoman Empire in the 1300s CE led to six centuries of Muslim rule. The Empire was achieved via rapid conquest, commerce, treaties, intrigues and taking over existing civil service structures. One of the great innovations of Islam was an ideal of reward based on merit. This included people of other religious traditions who were respected and able to participate and distinguish themselves by service or talent.

When in 1492 CE Christian control was restored to Spain by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, they expelled Jews and Muslims who were welcomed by the Ottoman Empire. The refugees greatly added to the cadre of intellectuals whom the Empire cultivated. Islamic culture was distinguished by its comprehensive embrace of intellectual culture. Places of learning, the madrassas, were built next to mosques and the religious leaders encouraged intellectual discussion. Some madrassas were considered as early models of universities.

As the Ottoman Empire expanded, a policy of suzerainty was applied. This allowed the local elite to continue to rule as long as they observed fealty to the Ottoman Empire and paid tribute. There was also a policy of socialisation where the sons of Christian rulers who accepted Ottoman rule were often taken, offered conversion, and were educated at the palace, raised with the Sultan's princes and princesses.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF ISLAM

Skills: research, explain, analyse

1. Explain the role that the ideas developed in Islam in this period played in the development of human knowledge throughout Europe.
2. What was the relationship between the religious leadership of Islam and the political leaders of Islam in this period?
3. Research the impact of different cultures on Islamic social structures during this period.
4. How did the Ottoman Empire's relationship with other religions benefit their society?

RENAISSANCE AND ENLIGHTENMENT PERIOD, 1300s–1700s CE: THE CHINA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA EXPERIENCES

Southeast Asia comprises the mainland countries of Myanmar (Burma), Laos, Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam and the island countries of Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, Brunei and Timor. While Europe was engaged in its Renaissance, Southeast Asia moved into its own transition from ancient times. A number of factors contributed to the changes in the various societies. There were invasions by tribal groups from Mongolia, decline of ancient powerful regimes, contested political power and changing trade relationships and warfare. But instead of radically disrupting Southeast Asian societies these influences brought greater cohesion to them. Political and cultural differences were integrated. The stability created by the social harmony enabled expansion of trade and increased standards of living across the populations.

Alamy Stock Photo/AF Fotografie

FIGURE 2.52 Portrait of Matteo Ricci (1552–1610 CE), an Italian mathematician, cartographer and Jesuit priest, meeting with Xu Guangqi (1562–1633 CE), a Chinese scholar who converted to Christianity. What elements in this engraving show how Ricci had embedded Christianity into Chinese culture?

It also made the societies of Southeast Asia resilient when challenged by foreign economic, political and religious ideas and practices, although during the 1600s CE, the demands of foreign traders and the missionary outreach to Southeast Asia of Islam and Christianity, both Catholic and Protestant, did create tensions.

Science and religion were aligned to enable the integration of Christianity into the elite circles of the Emperor of China. In 1592 CE a Chinese minister in the emperor's court, Xu Guangqi, appointed a Jesuit priest to correct the Chinese calendar after traditional Chinese astronomers had failed to correctly predict an eclipse. The appointee, Johann Schrek, had been taught by Galileo and used Galileo's improvements to the new invention of the telescope to ensure his predictions were correct. This, and the work of a fellow Jesuit, Matteo Ricci, who had integrated Confucianism and Christian thought so that it appealed to those in the ruling Chinese elite, brought Christianity credibility and appeal in China at the time.

Religion and politics were linked in the contests of foreign powers for control of trade. Catholicism with Spanish and Portuguese interests, Protestantism with Dutch and British traders, and Islam under some Muslim rulers. Tolerance for religious differences declined. The stability and harmony of Southeast Asia was disrupted.

Each of the religious traditions made claims of large-scale conversion of the local population. But often these were superficial conversions with many converts still practising their traditional religions. Effectiveness of large-scale conversion depended on the ability of the foreign authorities to enforce it. The converts that counted for the power base of the foreign traders were the individuals with local authority.

MODERN HISTORY, 1800 CE–PRESENT: OVERVIEW

The Modern period is the age when societies experience huge changes in many areas. For example, transportation went from the horse and cart to steam trains, motor vehicles and airplanes. Electricity revolutionised the way people lived and worked. Trends in the understanding of humanity's role in the world moved from the idea of being masters of the Earth to explorers of the universe; from exploiters of the natural world to caretakers; and from people caught up in national identity to global citizens.

In terms of religion the supreme authority wielded by the Christian traditions had faded dramatically. The rise of the secular world, which separated religions from the state, grew in the West along with a movement called Humanism which often agreed with the philosopher, Nietzsche, that from the point of view of society, 'God is dead' and the human person would take the place of God. These were European views that spread throughout the colonial empires of the 1800s and were exacerbated by the rivers of bloodshed in World War I and II.

The rise of the secular academic world saw religious traditions turned into academic studies. Arguments erupted over whether religion numbed the masses into subservience as Karl Marx believed or if it was the quintessential driving force of industrial capitalism as Max Weber saw it. These were the ideas that fuelled the growth of both communism and capitalism. The world saw for the first time large nation states turn to atheism in Russia and China.

In many Western countries including Australia, the Modern era saw religion sidelined in preference of secularism with its contemporary meaning of being irreligious or not religion-dependent. The questioning of religion also saw a proliferation of people turning to Indigenous and Eastern spiritualities, philosophies and the occult.

There have been great challenges for traditional religious traditions as they faced major ethical issues in societies progressing in values and actions at odds with them. The challenges of birth control, abortion, euthanasia, the role of women, LGBTIQA+ rights and abuse of children have led to a decline in Western religions generally.

Some religious traditions infused themselves in an ethnic identity and have survived, others have enabled continents to survive pandemics which wiped out a generation. The religious adherents of the world via natural increases and immigration between the developing and developed world are set to increase in the coming decades, making the community more pluralistic in its view and, in Australia, also more multicultural.

Of late there has been a rise in the influence of evangelical Christian churches, which have a more open social structure. There have been developments in the education and involvement of lay members of communities in leadership. In all traditions there have developed institutes for the studies of sacred texts, and a movement towards humbler and open leadership structures. There has been a rise in conservative elements of religious traditions, but there also seems to be an equally pronounced rise in the need of people to express their spirituality. These times are interesting, challenging, engaging and transformative for religions.

MODERN HISTORY, 1800 CE–PRESENT: THE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

The exploration of the New World in the 1600s CE culminated in the dominance of colonial powers in the 1800s CE. Each of these powers aligned with their dominant religion to persuade their new populations to reinterpret their religious landscape. The dominant powers of the West took Christianity to the Americas, Africa, Asia and the Pacific. In the East, Islam spread throughout Africa and Southeast Asia. By the 1800s CE Christian theology encouraged missionaries to incorporate their beliefs with the ideas found in the spiritual movements in the lands they conquered. This syncretism was based on the view that universal Christian values are embedded in all spiritualities and that the two can coexist and enrich each other; after all, the early Christians' encounter with Plato had led to an enriched understanding of their rituals and beliefs.

Christine Valladares

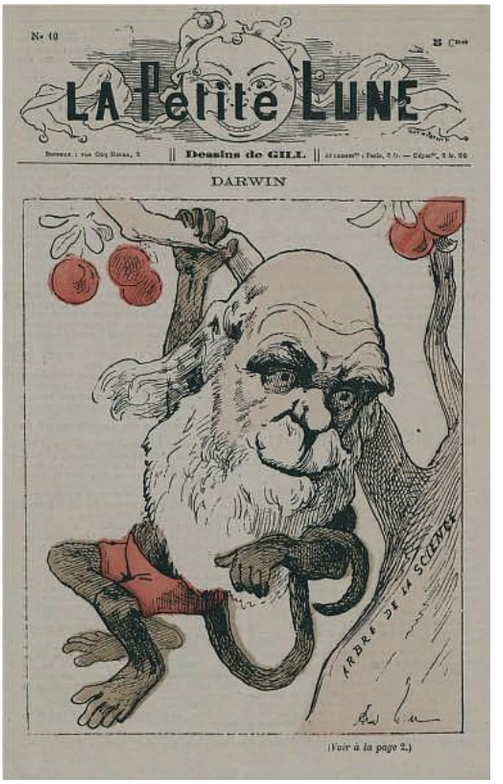
FIGURE 2.53 An El Salvadoran mural showing Archbishop Oscar Romero fighting for the liberation of his people. What evidence is there in this picture of the syncretism of Christianity and Mayan spirituality?

In Australia syncretism has been seen in the impact of missions which led to First Nations Peoples adopting Christianity while maintaining their traditional spirituality. This process, based on the view that universal Christian values are embedded in all spiritualities, can be seen in the following reflection by Deacon Boniface Perdjert when talking about Jesus.

> Like Him we have a great sense of God in nature. We like the way He teaches through the things of nature and the important part nature plays in the sacraments. We have Dreamtime figures who formed the world, and gave us laws and ceremony and life creatures from where our spirits come. We find it easy to see in Jesus THE great Dreamtime figure who, more than all the others, gave us Law, and Ceremony, and Life centres, and marks out the way we must follow to reach our true country. We have certain things in nature for our Dreaming. We call some of these brother and sister. They not only represent our Dreamtime figure, but in some ways they are Him. In the same way He lives in them and is them. So He is ever present. So it is not hard to realise that Christ is with us always. The same yesterday, today and forever. We do not find it strange when He says He is the Life, that we can and must live with His life, that in this life of His we are one. In some ways He lives in us and is us, so that what we do for each other we do for Him.

Joseph Smith was the founder and leader of the Latter Day Saints, a religion born in America. He was killed by a mob in 1844. His aim was to publish *The Book of Mormon*, have lay priests, build temples, and literally establish God's kingdom on Earth. He proposed to do so by gaining political power through running for president of the United States. He faced concerted opposition and while in jail facing charges for trying to silence a newspaper, he was killed. His death led to an exodus of his followers to Utah where they established a colony where society was organised, ruled and shaped by the Mormons. Brigham Young in 1847 became the theocratic leader of Utah and the Church of the Latter Day Saints. This is a tradition that has found it difficult to comply with the rulings of secular leaders over issues such as polygamy.

The rule of the Ottomans was coming to an end by the mid-1800s. Their military strength was diminished and parts of the empire were seeking independence. France at this time demanded protection of Catholics in Palestine and Russia did the same for the members of the Orthodox tradition. The Ottoman leaders agreed to these demands, but Russia went further in arguing that Palestine should be held by Christians so that Christians could have access to religious sites. They declared war on the Ottoman Turks. Russia was not supported in this by other European powers such as Britain and France who preferred an Islamic Ottoman Empire that they could influence than a confident Russia ruling and so they joined the Ottomans in fighting and winning the Crimean War. The Ottoman Empire which had ruled for about 600 years finally ended with their defeat in World War I. What the Crimean War showed was that in Russia religion in the modern world was being used as an excuse for expansionist policies and from the British and French point of view religion was less important than the military security of the State as Christian aligned with Muslim to defeat an Orthodox Christian enemy.



Pmx/Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain

FIGURE 2.54 A depiction of Charles Darwin. What is the cartoonist's view of Darwin and his theory? What religious allusions are in the cartoon?

Darwin (1809–1882) revolutionised the natural sciences (biology) by producing evidence that species originate through evolution and the process of natural selection. His book *On the Origin of Species* (1859) challenged Christian churches because it implied that creation occurs without divine intervention, contradicting the literal interpretation of the creation stories in Genesis 1 and 2. In doing this, the belief about a Creator God was undermined. His theory also denied the separation of man and animal which Darwin explored in his second work, *The Descent of Man* (1871). Darwin wrote that monkeys, apes and humans must have a common ancestor because of our great similarities compared with other species and that humans are animals too and are derived from less human-like ancestors. This undermined the belief that in God's plan humans have a unique and privileged place as well as the belief in redemption and the nature of the soul. Catholics avoided the debate to a large extent, as officially the creation stories were seen as allegorical not literal, but for the Orthodox and Protestant traditions this became a major hurdle in the relationship between science and faith.

As Protestantism matured during the late 1800s and early 1900s, schools of theology were led by great thinkers such as Friedrich Schleiermacher, Albert Schweitzer and Karl Barth. The Protestants' commitment to the interpretation of Scripture, spurred on by developments in archaeology, led to modern ways of interpreting sacred texts. Especially important was the search for the historical Jesus. The aim was also to accommodate the philosophical and scientific developments within a Christian theology.

In the Catholic Church this movement was resisted with the banning of books, the excommunication of Catholic Modernist biblical scholars, condemnation of Rationalism and Modernism and the declaration of the infallibility of the papacy in matters of faith and morals (Vatican I, 1869–70). But by 1943 the Church's position became untenable and Pope Pius XII released the encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu* which led to the Church acknowledging that Genesis 1–3 contains no history in the modern sense of the word, but rather Scripture needs to be interpreted for fundamental truths essential for salvation. This became the basis of historical

biblical criticism within the Catholic Church which was playing catch up with Protestants. This allowed for the Church to have a role in scientific debates.

Christian Churches also engaged in debates on social and moral issues such as slavery, which was a powerful economic tool for creating wealth both in Europe and the United States. The Quakers were the religious group who took the strongest and most consistent stance against slavery. They were a pacifist community who saw the violence of the enslavement of humans as a scourge on society and an affront to their Christian beliefs. As far back as 1688 they protested the use of slaves in the newly established colony of Pennsylvania. They were the first religious group to take a firm stance against African slavery and use their organisation internationally to abolish the trade. They had a firm commitment to the sacredness of all people. Their arguments came from those proposed by a Catholic, Bartolome de las Casas, when he freed his Latin American slaves in 1514 after he saw the cruelty of this system under Spain's Conquistadors. He dedicated the rest of his life to ending the enslavement of the peoples of the New World. He used the argument that these were humans, God's creation, and so demanded dignity. It was the first formal argument for human rights. He countered the argument that slavery brought people to Christ by referring to the authority of St Thomas Aquinas who had stated that people could not be brought to Christ through force but, instead, through their listening to the preaching of God's word.

The eventual demise of African slavery came through the work done in England led by Evangelical Anglicans, William Wilberforce and Thomas Clarkson, and Quaker Josiah Wedgwood. Their energy, financial support, political influence and commitment to Christian virtues led to the passing of the Abolition of Slavery Act in 1834. The 13th Amendment of the United States outlawing slavery was passed in 1865.

Urban poverty was another social and moral issue that engaged religious activists. The living conditions in working-class London were deplorable. A young Methodist named William Booth felt he was called to address the despair and immorality he saw there. The problem was so great and the poor's response to him so aggressive, that he saw this as a war and therefore needed to be fought with a disciplined army. Their weapons would be the word of God and their music. They would save souls through their good works and their prayer. And so it was in 1878 the Salvation Army

Getty Image/Heritage Images

FIGURE 2.55 William Booth's son, Bramwell, inspecting the boy scouts in London in 1925. Why would a uniform be important for the success of the Salvation Army?

took a new and radical approach to social change – they moved outside their chapel in Whitehall and onto the streets to confront a destitute community with the challenge of a moral life. Their example of loving service, although initially violently rejected, gained recognition, respect and reward through the support of the broader society.

Rerum Novarum (1891) was a ground-breaking document that changed the Catholic Church's role in society. It was the first of a series of papal statements that form a body of work called Catholic Social Teaching. These define the relationship between Catholics and society. The belief and vision underpinning these documents is the Kingdom of God, God's reign in this world and the next. *Rerum Novarum* challenged socialist, communist and capitalist ideas by arguing for workers' rights on the basis of respecting the dignity of the human person. These ideas continue today in various campaigns to combat injustices, such as to end modern slavery and to aid refugees.

Following are examples of the social teaching of the Catholic Church having a concrete impact on society.

- **Archbishop Daniel Mannix** of Australia, in the early 1900s CE, was the primary voice opposing conscription of young men to the army to fight in World War I. He used the powerful print media and street marches to put pressure on the government.
- **Dorothy Day** and her movement were and are America's most radical pacifists. Day used her skills as a journalist to oppose both World Wars, the Vietnam War and the development of nuclear weapons. She used her Catholic publication, *The Catholic Worker*, to influence government policy. She led street protest marches. She was jailed for her activism. She was at the cutting edge of a shift in the relationship between Church and State. She represented the mobilisation of lay Catholics so that they were engaged players in the political process within democracy.
- **Pope John XXIII** in 1962 was inspired by Catholic Social Teaching to take informed intervention in the Cuban Missile Crisis between the USA and Russia providing both leaders an opportunity to adopt a stance of peace by withdrawing their forces from a frightening confrontation.
- **Vatican II**, between 1962 and 1965, gathered over 2000 bishops in Rome at a council of the Church to debate the place of the Church in the modern world. The use of mass media was a novelty that moved the Catholic Church away from institution towards the more democratic notion of the People of God. Rather than closing the world out, Pope John XXXIII instructed the Church to open the windows and let the Spirit into the Church. He wanted an 'aggiornamento' – a new Spring in the Church. The documents that came from the Council, Vatican II, were teachings that recognised many of the modern developments in society, such as the interpretation of biblical texts, rituals in the language of the people in which lay people could have active roles as ministers, teachings on religious freedom, and instructions on working to create peace and justice. Catholics were no longer to be separate from the world, but to become integrated into the world by working to establish the Reign of God. An example of the impact of this change of role could be seen in American Catholics participating in civil disobedience movements in anti-Vietnam War campaigns led by a Catholic priest Daniel Berrigan. He established the pacifist group called the Plowshares Movement.
- **The Solidarity Movement** in the 1980s united workers in Catholic Poland who found justification for their trade union movement in the teachings of *Rerum Novarum*. Their resistance led to the fall of communism in Eastern Europe. Communism had tried to impose atheism on Eastern Europe which had oppressed the Orthodox Churches also.

- **Pope John Paul II** adopted the principle of the Preferential Option for the Poor as part of Catholic Social Teaching in the 1990s. It is the central idea that guides Liberation Theology, which has been a powerful force in Latin America in the fight for justice for campesinos (poor farmers) and land rights. It argues that when confronted with a choice between standing with the status quo or with the poor, a Catholic must stand with the poor and oppressed.
- **The Women's Liberation Movement** of the 1960s and the opening up of opportunity for women in society challenged religious groups to recognise the contribution women could make in their communities. In order to have a respected role in society it was recognised by many that women's contribution needed to be affirmed. Many Protestant denominations have been ordaining women since the 19th century. In 1992 the Church of England gained international attention when it ordained 32 women as priests. Pope Francis I has recently adopted the position of appointing women to prominent leadership roles without ordination. Women in leadership roles in religious institutions does, however, remain a point of disagreement in most Christian Churches.

Alamy Stock Photo/PA Images

FIGURE 2.56 The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby joins women priests in 2014 to mark the 20th anniversary of the ordination of the first female priests in the Church of England. What does this picture say about women's attitude to ordination into the priesthood?

It was not only the Catholic Church that took action to influence the wider society to become more conscious of social and moral issues. Following are two prominent examples – Evangelist Billy Graham and Dr Martin Luther King.

- **Evangelical Protestant, Billy Graham**, in the USA rose to prominence in 1949 with his crusades that went across the Western world. He made use of radio and later television as well as the large stadiums that were being built to accommodate sporting events. He took religion to the people and established that religion had a large role in influencing the people's democratic vote. In doing this he developed a close relationship with politicians of influence.
- **Baptist minister Dr Martin Luther King Jr** and the Civil Rights Movement in 1963 used the media to not only use speeches to persuade mass audiences, but to show the audience the violence inflicted on African-American people through their evening news broadcasts.

Evangelism has been adopted by the Pentecostal movement, which is the fastest growing religious movement in the world today, including Australia (Pew Research Centre), but especially in poorer nations. They preach equality and the power of the Spirit to those who are oppressed, aiming to mobilise them into forces with political influence. This is having an impact not only in the USA and Britain, but also in Africa and Latin America.

Many religious groups in the Western world have lost credibility and respect from adherents and the broader society in recent years due to revelations about the abuse of children in their care. There have been a series of enquiries that have revealed tragic stories of abuse by people in authority and lack of moral responsibility in religious groups. The statistics revealed in the report of the Ryan Commission in Ireland (2009), The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Australia (2013) and investigations into dioceses in America and Germany have revealed the extent of this scourge in the Catholic Church and other religious traditions.

The changing responses to this problem have demonstrated the capacity for the modern state to intervene in the operation of a range of religious groups when state laws are broken. It is a demonstration of how the role and place of religion in society in this period of history has shifted away from a previously powerful position.

Alamy Stock Photo/PA Images

FIGURE 2.57 Pluralist society unites in common cause. What other issues have united members of religious traditions in recent times?

With religious groups sidelined so that they are one of many stakeholders in political debates, they have been forced to adopt the role of lobbyist by trying to influence government policy through public opinion. This has been seen in the issue of the detention of refugees in Australia. The membership of church communities has taken to the streets, united across denominational boundaries, to influence governments to accept their demands for more just treatment of refugees.

CHRISTIANITY TODAY

Skills: explain, research, analyse

1. Why are Christian leaders in the modern world often challenging the political leaders of their time? Is this a healthy development?
2. Which of the aspects of religion is at the heart of the work of the individuals discussed in this section? Why is this aspect so important to religious people today?
3. What is the relationship between the different denominations in Christianity today?
4. What reforms are still needed in Christianity and how would you influence the tradition to bring these about?

MODERN TIMES, 1800 CE–PRESENT: THE ISLAMIC EXPERIENCE

In Islam, there were a number of reform movements during the 1800s CE. One reform movement in the Arabian Peninsula was based on the teachings of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703–1792 CE). He taught that there needed to be a return to basics in terms of ritual practice, faithfulness to the Quran and Hadiths, strict adherence to Sharia law and respect for rulers, in order to bring order to society. He had been able to attract the support of one of the region's most influential regional leaders, Muhammad Bin Saud Al Muqrin. Together they formed an alliance that shaped what became the Saudi State. As this family's armies fought and took territory they took with them Wahabist Islam. Over time, other dynasties controlled this area but after 1932 the area returned to the al-Saud family that re-established the Kingdom that is now Saudi Arabia in which the Wahabist tradition remains strong.

Another reform movement was in Egypt during the 1870s CE. Egypt was suffering economically and sold the Suez to Britain (1875) so that trade could go through Egypt to Europe. This loss of an important asset of Egypt was symbolic of the power of Britain and France in the region. Led by Jamal al Din al Afghani (Assad Abadi), an Iranian journalist living in Egypt, this reform movement aimed to restore and protect Islamic beliefs and culture under threat because of the dominance of European powers and the secularisation that occurred as a result of interacting with Western culture, but with a modernist approach which many found too radical. He and his supporters proposed that all Islamic states, from India to the Middle East, should rise up against British rule. He promoted the education of the people so that they would return to Islam. He also wanted to modernise the State to gain economic independence from the West through the use of science, technology and reason.

A later reform movement, again in Egypt, was the Muslim Brotherhood. During the 1940s it became Islam's most organised and powerful organisation. The group was the work of Hassan Al-Banna an educator who aimed to return Islam to the people through activism and care of the poor. The social structure of this group was integral to its success. They provided communities with a mosque for prayer, schools for education and sporting facilities for the body. The group's resistance to British rule came to include violence, to the extent that in 1948 the Egyptian government made membership of the group illegal. But the group maintained its support base and has remained strong. It was writings of Sayyid Qutb, a prominent member of the group, that brought to the forefront the religious idea of ***jihad*** (struggle) as relevant to the debate about the nature of modern Islam.

In Iran a revolution in 1979 removed the Shah who had strong links to Western governments and an attraction to Western secular ideas and moved the state to a more radical, fundamentalist religious Islamic republic with Shia rule under Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. This development had implications for the relationship between Iran which was a Shia majority state and the rest of the Arabian Peninsula which was largely led by Sunni. This has led to violent conflict.

The advent of social media has aided the rise of fundamentalist religious groups globally and in Islam led to the emergence of Al Qaeda and ISIS. These fringe groups have been able to use social media to recruit members from around the world who have supported their campaigns in the Middle East both physically as foot soldiers, as terrorists in their own countries or as groups who finance their activities. Technology has proven to be a powerful tool for attracting socially disaffected youth to take a stance for an extremist position that is in opposition to mainstream Islamic traditions.

Contemporary Islam is dynamic and diverse. Globally there are theocratic states and others that are young democracies. The Islamic populations in each region are adopting a character that is consistent with the belief that Muslims must be involved in the operation of the political structures of the state in which members live as they strive to spread the teachings of the Quran. Conflict in the Middle East has led to broad migration and refugee influxes from Islamic nations. This has raised questions about the adoption and application of Sharia law in both Islamic nations

that are increasingly influenced by Western Human Rights movements and Western nations that now have significant and growing Islamic communities. The study of Islamic thought is no longer confined to Muslim majority countries. Universities in America, Britain and Australia have respected academics exploring the relationship between Islam and society in the modern world. For many people this is evident in the debate about women's rights in marriage and dress. A symbol of change has been the rights that have been given to women in Saudi Arabia such as the right to drive. The argument used for changes in Saudi Arabia was that some elements of Islamic law are based on culture rather than theology and so change is possible. But this is not acceptable to other groups that argue that Islam must remain pure and not be blackened by Western values. There are also some countries such as Turkey that were once firmly secular but are now moving towards strengthening their commitment to Islam. Some Western nations have accepted elements of Islamic law to operate in their countries. This is the case in Britain where Islamic family court issues can be decided through Sharia law. In Australia the government allows for institutions to operate using Islamic principles – examples are the Islamic banking system and the slaughter of animals. In Australia, parliamentarians can now take their oath on the Quran.

AAP Image/LUKAS COCH

FIGURE 2.58 What is the significance of an oath and why is it appropriate that this oath was taken on the Quran, not the Bible?

ISLAM IN MODERN TIMES

Skills: research, explain, analyse

1. What was the main focus of Islamic reformers in this period of history?
2. What aspects of religion have been involved in these movements?
3. What is the relationship between these Islamic reformers and the State?
4. What trends are evident in an exploration of Islam in the modern era?
5. What is the relationship between the different streams of Islam today?
6. Write a paragraph describing Islamic life in Australia today

MODERN HISTORY, 1800s CE–PRESENT: THE JEWISH EXPERIENCE

The effects of the major societal changes occurring in Europe in the late 1700s and early 1800s, influenced by the spread of the new ideas of the enlightenment asserting individual freedoms and religious tolerance, had a major impact on Jewish life in Europe and spread to the Americas. Due to their new-found freedoms in Western European society of the 1800s CE, many Jews, now free from the restrictions of the ghetto, chose to leave their tradition and totally assimilate, or convert to Christianity in order to enhance their opportunity to advance in European society. On the other hand, a scholarly movement called the Science of Judaism emerged in Germany during the early 1800s CE, which applied the new historical, objective ways of thinking to investigating Jewish texts and history. This led to further changes in Jewish thought and practice.

During this period of adaptation and adjustment of Judaism to ensure its survival in modern times, Jews found innovative ways to live Jewishly in this newly opened world. The main streams that emerged were:

- **Reform Judaism** (later also known as Liberal and Progressive Judaism) first developed in 1819 in Germany. One of its founders, Abraham Geiger (1810–1874), argued that Judaism is in a constant process of change, adaptation, adjustment and evolution, which is necessary for survival. He advocated that ethical monotheism and morality were at the core of Judaism and most rituals were outmoded so they no longer had significance. Synagogues came to be called temples, because Reform rejected the idea that the Temple would be rebuilt. This movement soon spread to America through Jewish immigrants fleeing persecution. To secure Jewish continuity and relevance in a rapidly changing society Reformers chose to modernise Jewish practices by modifying or even abandoning some traditional Jewish beliefs, laws and customs; accepting the validity of historical scholarship; reintroducing the vernacular sermon into the synagogue; and insisting rabbis have secular educational qualifications.
- **Orthodox (Traditional or Torah)** Judaism (later also called Ultra-orthodox) spoke out strongly opposing the reformers. Traditionalists insisted on continuity of the beliefs and practices of what they saw as normative Judaism. They were horrified by the idea of changing anything at all in the tradition. Moses Sofer (1762–1839) believed that the movements and ideas of modern society were systematically destructive of Jewish faith, observance and identity. He and others argued that God's teachings and Jewish life are unalterable. To prevent extinction, they preached, Jews should totally resist assimilation by not adapting any of their beliefs and practices, and adhere to Halakhah, Jewish law. In this stream of Judaism, secular education is often minimal; instead children receive an education based on traditional Jewish texts. There are many groups within the Ultra-orthodox category including several Hassidic (movement from 1900s Poland) groups that encourage popular folklore and mysticism. There is also the law-focused Mitnagdim, another Eastern European movement of the 1800 and 1900s CE formed in opposition to Hassidism.
- **Neo-Orthodox Judaism** (later called Modern Orthodox) developed from the leadership of German Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808–88) who argued that 'religion allied with progress' was the bridge to adjusting to the changing world and preventing assimilation. This stream allowed for superficial change in clothing, participation in secular daily life, and studying of secular subjects in addition to their Jewish studies, while adamantly insisting on unswerving loyalty to Jewish beliefs and religious laws.
- **Conservative (Historical) Judaism** falls somewhere between Orthodox and Reform Judaism in its attitude and responses to the ideas and developments of modern society.

Its founder, Hungarian-born Rabbi Zacharia Frankel (1801–1875 CE), influenced by the development of historical scholarship in Europe, studied the evolution of Jewish law, which influenced his understanding of the practice and law in Judaism. The movement developed first in Germany in 1854 then later in America, stressing the historical importance of the Torah, Talmud and other rabbinic texts while also acknowledging the ongoing dynamic nature of the development of Judaism. The Conservative movement supports the notion of adaptation to changing times but wishes to preserve the central beliefs and as much tradition as possible, while acknowledging the existence of historical change and the need for ongoing moderate development of Judaism.

In contrast to the new Jewish freedoms in Western Europe, pogroms, violent riots against the Jews occurred in the late 1800s CE and early 1900s CE in the Pale of Settlement, an area that included Russia, Poland and the Ukraine. Jewish property was attacked, looted and destroyed and Jews were beaten in the streets. The 1903 CE Kishinev pogrom in Russia was published in newspapers throughout the world, raising awareness of the precariousness of Jewish life. Nevertheless, both Eastern and Western Europe remained the major centres of Jewish life and culture with messianic hopes continuing to bring hope into their daily life and reflected in their prayers, rituals, rich literature and humour. The rise of Nazism ended this existence.

Between 1860 and 1914 there was a large Jewish migration to America from Germany, Poland, Russia and Roumania (Romania), attracted by the promise of religious and political freedom after enduring poverty and oppression. America soon became the largest centre of Jewish culture and religion outside of Europe. Many Jewish communities flourished, erecting cemeteries, synagogues, hospitals, schools, community centres and founding charitable institutions, publishing Jewish newspapers in Yiddish and English, and re-establishing communal Jewish values in their new country of residence. Jewish thought, music, art, synagogue architecture and cuisine all began to display the strong influence of American culture on modern Judaism without them forgetting their age-old teachings.

Alamy Stock Photo/Everett Collection Inc

FIGURE 2.59 Russian Jews arriving in America. How does their baggage symbolise their hopes?

There was also a new wave of Jewish migration to Palestine. Longing for a return to the Promised Land from nearly 2000 years of exile became a reality from 1882 when young Russian Jewish pioneers made their way to Turkish Palestine. They were fuelled by their religious, cultural, social and political ideology and spurred on by persecution in their homeland. Waves of Jewish Eastern European migration followed, buying land and establishing agricultural settlements and new towns. The holy

Alamy Stock Photo/World History Archive

FIGURE 2.60 Between 1882 and 1903 an estimated 25 000–35 000 Jews mainly from Eastern Europe and Yemen migrated to Ottoman Palestine. What indications are there in this photograph that conditions were difficult for these early Jewish settlers?

tongue of Hebrew was adopted as their spoken national language for the first time since the Fall of Jerusalem to the Romans. The observance of Jewish laws and rituals varied greatly among these migrants but all were guided by Jewish ethical and messianic teachings to rebuild the Jewish homeland once again. Jewish settlements and cities grew substantially after World War I under the British Mandate.

Already home to 449 000 Jews before World War II, the present State of Israel was established in 1948 supported by the vote of the United Nations and by the subsequent war that accompanied it and the withdrawal of the British as the homeland of the Jewish people. It has become a haven for Jews persecuted and expelled from their countries of origin. Other Jews have been inspired by their faith to choose to 'go up' both spiritually and literally to live in the Holy Land. Israel has become an increasingly influential centre of Jewish thought and culture in the modern world. The cuisine, cultural diversity and rhythms of the Sephardic Jews from Arab lands and Ashkenazic Jews from Europe and Russia have strongly influenced the emergence of a distinctive Israeli style of Jewish food and culture, synagogue architecture, art and music.

The Nazi racial definition of who was a Jew meant scores of Christians with a Jewish parent or even one Jewish grandparent were also murdered. Although many clung to their faith to help their survival, others found no hope or answers in Jewish teachings. Major centres of learning and centuries of European Jewish life were totally destroyed. The aftermath of this traumatic event had permanent repercussions on the Jewish psyche, leading to many struggling to comprehend a god which could allow such an ordeal to occur. Many found questions and contradictions in religious belief instead of support, guidance and strength.

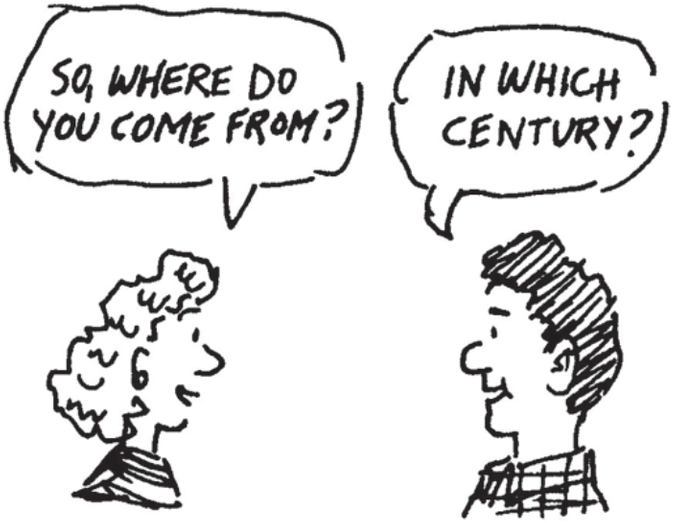
Another repercussion of the Nazi Holocaust was that many Churches later acknowledged their culpability that exacerbated the situation in Europe by teaching for many centuries of the collective guilt of Jews for Jesus' death. Pope Paul VI's 1965 CE proclamation *Nostra Aetate* (In our time) symbolised the Catholic Church's attempt to bring about a rapprochement between Christianity and Judaism and acknowledged the ongoing validity of God's Covenant with the Jews. More recently, the United Nations established an annual Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January to ensure universal remembrance of that bleak era.

Today the various streams of Judaism are addressing some of the challenging issues of modern society as seen in the actions outlined below.

- **The American Reform movement**, as a result of the rise of awareness of the status of women in modern society and the increasing number of women gaining higher education, in 1972 CE Rabbi Sally Preisand was ordained. She was thought to be the first female rabbi; however, the amazing story of Regina Jonas' ordination in 1935 CE Berlin was discovered, who unfortunately was murdered in Auschwitz in 1943. Priesand's ordination in the Reform movement and those women rabbis that have since followed her indicate the growing influence of feminism on contemporary Judaism.

- **The Conservative movement** has also embraced female equality in all aspects of ritual and social structure. More recently the Modern Orthodox stream is also beginning to ordain female spiritual leaders but is not yet according them equal status to male rabbis. The most traditional Ultra-orthodox groups totally reject these changes yet even their women are more highly educated and active in their community than in earlier generations.
- **Progressive (including Reform and Liberal) and Conservative streams** of Judaism have taken a welcoming stance to accepting LBGTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, Plus other) members into their community along with wider society's legal change to their equal status. Gays have been ordained as rabbis and taken up leadership roles in those Jewish communities. These synagogue communities may conduct same-sex commitment ceremonies and marriages if permitted in their State. Orthodox and Hasidic streams are less accepting or welcoming of overt expressions of gay life although they may admit an observant individual LGBTIQA+ adherent into their congregation.

Outside of Israel, assimilation is seen as the greatest threat to Jewish continuity in the modern world. Attracted to the ideas and lifestyle of the contemporary world, many Jews no longer are conversant in the ideas of their religion nor do they fully observe the traditional laws and customs. Many have become cultural Jews, retaining some vestiges of their tradition, eating Jewish delicacies and enjoying traditional music, dance and humour. Their children and grandchildren are not necessarily attending Hebrew school or participating in the wider Jewish community's social life, leading to a growing rate of intermarriage with non-Jews. This has led to a reaction from the Ultra-orthodox to give birth to large families to counter this trend and preserve traditional practices more rigorously to ensure Jewish continuity of its traditional practices.



From 'The Story of the Jews: A 4000 Year Adventure', written and illustrated by Stan Mack, Jewish Lights Publishing, USA, 2001, page xiii

FIGURE 2.61 What does this cartoon imply about the reason for the spread of Jews throughout the world today?

THE EMERGENCE OF MODERN JUDAISM

Skills: identify, explain, analyse

1. What major historical events have influenced Jews and Judaism in the modern period?
2. Why did a range of Jewish streams evolve in the modern period?
3. How did the meaning and importance of the Land of Israel change in the modern period?
4. Why are Jews not an ethnic group, national group or racial group?

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW

1 List the ways that religion has influenced society during each period.
2 List the ways society has influenced religion during each period.
3 In general, what does the material in this chapter say about the role of religion in society? List the roles you have observed and then organise these points in order from most important role in society to least important role in society.
4 Referring to the material in this chapter, identify when in history a religious tradition has done each of the following:
   - initiated the spread of ideas in society
   - endorsed the spread of ideas in society
   - resisted the spread of ideas in society.
5 What factors have been shown to threaten the existence of religious traditions in history?
6 Draw a poster or mindmap showing the growth of the ideas and spread of two of the religious traditions and spiritualities you have studied in this chapter.
7 Discuss the accuracy of the following statement in class: 'Scientific innovations in society always impact on the credibility of religious beliefs.'

Weblinks
Various for Chapter 2

EXTENSION

1 Research the role of women in one of Australia's religious traditions and answer the following questions:
- What roles do women have in the religious tradition?
- Are these roles the same as or different to from those of men?
- Are the roles of women firmly entrenched in the tradition or changing?
- What sections of their sacred texts are used in the discussion of women in the tradition?
- What rituals are reserved for each gender?
- What is the tradition's teaching on other genders?
- To what extent has the role of women changed in the religious tradition over time.

2 Research the impact of colonialism on First Peoples in Australia, Canada, Africa, New Zealand.
- How did religious groups facilitate the destruction of First Peoples' cultures?
- In what ways is this period of colonialism still impacting on the relationship between religious groups and First Peoples?
- Is syncretism a positive or a negative idea? Offer examples to support your point of view.
- What is the difference between syncretism and inculturation?

3 Research which areas of Asia/Southeast Asia were impacted by the following colonial powers – Britain, Holland, Portugal, Spain – and note which religious tradition they brought with them:
- For each of these countries, research what the dominant religion of these countries is today.
- How do you explain any differences that you have found?

4 In class, discuss which technological development in history was most effective in enhancing the role of religion in society?

5 In what ways has religion been part of a process of socialisation in the Modern period?

6 Research the profile of Christianity in China today. Look at:
- the number of Chinese who are Christian and the denominations to which they belong
- who appoints leaders in Christian communities in China
- the architectural style of Chinese Christian places of worship
- any conflict between Christianity and the Chinese state.

7 Using the material in this chapter, identify where fundamentalist ideas are found in each of the religious traditions discussed.

8 Define civil disobedience then respond to the following questions:
- Why were acts of civil disobedience a radical change in the Catholic Church's relationship with the state?
- What is the relationship between religious freedom and civil disobedience?

Alamy Stock Photo/Alicia Fox

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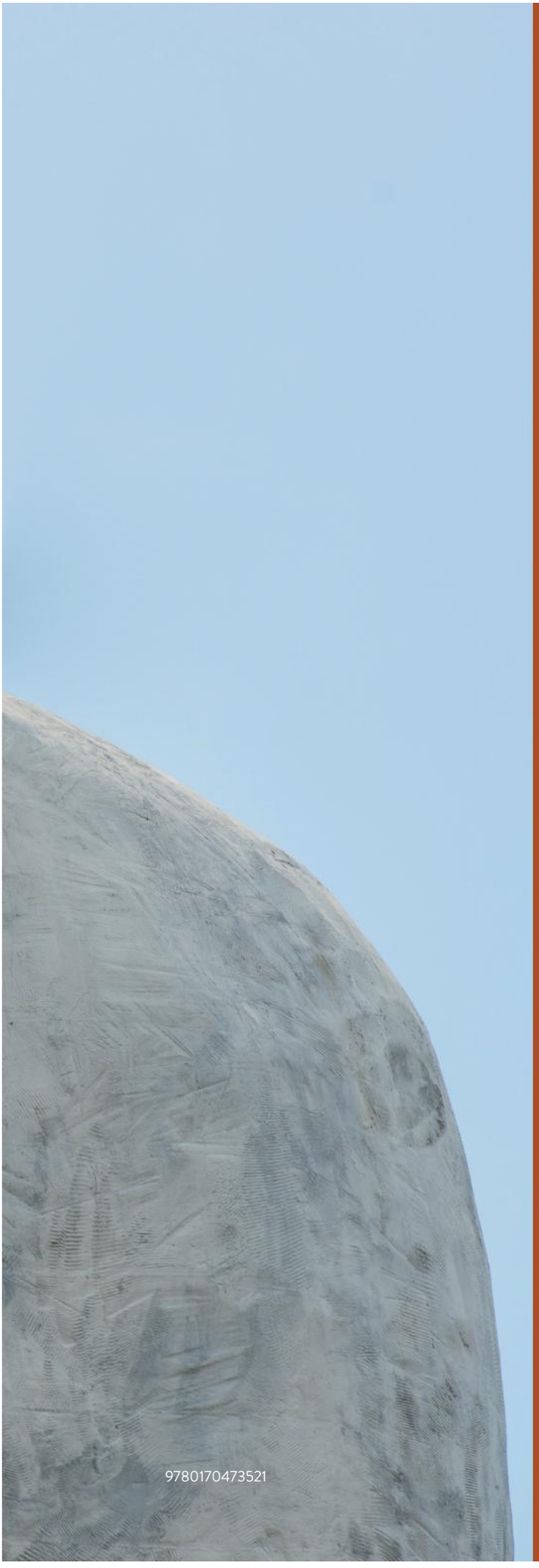


Chapter 3

RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY: THE AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCE

Outcome to be demonstrated

Discussion of the presence of religion in Australia, past and present

Focus questions

- How has the spiritual and religious composition of Australia changed over time?
- Which policies and trends have influenced the religious composition of Australia over time?
- How have spiritual and religious communities in Australia expressed their collective identity through the aspects of religion?
- In what ways have adherents used the aspects of religion to develop personal meaning and identity?
- How and why have spiritualities, religious traditions and denominations interacted with each other and contributed to the social infrastructure of Australia?

9780170473521

We acknowledge the First Peoples of the land on which this text was written, the Bunurong Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples; also the traditional custodians of the land on which the text is taught and studied. We acknowledge their elders past, present and emerging for they hold the cultural knowledge and wisdom that will make our nation whole. We also acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

Worksheet
Terminology

AUSTRALIA, A RELIGIOUS PLACE

> Australia has always been a spiritual place, as reflected in its unique and continually changing religious profile. This began with the First Nations Peoples who, over time, explored, named and dwelt across the continent. They forged their sense of belonging to and reverence of the land and its waters in harmony with the spirit-filled environment. Their spiritual knowledge still holds secrets unknown to mainstream Australia.
>
> An extract from a Research Report prepared for the Australian Human Rights Commission by Professor Gary Bouma, Professor Desmond Cahill, Dr Hass Dellal, Athalia Zwartz, p. 5.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Skills: explain, interpret, analyse

1. Why is it important to Acknowledge Country in this text?
2. When and how does your school Acknowledge Country?
3. Refer to the website of AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia to respond to answer the following questions.
   a. Why might the creators of this map include a statement that says that the borders and boundaries on the map may not be accurate and that the number of clans may not be correct?
   b. How might the climate and physical geography of the Australian continent have shaped the distribution of First Nations clan groups and their collective identity?
   c. Describe in prose the distribution of First Nations Peoples in Australia today.
4. Examine the language map (Figure 3.2). What does it show about social structure in pre-colonial society?

RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION AND ADHERENCE: PRE-COLONISATION

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES

Prior to 1788 Australia was a spiritual land and is known to the First Nations Peoples of Australia as Sacred Country. Estimates of the precolonial population of First Nations People of Australia vary from 300 000 to 1 000 000. Australia's First Nations Peoples spoke more than 250 languages. These were further diversified by 800 or more dialects through which groups expressed their spirituality and beliefs related to specific sacred places on the land on which they lived. Their beliefs, rituals, ethical principles and moral codes were and are sophisticated and complex. Each group developed their own overarching narrative of the cosmos and their place in it. This is expressed in the all-encompassing ideas of Lore and Laws connecting people to each other, the land, animals, plants and Ancestral Beings and Spirits. **Moiety**, defines the relationship of these things to each individual.

Russell, Robert. (1837). Melbourne from the falls, National Library of Australia, nla.obj-134644646

FIGURE 3.1 Yarra Falls. This natural bridge was a meeting place for tribes of the Kulin nation for thousands of years where the salt water and the fresh water met (near the Queens Bridge today). What impact would the loss of the waterfall have on the spirituality of the traditional custodians?

The spirituality of First Nations Peoples comes from, and is embedded in, the land to which they belong. Each people have their own language, beliefs, sacred stories, myths and lore which makes them distinctive; however, there are shared principles, values and practices that unite Australia's First Nations Peoples' spiritualities. This is an outline of one people's spirituality.

In the heart of the nation is the country of the Anangu people whose languages are Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara. An elder of the Yankunytjatjara group was Uncle Bob Randall who, through film and writing, explored for the broader Australian community the belief system he called *Kanyini.* In doing this he discussed his people's relationship of love and responsibility for the country to which they have always belonged, generation after generation for time immemorial. This relationship is modelled on the unconditional love given by "Earth Mother", "Sun Mother" and "Moon Father". Randall says that, "*When you grow up in that system you feel utterly secure because you belong to all that there is, and all that there is belongs to you.*"

He taught that this spirituality of Kanyini has *Tjukurrpa* – the ancient stories of Creation that are part of the oral history of the people. This was the time when the first great beings created the landscape, such as Uluru. These great beings left sacred sites to educate and shape the people through rites such as initiation. The information is sacred and so is only to be held by those who have gone through ceremony. These *Keepers* carry out ceremonies that protects the natural world.

The individual in this belief system possesses, what Randall calls, the "*soft voice of … super-consciousness*" which is sometimes opposed by the desire to exercise free will. If the two, super-consciousness and free will, are kept in balance then all things will be equal and exist in unconditional love and harmony. In Kanyini, the person contributes to their spirituality or *kurunpa* by recognising their own contribution to the development of unconditional love and harmony with all things and they should lead by example. *Walytja* or family is an important principle, as in this spirituality, each person has a connection to the song lines of their birth that links them to their totemic story.

Some sacred sites are restricted to different genders; others are open to the community and are places for gathering, singing and cultural knowledge sharing. As people travel over country the elders share the wisdom that is linked to place and reveal the natural order that underpins their spirituality. These places define their country, *ngura*, their place of belonging. Randall describes this relationship as a magical connection which provides the person's home. Land is, therefore, at the heart of the spirituality. Kanyini is a spirituality that has kept the people of the Western Desert strong and resilient.

SPIRITUALITY OF AUSTRALIA'S FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES

Skills: explain, outline, interpret, analyse

1. Explain Kanyini in your own words.
2. What does Kanyini require of the relationship between humans?
3. What does Kanyini require of the relationship between humans and the natural world?
4. How does Kanyini provide security to First Nations people?
5. Explore how Kanyini provided/provides personal meaning and identity through the aspects of religion.
6. Kanyini is called a spirituality and not a religion. Discuss in class why this might be the case.

Patrick Dodson is an elder of the Yawuru people of North Western Australia. He was the first of Australia's First Nations Peoples to be ordained a priest in the Catholic Church; however, he left the priesthood due to conflict between his two spiritual identities and the obligations they imposed. He was the first Chairperson of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation. In 2016 he became a senator in the Federal Parliament. This is an extract from his maiden speech in which he declares his identity and spirituality.

> I am a proud member of the Yawuru people of Broome. In the Yawuru language from around Broome there are three key concepts from the Bugarrigarra which shape our ways of knowing and understanding. These concepts will inform my work here, as they have formed my being. They are: Mabu ngarrung, a strong community where people matter and are valued; Mabu buru, a strong place, a good country where use of resources is balanced and sacredness is embedded in the landscape; Mabu liyan, a healthy spirit, a good state of being for individuals, families and community. Its essence arises from our encounter with the land and people.
>
> These concepts are not newly minted. They come from the time before time began. We call this the Bugarrigarra – from when the Earth was soft and yet to be moulded and given its form by the creative spirits. The Bugarrigarra encompasses the time well before Western philosophy, religion and laws existed or travelled to our lands in ships.

Yaruwu Senator Patrick Dodson's Maiden Speech to Parliament (September 2016).

SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE YAWURU PEOPLE OF BROOME

Skills: explain, outline, interpret, analyse

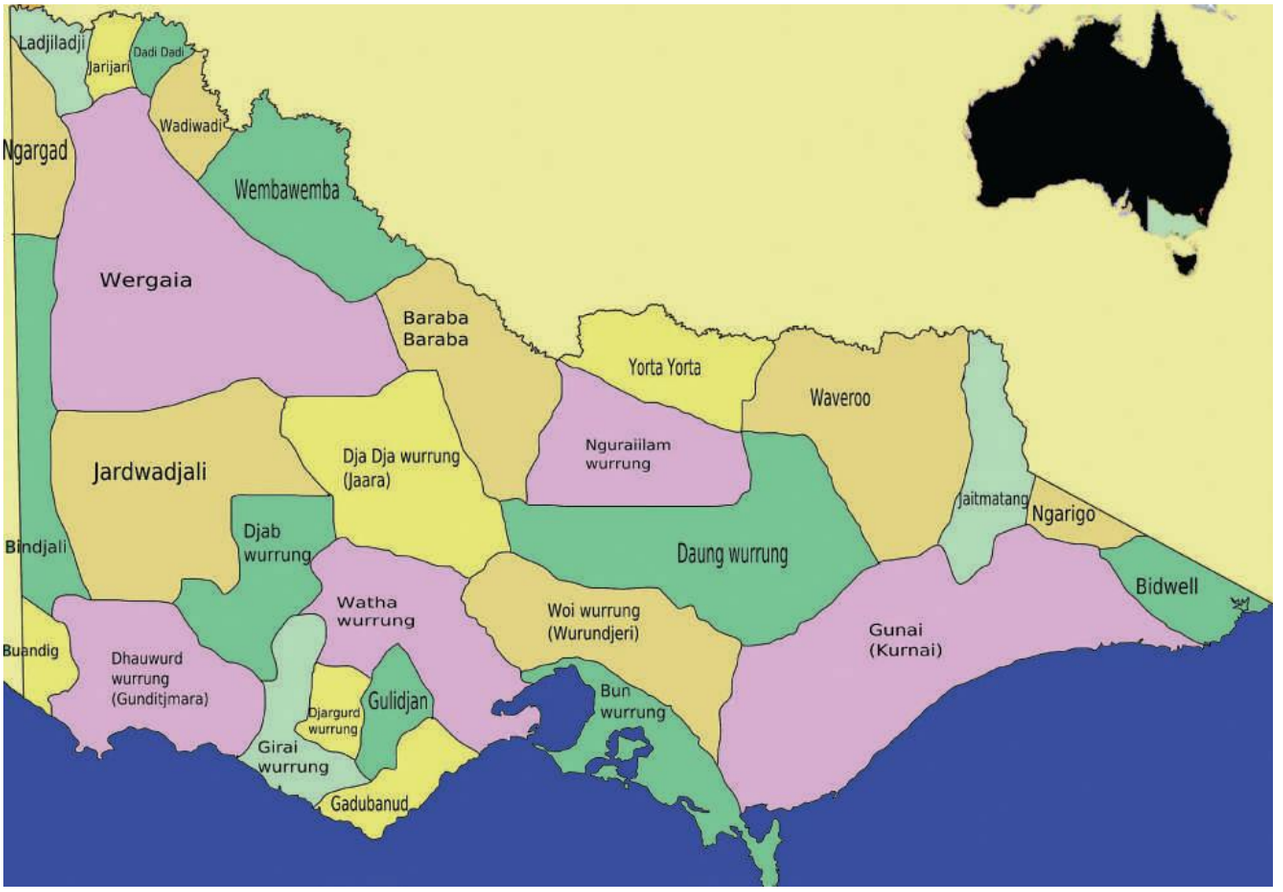
1 What does Bugarrigarra refer to in this speech?

2 Put the three key concepts of his people in a table and for each explain:
   a the literal meaning
   b how each can help Senator Dodson to be an effective member of the Australian Parliament.

3 What does Patrick Dodson say is the source of his wisdom?

4 How old is the belief system that Senator Dodson belongs to according to his speech? Use quotations to support your response.

5 Bob Randall and Patrick Dodson come from different First Nations Peoples. Identify what they have in common.



Tirin aka Takver/Wikimedia Commons/CC BY SA 3.0

FIGURE 3.2 Map of Victoria's First Nations Peoples

VICTORIA'S FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE

Skills: explain, interpret, analyse

1. Write a description of what you see in the map.
2. What are the implications of the information in this map for the people of Victoria and government policy makers?
3. Who are the traditional custodians of the Local Council area in which you live?
4. Provide three interesting facts that you discovered in your Local Council search.
5. Working in small groups, share your answers with other members of the class.
6. Research how the State Government of Victoria is trying to address Victoria's history by finding out about the Yoo-rrook Justice Commission.

RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION AND ADHERENCE: COLONISATION, 1788–1901

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES

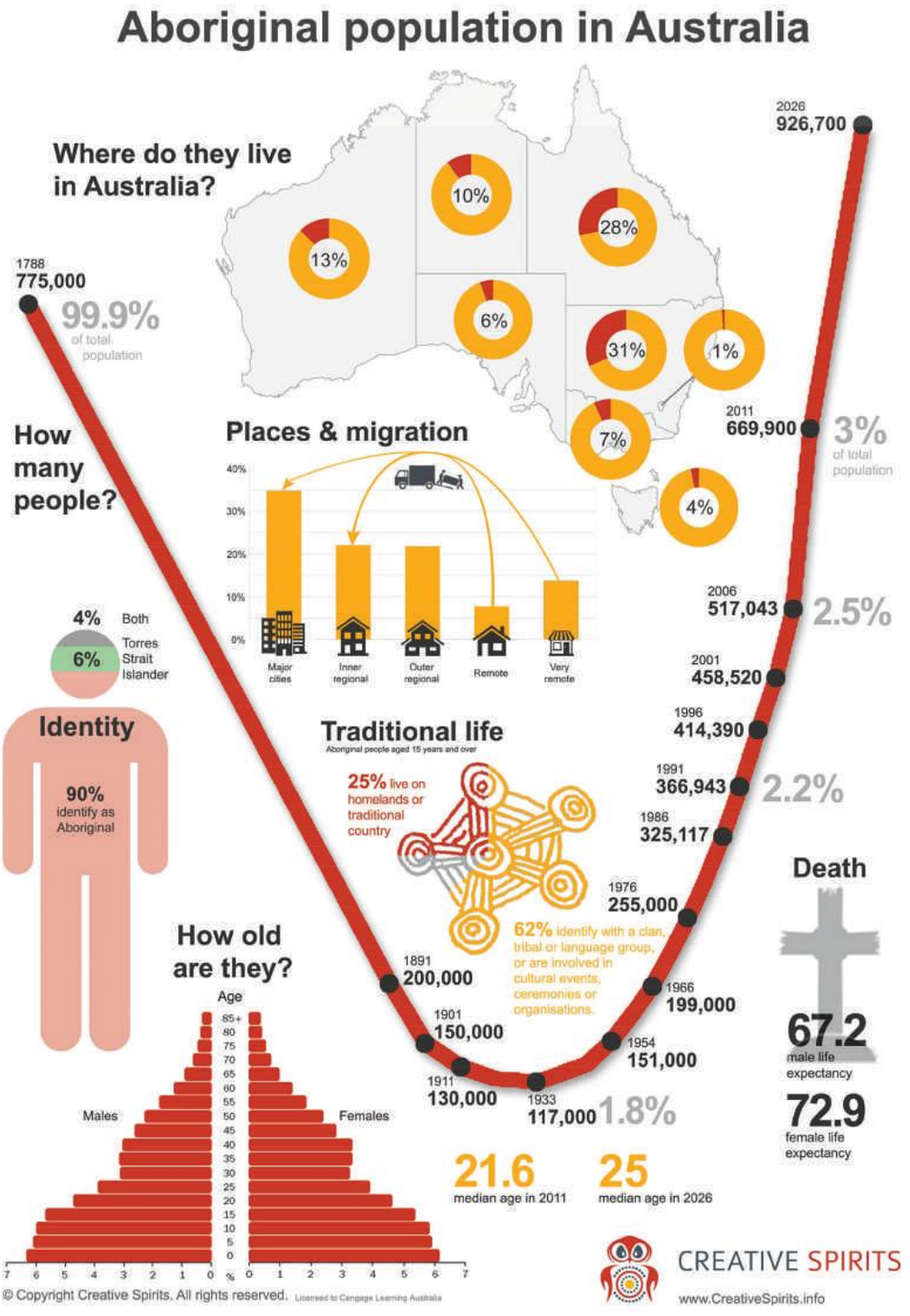
From 1788 the demographics and also the adherence to traditional spirituality of the First Nations People were under attack. A mysterious pestilence resembling smallpox, according to English soldier Watkin Tench, devastated the clans around *Warrane* (Port Jackson/Sydney Harbour) in 1789 leaving few to chant the oral history of **songlines**, to do their artwork, to dance their stories and speak the languages of their sacred country and to continue their spiritual practices. It is a myth to say that whole communities were wiped out but numbers were drastically reduced. The diminishing numbers of the First Nations Peoples occurred not only from disease but from massacres including poisonings. All of this affected the totality of adherence to First Nations Peoples' traditional spirituality, their social structures and every part of their lives.

Many early European settlers considered First Nations Australians to be primitive and godless. Christianity became a tool for the 'moral education' and 'civilisation' of First Nations Peoples. For the first European arrivals to Australia, the practices and beliefs of the First Nations Peoples were unrecognisable. The Elders and Headmen of the First Nations societies governed their religious and social structure but their leadership was collective and high status was given to female, as well as male, elders. In First Nations societies, women determine kinship relationships in line with the totemic religious system. By contrast, the Torres Strait Islanders had structures that were recognisable to Europeans, such as Island Councils headed by a *Mamoose* (head councillor). The Torres Strait Islanders also quickly adopted Christianity, which allowed them to have some autonomy from colonial administration.

IMPACT OF COLONISATION

Skills: describe, analyse, research

1. How did colonisation affect the social structures of First Nations Peoples in the mainland colonies and the Torres Strait?
2. How did colonisation affect the rituals of First Nations Peoples in the mainland colonies and the Torres Strait?
3. How did colonisation affect the sacred stories of First Nations Peoples in the mainland colonies and the Torres Strait?



© Creative Spirits, 'Aboriginal Population' infographic from www.CreativeSpirits.info

FIGURE 3.3 The impact of more than two centuries of colonisation on the population of First Nations Peoples of Australia (referred to in the infographic as 'Aboriginal'). What does this source say about the impact of colonisation on First Nations Peoples' societies? How do population figures indicate adherence rates? When was the population at its lowest in terms of numbers? When was it at its lowest as a percentage of overall population? How might an individual's identification influence these figures?

RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION AND ADHERENCE: COLONISATION, 1788–1901

STATISTICAL OVERVIEW

One source of information about distribution of religions within a country and the adherence to their beliefs and practices is through the official Government Census data.

The first census to include religious composition is that of 1828 in the New South Wales (NSW) colony. The census offers no information about distribution of adherents within the colony of NSW nor any indication of the level of their adherence to their tradition. It does give a snapshot of the variety of religious traditions in early colonial NSW, but with limitations. Military were not included in the Census. There were people in convict gangs who were unable to answer and thus were not recorded. Some people who were in the religious leadership did not declare their religious tradition despite 'missionary' appearing on their sheet as their occupation. The specificity of Protestant responses may have artificially suppressed their higher numbers. Also the recording clerics made mistakes and changed data by standardising information. For example, a listing under Wesleyan was recorded as Protestant, making the recorded numbers of particular Protestant denominations fewer than actuality. Unless they had been baptised, First Nations Peoples were not consistently counted.

The 1828 NSW Census figures show that out of a total population of 36,598, there were:

- 29,985 Christians, comprised of 8,515 Catholic and 21,470 Protestant, represented by numerous traditions: Church of England, Lutheran, Calvinist, Dissenter, Baptist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Quaker, Seeker and Wesleyan
- 102 were from the religions of Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Malay and Pagan
- 2 were Deist
- 1 was a Free Thinker
- 6,287 were not recorded

Source: State Archives and Records Authority of NSW

RELIGIOUS COMPOSITION OF EARLY COLONIAL AUSTRALIA

Skills: describe, explain, interpret

1. In a paragraph of prose, using the information provided above, describe the religious profile of Australia in 1828.
2. List three reasons why this data may not be totally accurate.
3. Why was Christianity the dominant institutional religion in the colony?
4. In the colony's beginnings, what challenges would have faced members of religious traditions that were not Christian?

RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION AND ADHERENCE: COLONISATION, 1788–1901

HINDUISM AND SIKHISM

In addition to the Indians who may have arrived in New South Wales on convict fleets, a group of domestic servants arrived from Calcutta in 1810. Up until 1850, groups were hired from India and Sri Lanka to work as labourers. Assorted merchants, 200 printers' apprentices and domestic workers were also contracted to work in the early colony. A number of Hindu and Sikh 'camelmen' were hired to help build the infrastructure of the country's interior (see also 'Islam' below, regarding the 'Ghans'). The seasonal nature of agricultural work meant that these labourers and hawkers travelled the eastern coast of Australia.

Immigration quotas restricted the numbers of Hindu women entering the country so these men often married local women, and many assimilated. There was evidence that there were close ties between First Nations peoples and the Hindus and Sikhs. In 1850, an immigration quota was imposed on men due to fears they would 'steal white settlers' jobs' – an argument that would still be applied to migrant groups from this time onwards. There was mistrust and suspicion about their practising what was called a 'heathen' religion. Fear of 'infidel ways' was given as one of the reasons. Following the European settlement of Australia's interior, Hindu and Sikh Indian hawkers (travelling merchants) became a lifeline to rural towns, selling silk, utensils and other items. Many did return home to their countries, while others, who had established businesses or shops, intermarried and stayed in small communities in the interior of Australia.

State Library of Victoria [H87.52/172]

FIGURE 3.4 Indian hawkers with their mobile home and shop, c. 1901–c. 1909. What do the carriage and clothes indicate about these men?

RELIGIONS INTERACTING
Skills: identify, interpret

1 How would intermarriage with First Nations Peoples determine the geographic distribution of Hindus and Sikhs?
2 What features of the spirituality of First Nations Peoples would appeal to the Hindus and Sikhs?

RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION AND ADHERENCE: COLONISATION, 1788–1901

ISLAM

In the late 1600s CE before European settlement, there was significant interaction between Muslim Macassan fishermen from Indonesia and First Nations Peoples. The trade of objects, ideas, beliefs and even dances indicate that this contact was sustained over many years.

After colonisation, Muslims accompanied Hindus and Sikhs as cameleers, to transport materials and build some substantial capital works and infrastructure linking the Northern Territory and South Australia. The 'Afghan' or 'Ghan' cameleers were forced to live in fenced 'Ghan towns' to prevent them from mixing with European settlers. A few prominent 'Ghans' assisted in the establishment of Australia's first mosques and a Shariah Court to air intracommunity disputes.

ESTABLISHING ISLAM IN EARLY AUSTRALIA
Skills: interpret, explain

1 Why would the Muslim community need to establish religious places and spaces?

RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION AND ADHERENCE: COLONISATION, 1788–1901

BUDDHISM

It has been speculated that Buddhists first came into contact with Australia's First Nations Peoples in the 1400s CE as a result of voyages of exploration under the Chinese Ming Dynasty.

The first evidence of Buddhist practice dates to the Gold Rush period where makeshift places of worship were shared by Confucians and Taoists. These sites have been found to contain remnants of Buddhist statues. A Buddhist temple was built in South Melbourne at this time but went into decline with the end of the Gold Rush and the community's inability to bring Buddhist clerics into Australia. More permanent Buddhist populations arrived in the 1870s. In Western Australia Japanese Shinto Buddhists arrived in Broome for the pearling industry. In Queensland, Buddhists, from what is now Sri Lanka, arrived to work on cane plantations. In the Northern Territory there were Chinese gold miners and pearlers on Thursday Island. The Thursday Island community grew to about 500 by the 1890s. They established a temple and planted Bodhi trees, which still survive. By 1891 there were 22 717 Buddhists in Australia making them 1.2 per cent of the population.

BUDDHISM IN EARLY AUSTRALIA

Skills: identify, list, interpret

1 List the denominations of Buddhism present in early colonial Australia.

2 Which of these denominations would be more likely to establish permanent settlements? Why?

RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION AND ADHERENCE: COLONISATION, 1788–1901

CHRISTIANITY

The first European to lay claim to the land, Captain Pedro Fernandez de Quiros, was a Portuguese Catholic who claimed the land for Spain in 1606 and named it 'The Great South Land of the Holy Spirit' (Australia del Espiritu Santo). But it was the English explorer Matthew Flinders, who suggested the name Australia after circumnavigating the continent in 1803.

However, in 1788, it was the British – not the Spanish – whose fleet of 11 ships brought 1480 men, women and children, mostly British and Irish, to establish a penal settlement. Most convicts were Church of England or Presbyterian and so were aligned with the Governor, magistrates and troops through religion. Catholics were a large minority (an estimated 800 in New South Wales by 1796), mostly convicts but also a few marines with no presence in the authority structure of the colony and no officially sanctioned priests. The first chaplain to the colony was Reverend Richard Johnson, who established the Church of England as the recognised religion of the colony, making adherence to any other form of Christianity very difficult.

Yet by 1793 the numbers of Presbyterian and Unitarian settlers were strong enough to demand their own religious services, rather than attending the compulsory Church of England services ordered by Governor Phillip. Their influence was supported by the arrival in 1824 of a minister, John Dunmore Lang, who unified the community and pushed for the right to build churches and schools in NSW.

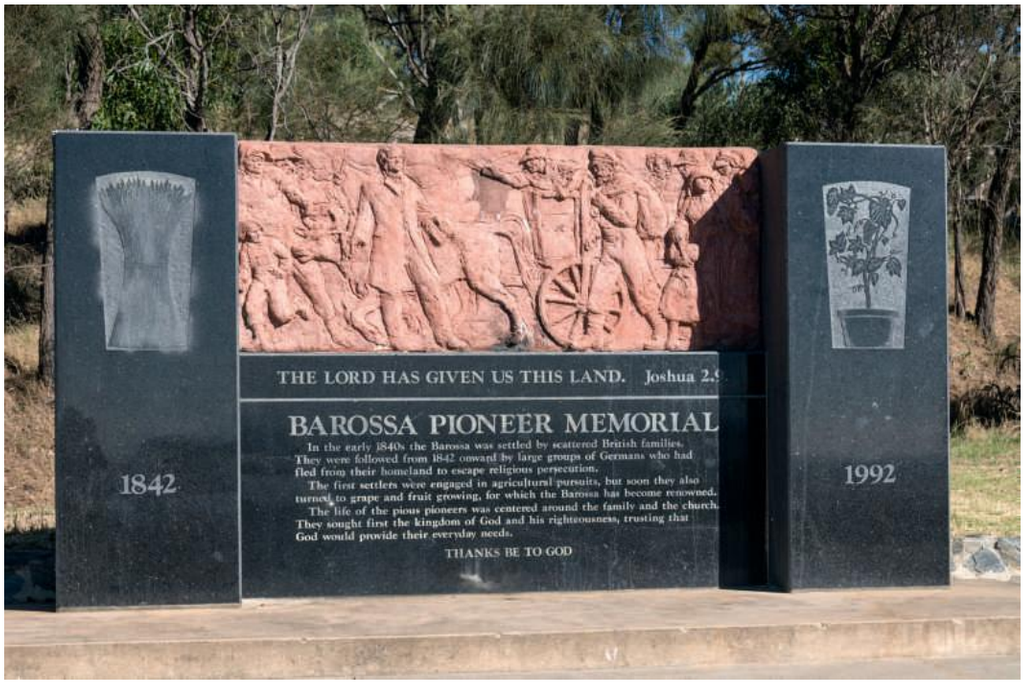
In 1820 the ability of Catholics in the colony to adhere to the practices of their tradition were made possible when officially appointed priests, Fathers Connolly and Therry, arrived in NSW. Over the following two decades, numerous missionaries from England, Ireland and France were serving Catholic communities in each of the colonies, establishing parishes and schools to enable adherence to the religious tradition. When gold was discovered in 1851, Catholics arrived from across Europe introducing diversity into the worship of parishes. However, the Church had by this time established a strong Irish hierarchy that confidently led the flourishing church, which was beginning to challenge the numerical dominance of the Church of England.

CHRISTIANITY IN EARLY AUSTRALIA

Skills: interpret, explain

1 How would the lack of clergy in the various denominations impact on their ritual life?

2 What would Catholics have believed would be the consequences for eternal life of no sacraments at that time?



Alamy Stock Photo/richard sowersby

FIGURE 3.5 Monument to Lutheran migrants escaping persecution and settling in the Barossa Valley. The inscription on the monument says that their life was centred on the church. Why would their church be so important for this group of migrants?

By the time transportation ended in 1868 about 168 000 convicts had arrived on the shores of Australia. About a quarter of convicts were Irish – 30 000 men and 10 000 women. Over 120 000 convicts were of other Christian denominations There were thriving communities of Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists and Lutherans. The Methodists were influential in the early colony. Their numbers continued to climb and by 1900 they were the third largest denomination in the colony after the Church of England and were heavily involved in welfare and missionary work. The Congregationalist numbers were very small, but influential because of their members' activity in the governance of the colony with a church established in Pitt Street, Sydney in 1842. The Baptists had established themselves by 1832 when they held their first religious service in NSW. The Lutherans were unusual as they arrived through South Australia where they were offered refuge from religious persecution. The first 500 arrived in 1838 with at least 20 000 settlers by 1860 who established Lutheran communities throughout rural South Australia, the Hamilton District through to the Wimmera in Northern Victoria and then Queensland.

The abundant and grand places of worship built by 1901, and found from major cities to rural towns, demonstrated the strength in the early colony of Christianity. This was particularly true of the Church of England (Anglican) as it was the tradition of the ruling class and had been granted ownership of significant land holdings. The membership of the Catholic tradition was largely working class, but upwardly mobile. Its schools became community hubs with effective missionary teachers teaching traditionally large Catholic families.

By 1901, 96 per cent of the population were nominally Christian and largely representative of religious thought that was Anglo-Celtic with the exception of the significant Lutheran population

– 40 per cent of the population were Church of England, 23 per cent Catholic, 34 per cent other Christian and about 1 per cent professing non-Christian religions. With Federation the new Constitution recognised Freedom of Religion or Belief (Section 116), which offered religious groups the opportunity to work together for a united religious identity. It states:

> The Commonwealth shall not make any law for establishing any religion, or for imposing any religious observance, or for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion, and no religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office or public trust under the Commonwealth.

RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION AND ADHERENCE: COLONISATION, 1788–1901

JUDAISM

On the 11 ships of the First Fleet between 8 and 14 Jewish males arrived in New South Wales. It would seem that the Jewish convicts were not particularly religious (nor educated in Judaism). They would have shared the animosity of other convicts towards clergy who were part of the government. Adherence to their religious tradition was difficult. They had no synagogue facilities, female Jews or guiding rabbi. They were even buried by Christian chaplains in what can arguably be described as the earliest interfaith events in Australia.

FIGURE 3.6 Convict-carved menorah (candelabrum), on a brick, Sydney. What does this image reveal about the origins of the Jewish community in Australia?

By the 1820s, free settlers – male and female – had arrived with knowledge of the tradition and copies of *siddurim* (prayer books). These factors made adherence more possible, marked by Jewish religious services eventually being held in people's homes by committed Jews. The establishment of a sanctified Jewish section of the cemetery in Sydney in 1817 enabled the engagement in more rituals of Judaism. Further adherence to the tradition was assisted by the appointment in 1828 of merchant Philip Joseph Cohen, authorised by the British Chief Rabbi Solomon Hirschel to perform Jewish marriages. In 1831 Reverend Aaron Levy arrived in Sydney bringing a Torah scroll and conducted regular services which greatly enhanced the ability of the Sydney Jews to adhere to their tradition. As the Sydney community became more established, adherence to the social justice principles of the tradition were aided by setting up social welfare in the form of the Hebrew Philanthropic and Orphan Society in 1833 to care for the needy in their community. More ritual expression of the tradition developed between 1835 and 1838 when British import Reverend Michael Rose performed religious duties, including circumcision on newborn Jewish baby boys.

Although the oldest and largest Jewish community in the early days of colonisation was in Sydney, there were communities in Melbourne, South Australia, Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia. But from 1788 until 1841 when the first purpose-built synagogue was erected in Australia on York Street, Sydney, expansion and expression of Judaism progressed slowly.

Other congregations followed in establishing purpose-built synagogues: Hobart (1845), Launceston Brisbane, Perth, Maitland (1846), Melbourne (1848), Goulburn (1848), Adelaide (1850) and Macquarie Street, Sydney (1857). This became possible as Jewish emancipists and free settlers grew in number with increasing immigration from England to escape poverty or seek new business interests. All the synagogues that were established in the colonies were under the authority of the Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom. Also, dedicated Jewish cemeteries opened in NSW in Maitland (1846) and Goulburn (1848).

In 1851 the discovery of gold in NSW and Victoria drew Jews from all over Australia and overseas, changing the distribution and numbers of the tradition. For example, in Melbourne between 1848 and 1861 the Jewish community grew from 200 to 3000 adherents. When gold was discovered in Ballarat in 1851, it lured scores of adventurous young Jewish men wanting to escape persecution in Germany, Eastern European pogroms, poverty in Scotland.

The distribution of the Jews in Victoria changed as these migrants settled into the various country towns seeking a better life. The Jewish community of Ballarat grew to at least 1000 in the mid-1800s CE. The newcomers involved themselves in the business, professional and public life of the young town, mainly as hawkers, store keepers and gold buyers rather than miners. The Jewish women on the goldfields became milliners, dressmakers and shopkeepers. Jews, like other communities at the diggings, kept their religious traditions, establishing a synagogue in 1856, purchasing Torah scrolls and conducting regular daily and weekly services.

Another sign of the growth and commitment of the Jewish community to adhere to their tradition was the establishment in 1850 of Australia's first Jewish Day Schools in Sydney and Melbourne with support from their respective colonial governments. Unfortunately, when government funding ended, both schools disbanded, Melbourne in 1872 and Sydney in 1880. By 1901, when Australia became a federated nation, there were 15 000 declared Jewish inhabitants.

JUDAISM IN EARLY AUSTRALIA

Skills: interpret, explain

1 How did the nature of the social structures of the Jewish communities change with the Gold Rush?

RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION AND ADHERENCE, 1901 ONWARDS

STATISTICAL OVERVIEW

Although Table 3.1 shows numerical distribution, it says nothing about geographical distribution; however, it does give some indication about adherence and insight into the religious composition of Australia for over a century.

TABLE 3.1 Religious composition of Australia, 1901–2006

	CHRISTIANITY							
Census year	**Anglican (%)**	**Catholic (%)**	**Othe (%)**	**Total (%)**	**Other religions (%)**	**No religion (%)**	**Not stated/ inadequately described (%)**	**Total ('000)**
1901	39.7	22.7	33.7	96.1	1.4	0.4	2.0[a]	3773.8
1911	38.4	22.4	35.1	95.9	0.8	0.4	2.9[a]	4455.0
1921	43.7	21.7	31.6	96.9	0.7	0.5	1.9[a]	5435.7
1933	38.7	19.6	28.1	86.4	0.4	0.2	12.9	6629.8
1947	39.0	20.9	28.1	88.0	0.5	0.3	11.1	7579.4
1954	37.9	22.9	28.5	89.4	0.6	0.3	9.7	8986.5
1961	34.9	24.9	28.4	88.3	0.7	0.4	10.7	10508.2
1966	33.5	26.2	28.5	88.2	0.7	0.8	10.3	11599.5
1971	31.0	27.0	28.2	86.2	0.8	6.7	6.2	12755.6
1976	27.7	25.7	25.2	78.6	1.0	8.3	11.4	13548.4
1981	26.1	26.0	24.3	76.4	1.4	10.8	11.4	14576.3
1986	23.9	26.0	23.0	73.0	2.0	12.7	12.4	15602.2
1991	23.8	27.3	22.9	74.0	2.6	12.9	10.5	16850.3
1996	22.0	27.0	21.9	70.9	3.5	16.6	9.0	17752.8
2001	20.7	26.6	20.7	68.0	4.9	15.5	11.7	18769.2
2006	18.7	25.8	19.3	63.9	5.6	18.7	11.9	19855.3

[a] Includes 'object to state'.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

Although there had been Muslims interacting with Australian societies since the pre-colonial times and Buddhists since the colonial days, by 2006 these religious communities were the fastest growing in the nation. Although Christianity remained the most influential tradition numerically, it is also significant to watch the increase of those who did not offer a religious denomination; by 2006 over 19 per cent of Australians either chose 'no religion' or did not fill in the question about religious adherence correctly.

INTERPRETING STATISTICS

Skills: interpret, synthesise, explain

1 What reasons may people have for deliberately not completing the section on the census related to religion correctly?

2 What do these figures and trends reveal about religion in the pluralist society of Australia?

In the decade between 2006 and 2016 those who claimed 'no religion' increased from 19 per cent to 30 per cent of the population. Within the 'none' category, 30 per cent are teenagers. Research has shown that over half of these teenagers see themselves as having a spirituality or are seeking answers for how and why to live their life and about existence generally. They do not want to be a part of an institutional religion. They have more options than previous generations to investigate

and to choose their spirituality, religion generally and religious traditions. In 2019 the *Australia's Generation Z Study* (Rasmussen, M.L., Singleton, A., Halafoff, A. & Bouma, G.), focused on Australian youth between the ages of 13 and 18. The data shows that Australian adolescents are becoming increasingly secular yet are eclectically spiritual but not necessarily affiliated with religious traditions. Many support the teaching of religion in schools though a preference is shown for it to be taught in a more academic and interfaith manner.

AUSTRALIAN YOUTH SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGION

Skills: analyse, extrapolate

1. As a class read though the *Australia's Generation Z Study* on the School of Sociology page on the Australian National University's website.
2. Which findings surprised you? With which findings did you agree or disagree?
3. Create a survey for the class to complete with questions to capture similar data from yourselves, or locate the survey itself.
4. Collate the data and present in a table, chart or graph.
5. How does your class data compare or contrast with the study?
6. In reference to your survey of the class (see above) and/or the study, how do your own views on religion sit in comparison with this data?

RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION AND ADHERENCE, 1901 ONWARDS

CHRISTIANITY

A demographic shift that impacted the adherence of Catholicism in the first decades of the 1900s CE was a change in the nationality of the leadership of the church. In the early colonial period the clergy had predominantly been Irish born and this was also true of the missionary religious brothers and sisters who moved into education and health in the second half of the 1800s CE. They served a community, over one third of which had come from Ireland as immigrants. It was the Irish serving the Irish on the whole. But by 1901 this had changed, with 80 per cent of Catholics being Australian born. In this period Australian Catholic orders of nuns were becoming influential through the work of the Good Samaritans, an order established by Bishop Polding, and the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart under the vision of Saint Mary MacKillop. By the middle of the 1900s CE virtually all the major religious orders were being led by Australian-born members who were trained in seminaries in Australia rather than being sent to Rome or Ireland. In 1901, 87 per cent of Sydney's priests were Irish; by the 1970s all of Australia's bishops were home-grown.

Overall, the Protestant traditions were still heavily reliant on England for the training and sourcing of their clergy. In 1900 up to 72 per cent of Church of England prelates and 40 per cent of Methodist ministers were born in Britain. The Church of England seminary, Moore Theological College, was established in 1856 and set the tone for an evangelical character in the Sydney diocese, as opposed to the more liberal theology of Melbourne. This is a distinction that has become more profound due to the debate over the ordination of women in the Anglican Communion in recent decades. It was not until 1962 that the Church of England in Australia became autonomous and in 1981 it became the Anglican Church of Australia.

DEVELOPMENTS IN CHRISTIANITY IN AUSTRALIA

Skills: identify, describe, interpret

1 Describe three benefits that the training of priests in Australia, rather than overseas, would have on the members of a religious tradition's adherence.

2 Who was governing the Church of England in Australia before 1962 if it was not the local leaders? Why would that matter?

In the post-World War II period the need for labour and the devastation of Europe led to a dramatic increase in migration, which brought with it large numbers of Italian and Eastern European Catholics. Greek migrants arrived also, bringing their Orthodox beliefs and practices. These migrants settled in communities in defined geographic areas shaping the landscape of the suburbs in accordance with their cultural and religious beliefs.

In the 1950s and 60s over a million Catholics arrived largely from Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, Germany, Croatia, Hungary and Poland. There were 160 000 Greek Orthodox and also Maronites from Lebanon, Coptic Christians from Ethiopia and other Christian denominations. They arrived without the English language and bearing different cultural views of their Christianity. They were seeking stability, security and a future for their children. They had little interest in the sectarianism of Catholics and Protestants. They wanted church services in their own language and buildings they recognised as their own for their ritual practice. Their religious practice was about family and a spiritual relationship with their God. They were apolitical on the whole. They challenged and confused the Christian establishment of this period. The assisted migration from Britain remained high during this period, boosting the numbers for the Protestant denominations, with the Church of England maintaining its place as the most populace tradition in Australia.

But by the period between 2006 and 2016 the composition of religions had changed. The traditional Protestant denominations had lost numbers as their congregations aged and as the community became more disillusioned with institutional religion. As these communities declined in the number of adherents, the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational Christian churches became the Uniting Church of Australia (1977) in order to maintain their viability. However, some adherents chose to oppose unification and remain independent, struggling on in small numbers. The Uniting Church helped to invigorate their congregations with a focus on working for social justice. The Anglican communion also is ageing and communities are closing down. An analytical investigation into the viability of the structures of the Anglican Church in Australia was undertaken in 2014 to address the concerns of increasing mission demands and diminishing numbers of adherents. It responded to the crisis by committing to improved financial management and the sale of Church properties.

CHRISTIANITY AND CHANGES

Skills: identify, describe, interpret

1 What is the impact of an ageing congregation on the operation of the aspects of religion in a church community?

2 Identify three religious buildings in your area that are of different Christian denominations. What do you know about them? Research when they were built and by which ethnic group.

Fairfax Syndication/Matt Golding

FIGURE 3.7 Churches up for sale. What does this cartoon suggest about attitudes to the sale of Church properties?

The National Church Life Survey, a census of Christian church attendance, suggests that Christianity has remained resilient overall. Pentecostal and evangelical Christian churches are attracting younger worshippers and family groups. The style of worship, it has been argued, is a central factor with the focus on music and preaching. The result is that Pentecostal churches are now the second largest Christian churches in Australia.

The Catholic Church has maintained numbers more effectively through the waves of immigration since the end of the Vietnam War (1972–73). The influx of Vietnamese, Indian, Sri Lankan, Filipino and South Sudanese Catholics who have filled schools with their children have aided the Catholic Church to remain the strongest of the Christian denominations and the most populous religion in Australia. Further change to the Catholic tradition has occurred as its baby boomer membership (born 1946–1964) substantially turned away from the church for a range of reasons which were clarified through the work of the Australian Plenary Council (2021–). Major concerns identified were the scandal of the abuse of children, the lack of a significant role for women in the church and the culture of clericalism. These were the basis for disillusionment among adherents. Nevertheless, within the religious composition of Australia, the membership of the Catholic tradition has remained strong due largely to the migration outlined earlier. Also within the Catholic tradition, First Nations Catholics were identified as the largest growing demographic in 2020.

CHANGING FACE OF CHRISTIANITY

Skills: explain, discuss, identify, analyse

1. Why are Pentecostal churches attracting a younger demographic?
2. Discuss whether traditional Christian denominations should change their rituals to make them more contemporary.
3. What reforms would your class suggest to those in charge of the Plenary Council in the Catholic Church?
4. Does the character of a church change the people or does the character of the people change a church?
5. In 2022 there was a split in the Anglican communion in NSW, creating a new Anglican denomination, the Diocese of the Southern Cross. Research the reasons for this schism.

RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION AND ADHERENCE, 1901 ONWARDS

JUDAISM

When Australia became a federated nation in 1901, there were 15 000 declared Jewish inhabitants, but by 1920 adherence to the tradition was lessening as intermarriage tested the long-term viability of the Jewish community in Australia. But from the 1920s onward the mass arrival of Jews from Eastern Europe and refugees from Central Europe escaping pogroms and poverty reinvigorated the static Jewish communities.

Just before or at the outbreak of World War II, 5000 Jewish refugees escaping Nazi Europe arrived in Australia. Between 1946 and 1954, 17 000 Jews, mostly Holocaust survivors, arrived from Europe and Shanghai. They brought with them a variety of ethnic variations to the practice of their Jewish faith, mainly variations of traditional Orthodoxy but also the growth of a strong German Reform contingent, who called themselves Liberal Jews at first but now go by the label Progressive Judaism.

These Jewish survivors of the Holocaust brought a different culture and an enhanced religiousness but also **secularism** to the Australian Jewish community. They established more synagogues and ground-breaking Jewish day schools. These schools have been essential in maintaining the Jewish religion and ethnic identity in a society that has been highly tolerant and open to them.

Another influx of Jewish migrants came in 1956 with thousands of Jews escaping the aftermath of the Hungarian Revolution and the Suez Crisis in Nasser's Egypt. Even though Sephardi Jews from Middle Eastern countries were of comparatively light complexion, they were barred by the White Australia Policy (Immigration Restriction Act of 1901) but several hundred refugees from Egypt were able to gain sponsorship. By 1966 there were 60 000 Jews in Australia.

Other migrations that increased the community include those from South Africa during the apartheid era, from Russia when the former Soviet government allowed them to leave and, most recently, from Israel. This diversity is complemented by different religious affiliations within Judaism of Ultra-Orthodox, Modern Orthodox, Conservative, Progressive (or Reform), Cultural and Secular movements. From 5000 during the Gold Rush period, the Jewish community now numbers well over 100 000 members.

The Census of 2016 indicated the Jewish population in Australia was 117 903. Sydney and Melbourne continue to be the largest Jewish communities, numbering approximately 50 000 and 45 000 respectively. Judaism comprised 0.7 per cent of the Victorian population in 2016 and 0.5 per cent of the NSW population. There are active communities in all the capital cities as well as small groups in rural areas but Jews comprise only 0.001 per cent (one tenth of 1 per cent) or less of the population in Queensland, South Australia and Northern Territory. However, according to a 2019 study by the Monash University Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation of this census data, these figures are understood to be understated due to the Jews' history of persecution bringing with it a reluctance to give personal data to governments.

Today, the Jewish community of Tasmania faces some challenges in common with the small communities of other religious traditions. Their ability to adhere to the practices of the tradition are reduced as they do not have a rabbi for weekly services or for minor Jewish holidays, so they have to do everything for themselves. For the major festivals and High Holy Days (*Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*) a rabbi is flown in to conduct services. The *shule* (synagogue) hosts both Modern Orthodox and Progressive services.

THE CHANGING FACE OF JUDAISM

Skills: describe, explain, interpret

1 What was the impact of immigration waves and settlement around Australia on the Jewish community?

2 What does the experience of the Jewish community indicate about the values of Australian society?

3 In what ways is the experience of the Tasmanian synagogue community similar to other religious places of worship?

RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION AND ADHERENCE, 1901 ONWARDS

ISLAM

© Cordell Jigsaw Productions

FIGURE 3.8 This is a promotional image for an SBS documentary that explored diversity in the Australian Islamic community. Why are programs like this important in dispelling stereotypes about religious traditions?

Large numbers of Muslims arrived post-World War II from countries such as Bosnia, Kosovo, Hungary, Russia and Romania as they were acceptable under the White Australia Policy. After its demise in the 1970s numbers increased from Lebanon and Turkey to escape civil strife. Over 60 000 arrived from Lebanon and largely settled in Sydney. Others arrived as students from impoverished nations such as Malaysia, Indonesia, India and Fiji under the Colombo plan (1951–). By 2007 over a third of the nation's Muslims were born in Australia.

The Islamic community now comprises over 183 different ethnic backgrounds and is growing numerically with an increase of 2.2 per cent between 2011 and 2016. By 2016, 25 per cent of Australian Muslims were from South and Central Asia and less than 20 per cent from the Middle East. Most recent arrivals include those from Africa – largely Somalia, Sudan and Ethiopia; the Middle East – Lebanon, Afghanistan, in particular the Hazara community, Syria, Saudi Arabia,

Iraq and Iran; and Asia – Malaysia, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India. Urban Melbourne and Sydney represent 75 per cent of the Australian Muslim community. The demographic profile of Islam is of a migrant population with the desire to settle and have a family, resulting in Islam in Australia currently having very young adherents. In 2016, 82 per cent of Muslim were below the age of 45 compared with 59 per cent of the general population.

The religious groups within Islam distinguish the different Muslim communities in contemporary Australian society. There are Sunni, Shia, Sufi, Alawis and Ahmadiyya communities. Islam is now a significant religion for First Peoples with over 2000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders identifying with Islam in the 2011 census. Some of these are descendants of the Afghan cameleers or the Western Australian Malay pearl divers of the 1800s CE, but most are converts through Islam's strong commitment to prison ministry for First Nations Peoples and the high profile conversion of rugby league star and boxer Anthony Mundine (Bundjalung, North NSW Coast). Other Australians from diverse ethnic backgrounds have also converted to Islam, in particular to Sufism, which now has an estimated 5000 adherents in Australia.

CONTEMPORARY ISLAM IN AUSTRALIA

Skills: list, interpret, analyse

1 Referring to the statistical information above about the Muslim community, list four adjectives that you would use to describe Islam in Australia to someone who has just arrived in the country.

2 Using your list of adjectives draw conclusions about what would be the needs that should be addressed in the Australian Muslim community today by various elements in the social structure of their religious tradition.

3 What are the grounds for optimism that the Australian Islamic community has a strong future?

RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION AND ADHERENCE, 1901 ONWARDS

HINDUISM AND SIKHISM

The community's increasing openness expressed in the 1960s and culminating in the election of the Whitlam Government saw the arrival of Southeast Asian and sub-continent populations who brought with them Hindu and Buddhist traditions. There was also a willingness of Australian-born young people to adopt religious beliefs that were seen to be experimental and spiritual. There was the colour and street music of the Hare Krishna movement, the Unification Movement of the Korean Reverend Moon and a range of cults and sects that arose causing excitement and concern. This diversity is seen in the growth of the 'other religions' category in the census data.

The migration of the Hindu and Sikh community in the 1900s CE was largely from India. The 1911 census had 3698 Hindus living in Australia. In the 1960s immigration laws were relaxed and Hindu adherents came as students and many took up permanent residency and citizenship on the completion of their courses. In the 1970s larger numbers arrived to fill Australia's skilled migrant needs, taking up professional positions such as doctors, teachers and engineers. Australia was an attractive destination due to its relatively close proximity to the Asian sub-continent, English being spoken and the shared colonial experience with Britain. In 1977 a Hindu community in Auburn

Alamy Stock Photo/Peter Ptschelinzew

FIGURE 3.9 Hare Krishna adherents participating in an Australia Day procession in Melbourne. What evidence is there in the image of commitment to their religious belief?

NSW established the nation's first temple, reflecting the increasing Hindu population due to the end of the White Australia Policy. By the start of the 1980s there were over 20 000 Hindus largely based in Sydney and Melbourne.

In the 1980s the rise of technology highlighted a need for skilled workers in the area of computing and technical support and turned to India to fill this gap, with many who arrived being adherents of Hinduism or Sikhism. Victoria's Indian population, for example, jumped from 12 000 in the 1970s to 169 804 in 2016. A proportion were Christian, but the majority were Hindu or Sikh. At present, of those in the community who were born in India, 63 per cent are Hindu and 29 per cent are Sikh. The community also has smaller numbers of Hindus from Sri Lanka, Fiji, Malaysia, Singapore and Nepal.

In terms of the Australian population, Hindus – although representing an estimated 2.7 per cent of the Australian population in 2021 – are the fastest growing religions in the nation due to a 60 per cent increase in population through migration, with over 80 per cent born overseas. In 30 years the Hindu population has grown from 20 000 to 684 000, with 66 per cent being under the age of 34 in 2021. In 2016 the census showed that 415 First Nations Peoples were adherents of Hinduism. Some scientists claim that there is a link between the sub-continent and Indigenous Australians that goes back 4200 years based on DNA studies.

There are now 210,400 adherents of Sikhism, vastly increased from 12,000 in 1996. There are families of Sikhs who can trace their ancestry back to the cameleers, gold prospectors and agricultural workers of the 1800s CE. They are settled in communities largely in Queensland and Northern NSW where their ancestors were cane workers or banana growers. It is in this region that the Sikhs established their first temple in 1968 (Woolgoolga). In recent years Sikhs have migrated from India, and have arrived largely as skilled professionals with many settling in Melbourne's suburbs, although communities are developing in regional areas.

HINDU AND SIKH AUSTRALIAN PLACES FOR WORSHIP

Skills: research, explain

1 The Murugan Temple in Sunshine was the inspiration of a member of Melbourne's Sri Lankan Tamil community. Research which features of this building show that it is a Hindu temple.

2 Where was Australia's first Sikh Temple built? Why there? What features show it is a Sikh Temple?

RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION AND ADHERENCE, 1901 ONWARDS

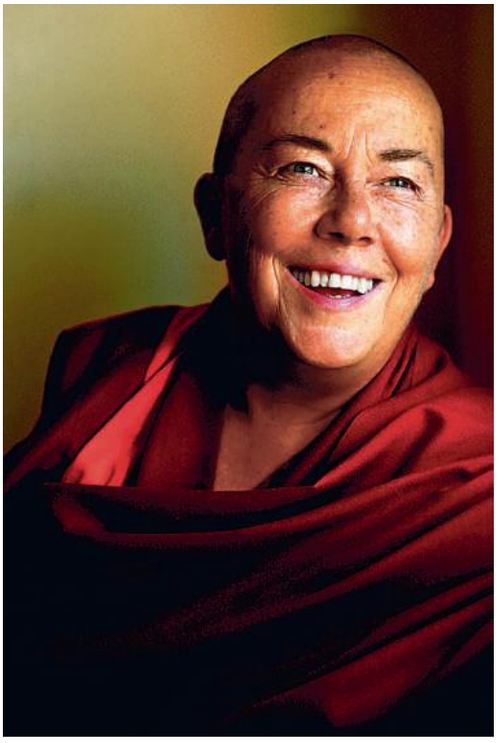
BUDDHISM

The introduction of the Immigration Restriction Act (1901) or White Australia Policy led to Chinese emigrating back to China or those who stayed converting to Christianity. The number of traditional Buddhists declined. However, in the early 1900s CE Buddhist thought became popular

with the wealthy Anglo-Saxon population through the Theosophical Society of Australia. This was a more philosophical, spiritual and mystical way of approaching religious ideas and was developed through Westerners taking an interest in both Hinduism and Buddhism. Even one of the earlier prime ministers, Alfred Deakin, after spending time in India and Sri Lanka, wrote a book on theosophy which included chapters on Buddhist thought. In 1919 a teacher, F.L. Woodward, who had spent time in Sri Lanka, settled in Tasmania and translated the sacred texts of Buddhism; this attracted more Australians to the religion. One such group was the 'Little Circle of Buddhists' established in Melbourne in 1925 to study Theravada Buddhist practice.

In the 1940s Buddhism became popular in Sydney through Australia's first female solicitor, Marie Byles, who wrote books on Buddhist practice that are still in print and she provided her home as a place for Vispassana meditation, the ancient contemplative practice to see things as they really are. The Buddhist Society of Sydney was established in the 1950s. In Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia Buddhist Societies followed and the practice was of the Theravada tradition, the strict adherence to the Buddha's original teachings and rules of monastic discipline. In Melbourne there was also a developing interest in Zen Buddhism, a meditation-based Buddhism that does not rely on scripture, doctrine or ritual. Zen is verified by personal experience and is passed on from master to disciple, through training. The membership of the societies was of an upper middle class and professional or academic demographic.

In this period and into the early 1970s there developed an interest in Buddhism by young people who travelled overseas to attend, study at, or volunteer in monasteries in India and Nepal and were often guided by Tibetan Buddhists (Vajrayana tradition). It is estimated that approximately 200 Australians became monks in Thailand in the 1970s. The Vajrayana tradition, based on mystical experiences, has remained popular with Australian Buddhists. One third of Buddhist organisations in Sydney today are of the Tibetan tradition, largely serving Western adherents. Although their numbers have grown with each of the three visits of the Dalai Lama – the pre-eminent Tibetan monk considered a living Buddha of compassion whose role is to help humanity – overall, the number of Westerners remains relatively small, comprising about one quarter of Australian adherents.



Fairfax Syndication/Steven Siewert

FIGURE 3.10 Robina Courtin, an Australian who became a Buddhist nun and has dedicated her life to working with people in prisons. What might a Buddhist nun have to offer people in prison? Why might Buddhism appeal to Australians?

During the 1970s Buddhism in Australia moved from Western practitioners to a more diverse and traditional approach as Asian immigration increased, through both refugees and people filling gaps in Australia's labour force. This brought all three of the main streams of Buddhism into the nation: Theravada (Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia, Burma), Mahayana (China, Korea, Japan, Vietnam) and Vajrayana (Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan). The first monasteries were in NSW, but Melbourne soon followed.

These two states have maintained the largest Buddhist populations. Today one third of Australia's Buddhists are Vietnamese. A growing group are those of a Chinese ethnicity and come from China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and Taiwan. In 1991 Buddhism was the fastest growing religious group but in the latest census was overtaken by Hinduism and Sikhism. Today Buddhists are 2.4 per cent of the total population; Buddhism is the fifth largest religious community.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF STATISTICAL DATA

Skills: analyse, interpret

In relation to Buddhism consider these questions.

1. Why is collecting statistical data on religions important for the nation?
2. Why is collecting statistical data on religions important for the religious traditions?
3. Why is collecting statistical data on religions important for the adherents and communities of the traditions?

RELIGION: GOVERNMENT POLICIES, TRENDS, INTERACTIONS – COLONISATION, 1788–1901

OVERVIEW

Australia was colonised as part of British colonial policy. This aimed to expand trade in England's favour, for raw and manufactured goods, selling more than was purchased by England. Australia, the colony of New South Wales, was established initially as a prison, to offload the excess from England's gaols. While the colonies that became the different states of Australia varied in their development, the policies of each colony in the 19th century had considerable influence on Australian society in the longer term. The text below includes policies that affected Australia's First Nations Peoples and South Pacific Islanders and certain peoples through immigration restrictions. It also includes trends within the demographics that added to the ethnic and religious diversity for which Australia has since become famous. The interactions between religious traditions in the Australian colonies and with the wider society are considered.

Religious ideas of punishment and reform pervaded the penal system of prisons. In the early decades of colonisation in NSW, the government coerced people into attending the official Church of England services with convicts being locked into pews and soldiers (many hungover from Saturday night excesses) woken and assembled to attend the Church of England services led by the first Chaplain Reverend Richard Johnson. Religion was used by Governor Macquarie as a tool to imbue morality and discipline.

INFLUENCES IN COLONIAL AUSTRALIA

Skills: analyse, explain

1. Why was Australia colonised?
2. What role did immigration policies and restrictions play in creating religious and ethnic diversity?
3. How did religious and political leaders use religion in the colonial system?

Transportation effectively ended in 1857. The colony then became populated with squatters, emancipated convicts and settlers coming from England to make their fortune. Riots on the Victorian and NSW goldfields in the 1850s and 1860s against Chinese miners, who held Confucian, Daoist and Buddhist beliefs, caused both colonies to introduce restrictive and racist immigration laws of the Chinese Immigrants Regulation and Restriction Acts. These Acts limited the number of Chinese entering the colonies. They also required an entry tax of ten pounds to be paid, together with a certificate of entry to be carried and produced upon request.

As the population of the colony grew, vagrancy laws saw prisons used as social welfare, housing men, women, children and babies, providing beds and three meals a day in comparison to horrendous alternatives. The dire situation of women in the colony saw the remarkable efforts of prominent colonial women such as Caroline Chisholm establish essential services to protect women of the colonial society. St Mary MacKillop established housing for single mothers and an early education system for children left destitute and living in squalor.

Religion stood against a prevailing lawlessness in a society caused by brutalised people who went on to further brutalise others. Religion served as a bulwark against the psychological impacts of transportation, the colonial penal system and opportunistic colonisation. As the cities expanded and beautiful buildings were constructed, religion provided an intellectual and civilising influence in society as seen in the names of the university colleges being built.

Newspix/Andy Tyndall

FIGURE 3.11
A contemporary actor, Jimi Bani, performing in a play based on the life of Jandamarra, a Banuba warrior from the Kimberley in Western Australia who turned his back on life on sheep stations to lead a resistance movement to reclaim his people's land and way of life. What does the actor's stance say about what he wants to portray as the character of Jandamarra?

RELIGION: GOVERNMENT POLICIES, TRENDS, INTERACTIONS – COLONISATION, 1788–1901

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES

As with other British colonies, the government policy was to turn First Nations Peoples into a cheap labour class. However, the egalitarian nature of their traditional society was at odds with the class system emerging in the colony, in which soldiers, governors and free settlers viewed themselves as better than the First Nations Peoples who were living on the land which the colonists coveted.

Many took up arms to fight the invaders in what has come to be called The Frontier Wars between 1788 and the 1930s. Historians are now uncovering the story of these conflicts as First Nations Peoples fought to save their sacred sites that were being taken away by the government's policy of giving Crown Land to settlers.

In one of these attempts to create a labour class, an estimated 62 000 people from the South Sea Islands (of Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Tuvalu, Kiribati and Fiji), historically known as 'Kanakas', were contracted or forcibly made to work for three years on plantations in the sugar industry in Queensland. Although they were contracted and paid six pounds a year, the justice of this system of 'blackbirding' labour was highly questionable. The first ship arrived in 1863 and the practice ended with the Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1901 which ordered the mass deportation of those labourers – about 10 000. These people would have brought with them their beliefs, practices and spirituality. But they were isolated from their country, families, culture and traditional expressions of spirituality or religion. Many became Christians as the Missionaries seemed the only sympathetic Europeans concerned about their well-being.

Every aspect of Australian First Nations Peoples' lives became regulate with the enactment in the colony of Victoria in 1869, of the Aboriginal Protection Acts. The governments of other colonies followed the Victorian initiative. The Acts sought to regulate and control the lives of First Nations Australians by restricting their rights to travel, residency, employment, marriage and parenting. Concern over the fate of children became a pretext for the wholesale removal of children from their parents. They were then raised within Christian institutions and Anglo-Australian families in order to assimilate, (accepting the colonial culture and rejecting their traditional culture) or integrate them into wider Australian society (identifying with both European, and their traditional culture). This caused a devastating loss of family, language, community, spirituality and personal identity.

As more British migrants took up the government's offer to be relocated to Australia the effect was devastating for the nation's First Peoples and their links to land. The arrivals were granted land and set about turning the colony into an agricultural settlement. All native vegetation was to be removed to receive government grants all native vegetation was to be removed, sacred sites were fenced off or destroyed and when the First Nations Peoples showed their displeasure the settlers responded by massacring them, often by poisoning. The University of Newcastle has produced a significant record of these events in their Colonial Massacres Map.

First Nations Peoples of Australia have shown incredible resilience to colonisation and its detrimental effect on their traditional society. One of the central elements of pre-colonial First Nations society was the social structure of their kinship system, including moiety, totems and skin names. This traditional structure continues to define the totality of integrated relationships between people, sacred country, animals and plants, generations, responsibilities between all things, to maintenance of ecology, spirituality and society.

KINSHIP SYSTEM

Skills: define, explain

1 Use the Glossary to find the meaning of the following terms of the kinship system: matrilineal, patrilineal, moiety, totem, skin name.

2 Now explain why this kinship system impacts on the spirituality of an individual.

RELIGION: GOVERNMENT POLICIES, TRENDS, INTERACTIONS – COLONISATION, 1788–1901

JUDAISM

The early Jewish convicts (once emancipated or finished their sentence) and free settlers were British and thus could easily blend into colonial society. They enjoyed the full civil and religious equality guaranteed by the British Government. Anti-Semitism existed but it was not commonplace, nor was it as institutionalised or deeply fixed as it was in European society and certainly it was not a Colonial Government policy. This allowed Jews to prosper in business and reach positions of community leadership with authority and power, unlike in Britain and Europe at that time. For example, in the colony of Swan River, Western Australia (WA), Lionel Samson became the first Jew to be elected to an Australian Parliament when he entered the WA Legislative Council in 1849–1856 and again in 1859–1868. During this colonial period from 1849 to 1900, the historical records show that over 50 Jews were elected as Members of Parliament across Australia – unprecedented in other countries at this time.

In pre-Federation Victoria the trend was for Jews to live mainly in the centre of the Melbourne business district or the nearby areas of Carlton, East Melbourne and St Kilda. These places are where institutional requirements such as the first *mikve* (ritual bath) and Jewish Schools such as the Peretz School were established. The Carlton experience was so integral to the establishment of the Jewish Community in Melbourne that many Jews whose parents and grandparents grew up in the area still support the Carlton Football Club despite living elsewhere.

When the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation was founded it requested recognition and government support under the NSW Church Act 1836. But it was not until after the separation of Victoria from New South Wales that in 1862 the Victorian Parliament finally granted the Melbourne Jewish community assistance equal to that of the churches to maintain their places of worship. Government funding was integral to the building of Jewish communal structures, as it was with other faith-based communities.

State Library of Western Australia, 4982B/16

FIGURE 3.12 Lionel Samson (1799–1878) was an early WA Swan River Colony settler who developed wholesale liquor distribution, vineyards and wine-making businesses that exist to this day. He became the first Jewish person to sit in an Australian legislative chamber and served two terms in the Western Australia Legislative Council. What does his successful career reflect about the government policies towards the status of Jews in the early days of the colonies?

BEING JEWISH IN COLONIAL AUSTRALIA

Skills: identify, explain, interpret, analyse

1. What enabled Jews to blend in with colonial Australian society?
2. Why were colonial Jews in Australia able to enjoy a better life than in England or Europe?
3. To what extent did colonial government policies aid or suppress Jewish community growth?

RELIGION: GOVERNMENT POLICIES, TRENDS, INTERACTIONS – COLONISATION, 1788–1901

CHRISTIANITY

The policies of the British government impacted on the religious nature of the colony. The First Fleet was to make New South Wales a penal colony. Britain did not intend there to be a religious nation. This was a period in history in which Europe had moved away from the medieval Christian vision. It was post-French Revolution and post-Enlightenment. The appointment of Reverend Richard Johnson as the first chaplain of the colony did not take place until six months after Arthur Phillip received his commission. It was only after the insistence of William Wilberforce, a member of the British Parliament who was an evangelical Christian and one of the initiators of the Church Mission Society in Britain. King George III's instructions stated that they were to follow instructions according to the rules of war. This meant that religion was to be controlled by the Governor, resulting in Rev. Johnson having limited authority. The governors insisted on the Church of England being the colony's religion and it was used as a way to develop morals and discipline.

The second reason that the British Government's policy impacted on the practice of religion was that in Britain Catholics lived under the Catholic Relief Act, which forbade them from worshipping. Catholics had no freedom of worship until 1829. For this reason, Catholic convicts had to attend Church of England services or be faced with severe punishments. Government policy was an impediment to the practice of any religion other than that of the Church of England. Samuel Marsden, the chaplain between 1794 and 1836, wrote: 'It is more than probable that if the Catholic religion was once allowed to be celebrated by Authority, that the colony would be lost to the British Empire in less than a year' (Marsden Manuscripts Mitchell library, Sydney, 1806–1807).

However there are ways around government policy. In 1817 the papacy responded to the requests of Catholics in the colony by appointing Jeremiah O'Flynn to be Apostolic Prefect of New Holland, but without British approval. Governor Macquarie ordered his deportation, but O'Flynn managed to serve the community in hiding until his departure in 1818.

In 1819 Commissioner Bigge initiated a change of policy, recommending the opening up of the colony to free settlers. This, and the O'Flynn experience, made it plain to Governor Macquarie that there needed to be a priest in the colony and in 1821 two priests were approved. This served to develop a Catholic identity as marriages and baptisms could now be ritualised. To maintain authority over potential rebels, Governor Macquarie forbade the marriage of Protestants and Catholics. One of the priests, Fr Therry, served the colony well, reaching out to both Catholics and Protestants and the First Nations population of New South Wales as he organised the building of schools and the establishment of charities. He earned the cooperation of Governor Macquarie.

The British Government still controlled the policies of the colony and, to control the Irish population, enforced a major shift in policy. They appointed an administrator, Thomas Hobbes Scott, of a Church and School Corporation in 1825 with instructions to favour the Church of England, denying the Catholics access to funds. One seventh of all crown land in NSW would be handed over to the Church of England to expand its presence and it was the only religion to receive government aid. The income from this land allowed the Church of England to become an independent entity in the colony that was not reliant on the governor.

The nature of the colony began to shift with the emancipation of convicts and assisted migration under the Land and Emigration Commission, which was set up under the Colonial Office in 1832. The Presbyterian minister John Dunmore Lang opposed this as he believed it would lower the moral tone of the colony by allowing Britain to send society's unwanted to the colony and that women would be forced into prostitution to support themselves. To some extent he was correct, but it was also the impetus of some of Australia's most notable religiously motivated people to put their beliefs into action. Caroline Chisholm, who had been raised in the Church of England and converted to Catholicism, took on the work of caring for the women who arrived in the colony with few resources. She set up hostels and worked to reform the conditions for emigrants through lobbying governments and public opinion in Britain. She set the tone for religious inspired lay social action in the colony.

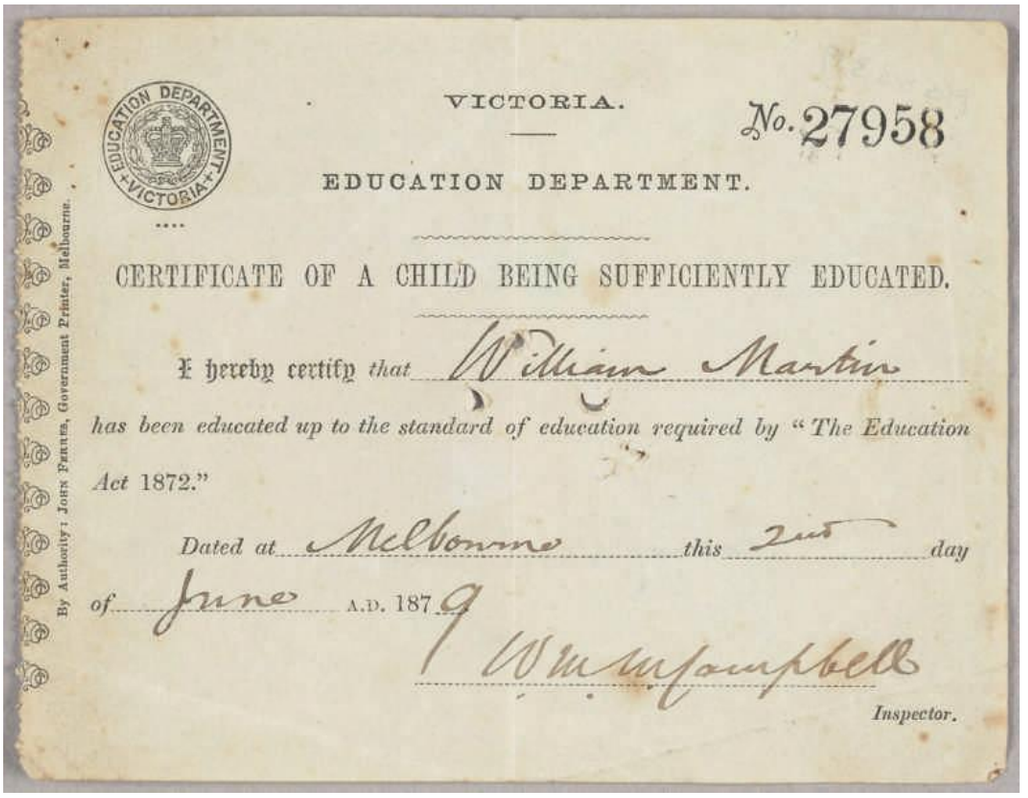
The migration between the 1830s and the Gold Rush of the 1850s reinforced the Christian identity of the colony. The migrants were British (Church of England), Irish (Catholic) and Scottish (Presbyterian and Catholic). They moved into the rural areas of NSW and Tasmania and eventually Victoria, developing communities and building churches in the rural hinterland or 'bush'. They, on the whole, developed a practical and pragmatic attitude to religious practice. Clergy were rarely seen at first. Ritual practice was linked to culture. The idea of mateship grew in these areas. Australian poet, Adam Lindsey Gordon, expressed the Australian Christian ethos and approach to the Golden Rule:

> Life is mostly froth and bubble, Two things stand like stone.
> Kindness in another's trouble, Courage in your own.

The appointment of Governor Bourke (1831–37), who was a Liberal with Enlightenment ideals, improved the situation for all religions in the colony. In 1836 he passed the Church Act which promoted religious liberty and was seen to be the granting of equality to Catholics, Anglicans and Presbyterians. This Act brought funding for the development of religious infrastructure for all religious groups. The government matched donations for buildings pound for pound up to one thousand pounds. Leaders of congregations were given stipends from the government. The benefits of the Act were that there was harmony between religious groups and the State gave religious groups protection in law; guaranteed an income to parishes; formally recognised Anglicans, Protestants and Catholics as denominations; and allowed for the building of churches that were beautiful in the colony. The Act liberated religions other than the Church of England and set a tone of tolerance in the growing colony. It also provided the impetus for religious orders, of nuns, brothers and priests, both Catholic and Church of England, to come and educate children and nurse in, and establish, hospitals.

The Protestant traditions began establishing very influential schools that were aimed at producing the leaders of the Australian community. Examples in Victoria are Scotch College in 1851 and Presbyterian Ladies College (PLC) in 1875 for the Presbyterian tradition. The influential Methodists in the colony persuaded the government to give them a significant piece of land on which to develop a school. This resulted in the building of Wesley College on St Kilda Rd (1850). The Church of England responded with the building of Melbourne Grammar (1858). The children from the wealthier families had their education catered for with world class schools. The middle and working classes found it difficult to educate their children and so most went into menial work at an early age.

Government policy and the funding of religious infrastructure remained a central focus for the development of Australia's religious groups. Because Governor Bourke's funding model was restricted to only three Christian denominations, other religions demanded a greater commitment from their adherents for the growth of their traditions. This became evident in the development of each colony's education system. With the end of transportation and the tempting wealth of the Gold Rush, liberals from Europe arrived in Australia. This was especially true of Victoria and in 1872 Enlightenment thinking led to the parliament passing the Education Act, which legislated that education would be free, compulsory and secular. It was the end of government funding for



VICTORIA.

No. 27958

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

CERTIFICATE OF A CHILD BEING SUFFICIENTLY EDUCATED.

I hereby certify that William Martin

has been educated up to the standard of education required by "The Education Act 1872."

Dated at Melbourne this 2nd day

of June A.D. 1873

Wm Campbell

Inspector.

By Authority; John Ferres, Government Printer, Melbourne.

State Library of Victoria [MS 8339]

FIGURE 3.13 One of the first certificates showing a child had completed their compulsory education and was 'sufficiently' educated (1873). Why was this an important government policy for religious groups in Victoria?

denominational schools and led to the establishment of a vibrant State school system. This Act was replicated in the other colonies.

The Catholic community had provided parish schools with the assistance of government aid and the teaching by a few religious orders; however, the impact of the Education Act was profound for the Catholic community who numerically were very large, but also impoverished. The bishops of Australia used their authority to call on missionary orders to come to Australia to become teachers in their schools. Irish and French orders responded enthusiastically. As communities built their schools the nuns and brothers provided the teaching, supported by Catholic families.

IMPACT OF SOME GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Skills: explain, analyse, interpret

1. In your own words describe the impact of Governor Bourke's 1836 Church Act on religions in the colonies.
2. In your own words describe the impact of the Education Act on the Catholic Church.
3. In a table outline the positives and negatives of the 1872 Education Act on Australian society.
4. List reasons why there was such a substantial growth in Catholic Education after 1888.
5. As a class, discuss whether Australia would be better if the Education Act had been accepted by religious denominations and all students in Australia went to a State (government) school.

RELIGION: GOVERNMENT POLICIES, TRENDS, INTERACTIONS – FEDERATION, 1901 ONWARDS

OVERVIEW

In 1901 the Immigration Restriction Act (known as the White Australia Policy) was enacted by the newly formed federal government. This resulted in the immediate deportation of tens of thousands of South Sea Islander indentured workers and significantly impacted upon the lives of Asian Australians who had come to Australia during the Gold Rush. Additionally, the new Australian Constitution did not recognise the rights of Australia's First Nations Peoples. The White Australia Policy favoured European or 'white' immigration and limited immigration from Asia. It introduced a number of tests, including a dictation test that could be given in any language at the discretion of the tester. It led to many Chinese Confucians and Taoists emigrating from Australia. It almost put an end to growth in religions other than Christianity.

At the conclusion of the Second World War in 1945, a large number of post-war immigrants, refugees from all over Europe, were given entry to Australia. This diversified the Christian and Jewish population with people arriving from different denominations or culturally different practices than the English, Irish and Scottish established churches and synagogues. In 1950 the theory of races, which underpinned much discriminatory government policy on immigration around the world, was challenged by scientists – 'Fallacies of racism exposed: UNESCO publishes Declaration by world's scientists' in *The UNESCO Courier* and a book in the same year, *The Race Question*. This was followed up by *The Race Concept: Results of an Inquiry* (1952), *Four Statements on the Race Question* (1969) and the *Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice.* Clearly around the world societies had shifted their **axioms** and **assumptions**. This shift was to have implications on government policy moving forwards.

By 1965, the major Australian political parties had removed restrictions from their approaches to immigration. With the Migration Act (1966), the Liberal and Country Party government of Harold Holt restored immigration equality, basing criteria on skills rather than race. The immigration of non-Europeans began to increase and immigrants to Australia are from many different countries. As in Australia's past, these immigrants brought their religions with them and set about establishing facilities that would enable them to express their tradition. In the 21st century the largest religion in Australia remains Christianity, though other religions continue to grow.

Since 1970 there have been a number of anti-discrimination Acts passed by the Australian Government: the Racial Discrimination Act in 1975, the Sex Discrimination Act in 1984, the Disability Discrimination Act in 1992, the Age Discrimination Act in 2004 and the Religious Discrimination Act, which is currently before Parliament. As Australia does not have a Bill of Rights religious groups are reliant on the Constitution (Clause 116 Freedom of Religion) and legislation passed by some states and territories for clarification of rights when conflict occurs. The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) has a Human Rights Act and Victoria has a Charter of Human Rights, both of which protect freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief. At times these rights come into conflict with each other.

There have been a number of challenges to freedom of religious speech to which the High Court has resorted to a range of legislation to restrict what is said by religious people who claim to be voicing beliefs. In 2004 the ministers of an evangelical group in Victoria, Catch the Fire Ministries, were charged with incitement to religious hatred after accusations by the Islamic Council of Victoria that they had vilified Muslims. They were found guilty under the 2001 Religious and Racial Tolerance Act on the grounds that they had 'presented [Islam] in a way which is essentially hostile, demeaning

Fairfax Syndication/Matt Golding

FIGURE 3.14 A cartoon highlighting the implications of a religious group making political statements that could be seen to be political and inciting hatred. It is a breach of the 2013 Charities Act. Catch the Fire Ministries (now Reformation Harvest Fire Ministries) had their status as a charity removed. What beliefs of Catch the Fire Ministries are highlighted in the cartoon?

and derogatory of all Muslim people, their God, Allah, and the prophet Mohammed and in general Muslim religious beliefs and practices' (Justice Higgins). The legislation was shown to value religious tolerance over freedom of speech. At the time, spokespeople from all of the major religions – Anglican, Catholic, Jewish, Quaker and Muslim – were supportive of the anti-vilification legislation. However, other groups argued that this was a suppression of the right of one religion to comment on the beliefs of another and so is problematic. In 2010 the High Court of Australia accepted the right of the Adelaide City Council to restrict the speech of Samuel and Caleb Corneloup, who used religious beliefs as a basis for expressing views that were anti-Muslim, anti-foreigner, anti-woman and anti-gay on the basis that the council was protecting the safety of the general public.

Questions of religious freedom and free speech have more recently been tested in the Israel Folau case (2019) in which he accused Rugby Australia of wrongfully dismissing him after he expressed statements that he said were an expression of religious beliefs, but were seen to be homophobic by the general public. This case was settled in private, but tensions between freedom of speech of religious groups and anti-vilification laws remain.

Australia as a nation has signed international treaties that are synchronised with other nations in agreeing to a number of rights; that is, 'freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief'.

Australia is often described as 'the lucky country' because of resources but also because of immigration. Australian society is devoid of an entrenched feudal upperclass because 19th-century migration brought with it revolutionary democratic ideals and worldviews from post-Enlightenment Europe. Immigrants may have come from societies with a class structure but when attempts were made to create one here, they were mocked as the 'squattocracy'. Newly arrived refugees and migrants liked the considerable social mobility within Australian society.

On any given day in contemporary Australia, people of different religions all over the nation attend their local cathedrals, synagogues, temples, mosques, churches, secular spaces of meaning and sacred sites, and celebrate important festivals and religious occasions in their homes or neighbourhoods. Some Australians attend their place of worship regularly, while others only attend on particular occasions. One may attend a place of worship daily, whereas another may only go once or twice a year, for a wedding or funeral, if at all. Almost one million young people attend religious schools in Australia – including Christian, Islamic and Jewish schools – a trend that is increasing. Although there are still some in the broader community who remain resistant to government policies that promote multicultural values and the principle of religious freedoms, there have been few barriers to non-Christian people attaining high positions in government, the law, the army and other professions of respect.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AND FREEDOM

Skills: analyse, explain

1 What have been the effects of the Anti-Discrimination Acts upon Australian society?
2 How have individuals been influenced by the Anti-Discrimination Acts?
3 Discuss why there is tension between freedom of speech and freedom of religious speech.

RELIGION: GOVERNMENT POLICIES, TRENDS, INTERACTIONS – FEDERATION, 1901 ONWARDS

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES

At the heart of First Nations Peoples' struggle to practise their spirituality has been government policies that destroyed their custodianship of the land. The policy of *Terra Nullius* that denied their existence from 1788, restricted their ability to operate as spiritual people in a sacred land. It meant that in some regions they only had restricted access to sacred sites and so could not always practise ceremonies or tell their sacred stories on their own country; their social structures were disrupted. Across the 20th century non-First Nations people chipped away at the myth that Australia was an empty land when the British arrived. There was the Wave Hill Walk-off (1966), which became the nation's longest strike. It came to an end with the iconic image of Prime Minister Gough Whitlam pouring the Earth into the hand of Vincent Lingiari, the leader of the protest. This critical event became memorialised in the song *From Little Things Big Things Grow* (1993) by Paul Kelly and Kev Carmody. In 1992 Eddie Mabo took the Queensland Government to the High Court, arguing that he and the Meriam people were the traditional owners of his island in the Torres Strait, Mer. This recognised the *Terra Nullius* was a legal fiction and acknowledged the land rights of the First Peoples. This ruling, and the progress towards a treaty with traditional custodians by State Governments, has led to a return to culture as witnessed in the rebirth of languages, the renaming of sacred sites with Aboriginal names and the renewal of ceremonies – for example, Garma Festival by the Yolgnu people. The *Uluru Statement of the Heart* (2017) remains unfinished business in this process of treaty making, land rights and sovereignty.

THE ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART

Skills: identify, interpret, explain

1 Download and read the statement, from the Uluru Statement website
2 Read and highlight the sections that refer to the spirituality of the people who wrote this invitation to the Australian public.
3 Write a personal response to the authors of the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* which includes references to your own belief system or the belief system of a religious tradition to which you belong (250 words).

National Sorry Day, now held annually in Australia on 26 May, was one of the recommendations of the *Bringing them Home* report (1997). The report was part of a Commonwealth Government inquiry into the forced removal of First Nations children from their families during more than 150 years – up until the 1980s. The report highlighted the absolute failure of this policy, and the psychological distress and long-term effects that it has had on families and individuals – at the time and still today.

In 2008 Prime Minister Kevin Rudd issued a public apology to the Stolen Generations, acknowledging the cruelty caused by this policy. Many Australian churches, such as the Uniting Church, have also apologised to First Nations Peoples for the far-reaching and devastating harm that has been caused by these policies. This public apology set in motion the government policy of 'Closing the Gap' in life expectancy between First Nations Peoples and other Australians. Progress in this area helps to preserve the health of elders and their capacity to pass on knowledge.

RELIGION: GOVERNMENT POLICIES, TRENDS, INTERACTIONS – FEDERATION, 1901 ONWARDS

JUDAISM

Acculturation and **assimilation** of immigrants were government goals to encourage a harmonious society. The Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, known as the White Australia Policy, did not list Jews but nevertheless authorities categorised Jews as white aliens – an ambiguous, transitional category. Visa applicant nominations would be considered for close relatives from any European country, but with officials granted the discretion to accept or reject applications based on perceived desirability. The distinctive characteristics and ethnicity of Eastern European Jews were of concern to the government, threatening the homogeneity of 'White Australia'.

In July 1938, 32 nations met at the Evian Conference, Switzerland, to try and solve the enormous refugee crisis caused by Jews fleeing the unprecedented brutality of Nazi Germany and Austria after attacks, mass arrests, the closing of Jewish institutions and the full destruction of Jewish economic life. The majority of nations were unwilling to help these refugees. Australia's delegate, Mr T.W. White, declared that Australia did not have a racial problem and did not want to import one. Therefore, no refugees would be admitted. The doors to Australia were even closed to schemes trying to save young German Jewish child refugees. Meanwhile the Australian borders were open to hundreds of British child evacuees. This opposition to accepting German Jewish immigrants was rooted in concerns about security, the need to maintain a cohesive society and safeguarding national economic interest. Chaim Weizmann, scientist and a leader of the British Jewish community, noted after the Evian Conference that the countries of the world were divided into two camps, those who wanted to get rid of Jews and those who refused to let them in.

During World War II, refugees fleeing Germany and Nazi-occupied countries were classed as enemy aliens by British and Australian governments. In 1940 the *HMT Dunera*, an extremely overcrowded British passenger ship, arrived in Australia after a horrific 57-day journey in dreadful conditions during which the ship was hit by a torpedo. It carried 2000 men, mostly Jewish refugees and also some Italian fascists and Nazi prisoners of war who were refused entry or deported from Britain. Both governments soon realised their misunderstanding of the Jews' predicament as non-combatant German refugees fleeing the horrors of Nazism. But so the governments would not lose face, the men were sent to internment camps in Hay, New South Wales. The internees were later offered the chance to return and fight in the British armed forces.

Martin Auer/Wikimedia Commons/CC BY SA 3.0

FIGURE 3.15 Austrian Jewish refugee Georg Auer was shipped to Australia as an enemy alien on the *Dunera*. He was kept in an internment camp until 1942, when he joined the Australian army where he served until 1946. This document was issued by the Australian Department of the Interior in lieu of a national passport to expedite his return to Austria. Why would Georg Auer be unlikely to wish to return to Austria as this Government document implies?

Arthur Calwell, post-war Australian Minister for Immigration in 1945, used the slogan, 'populate or perish' to emphasise the importance of immigration for national development and defence. He welcomed all people covered by existing legislation and rejected the religious and racial intolerance campaigns against this migration policy. Calwell encouraged close relatives of Holocaust survivors to apply to come to Australia and for Jewish Welfare Societies to process these applications. Between 1946 and 1954, 17 000 Jews, mostly Holocaust survivors, arrived from Europe and Shanghai.

A significant number of Jews came after the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, a further 10 000 arrived by 1961. The Suez Crisis of that same year triggered an exodus of Jews from Nasser's Egypt. Jews from Middle Eastern countries, even Sephardim (Jews who had lived in Spain and Arabic lands) of comparatively light complexion, were effectively barred by the White Australia Policy, enshrined in the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 that was not repealed until 1972. An easing of this barrier following Jewish community representations to government facilitated the entry of several hundred refugees from Egypt. Many Jews were also among those who migrated from Britain between 1945 and 1972 under the Assisted Passage Scheme of the Australian Government. Adult migrants were charged the very cheap fare of £10 (around $20) for the sea voyage to Australia. The 'Ten Pound Poms' sought to establish a better life for themselves. These Anglo Jews brought with them both Orthodox and Liberal Judaism.

Australia's migration post-war policies welcomed the economic growth migrants provided. Whereas the early Australian Jewish community was made up of mainly British-born adherents, today more than half of the current Australian Jewish population were born in Australia. According to the 2019 Monash University Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation Survey of the 2016 census, it enumerates Jewish migrants (in descending order of numbers) came from South Africa, Israel, the Former Soviet Union, United Kingdom and United States. Jewish adherents are not of a single ethnic, racial, linguistic or political background. They came to Australia for a variety of reasons such as avoiding religious and racial persecution, leaving behind unstable political circumstances and war, for economic improvement, and for family reunion.

Post-World War II federal government policies encouraged private school growth with subsidies for building school libraries, science laboratories, assembly halls and sports facilities. This enabled several Jewish schools to be established and flourish along with various Christian and Catholic schools who benefitted from these allocations.

FACTORS AFFECTING JEWS

Skills: identify, explain, analyse, interpret

1. What trends can you discern in the development of the Jewish community in the 20th century?
2. Why are Jews not an identifiable ethnic or racial group?
3. Why do you think migrant and ethnic groups choose to live in close proximity to each other?
4. How might living far from your religious community affect one's your religious commitment?
5. There are several documentaries, books and articles about 'The Dunera Boys'. Also the Jewish Museum in East St Kilda has resource material. What sort of internees were on board *HMT Dunera?* Find out about their fate during the voyage and what happened to them afterwards.

RELIGION: GOVERNMENT POLICIES, TRENDS, INTERACTIONS – FEDERATION, 1901 ONWARDS

CHRISTIANITY

The effect of the policy to have a 'White Australia' moved the focus of the mainstream community to religious rather than racial differences. This impacted on people's employment opportunities, location of geographic settlement and the political parties they followed. Between Federation and the 1970s this trend in discrimination based on religious affiliation was entrenched in Australian society and kept Catholics in working-class positions and Protestants in the upper and ruling class of the nation.

It was commonly known which workplaces, government and private, would accept which of the religious groups. The railways, the port and the police in Victoria were dominated by Catholics whereas what is now Australia Post, the legal and medical professions were dominated by Protestants. Suburbs were divided along main roads with one side being government-supported housing commission houses for lower working-class Catholics and the other side of the road

Californian bungalow homes that housed Protestants. In rural areas there were towns whose identities were shaped by the dominant religious groups, for example towns in the Wimmera that were predominantly Lutheran. Politically, the working class, who were mainly Catholic, became politically active through unions in the 1890s and with Federation they founded in 1901 the Labor Party which became the party of choice for Catholics. There were a range of small parties such as the Protectionist Party, the Free Trade Party and the United Party which, on the whole, represented the interests of landholders and wealthier members of the community whose religious affiliation was often Anglican or other Protestant denominations. With the outbreak of World War II these parties united to form the Liberal Party of Australia (1944) which became the government of power until 1972.

This was also a period in which the trend was for religion to impact on most aspects of a citizen's life in terms of how they shaped their own identity, the choices they made in careers and relationships and the way they were judged by society on the whole. This trend was fed by the fact that most clergy, both Catholic and Protestant, were trained in Britain. This antagonism between denominations changed with the Church of England of Australia establishing their independence from England in 1962, and the introduction of the practice of appointing Australian, not Irish, Catholics as bishops and leaders of Congregations. The opening up of Australia to migrants from Europe in the 1960s and from the sub-continent and Asia from the 1970s brought the arrival of both Catholics and Protestants whose worldview was very different from the hostilities that survived since the First Fleet between Catholics and Protestants of British origin. It also allowed for more positive relationships between different Christian denominations and other faith traditions.

With regard to Christian Orthodoxy in Australia, the Eastern, Russian, Albanian, Antiochian, Serbian Orthodox communities, and others, have similar stories to tell as the Greek Orthodox about their beginnings and development in Australia over the 20th century. Migration was restricted, even for Europeans, under the White Australia Policy. However, Greek sailors had from the Gold Rush period abandoned ship, deciding to try their luck in Australia. The first Greek Orthodox churches were established in Sydney and Melbourne in the early decades of the 20th century and by the 1960s most states and territories had Greek Orthodox places of worship and, by the 1960s, a monastery was established in New South Wales. It was common at this time for Greek migrants to change their names to ones more acceptable to British migrants and to assimilate into mainstream life, but in their homes they continued to follow the traditions of culture and religion. In 1964 the federal government began to provide funding for the establishment of religious schools and this allowed the Greek Orthodox Church to begin building their own schools – a trend that has continued. This has helped to shape Melbourne, in particular, which is said to be the third largest Greek city in the world.

The 1960s was a time of radical social change globally and the impact on Christianity and its practice in Australia was substantial. This was the time when the large demographic of post-war babies (the baby boomers) came of age. On the whole they refused to accept the inevitability of conflict between races and religions and instead had a mantra of 'peace' and 'love'. Conflict was instead with their parents who were still attached to a pre-war view of the world (the generation gap). It was a time of inter-religious and inter-racial marriage that broke down barriers. The United Nations had been established and it gave the world the Declaration of Human Rights that said individuals should have the right to freely practise their religion. The Catholic Church called

Vatican II, a council of the Church that reformed the relationship the Church was to have with society. It was a vision of reforming the world from within society instead of isolating itself from the community. It accepted the integrity of both other Christian traditions and world religions. It recognised Christianity's role in the persecution of the Jewish people. These international movements helped to reshape Christianity in Australia.

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FIGURE 3.16 Sheik Abdullah Khan, chair of the Islamic Cultural Centre; Australian Catholic University Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Hayden Ramsey; Bishop Michael McKenna, chair of the Bishops Commission for Christian Unity and Interreligious Dialogue; and Dr Ibrahim Abu Mohammed, the Grand Mufti of Australia, with the signed interfaith commitment statement. How does society benefit from interfaith dialogue?

Across the 20th century there arose religious leaders who were also interested in interfaith dialogue. There are global forums that Australia's religious leaders participate in, such as the Parliament of World Religions. In Australia there are bodies such as the National Council of Churches, the JCMA (Jewish, Christian, Muslim Association) and at a student level there is the Building Bridges programme run in schools.

There is also a developing movement towards Ecumenism whose aim it is to find unity in Christianity through dialogue between Christian denominations. This began in 1944 as a response to Christianity's role in the war. The best example of ecumenism's success has been the establishment of the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) through the dialogue between the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregationalist Traditions to form one Uniting Church. There has been substantial work done in this area internationally between Catholics and Lutherans in signing the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification in 1998. There are groups dedicated to promoting ecumenism in Australia through joint worship – for example, the Palm Sunday marches for refugees in Melbourne and ecumenical gatherings to sing Christmas carols or people attending the local churches of other Christian denominations on Pentecost Sunday.

TRENDS INFLUENCING CHRISTIANITY

Skills: identify, summarise, interpret, discuss

1. After reading this material identify the dominant trends in Christianity before 1960.
2. After reading this material identify the dominant trends in Christianity after 1960.
3. Using your summaries of the pre- and post-1960 trends, write a short paragraph (100 words) on what changed the way Christians related to each other in this period.
4. Looking at the trend in Christianity in recent times, what do you think will be the shape of Christianity in Australia in the future?
5. Discuss whether religious diversity in Christianity in Australia is a good thing.

The records in R. Fogarty's book *Catholic Education in Australia 1805–1950* show that between 1888 and 1950 Catholic education expanded from 508 to 1199 parish primary schools. By 2020 further expansion saw a total of 1755 primary and secondary schools. This growth in education was the basis for Catholics to become socially mobile and there is evidence of this in the number of Catholics found in leadership positions in politics, the law and medical fields. Their success led to the government reviewing government aid for schools in 1970. The Whitlam Government in 1973 introduced a needs-based funding model. Today a range of religious groups benefit from government funding in order to support their schools. In Victoria there is significant growth in religious schools with Adventist and other Christian denominations, Buddhist and Islamic traditions, now committed to religious education.

EXPRESSION OF COLLECTIVE RELIGIOUS IDENTITY THROUGH ASPECTS OF RELIGION

CONTEMPORARY FIRST NATIONS SPIRITUALITY

The traditional owners of Victoria now have a public event at which they share their collective identity with the people of Melbourne. The annual Melbourne Arts Festival now opens with a Tanderrum ceremony held in Federation Square. This ceremony is a gathering of all the clans of Victoria, the Wurundjeri/Woiwurrung, Boon Wurrung, Taungurung, Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung language groups of the Eastern Kulin Nation. Each mob draws from their own language and songlines to reveal the sacredness of the ceremony and the sacredness of the place. It draws in the broader community through sharing the spiritual experience with the elders and their communities.

Just as Tanderrum is a powerful way of expressing the oneness of people and the land, nationally the expression of this belief has become central to defining the collective identity of First Nations Peoples through broadly accepted protocols that encourage the ritual of having a person from a local clan perform a 'Welcome to Country' ceremony. In doing this the local people's spirituality is acknowledged and the nature of the ceremony in their area expresses particular beliefs that are integral to their identity.

When an elder cannot be present for a Welcome Ceremony, then the community is asked to perform an Acknowledgement of Country as a way of showing respect to the people of a living culture who are custodians for the land. In doing this the people recognise the collective identity of the First Nations Peoples whose spirituality is part of the area. Another ritual that many will have

seen that expresses the beliefs of the people is the smoking ceremony. This is a healing ceremony in which bad spirits are removed.

These public rituals have become powerful tools for First Nations Peoples to share with the Australian community their beliefs and have their collective identity recognised. They are a small start to healing the damage that was done to their spiritual practices by colonisation.

ASPECTS OF RELIGION IN SPIRITUALITIES OF FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES
Skills: describe, research, draw conclusions

1. What aspects of religion are evident in Tanderrum? In what ways do these aspects support each other to express beliefs?
2. Research the activities that happened during National Aboriginal and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week in the last 12 months through their website and write a paragraph outlining how these activities use the aspects of religion to express the collective identity of Australia's First Nations Peoples.
3. Watch *10 Canoes or In My Blood it Runs* or episodes from *Cleverman*. Discuss the ways First Nations Peoples are using film to express their collective identity to the rest of the nation. Is this an effective way to educate, inform and shape Australia's spiritual identity?

EXPRESSION OF COLLECTIVE RELIGIOUS IDENTITY THROUGH ASPECTS OF RELIGION

CHRISTIANITY

The collective identity of the Catholic Church in the colony's beginnings was influenced by changes to the leadership within the aspect of social structures. Tension existed between the largely Irish Catholic community and the government until the Church appointed members of the English Benedictine order to administer the Catholic Church in the colony. This was a new direction as it gave the government in Britain a way of providing Catholics in the colony with leadership that was British and whose vision of the Church was not in conflict with the Church of England and the sovereign. Father Ullathorne arrived in 1833 to be the first vicar-general in the colony and the first bishop was also a Benedictine, John Bede Polding, who arrived in 1835. Polding had a vision for the colony that was both spiritual and pastoral. He declared Sydney an Abbey Diocese in 1843 and gained permission to build a Benedictine Monastery in 1845. It was to set an intellectual and less political tone for the Church in the colony; it was to be an Australian Church. He said:

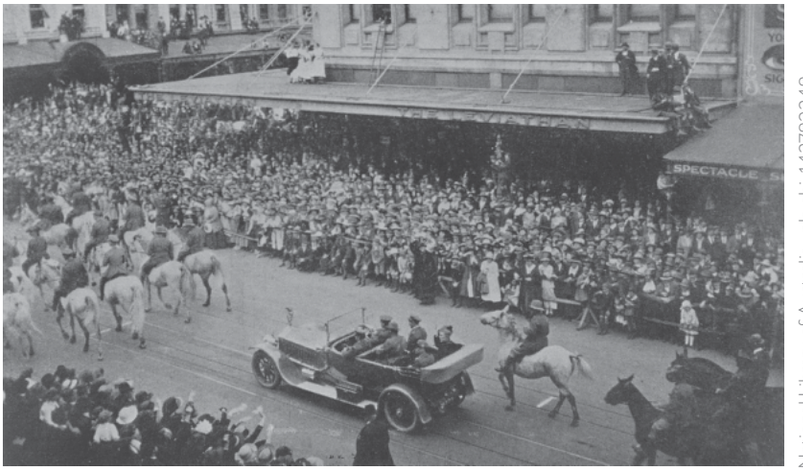
> Before everything else we are Catholics; and next, by a name swallowing up all distinctions or origins, we are Australians; from whatsoever land we or our parents have arrived hither, be it from Ireland, from France, from England, from Scotland, from Germany, we are no longer Irishmen, Frenchmen and Englishmen and Scotchmen, but Australians, and the man who seeks by word or writing to perpetuate invidious distinctions is an enemy to our peace and prosperity...
>
> The Pastoral Letter of John Bede Polding at the commencement of Lent 1856.

Polding promoted in the Catholic community his vision for a socially just society. He was known for his great care of the convicts and their families and he aimed to establish a Catholicism that was in tune with the spirituality of Australia. To this end Polding established relationships

with the First Nations Peoples and argued for their rights in public forums. He led the writing of a Pastoral Letter on the Christian duty to the Aboriginal people in 1869 in order to influence government policy.

> We have dispossessed the aboriginals of the soil … in natural justice we are held to compensation … Alas! It is shocking to think of what has, in fact, been done. With very little, with short-lived exception, injustice, neglect, cruelty, and a million times worse, the actual teaching of vice, have branded the annals of white men. The stain of blood is upon us – blood has been shed far otherwise than in self-defence – blood in needless and wanton cruelty …
>
> The Pastoral Letter of the Archbishop and Bishops of the Province, 1869, pp. 14–16.

However, by 1847 it was obvious that his vision was not economically viable and a new direction began in the social structure of Catholicism in Australia. What replaced the English Benedictine vision of Bishop Polding was an Irish Catholic Church for Australia. The appointment of bishops demonstrated the Church's willingness to establish an Irish Church and the enthusiastic acceptance by the community for the appointment of Irish bishops showed their desire to express a Catholicism that was linked to the world that remained in their hearts as their home.



National Library of Australia, nla.obj-143782348

FIGURE 3.17 A Catholic show of strength at the 1920 St Patrick's Day Parade – Archbishop Mannix is in the car. What aspect of religion is evident here? What does this gathering suggest was the attitude of those who attended, both to their religion and to broader society?

In the 20th century the social structure of the Catholic Church remained strongly hierarchical and was used to express the Catholic identity of the Church in Australia. The highpoint for Irish Catholics came with the appointment of Daniel Mannix (1864–1963) as Archbishop of Melbourne.

Mannix was articulate and determined to raise the living standards of Catholics. When Prime Minister Hughes proposed conscription to ensure troops to fight in World War I, Mannix became the spokesperson for the anti-conscription movement. He was a hero for the working class and oppressed. His longevity as archbishop helped him to establish a firm Irish Catholic identity that endured until his death and the arrival of migrants from Mediterranean Europe. It was a Catholicism that was anti-establishment, anti-authoritarian and fiercely loyal to the idea of Irish independence in what they believed to be their true 'home' – Ireland. Religiously, Australians had not yet abandoned their Anglo/Celtic identities for the egalitarian Australian ethos of mateship.

At that time Australia was strongly sectarian. Some workplaces would not hire Catholics if they applied, Protestants and Catholics did not intermarry, tension was rife between the denominations. Catholic children on the streets called their neighbours 'Proddy dogs' as they were in turn called 'Catholic frogs' and stones were thrown. Cracker night in November was celebrated as a reminder of the ruling class' distrust of Catholics as the stories of 'home', England and Guy Fawkes were told. Each year the orange and green worn on St Patrick's Day reminded the community of the violent tensions that remained in the Catholic 'home' of Ireland.

RELIGIOUS COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

Skills: identify, explain, discuss

1. Why does discrimination help a religious community to develop and maintain a collective identity?
2. Which religious groups in Australia today are having their religious identity strengthened through discrimination? Which aspects of religion are they using to respond to this tension?
3. Are processions and largely public displays of religious identity a positive or a negative for society?
4. Which symbols are mentioned in the article to indicate collective identity?

In the 1950s and 1960s Mannix, and the Catholic Church's identity in society, were strongly influenced by a European approach through political journalist and commentator B.A. Santamaria. His vision for religion was not linked to Ireland and was more intellectual and politically astute about global trends. He was shaped by the encroachment of communism in Europe and its attraction to members of the Labor Party in Australia. He was pivotal in splitting the Labor Party through the establishment of the Democratic Labor Party (DLP). Santamaria recognised the collective power of Catholics in Australia in shaping policy, both locally in discussions of education funding but also in foreign policy. He was savvy in his use of the new information technology – television. His views led to debate and division in the Catholic Church that stretched from the public arena in the union movement, to the pulpit and around the kitchen table. He demonstrated that lay Catholics had a place in the social structure of the Church.

Significantly the sectarianism that divided the nation was not supported by Prime Minister Robert Menzies, who was a Scottish Presbyterian. In 1964 he told an audience 'whether we be Catholic or Protestant or Jewish or Muslim, the end remains clear: We have an overwhelming duty to serve our country on the highest level and to the best of our talents.' It was a position that brought criticism of him from those who wanted the public displays of street processions by Catholics stopped; however, Menzies resisted this pressure in favour of a commitment to religious freedom in the nation.

The power of Santamaria's organisation, 'The Movement', came to an end with the more tolerant approach of Vatican II, the death of Mannix and the election of Gough Whitlam as prime minister of Australia. This was the start of the period we recognise today, in which the collective identity of Catholics changed radically as tensions between Christian groups subsided, ecumenism was born and tolerance was cemented by the Baby Boomer generation whose ethos was peace, love and harmony. It was a period when inter-marriage between Christian groups became common and religion became taboo as a discussion in family gatherings. Images of the Sacred Heart were no longer mandatory in Catholic homes and the nightly rosary disappeared. Anti-discrimination laws resulted in Catholics no longer being an oppressed group in the community and the hard work of Catholic educators had turned this religious group into a socially mobile community climbing the ladder to positions that included the prime ministership (Paul Keating, Kevin Rudd, Tony Abbott to name a few).

RELIGION AND POLITICS

Skills: observe, explain, discuss

1. What did B.A. Santamaria and 'The Movement' contribute to the collective identity of Catholics in Australia?
2. Why would the Catholic Church and the Labor Party share similar membership in this period?
3. Discuss whether religious people should use their beliefs to influence politics.

The waves of migration that shaped the development of Australia since the Gold Rush determined the dominant streams of religious practice over time to the present day. Australia, although an isolated island continent, has consistently been impacted by major global events including revolutions, wars, disasters and extreme poverty. The people who have arrived as a result of such events have brought with them their religions, local beliefs, superstitions and celebration of festivals. Each wave has shared these either through inter-marriage or neighbourly relationships. The result of this has been the beginnings of an interpretation of each religion that has an Australian character.

In 2008, Pope Benedict XVI visited Australia for World Youth Day (WYD). This week-long celebration of Catholicism, which focuses on youth, is celebrated every two to three years in different locations around the world. The Sydney festival was attended by 26 cardinals, 420 bishops and thousands of priests and approximately 500 000 young people from around the world. The Final Mass in Sydney was the largest gathering of people in Australia's history with attendance numbers estimated at 300 000 to 400 000 people. The Final Mass is the last event in WYD celebrations.

There are times in history when values shift and a hope-filled period follows. The challenge of these periods is that they call for courage and vision by leaders to take advantage of opportunities for strengthening and growth. The UCA was a community facing this type of challenge. They were formed in 1977 through uniting three Christian denominations – the Congregational Church, the Methodist Church and most of the Presbyterian Church of Australia. Their willingness to implement change meant the existing structures of the three denominations needed to be reviewed as they came together as one. Prior to uniting, the churches had mutually found a desire to be an Australian church. They wanted to be a church focused on Christian unity rather than antagonism and competition; and they wanted a vision that was focused on addressing questions of social justice in Australia. They finally agreed upon a structure; the Uniting Church is non-hierarchical. Instead there are a number of interrelated councils that have particular areas of responsibility and can make decisions in those areas. These four independent, yet interconnected, councils are: the Congregation (local) the Presbytery (regional) the Synods (state) and the Assembly (national). Each council has a chairperson but the chair does not have controlling authority. All members of the Uniting Church – male, female, ordained or lay – can be a part of these councils. Decision making in these councils is by consensus.

When the three Churches combined into a new entity called the Uniting Church, they felt the need for a new symbol to represent their creed. The following text discusses the meaning of the UCA's logo.

> The logo of the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) shows the cross of Jesus Christ, in its light and love, standing over a darkened world – redeeming it through grace and truth. By that cross people are bound to Christ and each other. The Holy Spirit, symbolised by the dove with the wings of flame, empowers and guides us to be witnesses to Jesus Christ. The wide U at the bottom points to the fact that we are uniting; as a semicircle it also reminds us that the renewing of both Church and world are as yet incomplete.

Uniting Church in Australia

FIGURE 3.18 The emblem of the Uniting Church in Australia. Which of the symbols used in the logo is dominant? Why was this symbol emphasised?

EXPLORING UNITING CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

Skills: identify, interpret, explain, synthesise

1. Australia is the only country using the name 'Uniting Church' – everywhere else it is called the United Church. What reasons might there be for Australia using the term 'uniting'?
2. What are the implications of the structure of authority of the Uniting Church for the way in which members of the tradition are able to participate in the tradition?
3. What issues relating to social structure and other aspects would this 1977 challenge to unite the denominations have presented to the members of the participating churches?

Newspix/Craig Greenhill

FIGURE 3.19 A Hillsong service at the Sydney Entertainment Centre. Which aspects of religion are being expressed in this service?

The Pentecostal Church is made up of a number of different churches that place an emphasis on experiencing the Holy Spirit in their services through music, dance, trances and speaking in tongues. Pentecostalism emerged from the Protestant (non-Catholic) tradition. It is unique in Australia in that it has not grown and developed as a result of patterns of migration but has emerged from members'

dissatisfaction with other Christian movements. The first Pentecostal Church was founded in Australia, in 1909, by Sarah Jane Lancaster, a former Methodist from Williamstown, in Melbourne. In the last two decades, the Pentecostal Church has expanded rapidly, and its adherents attend regularly; however, they do not always attend the same community but tend to 'congregation hop'.

PENTECOSTALISM

Skills: research, outline, interpret, synthesise

1 How does the Pentecostal Church in Australia express its collective identity?

Overall, Christianity in Australia in the 21st century in its many denominations is an eclectic mix of reactionary, orthodox and progressive beliefs and practices which impact on the expression of each community's collective identity. For the adherent there is a congregation or community able to facilitate the expression of their beliefs and meet their pastoral needs. Christians can worship in awe-inspiring gothic cathedrals, small intimate community chapels, historic monasteries or in halls and large stadiums, with each highlighting their own understanding of the relationship with God.

Essential in the expression of beliefs in Christianity are symbols such as the cross, crucifixes, stained glass windows, paintings and statues in Orthodox, Catholic and High Anglican churches. Whereas some Pentecostal groups do not use traditional religious symbols, they instead use symbols of a unified community speaking to a modern world to express their collective identity.

Expression of beliefs through the social structures in Christianity now range from strictly hierarchical interpretations of institutional churches such as the obedience of the Opus Dei community in Catholicism to denominations that use more democratic models, such as the appointment of ministers by parishes in the Anglican tradition or the election of leaders in the four non-hierarchical councils of the Uniting Church. Between these two models is the Vatican II structure of mainstream Catholicism, which turns the hierarchy on its head by teaching that those with power should be servants of all – though the implementation of this teaching is still in process.

From the 1600s CE the proclamation of the Gospel message is a way of distinguishing between the collective identity of different Christian traditions. In the Protestant tradition the proclamation of the Gospel and the Letters of St Paul is generally open to all members of the group, especially in evangelical communities. The breaking open and exploration of the Word of God is the central focus of prayer. It is the adherent's gift to be able to read and interpret the sacred texts. The proclamation of the Good News is often lengthy, personal, passionate and aimed at inspiring the congregation.

In the Orthodox and Catholic traditions the Scriptures are taught through catechesis, particularly in a homily delivered by a priest who has had academic training in a seminary, though the rigour of this can vary greatly. Catholicism and the Orthodox tradition are more focused on encountering God through sacraments – outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace. So the Eucharistic bread and wine, and the presence of an altar, are essential artefacts in the expression of the tradition's belief in the need to give thanks for the sacrifice made by Jesus Christ for the salvation of God's creation – especially humankind. Their collective identity is as a Eucharistic community.

The contemporary media give most attention to the expression of the collective identity of different religious traditions and their denominations by focusing on their stances on ethical issues. Texts such as press releases, or reports by authorised groups within traditions, are used

by Christian denominations to advocate for a vision of society expressed in their interpretation of sacred texts. These stances are sometimes supported by public gatherings or street marches in order to influence government decision making. In the Uniting Church, Anglican and Catholic denominations this is often seen in their support of groups which they deem have been treated unjustly by governments. At the moment First Nations Peoples, asylum seekers and refugees, and protection of the Earth are particular foci. There are specific groups within traditions that take strong stances to express their ethical views that provides them with a collective identity that shapes their lives and the public perception of their religious traditions – for example, the Right for Life movement which argues against abortion, Broken Rites which aims to develop awareness of clerical abuse, **PFLAG** which supports and advocates for **LGBTIQA+** persons and **ACRATH** which aims to end modern slavery. Through work and advocacy these groups have developed a distinctive Christian identity.

COLLECTIVE IDENTITY IN CHRISTIANITY

Skills: describe, research, review, analyse

1 Describe the collective identity of the Christian community to which you belong or that you have researched.

2 From your understanding of history as explored in this chapter and in Chapter 2, discuss how different emphasis on Christian beliefs has led to diversity in Christian identities in Australia.

EXPRESSION OF COLLECTIVE RELIGIOUS IDENTITY THROUGH ASPECTS OF RELIGION

CHINESE SPIRITUALITY

Australia's Chinese population has been increasing since the 1930s. There is now a significant number of people from China, Malaysia, Hong King and Singapore who are influenced by Confucian, Taoist and some Buddhist religious thought that is linked to the Lunar New Year. Australia has some of the most celebratory and distinctive festivities of anywhere in the world outside of China for this festival. The Dragon or Lion Dance is a central feature that shows the community chasing away any evil spirits and welcoming in wisdom and good fortune. To aid this, sacrifices are made to the ancestors. Each year is connected to a particular animal of the Chinese zodiac that shows the passage of time and the influence of the spirit world on history.

EXPRESSION OF COLLECTIVE RELIGIOUS IDENTITY THROUGH ASPECTS OF RELIGION

HINDUISM AND SIKHISM

Both of these traditions observe the Festival of Lights, Diwali, celebrating the victory of light over darkness. In order to develop an understanding of this festival in the broader community, the Indian and Australian governments have joined to establish a group called 'Celebrate India'. Each year in Melbourne there is a celebration of this religious event via costume, dance, food and art through Mandala making based on a ritual display of the importance of light. Even some of Melbourne's trams are painted at this time to make the Melbourne public aware of the coming of Diwali.

Getty Images/ Umang Gajjar

FIGURE 3.20 Melbourne's Diwali celebrations in Federation Square. Which aspects of religion are evident in this image of the Diwali festival?

During the bushfires of 2020 and the COVID pandemic the Sikh community expressed their commitment to hospitality through a collective effort of feeding those who were affected. This commitment reflects the work of the Sikh community in their sacred site of the Harmandir Sahib in Amritsar, the Golden Temple. It is a regular expression of their beliefs that normally happens at their local temple, but during these disasters the volunteers responded to the need to help others.

Fairfax Syndication/SIMON SCHLUTER

FIGURE 3.21 Sikh volunteers provide meals for bushfire victims in 2020. What symbols are used to show the collective identity of the Sikh men?

EXPRESSION OF COLLECTIVE RELIGIOUS IDENTITY THROUGH ASPECTS OF RELIGION

JUDAISM

Jews consider themselves as belonging to *Am Yisrael*, a nation or people, in addition to theological and cultural dimensions of their collective identity.

The earliest Jewish settlers in Australia struggled to maintain their Jewish identity when they were so few in number and scattered across the colonies. But as their numbers grew, especially in larger towns, they formed Jewish burial societies and created Jewish sections of cemeteries. They formed small congregations for worship and to celebrate the Sabbath and festivals, which in turn led to the building of community meeting places – synagogues and other social and welfare institutions.

As the Jewish population grew in number and economic stability, their confidence in the new Australian environment was reflected in their social structures. When Melbourne expanded, Victorian Jews chose to live in close proximity to each other to ease their integration into Australian society while maintaining their Jewish culture. They built synagogues in walking distance which ran Hebrew and Jewish studies classes and established kosher butchers and food stores in their neighbourhoods.

Jews acted on issues of concern to their religious community through social welfare organisations developed to support those in need such as orphans, the elderly and those living in poverty. These organisations still exist today, catering for the needs of the wider Jewish community. They include *Bnei Brith*, a fellowship lodge and women's organisations such as the National Council of Jewish Women.

Gradually Melbourne's Jewish communities spread from central Melbourne and Carlton into neighbouring suburbs of Elwood, Caulfield, Kew and Balwyn. In more recent times there are flourishing Jewish communities in South Caulfield, Bentleigh, East St Kilda, Toorak and Malvern. These suburbs all have synagogues, stores where kosher food may be purchased, adult and children's classes for learning Hebrew and engaging in their Judaism as well as an assortment of youth groups.

Joyofmuseums/Wikimedia Commons/CC BY SA 4.0

FIGURE 3.22 Jewish Museum of Australia – which has educational sections on Jewish history generally and in Australia, rituals, symbols, synagogues and stories of migrants – provides guided tours of the museum and offers a changing display of various arts. What does such a venue communicate about the collective identity of the Jewish community in Melbourne?

The high number of Holocaust survivors and their families in Melbourne in particular makes them very sensitive to cases of anti-Semitism and discrimination against individuals, especially Jews, but also many are active in supporting refugees of all backgrounds. The Holocaust Museum and the publication of many local survivor autobiographies are a conscious effort to inform the wider Australian public about the horrors of the Nazi era and through education to counter prejudice and discrimination.

Today, public celebrations of Jewish festivities are held in parks in the Jewish neighbourhoods, and even in Federation

Square in the city, where everyone of all faiths is invited to participate with them. Jewish music performances and artists are prominently displayed in the newspapers and on advertising posters. There is a popular annual Jewish Film Festival and the Melbourne Jewish Museum, all evidence of the proud stance collectively held by this community.

Though there are many sub-groups within the Jewish community in regard to countries of origin, languages spoken at home, range of religious customs and degree of observance to tradition, their collective identity is bound strongly by their shared history. Rituals, prayers, festivals, fast days, sabbath and community celebrations of births, bar and bat mitzvahs, weddings and funerals are all occasions for Jews to collectively share and proudly display their Jewish roots and culture.

JEWISH COMMUNAL IDENTITY

Skills: describe, explain, analyse

1 Why is it inaccurate to call Jews a racial group?

2 In what ways do Jews display their communal identity to the wider community?

EXPRESSION OF COLLECTIVE RELIGIOUS IDENTITY THROUGH ASPECTS OF RELIGION

ISLAM

In the colonial period Islamic collective identity was expressed in the building of the nation's first mosque by Afghan camel drivers in Maree, outback South Australia. Evidence of the growth in the community and its stabile presence in Australian society was seen in the building of the Great Mosque in Adelaide (1885) by their descendants. This mosque has become a place to visit for Muslims coming to Australia. Around 1884, the confidence of the Islamic community in Melbourne was expressed when 70 Muslims gathered to celebrate Eid by praying together in a gathering in Albert Park. It was reported at the time that 'during the whole service the worshippers wore a remarkably reverential aspect'.

The introduction of the White Australia Policy in 1901 largely put an end to growth in the Islamic community in Australia, although Muslims from the Balkans and Albania were fair-skinned enough to be allowed in. The Albanian Islamic community mainly settled in Shepparton and built Victoria's first mosque and became an active and thriving part of the local community. They now have four mosques in the city and an active Interfaith Council which includes all major faiths including Islam. An example of their ability to express their collective Muslim identity is found in the 'Cultural Kitchen Project' in which the different religious traditions can share their traditional foods at the time of major religious festivals like Eid.

By the 1960s Australia was welcoming Islamic migrants from Turkey in particular. Also the Civil War in Lebanon (1975–90) led many Lebanese to Australia and today the largest ethnic group in the Australian Muslim community is Lebanese, followed by Turkish. Over this same period, growth in the Sunni tradition has led to the establishment of community organisations

that lobby governments for funding for schools, halal certification and government grants. These organisations are also the public face of Islam when spokespeople are needed. The Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC), founded in 1964, now has branches in each state. In 1988 they appointed a Grand Mufti of Australia as a leading figure in their social structure.

Contemporary Australian Islam is ethnically diverse with people from more than 60 countries. Each of these communities has their own culture and way of expressing their collective identity. Evidence of this is seen in the breadth of the denominations, sects and their beliefs. The largest denomination is Sunni, but there are also communities of Shi'a, Ahmadiyya, Ibadi, Sufi, Isma'ili and Druze. The difference in the expression of their collective identity is seen in the architecture of the mosques. There are Turkish mosques whose structures echo the Sultan Ahmed Mosque (Blue Mosque) in Istanbul and are inscribed with Ottoman calligraphy. This is expressing a collective identity in their community that has a two cultures, one identity approach. On the other hand, there is the mosque at the Australian Islamic Centre at Newport (Melbourne) which dramatically adapts an Islamic aesthetic to the Australian context. It shows a community wanting to express its collective identity as both authentically Muslim in an Australian way. An example of the adaptation to an Australian context is the lack of minarets on this mosque. The call to prayer here and in all Mosques in Australia now happens internally, and is not heard beyond the Mosque premises. This recognises that the Muslim communities exist in suburbs in which the broadcast call to prayer would be disruptive of others and not serve the traditional purpose it would have in a majority Muslim nation. This exclusion is compensated for through the inclusion of dramatic use of light, colour and water that reflect the significance of these in Islam. As a third example there is the new mosque built in Punchbowl in NSW, which also does not have traditional minarets, but still has a primary focus on projecting the call to prayer into a community that is over one third Muslim.

Shutterstock.com/Pawonike Gallery

FIGURE 3.23 Muslim community in Perth WA celebrates Eid Al Adha by coming to celebrations together in a park. What does this image indicate about the collective identity of Muslims in Australia?

Currently the identity of Islam in Australia reflects its diversity not only in denominational adherence and ethnic background (with more than half of the population being born overseas) but also its diversity in the degree of adherence to religious norms. Demographically the tradition is very young both in its time in the nation and in the age of its membership. It is a youthful tradition that is on the journey to finding a distinctive Australian identity. Also, the census shows that Muslims face the challenge of having, overall, a lower socio-economic status than the mainstream. This means there are many challenges that, overall, lead to their collective identity being expressed in a myriad of ways.

ISLAMIC COMMUNAL IDENTITY

Skills: identify, analyse, explain

1 Why are sacred places and spaces so important for Islam in Australia?

2 What example of collective identity mentioned above best reflects the view of Islam that you held before reading? Would you focus on a different example now?

PERSONAL MEANING AND IDENTITY EXPRESSED THROUGH ASPECTS OF RELIGION

OVERVIEW

The colonists, when they arrived in 1788, would have seen evidence of an ancient people's personal search for meaning and identity told in the stories and symbols of the rock paintings that marked out sacred sites; in the burial rituals of decorated hollow logs that contained the remains of the dead; and in environmental practices such as **Cool Burning** that showed their spiritual relationship of interdependence with the land.

The early penal colony did not allow for any public alternative expression of beliefs. Attendance at the Church of England services was compulsory. Personal expressions of belief were important as they helped the convicts to maintain not only their religious beliefs but their links to their homeland. There are stories of Catholic convicts saying rosaries and conducting prayer services in their homes when they were emancipated.

With the arrival of free settlers and the end of transportation, public places of worship became important for the personal expression of faith. The first grand buildings in New South Wales were the churches built through the sacrifice and labour of members of different Christian traditions. This spread to the other colonies and places of worship developed for the Jewish, Muslim and Chinese religions, facilitating expression of their beliefs and their identity as individuals of faith. Artefacts and stories from this period highlight the way these early settlers expressed their beliefs through the aspects of religion.

In 1812 Michael Hayes, a Catholic emancipist, wrote:

> The Catholics here are destitute of prayer and other religious books. Three thousand or more prayer books would be required as well as catechisms for the children born here … A Roman Catholic priest or two, to get the sanction of government at home and come here, would derive more from a living than a parish priest in Ireland.

Although a Catholic priest Jeremiah O'Flynn did arrive without permission in 1817, his pastoral ministry was brief. There is a story that he left a sacred artefact – a consecrated eucharistic host – which became a precious focal symbol for Catholics who met in secret to pray in the homes of William Davis and James Dempsey. This use of symbol, artefact and ritual helped sustain the individuals in their Catholic identity until the sanctioned arrival of Fathers Therry and Connolly in 1820.

In the 1860s a young woman's Catholic faith, and her compassion for the poor, led to her adopting a lifestyle that not only allowed her to find personal meaning in her life, but over the following decades impacted on thousands of other young women who followed her example. Mary MacKillop began a religious order of Australian nuns called the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart. She established a code of practice, or the Josephite Rule, for the order that made them self-governing and required them to be dedicated to a life of poverty and service by educating and caring for the destitute. Her strong commitment to leading an ethical life often resulted in her being in conflict with the Catholic hierarchy, even leading to her excommunication. She appealed to Pope Pius IX for assistance and he recognised her order and her governance of it. Her nuns wore a simple and distinctive brown habit that led to them affectionately being called 'The Brown Joeys'. Mary MacKillop's personal expression of her faith through beliefs, social structures, ethics and spiritual experiences made her a model for the Australian Catholic Church and she was canonised the nation's first saint in 2010.

Alamy Stock Photo/Amer Ghazzal /ArkReligion.com

FIGURE 3.24 Sculpture by Judith Rolevink, 2009, of St Mary MacKillop in Mary MacKillop Plaza, St Francis Xavier Cathedral, Adelaide, South Australia. What does this sculpture show about Mary MacKillop's personal meaning and identity?

In Australia under the White Australia Policy a personal commitment to finding meaning through religious belief overwhelmingly meant loyalty to either Protestantism or Catholicism. There remained small and resilient communities of religions other than Christianity, but these were very small minorities who often hid their identities because of the nation's policy of assimilation.

However, this changed with the post-war migration. Evidence of personal faith was seen in people's dress, jewellery, religious artefacts in gardens or in houses. Although Australia was intended to be a secular country living by the values and ethos of an Anglo/Saxon/Celtic heritage, by the 1970s it became clear that this was neither desirable, practical or the reality of Australian life. It was evident that Australia was a multicultural country and the government officially recognised this in the policies and rhetoric of the 1970s. Today, people's expression of religious beliefs and their symbolic and ritual practices are openly discussed, debated and shared.

PERSONAL MEANING AND IDENTITY EXPRESSED THROUGH ASPECTS OF RELIGION

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES

Have you seen *The Sapphires*? This film explores in a creative format the world of First Nations Peoples in Northern Victoria on a mission called Cummeragunja. The story of this community shows the complexity of the relationships between First Nations Peoples and white settlers in the early years after Federation and the Yorta Yorta's resistance to assimilation and their refusal to abandon their identity. A leader in this community was William Cooper (1861–1941). He adopted Christianity but maintained his commitment to land rights and his people's spirituality. He moved to Melbourne when he was expelled from the mission for complaining about the NSW Aborigines Protection Board removing his people's right to farm their land. He was a leader who began the first organisation with all Aboriginal membership, the Australian Aborigines' League. He enlisted the support of the Australian Workers Union. He was the first to lead a delegation and petition the government to give his people constitutional recognition and land rights, but was unsuccessful. He worked tirelessly to collect 1814 signatures to petition King George VI, but the government refused to send his petition. His persistence did lead the government to establish a day in recognition of Aboriginal people called Aboriginal Sunday (1940) on which Aboriginal people could celebrate their culture. This day has developed over the years to be what we now know as NAIDOC Week. It should be noted that William Cooper has been honoured internationally. His commitment to justice led him to lead a protest march to the German Consulate in Melbourne in 1938 to protest the treatment of the Jewish people by Nazi Germany. His name is remembered at the Holocaust Memorial, Yad Vashem in Israel. His life demonstrates his people's commitment to continuing their culture. The Yorta Yorta have fought tirelessly to gain recognition of their culture and links to the land throughout the 20th and into the 21st century.

EXPRESSING PERSONAL MEANING AND IDENTITY

Skills: identify, explain, analyse, research

1. Refer to the map of Victoria (Figure 3.2) and locate the lands of the Yorta Yorta.
2. How is the land an aspect of religion for First Nations Peoples?
3. Explain the link between political action and the preservation of First Nations Peoples' spirituality.
4. How did William Cooper engage in interfaith interaction?
5. Research two of the following and describe how understanding of their identity and personal meaning in life have led them to use their talents as Yorta Yorta people to educate the rest of Australia about their spirituality: Sir Douglas Nicholls, Marj Tucker, Geraldine Briggs, Jimmy Little, Artist Lin Onus and David Wirrpanda, Deborah Cheetham, Isaiah Firebrace.

In the 1960s there came to prominence a young First Nations leader from the Arrernte people. He had grown up in poverty in Alice Springs, but because he was identified as having talent he was offered the opportunity to take up a scholarship in Adelaide. His disconnection from his mother and culture was distressing for him, but it proved to be fortuitous for First Nations Peoples. He gained attention through his skill as a soccer player and played professionally in England. His desire to change the living conditions of his people became stronger so he returned to Australia and enrolled in university. At this time First Nations Peoples were forced to live outside of rural towns as 'fringe dwellers'; they were not afforded the rights of other Australians. Charles Perkins organised a student protest called The Freedom Rides, in which a bus of students went into rural towns highlighting the discrimination that was experienced by First Nations Peoples to the press and TV cameras who followed the bus. It was a powerful moment in Australia's history. Perkins went on to be an advisor to government and to advocate for his people and his culture. His legacy lives on in his daughters and grandchildren who have used their skills to advance First Nations Peoples' spirituality through promotion of First Nations artists (Hetti Perkins), exploration of First Nations Peoples' cultures in films and TV productions (Rachel Perkins), and through portrayals of First Nations characters in film (Madeleine Madden).

EXPRESSING PERSONAL MEANING AND IDENTITY

Skills: explain, analyse, discuss, research

1. How can making films be a strong way of promoting First Nations Peoples' spirituality?
2. To what extent could the work of the Perkins family be seen as expressing their spirituality?
3. Discuss as a class the following statement: Spirituality and politics do not mix.
4. Research artists who have been supported by Hetti Perkins. Using one artist as a focus explore how their art reveals something about First Nations Peoples' spirituality.

Getty Images/Don Arnold

FIGURE 3.25 Bangarra Dance Theatre. Which aspects of religion are used in the performances of this company?

In the 1990s First Nations Peoples' spirituality was receiving more mainstream interest both in Australia and overseas. A group called Bangarra Dance Theatre was established in 1989, and an Nunukul and Munaldjali man, Stephen Page, became its artistic director in 1991. His brothers, David and Russell, joined him as the group's success in exploring First Nations Peoples' spirituality was acclaimed in the wider society. In the years that have followed Bangarra has provided Australia with insights into First Nations culture that has helped to shape understanding of the relationship between storytelling, the land and the spirit world. Concepts like songlines have been explored. Dance, music and imagery have been linked to give the broader community a more sophisticated and challenging understanding of not only First Nations Peoples' spirituality, but also their own spirituality as Australians. The importance of dance as an expression of spiritual identity is also emphasised by Patty Mills, the first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander basketball player to represent Australia in four consecutive Olympic Games. He uses his high profile as an international basketball player to teach pride in their culture to First Nations children. He uses his authority to work with the players in the Australian team by teaching them about his language and culture. In a documentary he said:

> I'm Patty Mills and I come from Ynunga people of South Australia and the Muralag and Kokatha tribes of the Murri Islands in the far east Torres Strait. I think it comes back to identity and being able to understand who you are and how to be seen as that identity and how that can educate and teach people about who you are and where you are from. I started to do traditional dance around the same time that I learnt to walk … dancing was for me, along with traditional songs and music, a very strong gateway into my culture.

EXPRESSING PERSONAL MEANING AND IDENTITY

Skills: analyse, reflect

1. Are Bangara dance performances a clear expression of beliefs through the aspects? Explain your answer.
2. After reading this material draw three conclusions about why the progress in recognition of First Nations spirituality has been largely through the Arts sector.

PERSONAL MEANING AND IDENTITY EXPRESSED THROUGH ASPECTS OF RELIGION

ISLAM

Until well into the 20th century the White Australia Policy restricted entry to Muslims. The few that were within the Australian society kept a low profile in expressing their Islamic identity. Those Muslims who have arrived over the last 50 years initially were also private in expressing their identity. But as the Islamic community grew in numbers and security within the Australian society they have built mosques enabling a more communal and public expression of the personal meaning and identity they find in their religious tradition.

In 2016 Waleed Aly's acceptance speech at the Logies made headline news throughout Australia in both the traditional press and social media. His profile as Australia's most prominent Muslim

Getty Images/Wendell Teodoro

FIGURE 3.26 Waleed Aly and Susan Carland pictured at the opening of *Hamilton the Musical* in Melbourne. What does their attire suggest about their personal identity as Muslims?

through his work on *The Project* (Channel 10) had made many of his editorial pieces talking points around the proverbial office water cooler. His speech on that night highlighted his and his wife's adherence to Islam. He was revealing the challenges that face a Muslim in contemporary Australia. What he produced was a brave and notable oral text that voiced his pride in his religious identity and the ethical responsibility it brought with it. He said:

> There have been a lot of people in the last week or two that have made it really, really clear to me that me being here right now really matters to them. And it matters to them for a particular reason. That reason was brought home shudderingly not so long ago actually when someone, who is in this room and I'm not going to use their name that they use in the industry, came up to me and introduced themselves to me and said, 'I really hope you win. My name's Mustafa, but I can't use that name because I won't get a job.'
>
> I am incredibly humbled that you would even think to invest in me in that way, but I'm also incredibly saddened by it because the truth is you deserve more numerous and more worthy avatars than that and I don't know if and when that's gonna happen but if tonight means anything – and I don't know if it does – but if tonight means anything it's that the Australian public – our audience – as far as they're concerned, there's absolutely no reason why that can't change.

EXPRESSING IDENTITY AND PERSONAL MEANING

Skills: identify, discuss, explain

1. Working in pairs list the high profile Australian Muslims you know (you should think broadly about areas such as politics, sport, the arts, science).
2. Referring to your list, discuss whether there are enough high profile Australian Muslims to give the wider community an understanding of Islamic beliefs and culture. If not, consider why.
3. Discuss which channels or Australian shows include multicultural people as presenters and key characters. To what extent do your searches confirm Waleed Aly's comments about Australian television and other media?

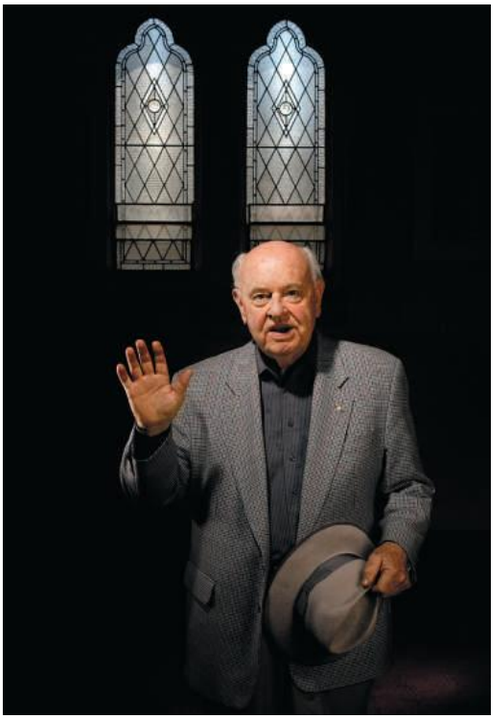
PERSONAL MEANING AND IDENTITY EXPRESSED THROUGH ASPECTS OF RELIGION

CHRISTIANITY

Over much of the lengthy period from Federation, Christianity in Australia has been characterised by the historic tensions between denominations. This became so much a part of society that it was commonly known that religion should not be discussed in general conversation. For Australian Christians their personal meaning and identity was grounded in belonging to a particular denomination. They described themselves as Methodist, Presbyterian, Catholic, Lutheran, Baptist, Congregationalist, Quaker, Anglican, rather than Christian. Their personal meaning and identity was heightened and reinforced by their membership of a particular local religious community. This local church community provided not only their religious support and expression but also much of their social life as well.

Reverend Tim Costello has throughout his adult life been a prominent Christian who through books, television and public addresses used his religious beliefs to underpin his advocacy work on behalf of communities he sees as being oppressed by a society that has unjust structures. In his various roles he has consistently, publicly declared the influence of Jesus Christ in guiding his ministry. In an interview he described the impact of his Christianity this way:

> I was blessed to grow up in a Christian family. So the concept of grace, even the practice of grace, was there in my home. I don't take for granted the fact of having a loving family. I know so many people come from families where there's been divorce. There's sometimes been domestic violence. There's often been a lack of love. So in some ways the grace was first experienced by parents who love God, who love me, who could discipline me, but also show that there was a thing called acceptance, not based on me doing better. Often Christianity is heard by people outside as, 'You failed and you should do better and you must try harder.' Actually, that's a deformed view of Christianity. Christianity is, 'You failed because you lost an encounter with the God who made you with the purposes for which He's made you.' Those purposes, in this understanding of faith, say you will fail and God will forgive, and he will give you opportunity to actually experience unconditional acceptance so that you can be set free at another level, at a high level, to live and work according to God's purpose. So for me, grace started in the family. Very practically, I learned in my early legal practice, that I wasn't too different from the people I was representing. I might have a law degree, I might have a respectable life, but the nasties were inside me: envy, and resentment, and careerism, of greed. And grace actually deals with me acknowledging those nasties and handing my life back to God, and it happens daily. It happened in a born again experience for me in my teenage years. But those things are daily. This God who accepts me, even though I sin. There's a wonderful book by Philip Yancey who said, 'God loves me no matter what I do, God doesn't love me less because of what I've done. He loves me. Period, end of sentence.' That, for me, is grace. That has been life changing for me.



Fairfax Syndication/SIMON SCHLUTER

FIGURE 3.27 Father Bob Maguire at the time when he was reluctantly retiring from his role as parish priest in South Melbourne. Why might Fr Bob not be wearing any artefacts that show his priesthood?

Father Bob Maguire, a Catholic priest in Melbourne, found his life changed through his commitment to the impoverished of the St Kilda area. He served for 35 years in a parish in neighbouring South Melbourne and began a charity that provides essential aid to those who arrive on his doorstep. His idiosyncratic expression of his beliefs has found an audience on radio, television, social media and from the pulpit of churches. His call for change is regularly in the context of his reading of his sacred texts of the Gospel and the Letters of St Paul. In an interview he described how he perceives God:

God will be at home with us.

God's knocking on the door!

Knock, knock, knock. Excuse me.

Yes, who is it?

God.

Well, hang on. Do you want us to come out?

No, no, no! I want to come in!

What do you want to come in for?

I'm going to come in and wait on you - serve you.

You have the choice to open the door. This changes the whole concept of God.

We've got to let this doorknocking God in.

UNDERSTANDINGS OF GOD

Skills: describe, analyse, debate

1. Explain in our own words what Tim Costello means by the term grace.
2. How is this concept of grace linked to the aspect of spiritual experiences?
3. Describe or draw the image being used by Fr Bob Maguire showing the relationship between God and humans.
4. What is the Christian belief he is expressing about God's relationship with people?
5. Is Fr Bob's image of God appealing, challenging or frightening? Why?

PERSONAL MEANING AND IDENTITY EXPRESSED THROUGH ASPECTS OF RELIGION

HINDUISM

While Hinduism may still be seen as a minority religion in Australia, it is also one of the fastest growing. Today, Hindus in Australia are well-educated professionals in fields such as medicine, engineering, commerce and information technology. One such immigrant is Dr Jayant Bhalchandra Bapat who came to Australia in 1965 and worked as a university lecturer in organic

chemistry. In the 1980s he became a *purohit* or Hindu priest, feeling that his personal meaning and identity was in undertaking the responsibility to provide for the religious needs of the Hindu community, which had few temples or priests at that time. As a priest it was his role to guide ordinary Hindus regarding the rules and regulations for fasts, performing festivals and *pujas*, ceremonies and rituals. When he began as a lay priest, the small Hindu community, despite having different Indian ethnicities and languages, was united. Bapat is concerned that now that the Hindu community has grown substantially it has become more divided. Bapat sees unity as a necessity if the Hindu community wishes to grow and flourish in Australia. His personal commitment to Hinduism makes him keen to help his co-religionists integrate into the broader Australian community while maintaining their distinct culture and language. Bapat notes, 'It is possible to be a Hindu in Australia – within limits'.

One difficulty Bapat notes is eating strictly vegetarian when buying meals out of the home as the same knife to cut the vegetables may have been previously used to slice meat. He is also concerned that the Hindu culture's subordination of the role of women in the family and community has been very slow to change even in Australia. The lack of Hindu or Indian politicians in Australia is also witness to the need for further acceptance and integration of and by Hindus into the Australian culture. But he is hopeful that Hinduism's religious tolerance and lack of fundamentalism, its respect for elders and other religions will all ease its successful establishment in Australian society, enabling individuals to develop their personal meaning and identity in an Australian way.

Another Hindu Australian is Vimala Raman who trained as an Indian classical dancer. In Hinduism a young girl has the opportunity to learn about the gods, the sacred stories, the religious myths through a process that begins in early childhood and is culminated in a performance of classical Indian dance that is a profound expression of a personal commitment to the beliefs that give meaning to her life and shape her identity. The dance that is performed, and for which she has trained most of her life, is called *Bharathnatyam* and the public performance is called the *Arangetram*. The preparation for this performance has involved intensive study and guidance under an approved guru. The dance is accompanied by prayer. Each element of the performance expresses the beliefs held personally by the dancer. The *Arangetram* can take up to three to four hours. It is a spiritual experience for both the dancer and the audience as the *Bharathnatyam* leads them to spiritual enlightenment through prescribed music and movement.

Fairfax Syndication/Tim Bauer

FIGURE 3.28 Vimala Raman, Indian classical dancer.

BEING HINDU

Skills: describe, analyse, explain

1 For both of the Hindu individuals mentioned above, identify which aspects of religion motivated their choices in life.

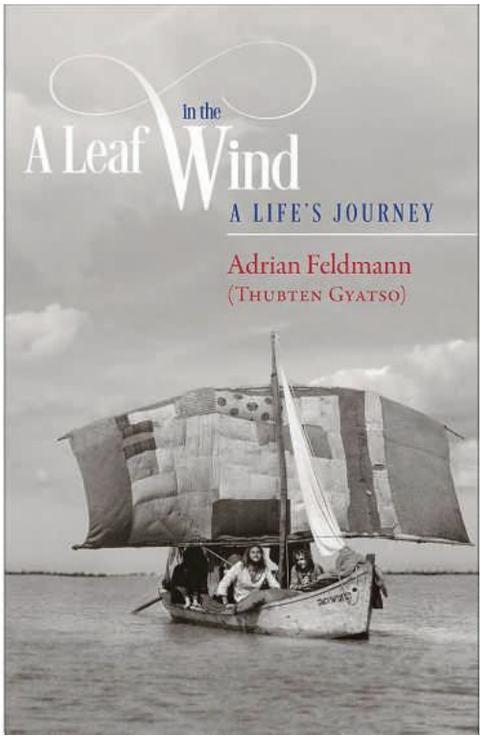
2 Why is Dr Bapat concerned for the future of the Hindu community?

3 In what ways does Vimala Raman express her Hindu beliefs?

PERSONAL MEANING AND IDENTITY EXPRESSED THROUGH ASPECTS OF RELIGION

BUDDHISM

Buddhism has a long history of appeal to European Australians. Even during the decades of the White Australian Policy when migrants from Buddhist countries were restricted, Buddhism appealed to Europeans on an intellectual, ethical and spiritual basis. The associations of Australian Buddhists did not have a strong public presence but after the demise of the White Australian Policy in the 1970s the various waves of migrants changed the nature of Buddhism in Australia. Neighbourhood houses were converted to Buddhist centres and gradually temples were constructed giving a very noticeable public presence to the symbols and worship rituals, places and spaces of Buddhism. These venues welcome visitors and are open to sharing their beliefs and ritual practices so that the Buddhist way of finding personal meaning and identity can be understood and hopefully appreciated by members of other religious traditions and the wider society. Following are some examples of Australians who follow the Buddhist way.



Adrian Feldmann - Thubten Gyatso

FIGURE 3.29 Australian Buddhist monk Thubten Gyatso pictured on the cover of his book, *A Leaf in the Wind* (Lothian Books, Melbourne, 2005). How does this cover photo give a sense of his devotion to Buddhism?

The spiritual journey to find personal meaning and identity led Melbourne-born Thubten Gyatso to become one of the first Westerners to be a monk in Tibetan Buddhism, taking vows of morality and celibacy and refraining from intoxicants. His commitment to the tenets and way of life of the Buddhist tradition resulted in a desire to share his Buddhist convictions. This developed into his role as a spiritual and Buddhist philosophy teacher, lecturing extensively in Australia, the USA and Mongolia. His outreach to others also led him to establish Dharma centres around the world, including in Australia. Those Tibetan Buddhist institutes he helped establish in the capital cities of Australia have flourished due to the influx of Buddhist refugees and the attraction of the Buddhist worldview and lifestyle to increasing numbers of Australians from diverse backgrounds, including different religious traditions. He would like to see Buddhist monks and nuns more active in wider society as seen in the example of Christian churches. Thubten Gyatso states, 'Simply, my belief and my conviction in Buddhism, is that it is a complete and unmistaken presentation of the reality of existence.'

Melbourne-born Robina Courtin was one of the first women in the world to become a Buddhist nun. Ordained in 1978 into the Gelugpa tradition she has become an important figure in Buddhism in Australia and the world. Her desire to find truth and happiness led her to Buddhism and her most significant work of being companions to people in prison. In 1996 she formalised this work by founding The Prison Project, which has aided more than 20 000 prisoners globally. Her public expression of her personal beliefs through this work has led many others to join Buddhism and her ministry. She has written many texts about the application of Buddhist thought, had an award-winning film (*Chasing Buddha*) made about her, and appeared in many television talk shows about her life and her Buddhism. She expresses her beliefs with humour and humility. She conducts lectures at venues all around the world and guides pilgrimages to sacred sites. She has said:

> According to Buddha, attachment is effectively the main source of our suffering in day-to-day life. A big surprise! We usually confuse it with love, which is necessarily altruistic and which is the source of our own happiness and the capacity to help others. Attachment is necessarily I-based: dissatisfaction, neediness, expectation, manipulating others to get what I want. Love, however, is other-based: open, kind, clear, the wish that others be happy. How do we distinguish them? That's the key to practice. Through meditation, becoming our own therapist … we can learn to unpack and unravel our emotions and lessen attachment and the other delusions and grow love, compassion and the rest for our own sake and the sake of others.

BEING BUDDHIST

Skills: describe, explain, analyse

1. For both of the Buddhist individuals mentioned above, identify which aspects of religion motivated their choices in life.
2. How does Thubten Gyatso demonstrate his commitment to Buddhism in his everyday life?
3. How does Robina Courtin understand love and how to achieve it?

PERSONAL MEANING AND IDENTITY EXPRESSED THROUGH THE ASPECTS OF RELIGION

JUDAISM

Throughout the colonial and post-Federation periods, Australian Jewry generally continued to retain many of the aspects of their religious identity, though observance varied and intermarriage was common. Nevertheless, a strong ethical inheritance of Judaism permeated their involvement in Australian life, shown in setting up and supporting Jewish and non-Jewish charities and educational institutions. Civic duty was also important to Australian Jews witnessed by being part of the Australian forces in all the wars in which Australia has been engaged and their deaths are

remembered on many synagogue honour boards. Following are examples of how some members of the Australian Jewish communities expressed their personal meaning and identity through religious and communal activities.

Sir Isaac Isaacs (1855–1948) though not observant of Jewish practices or synagogue attendance in his daily life, was very committed to his religious tradition. His involvement in Jewish texts, stories, ethics and community were a feature of his personal commitment to Judaism. He wrote for the Jewish press on religious and biblical subjects, especially the inter-testamental period, and was a frequent speaker at Jewish functions. He believed that Jewishness was not a matter of race or nationality but only of religion.

In the early 1940s Isaacs attacked political **Zionism**, supporting the British stance on opposing the establishment of a Jewish State in British Mandate Palestine. This strident stance lost him popularity in the Australian Jewish community as awareness of the devastating Nazi holocaust of European Jews was growing and a homeland was seen as a way of assisting their urgent need.

Isaacs expressed his strong sense of ethical responsibility in exercising his civic duty in the many positions he held. He was a master lawyer, judge and prominent figure in federal politics, active in drafting the Australian Constitution. He was appointed Attorney-General of Australia 1905–1906 and later Chief Justice of Australia 1930–31, the first Jew to attain this lofty position. Isaacs became the ninth Governor General of Australia from 1931 to 1936 and the first Australian born candidate to this eminent position.

Malvina Malinek

FIGURE 3.30 Malvina Malinek OAM, Romanian born Jewish communal and national advocate for women's rights and an opponent of anti-Semitism. How does the title of her book *Across the Black Sea: In Pursuit of Social Justice* indicate the influence of Judaism in her life?

The arrival of thousands of Holocaust survivors from all over Europe changed the nature of the Jewish Communities in Australia. Their prime focus was on Jewish survival and supporting the establishment of the State of Israel rather than the Anglo-British sentiments of the earlier Australian Jewish community leaders.

This new post-war focus can be seen in the activities of Malvina Malinek OAM, a research biochemist and hospital scientist who arrived in Australia as a 12-year-old in 1949 from Romania. Her traditional Orthodox Jewish family upbringing ensured she saw Judaism as the most important influence in raising her family and engaging with her Jewish community and the wider Australian society. But her liberal attitude has seen her become a member of the Progressive Movement of Judaism. Malinek's life of local, communal and civic service has been guided by her Jewish ethics and teachings. She is an active participant in Jewish community affairs and debates, as well as a prolific letter writer to the major newspapers, hotly defending her views on Israel's historical right to exist as the homeland of the Jewish people.

> Judaism does not teach us to hate others, only to improve ourselves as we pray every Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) to the Almighty to forgive our sins, not the sins of others towards us. I have always admired the wisdom of our sages in our various Torah books and the way they adapted the teachings to the needs of the people at the time. For women, the health of the mother is paramount as she has to look after all her children. Therefore, the mother always takes precedence over her unborn child. The father has responsibilities towards his wife and children prescribed in the Torah.

> As I started my Science studies, I realised how clever the dietary laws of Kashrut are to preserve the health of the people, long before the world knew anything about the importance of personal cleanliness, infectious diseases and the various organisms infecting the animal world used in the human food chain. All in all, our Jewish religion taught me everything about being a good person and to help others to overcome their disadvantages.
>
> Interview with Malvina Malinek by Shayndel Samuel, 12 May 2022.

In pursuing her understanding of ethical responsibility Malinek has been an active member and leader in Jewish and non-Jewish women's organisations where she continued actively condemning anti-Semitism, encouraging equality for women in the Jewish and wider community, interfaith cooperation and supporting Israel politically and practically. She eventually became president of NCJW Vic in 1973 and in 1985 she became president of National Council of Jewish Women Vic in 1973. She represented issues of concern to Jewish women at several conferences of the International Council of Jewish Women.

The next generation of Australian-born Jews continue to live out their traditions applying them to contemporary life issues. Kathy Kaplan OAM, is Founder and President of Impact for Women, a charity run completely by volunteers, committed to making a grass-roots, practical and common-sense difference to Victorian women and children escaping extreme violence at home. Kaplan is passionate about her involvement in interfaith and intrafaith work based on her conviction that, as one human family, it is possible to produce something good for the whole of humanity when we are respectfully united in and through our diversities. Kathy is highly involved in the Jewish religious community having been president of Temple Beth Israel; the chair of its Education Committee and the secretary of Progressive Judaism Victoria. Kaplan also serves on the small team of volunteers who prepare the dead for burial according to Jewish ritual law. Her beliefs, ethics and actions are firmly entrenched in her Jewish tradition as can be seen in this speech given to her synagogue community:

> The Jewish community's fabric comes from strong principles and ethics. We Jews have always been at the forefront of the human and civil rights movements. *Tzedek, tzedek, tirdof* (Justice, justice you shall pursue), is one of our most potent mandates with *piku'ah nefesh* (to save a life) being of prime importance to eradicate or reduce this scourge of family and domestic violence. As Jews, as humans, it is our responsibility to bring about a better world through *tikkun olam* (repairing the world). Abuse victims live in a metaphorical *sukkah*, an insubstantial temporary shelter, every single day, never knowing when the next gust of abuse will sweep away the sparse protection over their heads. Each of us needs to open our eyes, heart and mouth to speak out against family violence and become change agents to ensure that our neighbours and families are safe in their homes. Please take whatever action you can to help build a world where every home is a *sukkat shalom*, a shelter of peace, of justice, a place of calm and confidence for every person around the globe.
>
> Extracts from a speech September 2012 with permission by Kathy Kaplan.

Kathy Kaplan

FIGURE 3.31 How does this image indicate that Kathy Kaplan has found fulfilment in living her religious beliefs and ethics?

BEING JEWISH

Skills: identify, interpret, analyse

1 For each of the Jewish individuals mentioned above, identify which aspects of religion motivated their choices in life.

2 How did Sir Isaac Isaacs' life display his strong ties to his Jewish faith and community?

3 What particular Jewish beliefs and ethical principles motivate Malvina Malinek OAM in her community involvement?

4 How does Kathy Kaplan OAM use Jewish texts and ethics to justify her drive to help others in the community?

INTERACTION BETWEEN SPIRITUALITIES, RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS AND DENOMINATIONS WITH EACH OTHER AND THE WIDER AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY

Interfaith interaction in Australia began in the 1600s CE between the First Nations Peoples and the visiting Muslim Macassan fishermen who came to harvest and process sea cucumbers. Among the First Nations Peoples of the coastal areas of Northern Australia there are stories that describe the Muslim prayer rituals and indicate that there was a syncretism of Islamic beliefs and Yolgnu people's spiritual practices. This suggests that the interactions between the traditions were peaceful and informative.

But the arrival of the Europeans in 1788 to establish the penal colony of NSW brought interaction that was neither productive nor harmonious. Europeans dismissed the spiritualities of the First Nations Peoples as primitive and pagan. The Europeans believed that First Nations Peoples were in need of conversion to Christianity. So their spiritualities were repressed and replaced with Christian stories, beliefs and ritual practices.

During the early colonial period the dominant religion was Christianity. The Anglican tradition was the official religion of the colony supported by government authority and financial help. Other Christian denominations, including the large numbers of Catholics, had little opportunity or resources to express publicly the religious identity or practices of their denomination. This period was not harmonious; indeed there were physical conflicts such as at Castle Hill in 1804.

As the colonies developed there was contestation between the Christian denominations that were Protestant with the Catholic denomination, carrying over the intolerance between the traditions from their various European homelands. This was a long-lived disharmony between Christian communities in Australia, which was expressed in avoidance and hostility between religious communities and in political policies and in the formation of religious aligned political parties. Although with the arrival of the liberal thinker Governor Bourke, there was a short period where religious tolerance was emphasised and all denominations of Christianity were funded for church buildings.

During the 1860s there began an Ecumenical Movement among Anglican communities separated by their emphasis on particular beliefs and religious practices that created the description of High and Low Anglican Church. But the Catholic tradition was not party to any of these Ecumenical interactions until well into the 20th century.

Over this same period of colonial Australia, the Jewish tradition began as a small group with private observance as the dominance of the Anglican Christian tradition through its official status as the State religion made it difficult for other traditions to publicly worship. Jewish religious practices were limited also by the absence of rabbis and communal structures. Jews were even buried by Christian clergy in Christian cemeteries. Those families who owned property could buy a private plot in the Christian cemeteries. Although not intended as such, this burial of Jews in Christian cemeteries and by Christian clergy could be seen as an interfaith interaction, though certainly an unequal interaction. Although anti-Semitism existed it was not a prevalent force, nor was it institutionalised or entrenched as in European society. As more Jewish free settlers arrived the resources of the community improved. Jews were involved in a wide range of trades and businesses with successful interaction with the mostly Christian residents of their society. But this social and business level of interaction and the resulting social mobility of Jews in Australian society did not involve interfaith interaction.

There were small numbers of other religious traditions represented in the colonial period. There were Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists within the community, but their interaction was more on business and occupation levels with the wider society, including members of other religious traditions. There was no intentional interfaith interaction between these faiths and other religious traditions in the colonies. The exception of religious traditions interacting was some elite groups of Westerners who studied particular Eastern traditions and established institutions for social, theological and philosophical discourse. But they were not involved with interfaith activities.

Ecumenical interaction was not on the agenda of most individuals and communities and interfaith interaction was even less likely to be considered as all Christian denominations saw The Truth contained within Christianity. This situation did not substantially change until the 1960s although there had been numerous earlier overtures towards ecumenical interaction from some Protestant denominations. As a whole, Catholicism did not participate in these, though individual clerics, religious and members of the laity did. During World War II the Anglicans initiated interfaith contact with Jewish leaders. In 1961 the Catholic Church attempted to begin a Council of Christians and Jews but it did not eventuate until 1991 with the establishment of the Council of Christians and Jews. This now includes Muslims.

However, in a bigger forum, in 1893 there was a worldwide major step forward in the interaction between religions and between Christian denominations. The first World's Parliament of Religions was held in Chicago, USA. It was an unprecedented event bringing together representatives of Confucianism, Taoism, Shintoism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Islam and Christianity, including Catholicism that had been tentative about interacting with Protestant Christians due to the history of negative relations. The Parliament had a number of objectives including:

- to create the opportunity for the inaugural conference of leading representatives of the great historic religions of the world in the hope that it may assist more secure international peace
- to present the important distinctive truths held and taught by each religion and to present the important truths the various religions hold and teach in common
- to develop relationship among diverse faiths, through friendly conference and mutual good understanding, though not striving to achieve any formal and outward unity.

Such objectives seem to avoid any emphasis of supremacy of one religion but this was still part of the thinking of the time as seen in the reason for non-participation in the parliament by the Archbishop of Canterbury (Church of England), who emphasised that there was one religion and it is Christianity. Therefore, for Christianity to be part of a Parliament of Religions it had to be assumed that all religions were equal.

Although it was intended that the Parliaments would be held in different countries every three to five years, there was a gap of 100 years due to the events of Revolutions, two World Wars, Depressions and the Cold War. The second Parliament occurred in 1993, returning to Chicago. Since then the Parliaments have been more frequent: 1999 in South Africa, 2004 in Spain, 2009 in Melbourne, 2015 Utah, USA, 2018 Canada, 2021 (virtual, due to the COVID-19 pandemic). Already in preparation is the 2023 Parliament. It is again in Chicago, USA with the theme of 'Call to Conscience, Defending Freedoms and Human Rights'. This focus indicates that the concerns of the Parliament have moved a long way from those of 1893.

Effeietsanders/Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain

FIGURE 3.32 Opening address by Swami Vivekananda of the Jain tradition for the 1893 World Parliament of Religions. What does this image show about the participants in this event?

Getty Images/ Robert Cianflone

FIGURE 3.33 A speaker at the 2009 Melbourne Parliament of World's Religions. What does this logo on the banner behind him suggest has changed about the participants in the Parliament?

Ecumenical interaction was minimal and low key between some Protestant traditions, though this blossomed in the 1970s with the formation of the Uniting Church of Australia. Although Pope John XXIII in the documents of Vatican II had freed the Catholic Church to move into interfaith and ecumenical interaction, the Australian leadership was slow to positively respond. There was a strong legacy of intolerance and distrust of other traditions, but it was changing rapidly. At an institutional level there were few organisations promoting interfaith and ecumenical activities but at personal levels there was an openness to interacting with others of different Christian denominations and other faiths.

Religious intolerance is still evident in Australia. Expressions of anti-Semitism have taken the form of serious attacks on the religious sites of the Jewish community throughout Australia; for example, in a short period in the 1990s five synagogues in Sydney were subjects of arson attacks. In Melbourne a Jewish Kindergarten was set alight in Doncaster and bomb threats made to communities. In Adelaide Jewish graves were desecrated. Such events continue to occur but are generally of a minor nature and infrequent.

Hindu temples also have been the focus of attacks. Residents have put pressure on councils to restrict the building of temples and some have been vandalised and destroyed. In 1991 the Hindu community purchased land, where there had been an Anglican Church, in The Basin, an outer eastern suburb of Melbourne. The conflict that arose resulted in the temple being set on fire in 1999. In 2018 Barathiye Mandir Temple, in Western Sydney's Regents Park, was attacked by vandals who destroyed religious artefacts and set fire to the premises.

In the 21st century the Islamic community has been subject to similar protests and harassment over the building of a mosque in Bendigo. In this case many of the protestors did not come from Bendigo and much of the local community supported the local Islamic community in their work to build a sacred place for their religious practice. Other tensions between Muslims and the broader Australian community arose due to events such as 11 September 2001, the Bali bombings (2002), the War on Terror (2001–21), the Cronulla Riots (2005), the siege at the Lindt Café in Sydney (2014) and the terrorist attack in Bourke Street (2020). There were reactions in the wider Australian society that were often negative, even violent, fuelled by a media focus on radical expressions of Islamic identity. In a show of solidarity against both terrorism and Islamophobia, in November 2014 about 3000 Shi'a Muslims marched peacefully in the annual **Ashura** Procession in Sydney to mark the death of Imam Hussein, with many placards declaring this was Islam, not the actions of ISIS. The praise for this demonstration from within Islam and the broader community was evidence that the pain that was being caused to the Muslim community in Australia was uniting groups in solidarity.

AAP Image/JENNY COCKERELL

FIGURE 3.34 Shia Muslims chanting 'down with ISIS' join the Ashura procession in Sydney 2014. In what ways is this an interfaith interaction?

For First Nations Peoples the destruction of a 46 000-year-old sacred site, the Juukan Caves (2020) by Rio Tinto mining company shocked not only Australia but the world. This moment highlighted a lack of understanding of Australia's First Nations Peoples, spirituality at an institutional level, as it was done with approval by the government of Western Australia. Sacred places and spaces are important for the expression of people's personal spirituality and religious beliefs, which makes their damage and destruction a potent means of causing pain and suffering to religious and spiritual people and potentially provoking social unrest.

The 2019 'Australia Talks' survey of around 54 000 Australians conducted by the ABC showed that Australians believe religious discrimination remains; however, they do not seem to see this as a major concern. Overall, they see religion as a private concern and not the most important factor in defining identity. An explanation for this could be that Australia is the most religiously diverse country in the world (G. Bouma, Monash University). It is not that we have so many different religious traditions and denominations, but that the minorities are increasingly large and growing. It could be that these communities have migrated to such a distant continent in order to find a life in which there is peace and tolerance and so do not want to enter into conflict over religious beliefs or practices. For this reason, students tend to assimilate into the dominant culture at school, but return to homes that take religious belief and practice very seriously, as witnessed in marriage and funeral rituals.

One of the major ways in which religions interact in Australian society is through providing charity. Many religions heed their own teachings on values and ethics, and provide charity for all – including non-believers – at the lowest socio-economic end of society. Many charities have a religious background, including the Salvation Army, the Brotherhood of St Laurence, the St Vincent de Paul Society, Jewish Care, Muslim Aid and Mission Australia. They bridge the gap between social security payments and the actual cost of living. All perform a large range of activities in this effort to assist those living in poverty in Australia. According to ACOSS (Australia Council of Social Service) and University of New South Wales (UNSW) in their joint report 'Poverty in Australia 2020', despite living in a wealthy country, 1 in 8 Australians live in poverty and over 1 in 6 children live in poverty.

Religions address inequality by providing accommodation, women's refuges, opportunity shops and soup kitchens. A number of charities, including Uniting Care (an agency of the Uniting Church), also run houses for troubled youth and the elderly who cannot afford help privately. There is also an emergency relief service for drug and alcohol users, which links the services of many religious charities together.

RELIGION AND CHARITY

Skills: research, explain, interpret

1 In a country where there is government assistance, why is it necessary for religious charities to assist poor people?

2 Examine a charitable activity by a religion in detail. Outline the teachings on charity by the religion. What specific actions is the religious charity doing to enact those teachings?

Religions can have an important and beneficial effect on a society. Not only can they offer a society the opportunity to celebrate, commemorate or grieve, they can also contribute to a society's richness and identity. Unfortunately, however, the interactions of different religions in Australian society have not always been positive and beneficial. There are sometimes differences and conflicts between the values and beliefs of different members of society.

Australia is a multicultural, secular country where religious tolerance is promoted by the federal government, which channels funding into interfaith initiatives, indicating a positive attitude to religious freedom in contemporary Australian society. There are a number of organisations and events (many of which have existed for decades) that are trying to foster these connections, such as:

- Interfaith Building Bridges programme for senior school students
- Harmony Day
- Better Balanced Futures
- ACOSS
- Jewish Christian Muslim Association of Australia (JCMA)
- Council of Christians and Jews
- Australian Intercultural Society
- Women's Interfaith Network
- Ecumenical and Interfaith Commission
- Kingston Interfaith Network
- Centre of Melbourne Multi-Faith and Others Network
- Australian National Dialogue of Christians, Muslims and Jews
- Interfaith Network of the City of Greater Dandenong
- Interfaith Centre Melbourne
- Regional Interfaith Dialogue
- World Conference of Religions for Peace
- Parliament of the World's Religions.

EXPLORING INTERFAITH

Skills: research, explain, outline, interpret

1 Research one interfaith organisation or initiative from the list above and answer the following questions:
   a What does the organisation or initiative offer and what purpose does it serve?
   b Who is its target audience?
   c What has it achieved, according to those who organise and participate in it?
   d Should such organisations have government support?

CHAPTER 3

REVISION

A Short-answer questions

1 If 'no religion' is not a religion, why is it included in statistics on religions?
2 Why has it become usual for people and organisations to begin presentations with Acknowledgement of the Land of the traditional First Nations Peoples?
3 Why are Asian religious and philosophical traditions appealing to Australians?
4 List the trends that changed the central position of religion in Australian society.

B Extended-response questions

5 Attempt to explain what it means to be an Australian. What evidence, events or literature do you draw on to substantiate your analysis? Is religion part of the Australian identity? Why? Why not?
6 In what ways are Anzac Day 'pilgrimages' to Turkey and battle sites in Europe similar to, and different from, religious pilgrimages?
7 How have government policies affected the spiritualities of First Nations Peoples?
8 How is adherence to the spiritualities of First Nations Peoples similar to, and different from, adherence by members of a religious tradition?
9 What is the connection between immigration policies and religious composition?
10 How did a convict's emancipation change their religious adherence? What role did churches play in colonial Australian society?
11 What positive interactions have religious traditions and denominations had with each other and with wider society?
12 Create a survey of four questions to explore whether students in your year level have experienced discrimination based on religion. During a break from classes, survey at least four people. Next class collate your results with others in the class then draw conclusions on whether Australian society is tolerant of people with religious beliefs.
13 Discuss to what extent recent Australian governments' opposition to accepting refugees is rooted in the same concerns as in the 1930s: security, the need to maintain a cohesive society and safeguarding national economic interest – or were there other factors at play?
14 View or read media about the proposed Religious Discrimination Bill. Why would statements based on religious views, which may be considered offensive and vilifying by others, need protection by article 42? (Refer to the article, "'Too great a cost': The High Court's ruling in the Garlett appeal highlights the need for a Human Rights Act" on the Australian Lawyer Alliance website.)

C Essay questions

15 Discuss the impact of government immigration policies on the religious composition of Australia. In your discussion, use any points raised in this chapter and related material from wider research.
16 Discuss what has happened to the spiritualities of First Nations Peoples as a result of their experiences of colonisation. In your discussion refer to multiple sources, including this book and related materials as well as the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

INTERVIEW

Interview a person, at school or from the wider community, who has participated in a religious charity, volunteered at an opportunity shop or done mission work.

Some suggested questions

- Why do you donate your time (or money) to a religious charity?
- What inspired you to donate your time (or money)?
- What has kept you donating time (or money)?
- Why do you think that charities are needed in Australian society?
- Why contribute to or work for a religious charity?
- Are you a member of a religious tradition?
- How does charity fit in with your personal belief system?

Task

- Write a 300-word summation of the person's answers.
- Write a 200-word reflection (what and why) on your own experiences with charities.

Remember to practise good interview etiquette. This includes sending the questions to the interviewee in advance; listening attentively to the responses so you can ask follow-up questions that may not be on your list; and sending a thank you note.

Weblinks
Various for Chapter 3

Alamy Stock Photo/Alicia Fox

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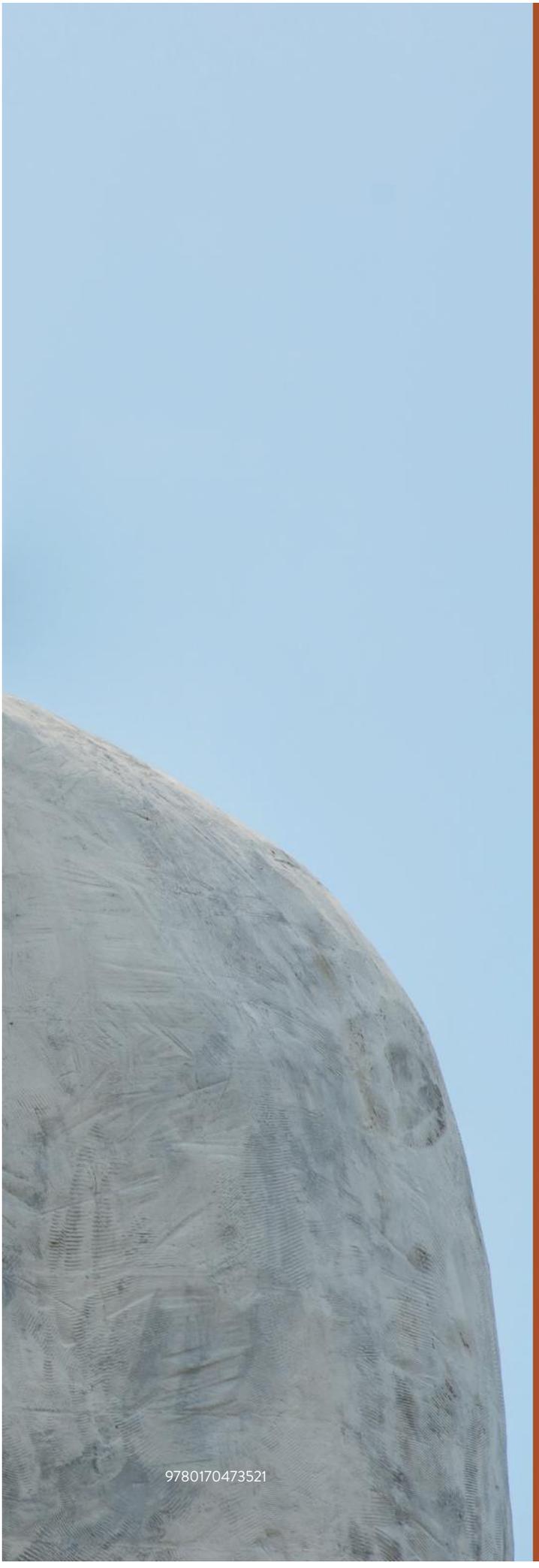


Chapter 3

RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY: THE AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCE

Outcome to be demonstrated

Discussion of the presence of religion in Australia, past and present

Focus questions

- How has the spiritual and religious composition of Australia changed over time?
- Which policies and trends have influenced the religious composition of Australia over time?
- How have spiritual and religious communities in Australia expressed their collective identity through the aspects of religion?
- In what ways have adherents used the aspects of religion to develop personal meaning and identity?
- How and why have spiritualities, religious traditions and denominations interacted with each other and contributed to the social infrastructure of Australia?

9780170473521

We acknowledge the First Peoples of the land on which this text was written, the Bunurong Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples; also the traditional custodians of the land on which the text is taught and studied. We acknowledge their elders past, present and emerging for they hold the cultural knowledge and wisdom that will make our nation whole.

Worksheet
Terminology

AUSTRALIA, A RELIGIOUS PLACE

> Australia has always been a spiritual place, as reflected in its unique and continually changing religious profile. This began with the First Nations Peoples who, over time, explored, named and dwelt across the continent. They forged their sense of belonging to and reverence of the land and its waters in harmony with the spirit-filled environment. Their spiritual knowledge still holds secrets unknown to mainstream Australia.
>
> An extract from a Research Report prepared for the Australian Human Rights Commission by Professor Gary Bouma, Professor Desmond Cahill, Dr Hass Dellal, Athalia Zwartz, p. 5.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Skills: explain, interpret, analyse

1. Why is it important to Acknowledge Country in this text?
2. When and how does your school Acknowledge Country?
3. Refer to the website of AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia to respond to answer the following questions.
   a. Why might the creators of this map include a statement that says that the borders and boundaries on the map may not be accurate and that the number of clans may not be correct?
   b. How might the climate and physical geography of the Australian continent have shaped the distribution of First Nations clan groups and their collective identity?
   c. Describe in prose the distribution of First Nations Peoples in Australia today.
4. Examine the language map (Figure 3.2). What does it show about social structure in pre-colonial society?

RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION AND ADHERENCE: PRE-COLONISATION

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES

Prior to 1788 Australia was a spiritual land and is known to the First Nations Peoples of Australia as Sacred Country. Estimates of the precolonial population of First Nations People of Australia vary from 300 000 to 1 000 000. Australia's First Nations Peoples spoke more than 250 languages. These were further diversified by 800 or more dialects through which groups expressed their spirituality and beliefs related to specific sacred places on the land on which they lived. Their beliefs, rituals, ethical principles and moral codes were and are sophisticated and complex. Each group developed their own overarching narrative of the cosmos and their place in it. This is expressed in the all-encompassing ideas of Lore and Laws connecting people to each other, the land, animals, plants and Ancestral Beings and Spirits. **Moiety**, defines the relationship of these things to each individual.

Russell, Robert. (1837). Melbourne from the falls, National Library of Australia, nla.obj-134644646

FIGURE 3.1 Yarra Falls. This natural bridge was a meeting place for tribes of the Kulin nation for thousands of years where the salt water and the fresh water met (near the Queens Bridge today). What impact would the loss of the waterfall have on the spirituality of the traditional custodians?

The spirituality of First Nations Peoples comes from, and is embedded in, the land to which they belong. Each people have their own language, beliefs, sacred stories, myths and lore which makes them distinctive; however, there are shared principles, values and practices that unite Australia's First Nations Peoples' spiritualities. This is an outline of one people's spirituality.

In the heart of the nation is the country of the Anangu people whose languages are Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara. An elder of the Yankunytjatjara group was Uncle Bob Randall who, through film and writing, explored for the broader Australian community the belief system he called *Kanyini.* In doing this he discussed his people's relationship of love and responsibility for the country to which they have always belonged, generation after generation for time immemorial. This relationship is modelled on the unconditional love given by "Earth Mother", "Sun Mother" and "Moon Father". Randall says that, "*When you grow up in that system you feel utterly secure because you belong to all that there is, and all that there is belongs to you.*"

He taught that this spirituality of Kanyini has *Tjukurrpa* – the ancient stories of Creation that are part of the oral history of the people. This was the time when the first great beings created the landscape, such as Uluru. These great beings left sacred sites to educate and shape the people through rites such as initiation. The information is sacred and so is only to be held by those who have gone through ceremony. These *Keepers* carry out ceremonies that protects the natural world.

The individual in this belief system possesses, what Randall calls, the "*soft voice of … super-consciousness*" which is sometimes opposed by the desire to exercise free will. If the two, super-consciousness and free will, are kept in balance then all things will be equal and exist in unconditional love and harmony. In Kanyini, the person contributes to their spirituality or *kurunpa* by recognising their own contribution to the development of unconditional love and harmony with all things and they should lead by example. *Walytja* or family is an important principle, as in this spirituality, each person has a connection to the song lines of their birth that links them to their totemic story.

Some sacred sites are restricted to different genders; others are open to the community and are places for gathering, singing and cultural knowledge sharing. As people travel over country the elders share the wisdom that is linked to place and reveal the natural order that underpins their spirituality. These places define their country, *ngura*, their place of belonging. Randall describes this relationship as a magical connection which provides the person's home. Land is, therefore, at the heart of the spirituality. Kanyini is a spirituality that has kept the people of the Western Desert strong and resilient.

SPIRITUALITY OF AUSTRALIA'S FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES

Skills: explain, outline, interpret, analyse

1. Explain Kanyini in your own words.
2. What does Kanyini require of the relationship between humans?
3. What does Kanyini require of the relationship between humans and the natural world?
4. How does Kanyini provide security to First Nations people?
5. Explore how Kanyini provided/provides personal meaning and identity through the aspects of religion.
6. Kanyini is called a spirituality and not a religion. Discuss in class why this might be the case.

Patrick Dodson is an elder of the Yawuru people of North Western Australia. He was the first of Australia's First Nations Peoples to be ordained a priest in the Catholic Church; however, he left the priesthood due to conflict between his two spiritual identities and the obligations they imposed. He was the first Chairperson of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation. In 2016 he became a senator in the Federal Parliament. This is an extract from his maiden speech in which he declares his identity and spirituality.

> I am a proud member of the Yawuru people of Broome. In the Yawuru language from around Broome there are three key concepts from the Bugarrigarra which shape our ways of knowing and understanding. These concepts will inform my work here, as they have formed my being. They are: Mabu ngarrung, a strong community where people matter and are valued; Mabu buru, a strong place, a good country where use of resources is balanced and sacredness is embedded in the landscape; Mabu liyan, a healthy spirit, a good state of being for individuals, families and community. Its essence arises from our encounter with the land and people.
>
> These concepts are not newly minted. They come from the time before time began. We call this the Bugarrigarra – from when the Earth was soft and yet to be moulded and given its form by the creative spirits. The Bugarrigarra encompasses the time well before Western philosophy, religion and laws existed or travelled to our lands in ships.

Yaruwu Senator Patrick Dodson's Maiden Speech to Parliament (September 2016).

SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE YAWURU PEOPLE OF BROOME

Skills: explain, outline, interpret, analyse

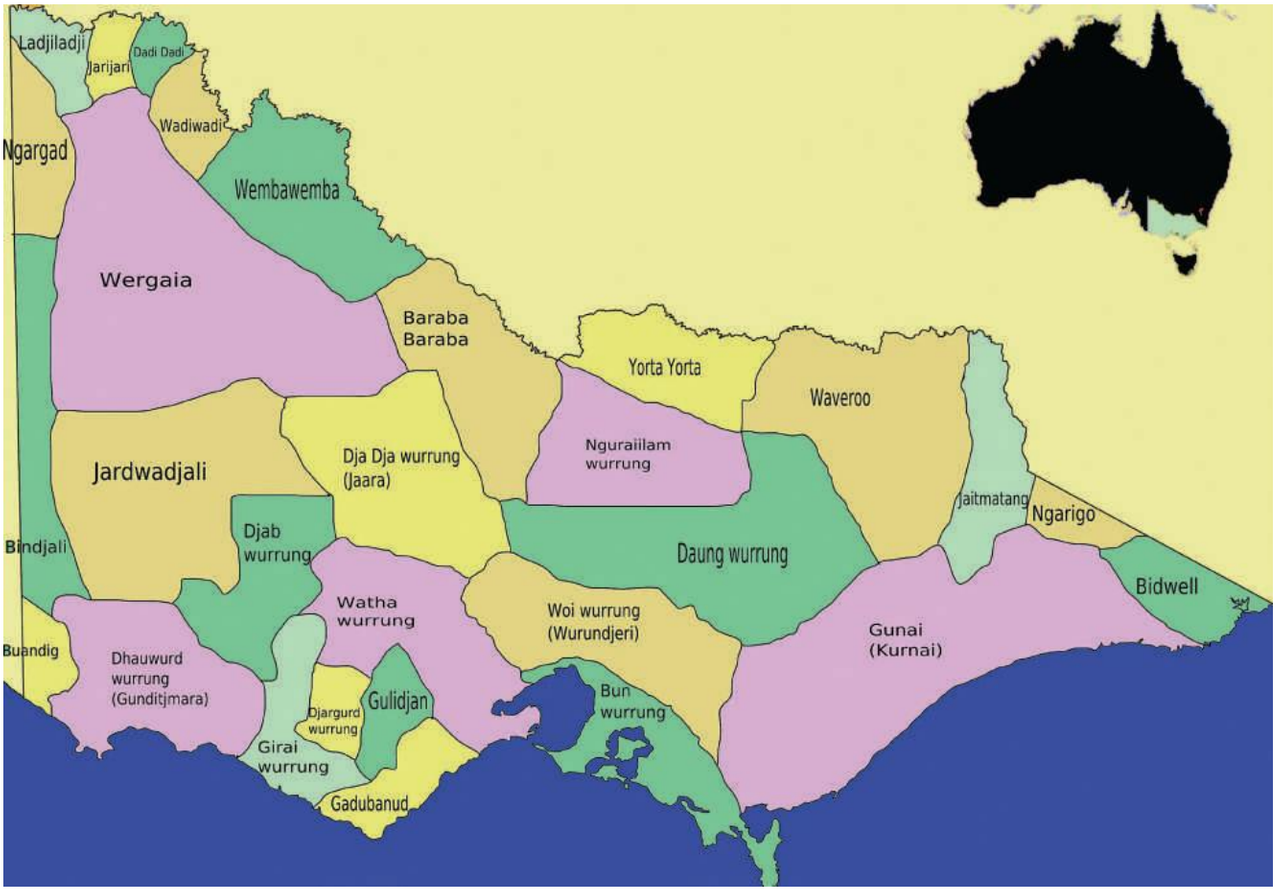
1 What does Bugarrigarra refer to in this speech?

2 Put the three key concepts of his people in a table and for each explain:
   a the literal meaning
   b how each can help Senator Dodson to be an effective member of the Australian Parliament.

3 What does Patrick Dodson say is the source of his wisdom?

4 How old is the belief system that Senator Dodson belongs to according to his speech? Use quotations to support your response.

5 Bob Randall and Patrick Dodson come from different First Nations Peoples. Identify what they have in common.



Tirin aka Takver/Wikimedia Commons/CC BY SA 3.0

FIGURE 3.2 Map of Victoria's First Nations Peoples

VICTORIA'S FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE

Skills: explain, interpret, analyse

1. Write a description of what you see in the map.
2. What are the implications of the information in this map for the people of Victoria and government policy makers?
3. Who are the traditional custodians of the Local Council area in which you live?
4. Provide three interesting facts that you discovered in your Local Council search.
5. Working in small groups, share your answers with other members of the class.
6. Research how the State Government of Victoria is trying to address Victoria's history by finding out about the Yoo-rrook Justice Commission.

RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION AND ADHERENCE: COLONISATION, 1788–1901

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES

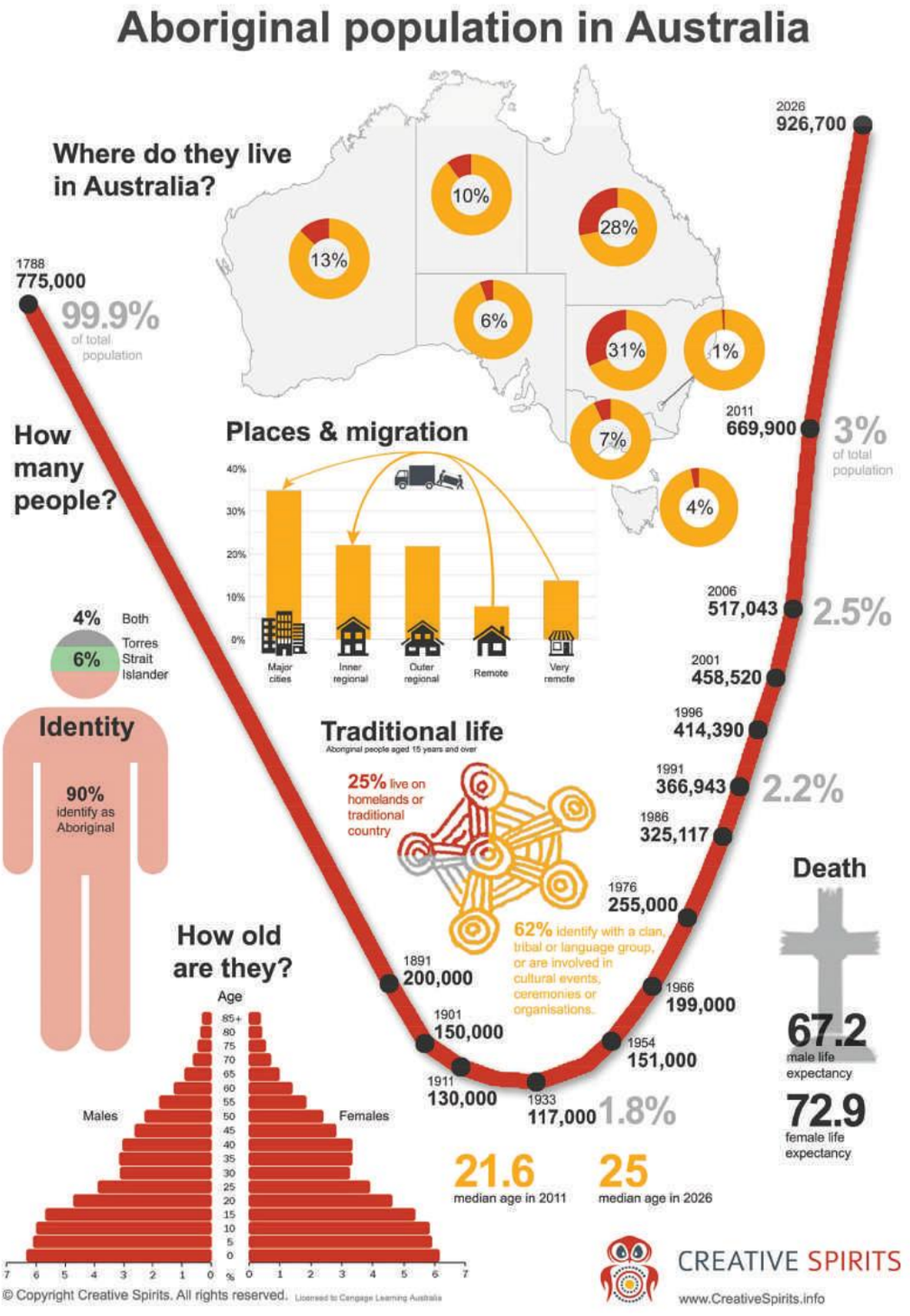
From 1788 the demographics and also the adherence to traditional spirituality of the First Nations People were under attack. A mysterious pestilence resembling smallpox, according to English soldier Watkin Tench, devastated the clans around *Warrane* (Port Jackson/Sydney Harbour) in 1789 leaving few to chant the oral history of **songlines**, to do their artwork, to dance their stories and speak the languages of their sacred country and to continue their spiritual practices. It is a myth to say that whole communities were wiped out but numbers were drastically reduced. The diminishing numbers of the First Nations Peoples occurred not only from disease but from massacres including poisonings. All of this affected the totality of adherence to First Nations Peoples' traditional spirituality, their social structures and every part of their lives.

Many early European settlers considered First Nations Australians to be primitive and godless. Christianity became a tool for the 'moral education' and 'civilisation' of First Nations Peoples. For the first European arrivals to Australia, the practices and beliefs of the First Nations Peoples were unrecognisable. The Elders and Headmen of the First Nations societies governed their religious and social structure but their leadership was collective and high status was given to female, as well as male, elders. In First Nations societies, women determine kinship relationships in line with the totemic religious system. By contrast, the Torres Strait Islanders had structures that were recognisable to Europeans, such as Island Councils headed by a *Mamoose* (head councillor). The Torres Strait Islanders also quickly adopted Christianity, which allowed them to have some autonomy from colonial administration.

IMPACT OF COLONISATION

Skills: describe, analyse, research

1. How did colonisation affect the social structures of First Nations Peoples in the mainland colonies and the Torres Strait?
2. How did colonisation affect the rituals of First Nations Peoples in the mainland colonies and the Torres Strait?
3. How did colonisation affect the sacred stories of First Nations Peoples in the mainland colonies and the Torres Strait?



© Creative Spirits, 'Aboriginal Population' infographic from www.CreativeSpirits.info

FIGURE 3.3 The impact of more than two centuries of colonisation on the population of First Nations Peoples of Australia (referred to in the infographic as 'Aboriginal'). What does this source say about the impact of colonisation on First Nations Peoples' societies? How do population figures indicate adherence rates? When was the population at its lowest in terms of numbers? When was it at its lowest as a percentage of overall population? How might an individual's identification influence these figures?

RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION AND ADHERENCE: COLONISATION, 1788–1901

STATISTICAL OVERVIEW

One source of information about distribution of religions within a country and the adherence to their beliefs and practices is through the official Government Census data.

The first census to include religious composition is that of 1828 in the New South Wales (NSW) colony. The census offers no information about distribution of adherents within the colony of NSW nor any indication of the level of their adherence to their tradition. It does give a snapshot of the variety of religious traditions in early colonial NSW, but with limitations. Military were not included in the Census. There were people in convict gangs who were unable to answer and thus were not recorded. Some people who were in the religious leadership did not declare their religious tradition despite 'missionary' appearing on their sheet as their occupation. The specificity of Protestant responses may have artificially suppressed their higher numbers. Also the recording clerics made mistakes and changed data by standardising information. For example, a listing under Wesleyan was recorded as Protestant, making the recorded numbers of particular Protestant denominations fewer than actuality. Unless they had been baptised, First Nations Peoples were not consistently counted.

The 1828 NSW Census figures show that out of a total population of 36,598, there were:

- 29,985 Christians, comprised of 8,515 Catholic and 21,470 Protestant, represented by numerous traditions: Church of England, Lutheran, Calvinist, Dissenter, Baptist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Quaker, Seeker and Wesleyan
- 102 were from the religions of Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Malay and Pagan
- 2 were Deist
- 1 was a Free Thinker
- 6,287 were not recorded

Source: State Archives and Records Authority of NSW

RELIGIOUS COMPOSITION OF EARLY COLONIAL AUSTRALIA

Skills: describe, explain, interpret

1. In a paragraph of prose, using the information provided above, describe the religious profile of Australia in 1828.
2. List three reasons why this data may not be totally accurate.
3. Why was Christianity the dominant institutional religion in the colony?
4. In the colony's beginnings, what challenges would have faced members of religious traditions that were not Christian?

RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION AND ADHERENCE: COLONISATION, 1788–1901

HINDUISM AND SIKHISM

In addition to the Indians who may have arrived in New South Wales on convict fleets, a group of domestic servants arrived from Calcutta in 1810. Up until 1850, groups were hired from India and Sri Lanka to work as labourers. Assorted merchants, 200 printers' apprentices and domestic workers were also contracted to work in the early colony. A number of Hindu and Sikh 'camelmen' were hired to help build the infrastructure of the country's interior (see also 'Islam' below, regarding the 'Ghans'). The seasonal nature of agricultural work meant that these labourers and hawkers travelled the eastern coast of Australia.

Immigration quotas restricted the numbers of Hindu women entering the country so these men often married local women, and many assimilated. There was evidence that there were close ties between First Nations peoples and the Hindus and Sikhs. In 1850, an immigration quota was imposed on men due to fears they would 'steal white settlers' jobs' – an argument that would still be applied to migrant groups from this time onwards. There was mistrust and suspicion about their practising what was called a 'heathen' religion. Fear of 'infidel ways' was given as one of the reasons. Following the European settlement of Australia's interior, Hindu and Sikh Indian hawkers (travelling merchants) became a lifeline to rural towns, selling silk, utensils and other items. Many did return home to their countries, while others, who had established businesses or shops, intermarried and stayed in small communities in the interior of Australia.

State Library of Victoria [H87.52/172]

FIGURE 3.4 Indian hawkers with their mobile home and shop, c. 1901–c. 1909. What do the carriage and clothes indicate about these men?

RELIGIONS INTERACTING
Skills: identify, interpret

1 How would intermarriage with First Nations Peoples determine the geographic distribution of Hindus and Sikhs?
2 What features of the spirituality of First Nations Peoples would appeal to the Hindus and Sikhs?

RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION AND ADHERENCE: COLONISATION, 1788–1901

ISLAM

In the late 1600s CE before European settlement, there was significant interaction between Muslim Macassan fishermen from Indonesia and First Nations Peoples. The trade of objects, ideas, beliefs and even dances indicate that this contact was sustained over many years.

After colonisation, Muslims accompanied Hindus and Sikhs as cameleers, to transport materials and build some substantial capital works and infrastructure linking the Northern Territory and South Australia. The 'Afghan' or 'Ghan' cameleers were forced to live in fenced 'Ghan towns' to prevent them from mixing with European settlers. A few prominent 'Ghans' assisted in the establishment of Australia's first mosques and a Shariah Court to air intracommunity disputes.

ESTABLISHING ISLAM IN EARLY AUSTRALIA
Skills: interpret, explain

1 Why would the Muslim community need to establish religious places and spaces?

RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION AND ADHERENCE: COLONISATION, 1788–1901

BUDDHISM

It has been speculated that Buddhists first came into contact with Australia's First Nations Peoples in the 1400s CE as a result of voyages of exploration under the Chinese Ming Dynasty.

The first evidence of Buddhist practice dates to the Gold Rush period where makeshift places of worship were shared by Confucians and Taoists. These sites have been found to contain remnants of Buddhist statues. A Buddhist temple was built in South Melbourne at this time but went into decline with the end of the Gold Rush and the community's inability to bring Buddhist clerics into Australia. More permanent Buddhist populations arrived in the 1870s. In Western Australia Japanese Shinto Buddhists arrived in Broome for the pearling industry. In Queensland, Buddhists, from what is now Sri Lanka, arrived to work on cane plantations. In the Northern Territory there were Chinese gold miners and pearlers on Thursday Island. The Thursday Island community grew to about 500 by the 1890s. They established a temple and planted Bodhi trees, which still survive. By 1891 there were 22 717 Buddhists in Australia making them 1.2 per cent of the population.

BUDDHISM IN EARLY AUSTRALIA

Skills: identify, list, interpret

1 List the denominations of Buddhism present in early colonial Australia.

2 Which of these denominations would be more likely to establish permanent settlements? Why?

RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION AND ADHERENCE: COLONISATION, 1788–1901

CHRISTIANITY

The first European to lay claim to the land, Captain Pedro Fernandez de Quiros, was a Portuguese Catholic who claimed the land for Spain in 1606 and named it 'The Great South Land of the Holy Spirit' (Australia del Espiritu Santo). But it was the English explorer Matthew Flinders, who suggested the name Australia after circumnavigating the continent in 1803.

However, in 1788, it was the British – not the Spanish – whose fleet of 11 ships brought 1480 men, women and children, mostly British and Irish, to establish a penal settlement. Most convicts were Church of England or Presbyterian and so were aligned with the Governor, magistrates and troops through religion. Catholics were a large minority (an estimated 800 in New South Wales by 1796), mostly convicts but also a few marines with no presence in the authority structure of the colony and no officially sanctioned priests. The first chaplain to the colony was Reverend Richard Johnson, who established the Church of England as the recognised religion of the colony, making adherence to any other form of Christianity very difficult.

Yet by 1793 the numbers of Presbyterian and Unitarian settlers were strong enough to demand their own religious services, rather than attending the compulsory Church of England services ordered by Governor Phillip. Their influence was supported by the arrival in 1824 of a minister, John Dunmore Lang, who unified the community and pushed for the right to build churches and schools in NSW.

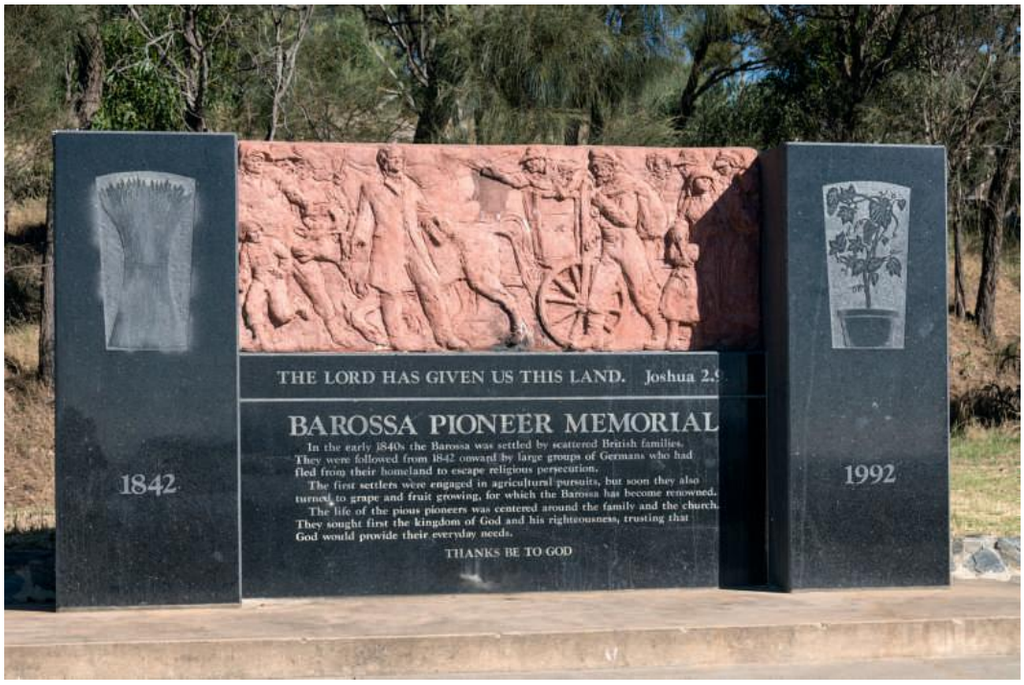
In 1820 the ability of Catholics in the colony to adhere to the practices of their tradition were made possible when officially appointed priests, Fathers Connolly and Therry, arrived in NSW. Over the following two decades, numerous missionaries from England, Ireland and France were serving Catholic communities in each of the colonies, establishing parishes and schools to enable adherence to the religious tradition. When gold was discovered in 1851, Catholics arrived from across Europe introducing diversity into the worship of parishes. However, the Church had by this time established a strong Irish hierarchy that confidently led the flourishing church, which was beginning to challenge the numerical dominance of the Church of England.

CHRISTIANITY IN EARLY AUSTRALIA

Skills: interpret, explain

1 How would the lack of clergy in the various denominations impact on their ritual life?

2 What would Catholics have believed would be the consequences for eternal life of no sacraments at that time?



Alamy Stock Photo/richard sowersby

FIGURE 3.5 Monument to Lutheran migrants escaping persecution and settling in the Barossa Valley. The inscription on the monument says that their life was centred on the church. Why would their church be so important for this group of migrants?

By the time transportation ended in 1868 about 168 000 convicts had arrived on the shores of Australia. About a quarter of convicts were Irish – 30 000 men and 10 000 women. Over 120 000 convicts were of other Christian denominations There were thriving communities of Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists and Lutherans. The Methodists were influential in the early colony. Their numbers continued to climb and by 1900 they were the third largest denomination in the colony after the Church of England and were heavily involved in welfare and missionary work. The Congregationalist numbers were very small, but influential because of their members' activity in the governance of the colony with a church established in Pitt Street, Sydney in 1842. The Baptists had established themselves by 1832 when they held their first religious service in NSW. The Lutherans were unusual as they arrived through South Australia where they were offered refuge from religious persecution. The first 500 arrived in 1838 with at least 20 000 settlers by 1860 who established Lutheran communities throughout rural South Australia, the Hamilton District through to the Wimmera in Northern Victoria and then Queensland.

The abundant and grand places of worship built by 1901, and found from major cities to rural towns, demonstrated the strength in the early colony of Christianity. This was particularly true of the Church of England (Anglican) as it was the tradition of the ruling class and had been granted ownership of significant land holdings. The membership of the Catholic tradition was largely working class, but upwardly mobile. Its schools became community hubs with effective missionary teachers teaching traditionally large Catholic families.

By 1901, 96 per cent of the population were nominally Christian and largely representative of religious thought that was Anglo-Celtic with the exception of the significant Lutheran population

– 40 per cent of the population were Church of England, 23 per cent Catholic, 34 per cent other Christian and about 1 per cent professing non-Christian religions. With Federation the new Constitution recognised Freedom of Religion or Belief (Section 116), which offered religious groups the opportunity to work together for a united religious identity. It states:

> The Commonwealth shall not make any law for establishing any religion, or for imposing any religious observance, or for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion, and no religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office or public trust under the Commonwealth.

RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION AND ADHERENCE: COLONISATION, 1788–1901

JUDAISM

On the 11 ships of the First Fleet between 8 and 14 Jewish males arrived in New South Wales. It would seem that the Jewish convicts were not particularly religious (nor educated in Judaism). They would have shared the animosity of other convicts towards clergy who were part of the government. Adherence to their religious tradition was difficult. They had no synagogue facilities, female Jews or guiding rabbi. They were even buried by Christian chaplains in what can arguably be described as the earliest interfaith events in Australia.

FIGURE 3.6 Convict-carved menorah (candelabrum), on a brick, Sydney. What does this image reveal about the origins of the Jewish community in Australia?

By the 1820s, free settlers – male and female – had arrived with knowledge of the tradition and copies of *siddurim* (prayer books). These factors made adherence more possible, marked by Jewish religious services eventually being held in people's homes by committed Jews. The establishment of a sanctified Jewish section of the cemetery in Sydney in 1817 enabled the engagement in more rituals of Judaism. Further adherence to the tradition was assisted by the appointment in 1828 of merchant Philip Joseph Cohen, authorised by the British Chief Rabbi Solomon Hirschel to perform Jewish marriages. In 1831 Reverend Aaron Levy arrived in Sydney bringing a Torah scroll and conducted regular services which greatly enhanced the ability of the Sydney Jews to adhere to their tradition. As the Sydney community became more established, adherence to the social justice principles of the tradition were aided by setting up social welfare in the form of the Hebrew Philanthropic and Orphan Society in 1833 to care for the needy in their community. More ritual expression of the tradition developed between 1835 and 1838 when British import Reverend Michael Rose performed religious duties, including circumcision on newborn Jewish baby boys.

Although the oldest and largest Jewish community in the early days of colonisation was in Sydney, there were communities in Melbourne, South Australia, Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia. But from 1788 until 1841 when the first purpose-built synagogue was erected in Australia on York Street, Sydney, expansion and expression of Judaism progressed slowly.

Other congregations followed in establishing purpose-built synagogues: Hobart (1845), Launceston Brisbane, Perth, Maitland (1846), Melbourne (1848), Goulburn (1848), Adelaide (1850) and Macquarie Street, Sydney (1857). This became possible as Jewish emancipists and free settlers grew in number with increasing immigration from England to escape poverty or seek new business interests. All the synagogues that were established in the colonies were under the authority of the Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom. Also, dedicated Jewish cemeteries opened in NSW in Maitland (1846) and Goulburn (1848).

In 1851 the discovery of gold in NSW and Victoria drew Jews from all over Australia and overseas, changing the distribution and numbers of the tradition. For example, in Melbourne between 1848 and 1861 the Jewish community grew from 200 to 3000 adherents. When gold was discovered in Ballarat in 1851, it lured scores of adventurous young Jewish men wanting to escape persecution in Germany, Eastern European pogroms, poverty in Scotland.

The distribution of the Jews in Victoria changed as these migrants settled into the various country towns seeking a better life. The Jewish community of Ballarat grew to at least 1000 in the mid-1800s CE. The newcomers involved themselves in the business, professional and public life of the young town, mainly as hawkers, store keepers and gold buyers rather than miners. The Jewish women on the goldfields became milliners, dressmakers and shopkeepers. Jews, like other communities at the diggings, kept their religious traditions, establishing a synagogue in 1856, purchasing Torah scrolls and conducting regular daily and weekly services.

Another sign of the growth and commitment of the Jewish community to adhere to their tradition was the establishment in 1850 of Australia's first Jewish Day Schools in Sydney and Melbourne with support from their respective colonial governments. Unfortunately, when government funding ended, both schools disbanded, Melbourne in 1872 and Sydney in 1880. By 1901, when Australia became a federated nation, there were 15 000 declared Jewish inhabitants.

JUDAISM IN EARLY AUSTRALIA

Skills: interpret, explain

1 How did the nature of the social structures of the Jewish communities change with the Gold Rush?

RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION AND ADHERENCE, 1901 ONWARDS

STATISTICAL OVERVIEW

Although Table 3.1 shows numerical distribution, it says nothing about geographical distribution; however, it does give some indication about adherence and insight into the religious composition of Australia for over a century.

TABLE 3.1 Religious composition of Australia, 1901–2006

	CHRISTIANITY							
Census year	**Anglican (%)**	**Catholic (%)**	**Othe (%)**	**Total (%)**	**Other religions (%)**	**No religion (%)**	**Not stated/ inadequately described (%)**	**Total ('000)**
1901	39.7	22.7	33.7	96.1	1.4	0.4	2.0[a]	3773.8
1911	38.4	22.4	35.1	95.9	0.8	0.4	2.9[a]	4455.0
1921	43.7	21.7	31.6	96.9	0.7	0.5	1.9[a]	5435.7
1933	38.7	19.6	28.1	86.4	0.4	0.2	12.9	6629.8
1947	39.0	20.9	28.1	88.0	0.5	0.3	11.1	7579.4
1954	37.9	22.9	28.5	89.4	0.6	0.3	9.7	8986.5
1961	34.9	24.9	28.4	88.3	0.7	0.4	10.7	10508.2
1966	33.5	26.2	28.5	88.2	0.7	0.8	10.3	11599.5
1971	31.0	27.0	28.2	86.2	0.8	6.7	6.2	12755.6
1976	27.7	25.7	25.2	78.6	1.0	8.3	11.4	13548.4
1981	26.1	26.0	24.3	76.4	1.4	10.8	11.4	14576.3
1986	23.9	26.0	23.0	73.0	2.0	12.7	12.4	15602.2
1991	23.8	27.3	22.9	74.0	2.6	12.9	10.5	16850.3
1996	22.0	27.0	21.9	70.9	3.5	16.6	9.0	17752.8
2001	20.7	26.6	20.7	68.0	4.9	15.5	11.7	18769.2
2006	18.7	25.8	19.3	63.9	5.6	18.7	11.9	19855.3

[a] Includes 'object to state'.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

Although there had been Muslims interacting with Australian societies since the pre-colonial times and Buddhists since the colonial days, by 2006 these religious communities were the fastest growing in the nation. Although Christianity remained the most influential tradition numerically, it is also significant to watch the increase of those who did not offer a religious denomination; by 2006 over 19 per cent of Australians either chose 'no religion' or did not fill in the question about religious adherence correctly.

INTERPRETING STATISTICS

Skills: interpret, synthesise, explain

1 What reasons may people have for deliberately not completing the section on the census related to religion correctly?

2 What do these figures and trends reveal about religion in the pluralist society of Australia?

In the decade between 2006 and 2016 those who claimed 'no religion' increased from 19 per cent to 30 per cent of the population. Within the 'none' category, 30 per cent are teenagers. Research has shown that over half of these teenagers see themselves as having a spirituality or are seeking answers for how and why to live their life and about existence generally. They do not want to be a part of an institutional religion. They have more options than previous generations to investigate

and to choose their spirituality, religion generally and religious traditions. In 2019 the *Australia's Generation Z Study* (Rasmussen, M.L., Singleton, A., Halafoff, A. & Bouma, G.), focused on Australian youth between the ages of 13 and 18. The data shows that Australian adolescents are becoming increasingly secular yet are eclectically spiritual but not necessarily affiliated with religious traditions. Many support the teaching of religion in schools though a preference is shown for it to be taught in a more academic and interfaith manner.

AUSTRALIAN YOUTH SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGION

Skills: analyse, extrapolate

1. As a class read though the *Australia's Generation Z Study* on the School of Sociology page on the Australian National University's website.
2. Which findings surprised you? With which findings did you agree or disagree?
3. Create a survey for the class to complete with questions to capture similar data from yourselves, or locate the survey itself.
4. Collate the data and present in a table, chart or graph.
5. How does your class data compare or contrast with the study?
6. In reference to your survey of the class (see above) and/or the study, how do your own views on religion sit in comparison with this data?

RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION AND ADHERENCE, 1901 ONWARDS

CHRISTIANITY

A demographic shift that impacted the adherence of Catholicism in the first decades of the 1900s CE was a change in the nationality of the leadership of the church. In the early colonial period the clergy had predominantly been Irish born and this was also true of the missionary religious brothers and sisters who moved into education and health in the second half of the 1800s CE. They served a community, over one third of which had come from Ireland as immigrants. It was the Irish serving the Irish on the whole. But by 1901 this had changed, with 80 per cent of Catholics being Australian born. In this period Australian Catholic orders of nuns were becoming influential through the work of the Good Samaritans, an order established by Bishop Polding, and the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart under the vision of Saint Mary MacKillop. By the middle of the 1900s CE virtually all the major religious orders were being led by Australian-born members who were trained in seminaries in Australia rather than being sent to Rome or Ireland. In 1901, 87 per cent of Sydney's priests were Irish; by the 1970s all of Australia's bishops were home-grown.

Overall, the Protestant traditions were still heavily reliant on England for the training and sourcing of their clergy. In 1900 up to 72 per cent of Church of England prelates and 40 per cent of Methodist ministers were born in Britain. The Church of England seminary, Moore Theological College, was established in 1856 and set the tone for an evangelical character in the Sydney diocese, as opposed to the more liberal theology of Melbourne. This is a distinction that has become more profound due to the debate over the ordination of women in the Anglican Communion in recent decades. It was not until 1962 that the Church of England in Australia became autonomous and in 1981 it became the Anglican Church of Australia.

DEVELOPMENTS IN CHRISTIANITY IN AUSTRALIA

Skills: identify, describe, interpret

1 Describe three benefits that the training of priests in Australia, rather than overseas, would have on the members of a religious tradition's adherence.

2 Who was governing the Church of England in Australia before 1962 if it was not the local leaders? Why would that matter?

In the post-World War II period the need for labour and the devastation of Europe led to a dramatic increase in migration, which brought with it large numbers of Italian and Eastern European Catholics. Greek migrants arrived also, bringing their Orthodox beliefs and practices. These migrants settled in communities in defined geographic areas shaping the landscape of the suburbs in accordance with their cultural and religious beliefs.

In the 1950s and 60s over a million Catholics arrived largely from Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, Germany, Croatia, Hungary and Poland. There were 160 000 Greek Orthodox and also Maronites from Lebanon, Coptic Christians from Ethiopia and other Christian denominations. They arrived without the English language and bearing different cultural views of their Christianity. They were seeking stability, security and a future for their children. They had little interest in the sectarianism of Catholics and Protestants. They wanted church services in their own language and buildings they recognised as their own for their ritual practice. Their religious practice was about family and a spiritual relationship with their God. They were apolitical on the whole. They challenged and confused the Christian establishment of this period. The assisted migration from Britain remained high during this period, boosting the numbers for the Protestant denominations, with the Church of England maintaining its place as the most populace tradition in Australia.

But by the period between 2006 and 2016 the composition of religions had changed. The traditional Protestant denominations had lost numbers as their congregations aged and as the community became more disillusioned with institutional religion. As these communities declined in the number of adherents, the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational Christian churches became the Uniting Church of Australia (1977) in order to maintain their viability. However, some adherents chose to oppose unification and remain independent, struggling on in small numbers. The Uniting Church helped to invigorate their congregations with a focus on working for social justice. The Anglican communion also is ageing and communities are closing down. An analytical investigation into the viability of the structures of the Anglican Church in Australia was undertaken in 2014 to address the concerns of increasing mission demands and diminishing numbers of adherents. It responded to the crisis by committing to improved financial management and the sale of Church properties.

CHRISTIANITY AND CHANGES

Skills: identify, describe, interpret

1 What is the impact of an ageing congregation on the operation of the aspects of religion in a church community?

2 Identify three religious buildings in your area that are of different Christian denominations. What do you know about them? Research when they were built and by which ethnic group.

Fairfax Syndication/Matt Golding

FIGURE 3.7 Churches up for sale. What does this cartoon suggest about attitudes to the sale of Church properties?

The National Church Life Survey, a census of Christian church attendance, suggests that Christianity has remained resilient overall. Pentecostal and evangelical Christian churches are attracting younger worshippers and family groups. The style of worship, it has been argued, is a central factor with the focus on music and preaching. The result is that Pentecostal churches are now the second largest Christian churches in Australia.

The Catholic Church has maintained numbers more effectively through the waves of immigration since the end of the Vietnam War (1972–73). The influx of Vietnamese, Indian, Sri Lankan, Filipino and South Sudanese Catholics who have filled schools with their children have aided the Catholic Church to remain the strongest of the Christian denominations and the most populous religion in Australia. Further change to the Catholic tradition has occurred as its baby boomer membership (born 1946–1964) substantially turned away from the church for a range of reasons which were clarified through the work of the Australian Plenary Council (2021–). Major concerns identified were the scandal of the abuse of children, the lack of a significant role for women in the church and the culture of clericalism. These were the basis for disillusionment among adherents. Nevertheless, within the religious composition of Australia, the membership of the Catholic tradition has remained strong due largely to the migration outlined earlier. Also within the Catholic tradition, First Nations Catholics were identified as the largest growing demographic in 2020.

CHANGING FACE OF CHRISTIANITY

Skills: explain, discuss, identify, analyse

1. Why are Pentecostal churches attracting a younger demographic?
2. Discuss whether traditional Christian denominations should change their rituals to make them more contemporary.
3. What reforms would your class suggest to those in charge of the Plenary Council in the Catholic Church?
4. Does the character of a church change the people or does the character of the people change a church?
5. In 2022 there was a split in the Anglican communion in NSW, creating a new Anglican denomination, the Diocese of the Southern Cross. Research the reasons for this schism.

RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION AND ADHERENCE, 1901 ONWARDS

JUDAISM

When Australia became a federated nation in 1901, there were 15 000 declared Jewish inhabitants, but by 1920 adherence to the tradition was lessening as intermarriage tested the long-term viability of the Jewish community in Australia. But from the 1920s onward the mass arrival of Jews from Eastern Europe and refugees from Central Europe escaping pogroms and poverty reinvigorated the static Jewish communities.

Just before or at the outbreak of World War II, 5000 Jewish refugees escaping Nazi Europe arrived in Australia. Between 1946 and 1954, 17 000 Jews, mostly Holocaust survivors, arrived from Europe and Shanghai. They brought with them a variety of ethnic variations to the practice of their Jewish faith, mainly variations of traditional Orthodoxy but also the growth of a strong German Reform contingent, who called themselves Liberal Jews at first but now go by the label Progressive Judaism.

These Jewish survivors of the Holocaust brought a different culture and an enhanced religiousness but also **secularism** to the Australian Jewish community. They established more synagogues and ground-breaking Jewish day schools. These schools have been essential in maintaining the Jewish religion and ethnic identity in a society that has been highly tolerant and open to them.

Another influx of Jewish migrants came in 1956 with thousands of Jews escaping the aftermath of the Hungarian Revolution and the Suez Crisis in Nasser's Egypt. Even though Sephardi Jews from Middle Eastern countries were of comparatively light complexion, they were barred by the White Australia Policy (Immigration Restriction Act of 1901) but several hundred refugees from Egypt were able to gain sponsorship. By 1966 there were 60 000 Jews in Australia.

Other migrations that increased the community include those from South Africa during the apartheid era, from Russia when the former Soviet government allowed them to leave and, most recently, from Israel. This diversity is complemented by different religious affiliations within Judaism of Ultra-Orthodox, Modern Orthodox, Conservative, Progressive (or Reform), Cultural and Secular movements. From 5000 during the Gold Rush period, the Jewish community now numbers well over 100 000 members.

The Census of 2016 indicated the Jewish population in Australia was 117 903. Sydney and Melbourne continue to be the largest Jewish communities, numbering approximately 50 000 and 45 000 respectively. Judaism comprised 0.7 per cent of the Victorian population in 2016 and 0.5 per cent of the NSW population. There are active communities in all the capital cities as well as small groups in rural areas but Jews comprise only 0.001 per cent (one tenth of 1 per cent) or less of the population in Queensland, South Australia and Northern Territory. However, according to a 2019 study by the Monash University Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation of this census data, these figures are understood to be understated due to the Jews' history of persecution bringing with it a reluctance to give personal data to governments.

Today, the Jewish community of Tasmania faces some challenges in common with the small communities of other religious traditions. Their ability to adhere to the practices of the tradition are reduced as they do not have a rabbi for weekly services or for minor Jewish holidays, so they have to do everything for themselves. For the major festivals and High Holy Days (*Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*) a rabbi is flown in to conduct services. The *shule* (synagogue) hosts both Modern Orthodox and Progressive services.

THE CHANGING FACE OF JUDAISM

Skills: describe, explain, interpret

1 What was the impact of immigration waves and settlement around Australia on the Jewish community?

2 What does the experience of the Jewish community indicate about the values of Australian society?

3 In what ways is the experience of the Tasmanian synagogue community similar to other religious places of worship?

RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION AND ADHERENCE, 1901 ONWARDS

ISLAM

© Cordell Jigsaw Productions

FIGURE 3.8 This is a promotional image for an SBS documentary that explored diversity in the Australian Islamic community. Why are programs like this important in dispelling stereotypes about religious traditions?

Large numbers of Muslims arrived post-World War II from countries such as Bosnia, Kosovo, Hungary, Russia and Romania as they were acceptable under the White Australia Policy. After its demise in the 1970s numbers increased from Lebanon and Turkey to escape civil strife. Over 60 000 arrived from Lebanon and largely settled in Sydney. Others arrived as students from impoverished nations such as Malaysia, Indonesia, India and Fiji under the Colombo plan (1951–). By 2007 over a third of the nation's Muslims were born in Australia.

The Islamic community now comprises over 183 different ethnic backgrounds and is growing numerically with an increase of 2.2 per cent between 2011 and 2016. By 2016, 25 per cent of Australian Muslims were from South and Central Asia and less than 20 per cent from the Middle East. Most recent arrivals include those from Africa – largely Somalia, Sudan and Ethiopia; the Middle East – Lebanon, Afghanistan, in particular the Hazara community, Syria, Saudi Arabia,

Iraq and Iran; and Asia – Malaysia, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India. Urban Melbourne and Sydney represent 75 per cent of the Australian Muslim community. The demographic profile of Islam is of a migrant population with the desire to settle and have a family, resulting in Islam in Australia currently having very young adherents. In 2016, 82 per cent of Muslim were below the age of 45 compared with 59 per cent of the general population.

The religious groups within Islam distinguish the different Muslim communities in contemporary Australian society. There are Sunni, Shia, Sufi, Alawis and Ahmadiyya communities. Islam is now a significant religion for First Peoples with over 2000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders identifying with Islam in the 2011 census. Some of these are descendants of the Afghan cameleers or the Western Australian Malay pearl divers of the 1800s CE, but most are converts through Islam's strong commitment to prison ministry for First Nations Peoples and the high profile conversion of rugby league star and boxer Anthony Mundine (Bundjalung, North NSW Coast). Other Australians from diverse ethnic backgrounds have also converted to Islam, in particular to Sufism, which now has an estimated 5000 adherents in Australia.

CONTEMPORARY ISLAM IN AUSTRALIA

Skills: list, interpret, analyse

1 Referring to the statistical information above about the Muslim community, list four adjectives that you would use to describe Islam in Australia to someone who has just arrived in the country.

2 Using your list of adjectives draw conclusions about what would be the needs that should be addressed in the Australian Muslim community today by various elements in the social structure of their religious tradition.

3 What are the grounds for optimism that the Australian Islamic community has a strong future?

RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION AND ADHERENCE, 1901 ONWARDS

HINDUISM AND SIKHISM

The community's increasing openness expressed in the 1960s and culminating in the election of the Whitlam Government saw the arrival of Southeast Asian and sub-continent populations who brought with them Hindu and Buddhist traditions. There was also a willingness of Australian-born young people to adopt religious beliefs that were seen to be experimental and spiritual. There was the colour and street music of the Hare Krishna movement, the Unification Movement of the Korean Reverend Moon and a range of cults and sects that arose causing excitement and concern. This diversity is seen in the growth of the 'other religions' category in the census data.

The migration of the Hindu and Sikh community in the 1900s CE was largely from India. The 1911 census had 3698 Hindus living in Australia. In the 1960s immigration laws were relaxed and Hindu adherents came as students and many took up permanent residency and citizenship on the completion of their courses. In the 1970s larger numbers arrived to fill Australia's skilled migrant needs, taking up professional positions such as doctors, teachers and engineers. Australia was an attractive destination due to its relatively close proximity to the Asian sub-continent, English being spoken and the shared colonial experience with Britain. In 1977 a Hindu community in Auburn

Alamy Stock Photo/Peter Ptschelinzew

FIGURE 3.9 Hare Krishna adherents participating in an Australia Day procession in Melbourne. What evidence is there in the image of commitment to their religious belief?

NSW established the nation's first temple, reflecting the increasing Hindu population due to the end of the White Australia Policy. By the start of the 1980s there were over 20 000 Hindus largely based in Sydney and Melbourne.

In the 1980s the rise of technology highlighted a need for skilled workers in the area of computing and technical support and turned to India to fill this gap, with many who arrived being adherents of Hinduism or Sikhism. Victoria's Indian population, for example, jumped from 12 000 in the 1970s to 169 804 in 2016. A proportion were Christian, but the majority were Hindu or Sikh. At present, of those in the community who were born in India, 63 per cent are Hindu and 29 per cent are Sikh. The community also has smaller numbers of Hindus from Sri Lanka, Fiji, Malaysia, Singapore and Nepal.

In terms of the Australian population, Hindus – although representing an estimated 2.7 per cent of the Australian population in 2021 – are the fastest growing religions in the nation due to a 60 per cent increase in population through migration, with over 80 per cent born overseas. In 30 years the Hindu population has grown from 20 000 to 684 000, with 66 per cent being under the age of 34 in 2021. In 2016 the census showed that 415 First Nations Peoples were adherents of Hinduism. Some scientists claim that there is a link between the sub-continent and Indigenous Australians that goes back 4200 years based on DNA studies.

There are now 210,400 adherents of Sikhism, vastly increased from 12,000 in 1996. There are families of Sikhs who can trace their ancestry back to the cameleers, gold prospectors and agricultural workers of the 1800s CE. They are settled in communities largely in Queensland and Northern NSW where their ancestors were cane workers or banana growers. It is in this region that the Sikhs established their first temple in 1968 (Woolgoolga). In recent years Sikhs have migrated from India, and have arrived largely as skilled professionals with many settling in Melbourne's suburbs, although communities are developing in regional areas.

HINDU AND SIKH AUSTRALIAN PLACES FOR WORSHIP

Skills: research, explain

1 The Murugan Temple in Sunshine was the inspiration of a member of Melbourne's Sri Lankan Tamil community. Research which features of this building show that it is a Hindu temple.

2 Where was Australia's first Sikh Temple built? Why there? What features show it is a Sikh Temple?

RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION AND ADHERENCE, 1901 ONWARDS

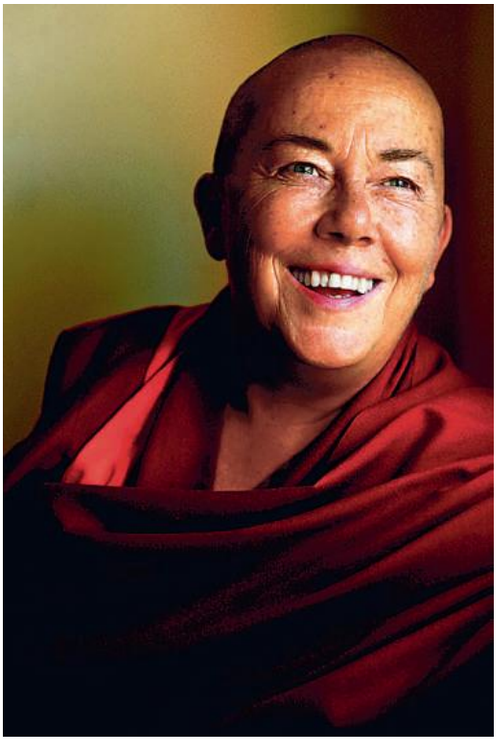
BUDDHISM

The introduction of the Immigration Restriction Act (1901) or White Australia Policy led to Chinese emigrating back to China or those who stayed converting to Christianity. The number of traditional Buddhists declined. However, in the early 1900s CE Buddhist thought became popular

with the wealthy Anglo-Saxon population through the Theosophical Society of Australia. This was a more philosophical, spiritual and mystical way of approaching religious ideas and was developed through Westerners taking an interest in both Hinduism and Buddhism. Even one of the earlier prime ministers, Alfred Deakin, after spending time in India and Sri Lanka, wrote a book on theosophy which included chapters on Buddhist thought. In 1919 a teacher, F.L. Woodward, who had spent time in Sri Lanka, settled in Tasmania and translated the sacred texts of Buddhism; this attracted more Australians to the religion. One such group was the 'Little Circle of Buddhists' established in Melbourne in 1925 to study Theravada Buddhist practice.

In the 1940s Buddhism became popular in Sydney through Australia's first female solicitor, Marie Byles, who wrote books on Buddhist practice that are still in print and she provided her home as a place for Vispassana meditation, the ancient contemplative practice to see things as they really are. The Buddhist Society of Sydney was established in the 1950s. In Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia Buddhist Societies followed and the practice was of the Theravada tradition, the strict adherence to the Buddha's original teachings and rules of monastic discipline. In Melbourne there was also a developing interest in Zen Buddhism, a meditation-based Buddhism that does not rely on scripture, doctrine or ritual. Zen is verified by personal experience and is passed on from master to disciple, through training. The membership of the societies was of an upper middle class and professional or academic demographic.

In this period and into the early 1970s there developed an interest in Buddhism by young people who travelled overseas to attend, study at, or volunteer in monasteries in India and Nepal and were often guided by Tibetan Buddhists (Vajrayana tradition). It is estimated that approximately 200 Australians became monks in Thailand in the 1970s. The Vajrayana tradition, based on mystical experiences, has remained popular with Australian Buddhists. One third of Buddhist organisations in Sydney today are of the Tibetan tradition, largely serving Western adherents. Although their numbers have grown with each of the three visits of the Dalai Lama – the pre-eminent Tibetan monk considered a living Buddha of compassion whose role is to help humanity – overall, the number of Westerners remains relatively small, comprising about one quarter of Australian adherents.



Fairfax Syndication/Steven Siewert

FIGURE 3.10 Robina Courtin, an Australian who became a Buddhist nun and has dedicated her life to working with people in prisons. What might a Buddhist nun have to offer people in prison? Why might Buddhism appeal to Australians?

During the 1970s Buddhism in Australia moved from Western practitioners to a more diverse and traditional approach as Asian immigration increased, through both refugees and people filling gaps in Australia's labour force. This brought all three of the main streams of Buddhism into the nation: Theravada (Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia, Burma), Mahayana (China, Korea, Japan, Vietnam) and Vajrayana (Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan). The first monasteries were in NSW, but Melbourne soon followed.

These two states have maintained the largest Buddhist populations. Today one third of Australia's Buddhists are Vietnamese. A growing group are those of a Chinese ethnicity and come from China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and Taiwan. In 1991 Buddhism was the fastest growing religious group but in the latest census was overtaken by Hinduism and Sikhism. Today Buddhists are 2.4 per cent of the total population; Buddhism is the fifth largest religious community.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF STATISTICAL DATA

Skills: analyse, interpret

In relation to Buddhism consider these questions.

1. Why is collecting statistical data on religions important for the nation?
2. Why is collecting statistical data on religions important for the religious traditions?
3. Why is collecting statistical data on religions important for the adherents and communities of the traditions?

RELIGION: GOVERNMENT POLICIES, TRENDS, INTERACTIONS – COLONISATION, 1788–1901

OVERVIEW

Australia was colonised as part of British colonial policy. This aimed to expand trade in England's favour, for raw and manufactured goods, selling more than was purchased by England. Australia, the colony of New South Wales, was established initially as a prison, to offload the excess from England's gaols. While the colonies that became the different states of Australia varied in their development, the policies of each colony in the 19th century had considerable influence on Australian society in the longer term. The text below includes policies that affected Australia's First Nations Peoples and South Pacific Islanders and certain peoples through immigration restrictions. It also includes trends within the demographics that added to the ethnic and religious diversity for which Australia has since become famous. The interactions between religious traditions in the Australian colonies and with the wider society are considered.

Religious ideas of punishment and reform pervaded the penal system of prisons. In the early decades of colonisation in NSW, the government coerced people into attending the official Church of England services with convicts being locked into pews and soldiers (many hungover from Saturday night excesses) woken and assembled to attend the Church of England services led by the first Chaplain Reverend Richard Johnson. Religion was used by Governor Macquarie as a tool to imbue morality and discipline.

INFLUENCES IN COLONIAL AUSTRALIA

Skills: analyse, explain

1. Why was Australia colonised?
2. What role did immigration policies and restrictions play in creating religious and ethnic diversity?
3. How did religious and political leaders use religion in the colonial system?

Transportation effectively ended in 1857. The colony then became populated with squatters, emancipated convicts and settlers coming from England to make their fortune. Riots on the Victorian and NSW goldfields in the 1850s and 1860s against Chinese miners, who held Confucian, Daoist and Buddhist beliefs, caused both colonies to introduce restrictive and racist immigration laws of the Chinese Immigrants Regulation and Restriction Acts. These Acts limited the number of Chinese entering the colonies. They also required an entry tax of ten pounds to be paid, together with a certificate of entry to be carried and produced upon request.

As the population of the colony grew, vagrancy laws saw prisons used as social welfare, housing men, women, children and babies, providing beds and three meals a day in comparison to horrendous alternatives. The dire situation of women in the colony saw the remarkable efforts of prominent colonial women such as Caroline Chisholm establish essential services to protect women of the colonial society. St Mary MacKillop established housing for single mothers and an early education system for children left destitute and living in squalor.

Religion stood against a prevailing lawlessness in a society caused by brutalised people who went on to further brutalise others. Religion served as a bulwark against the psychological impacts of transportation, the colonial penal system and opportunistic colonisation. As the cities expanded and beautiful buildings were constructed, religion provided an intellectual and civilising influence in society as seen in the names of the university colleges being built.

Newspix/Andy Tyndall

FIGURE 3.11
A contemporary actor, Jimi Bani, performing in a play based on the life of Jandamarra, a Banuba warrior from the Kimberley in Western Australia who turned his back on life on sheep stations to lead a resistance movement to reclaim his people's land and way of life. What does the actor's stance say about what he wants to portray as the character of Jandamarra?

RELIGION: GOVERNMENT POLICIES, TRENDS, INTERACTIONS – COLONISATION, 1788–1901

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES

As with other British colonies, the government policy was to turn First Nations Peoples into a cheap labour class. However, the egalitarian nature of their traditional society was at odds with the class system emerging in the colony, in which soldiers, governors and free settlers viewed themselves as better than the First Nations Peoples who were living on the land which the colonists coveted.

Many took up arms to fight the invaders in what has come to be called The Frontier Wars between 1788 and the 1930s. Historians are now uncovering the story of these conflicts as First Nations Peoples fought to save their sacred sites that were being taken away by the government's policy of giving Crown Land to settlers.

In one of these attempts to create a labour class, an estimated 62 000 people from the South Sea Islands (of Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Tuvalu, Kiribati and Fiji), historically known as 'Kanakas', were contracted or forcibly made to work for three years on plantations in the sugar industry in Queensland. Although they were contracted and paid six pounds a year, the justice of this system of 'blackbirding' labour was highly questionable. The first ship arrived in 1863 and the practice ended with the Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1901 which ordered the mass deportation of those labourers – about 10 000. These people would have brought with them their beliefs, practices and spirituality. But they were isolated from their country, families, culture and traditional expressions of spirituality or religion. Many became Christians as the Missionaries seemed the only sympathetic Europeans concerned about their well-being.

Every aspect of Australian First Nations Peoples' lives became regulate with the enactment in the colony of Victoria in 1869, of the Aboriginal Protection Acts. The governments of other colonies followed the Victorian initiative. The Acts sought to regulate and control the lives of First Nations Australians by restricting their rights to travel, residency, employment, marriage and parenting. Concern over the fate of children became a pretext for the wholesale removal of children from their parents. They were then raised within Christian institutions and Anglo-Australian families in order to assimilate, (accepting the colonial culture and rejecting their traditional culture) or integrate them into wider Australian society (identifying with both European, and their traditional culture). This caused a devastating loss of family, language, community, spirituality and personal identity.

As more British migrants took up the government's offer to be relocated to Australia the effect was devastating for the nation's First Peoples and their links to land. The arrivals were granted land and set about turning the colony into an agricultural settlement. All native vegetation was to be removed to receive government grants all native vegetation was to be removed, sacred sites were fenced off or destroyed and when the First Nations Peoples showed their displeasure the settlers responded by massacring them, often by poisoning. The University of Newcastle has produced a significant record of these events in their Colonial Massacres Map.

First Nations Peoples of Australia have shown incredible resilience to colonisation and its detrimental effect on their traditional society. One of the central elements of pre-colonial First Nations society was the social structure of their kinship system, including moiety, totems and skin names. This traditional structure continues to define the totality of integrated relationships between people, sacred country, animals and plants, generations, responsibilities between all things, to maintenance of ecology, spirituality and society.

KINSHIP SYSTEM

Skills: define, explain

1 Use the Glossary to find the meaning of the following terms of the kinship system: matrilineal, patrilineal, moiety, totem, skin name.

2 Now explain why this kinship system impacts on the spirituality of an individual.

RELIGION: GOVERNMENT POLICIES, TRENDS, INTERACTIONS – COLONISATION, 1788–1901

JUDAISM

The early Jewish convicts (once emancipated or finished their sentence) and free settlers were British and thus could easily blend into colonial society. They enjoyed the full civil and religious equality guaranteed by the British Government. Anti-Semitism existed but it was not commonplace, nor was it as institutionalised or deeply fixed as it was in European society and certainly it was not a Colonial Government policy. This allowed Jews to prosper in business and reach positions of community leadership with authority and power, unlike in Britain and Europe at that time. For example, in the colony of Swan River, Western Australia (WA), Lionel Samson became the first Jew to be elected to an Australian Parliament when he entered the WA Legislative Council in 1849–1856 and again in 1859–1868. During this colonial period from 1849 to 1900, the historical records show that over 50 Jews were elected as Members of Parliament across Australia – unprecedented in other countries at this time.

In pre-Federation Victoria the trend was for Jews to live mainly in the centre of the Melbourne business district or the nearby areas of Carlton, East Melbourne and St Kilda. These places are where institutional requirements such as the first *mikve* (ritual bath) and Jewish Schools such as the Peretz School were established. The Carlton experience was so integral to the establishment of the Jewish Community in Melbourne that many Jews whose parents and grandparents grew up in the area still support the Carlton Football Club despite living elsewhere.

When the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation was founded it requested recognition and government support under the NSW Church Act 1836. But it was not until after the separation of Victoria from New South Wales that in 1862 the Victorian Parliament finally granted the Melbourne Jewish community assistance equal to that of the churches to maintain their places of worship. Government funding was integral to the building of Jewish communal structures, as it was with other faith-based communities.

State Library of Western Australia, 4982B/16

FIGURE 3.12 Lionel Samson (1799–1878) was an early WA Swan River Colony settler who developed wholesale liquor distribution, vineyards and wine-making businesses that exist to this day. He became the first Jewish person to sit in an Australian legislative chamber and served two terms in the Western Australia Legislative Council. What does his successful career reflect about the government policies towards the status of Jews in the early days of the colonies?

BEING JEWISH IN COLONIAL AUSTRALIA

Skills: identify, explain, interpret, analyse

1. What enabled Jews to blend in with colonial Australian society?
2. Why were colonial Jews in Australia able to enjoy a better life than in England or Europe?
3. To what extent did colonial government policies aid or suppress Jewish community growth?

RELIGION: GOVERNMENT POLICIES, TRENDS, INTERACTIONS – COLONISATION, 1788–1901

CHRISTIANITY

The policies of the British government impacted on the religious nature of the colony. The First Fleet was to make New South Wales a penal colony. Britain did not intend there to be a religious nation. This was a period in history in which Europe had moved away from the medieval Christian vision. It was post-French Revolution and post-Enlightenment. The appointment of Reverend Richard Johnson as the first chaplain of the colony did not take place until six months after Arthur Phillip received his commission. It was only after the insistence of William Wilberforce, a member of the British Parliament who was an evangelical Christian and one of the initiators of the Church Mission Society in Britain. King George III's instructions stated that they were to follow instructions according to the rules of war. This meant that religion was to be controlled by the Governor, resulting in Rev. Johnson having limited authority. The governors insisted on the Church of England being the colony's religion and it was used as a way to develop morals and discipline.

The second reason that the British Government's policy impacted on the practice of religion was that in Britain Catholics lived under the Catholic Relief Act, which forbade them from worshipping. Catholics had no freedom of worship until 1829. For this reason, Catholic convicts had to attend Church of England services or be faced with severe punishments. Government policy was an impediment to the practice of any religion other than that of the Church of England. Samuel Marsden, the chaplain between 1794 and 1836, wrote: 'It is more than probable that if the Catholic religion was once allowed to be celebrated by Authority, that the colony would be lost to the British Empire in less than a year' (Marsden Manuscripts Mitchell library, Sydney, 1806–1807).

However there are ways around government policy. In 1817 the papacy responded to the requests of Catholics in the colony by appointing Jeremiah O'Flynn to be Apostolic Prefect of New Holland, but without British approval. Governor Macquarie ordered his deportation, but O'Flynn managed to serve the community in hiding until his departure in 1818.

In 1819 Commissioner Bigge initiated a change of policy, recommending the opening up of the colony to free settlers. This, and the O'Flynn experience, made it plain to Governor Macquarie that there needed to be a priest in the colony and in 1821 two priests were approved. This served to develop a Catholic identity as marriages and baptisms could now be ritualised. To maintain authority over potential rebels, Governor Macquarie forbade the marriage of Protestants and Catholics. One of the priests, Fr Therry, served the colony well, reaching out to both Catholics and Protestants and the First Nations population of New South Wales as he organised the building of schools and the establishment of charities. He earned the cooperation of Governor Macquarie.

The British Government still controlled the policies of the colony and, to control the Irish population, enforced a major shift in policy. They appointed an administrator, Thomas Hobbes Scott, of a Church and School Corporation in 1825 with instructions to favour the Church of England, denying the Catholics access to funds. One seventh of all crown land in NSW would be handed over to the Church of England to expand its presence and it was the only religion to receive government aid. The income from this land allowed the Church of England to become an independent entity in the colony that was not reliant on the governor.

The nature of the colony began to shift with the emancipation of convicts and assisted migration under the Land and Emigration Commission, which was set up under the Colonial Office in 1832. The Presbyterian minister John Dunmore Lang opposed this as he believed it would lower the moral tone of the colony by allowing Britain to send society's unwanted to the colony and that women would be forced into prostitution to support themselves. To some extent he was correct, but it was also the impetus of some of Australia's most notable religiously motivated people to put their beliefs into action. Caroline Chisholm, who had been raised in the Church of England and converted to Catholicism, took on the work of caring for the women who arrived in the colony with few resources. She set up hostels and worked to reform the conditions for emigrants through lobbying governments and public opinion in Britain. She set the tone for religious inspired lay social action in the colony.

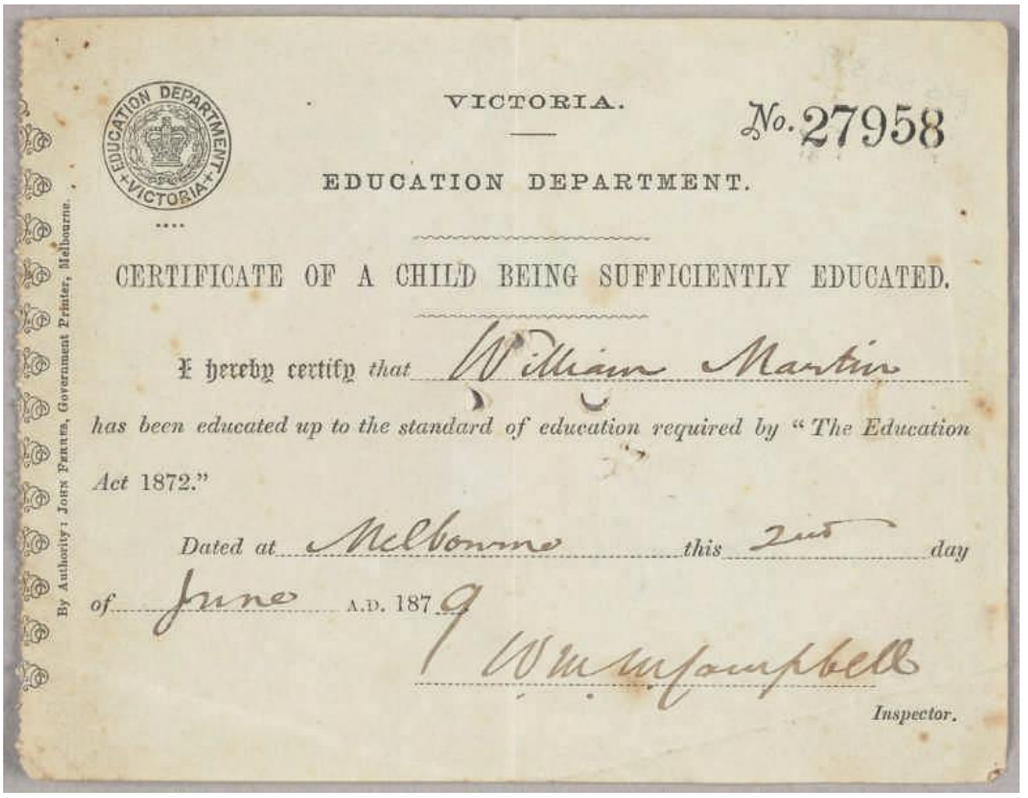
The migration between the 1830s and the Gold Rush of the 1850s reinforced the Christian identity of the colony. The migrants were British (Church of England), Irish (Catholic) and Scottish (Presbyterian and Catholic). They moved into the rural areas of NSW and Tasmania and eventually Victoria, developing communities and building churches in the rural hinterland or 'bush'. They, on the whole, developed a practical and pragmatic attitude to religious practice. Clergy were rarely seen at first. Ritual practice was linked to culture. The idea of mateship grew in these areas. Australian poet, Adam Lindsey Gordon, expressed the Australian Christian ethos and approach to the Golden Rule:

> Life is mostly froth and bubble, Two things stand like stone.
> Kindness in another's trouble, Courage in your own.

The appointment of Governor Bourke (1831–37), who was a Liberal with Enlightenment ideals, improved the situation for all religions in the colony. In 1836 he passed the Church Act which promoted religious liberty and was seen to be the granting of equality to Catholics, Anglicans and Presbyterians. This Act brought funding for the development of religious infrastructure for all religious groups. The government matched donations for buildings pound for pound up to one thousand pounds. Leaders of congregations were given stipends from the government. The benefits of the Act were that there was harmony between religious groups and the State gave religious groups protection in law; guaranteed an income to parishes; formally recognised Anglicans, Protestants and Catholics as denominations; and allowed for the building of churches that were beautiful in the colony. The Act liberated religions other than the Church of England and set a tone of tolerance in the growing colony. It also provided the impetus for religious orders, of nuns, brothers and priests, both Catholic and Church of England, to come and educate children and nurse in, and establish, hospitals.

The Protestant traditions began establishing very influential schools that were aimed at producing the leaders of the Australian community. Examples in Victoria are Scotch College in 1851 and Presbyterian Ladies College (PLC) in 1875 for the Presbyterian tradition. The influential Methodists in the colony persuaded the government to give them a significant piece of land on which to develop a school. This resulted in the building of Wesley College on St Kilda Rd (1850). The Church of England responded with the building of Melbourne Grammar (1858). The children from the wealthier families had their education catered for with world class schools. The middle and working classes found it difficult to educate their children and so most went into menial work at an early age.

Government policy and the funding of religious infrastructure remained a central focus for the development of Australia's religious groups. Because Governor Bourke's funding model was restricted to only three Christian denominations, other religions demanded a greater commitment from their adherents for the growth of their traditions. This became evident in the development of each colony's education system. With the end of transportation and the tempting wealth of the Gold Rush, liberals from Europe arrived in Australia. This was especially true of Victoria and in 1872 Enlightenment thinking led to the parliament passing the Education Act, which legislated that education would be free, compulsory and secular. It was the end of government funding for



VICTORIA.

No. 27958

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

CERTIFICATE OF A CHILD BEING SUFFICIENTLY EDUCATED.

I hereby certify that William Martin

has been educated up to the standard of education required by "The Education Act 1872."

Dated at Melbourne this 2nd day

of June A.D. 1873

Wm Campbell

Inspector.

By Authority; John Ferres, Government Printer, Melbourne.

State Library of Victoria [MS 8339]

FIGURE 3.13 One of the first certificates showing a child had completed their compulsory education and was 'sufficiently' educated (1873). Why was this an important government policy for religious groups in Victoria?

denominational schools and led to the establishment of a vibrant State school system. This Act was replicated in the other colonies.

The Catholic community had provided parish schools with the assistance of government aid and the teaching by a few religious orders; however, the impact of the Education Act was profound for the Catholic community who numerically were very large, but also impoverished. The bishops of Australia used their authority to call on missionary orders to come to Australia to become teachers in their schools. Irish and French orders responded enthusiastically. As communities built their schools the nuns and brothers provided the teaching, supported by Catholic families.

IMPACT OF SOME GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Skills: explain, analyse, interpret

1. In your own words describe the impact of Governor Bourke's 1836 Church Act on religions in the colonies.
2. In your own words describe the impact of the Education Act on the Catholic Church.
3. In a table outline the positives and negatives of the 1872 Education Act on Australian society.
4. List reasons why there was such a substantial growth in Catholic Education after 1888.
5. As a class, discuss whether Australia would be better if the Education Act had been accepted by religious denominations and all students in Australia went to a State (government) school.

RELIGION: GOVERNMENT POLICIES, TRENDS, INTERACTIONS – FEDERATION, 1901 ONWARDS

OVERVIEW

In 1901 the Immigration Restriction Act (known as the White Australia Policy) was enacted by the newly formed federal government. This resulted in the immediate deportation of tens of thousands of South Sea Islander indentured workers and significantly impacted upon the lives of Asian Australians who had come to Australia during the Gold Rush. Additionally, the new Australian Constitution did not recognise the rights of Australia's First Nations Peoples. The White Australia Policy favoured European or 'white' immigration and limited immigration from Asia. It introduced a number of tests, including a dictation test that could be given in any language at the discretion of the tester. It led to many Chinese Confucians and Taoists emigrating from Australia. It almost put an end to growth in religions other than Christianity.

At the conclusion of the Second World War in 1945, a large number of post-war immigrants, refugees from all over Europe, were given entry to Australia. This diversified the Christian and Jewish population with people arriving from different denominations or culturally different practices than the English, Irish and Scottish established churches and synagogues. In 1950 the theory of races, which underpinned much discriminatory government policy on immigration around the world, was challenged by scientists – 'Fallacies of racism exposed: UNESCO publishes Declaration by world's scientists' in *The UNESCO Courier* and a book in the same year, *The Race Question*. This was followed up by *The Race Concept: Results of an Inquiry* (1952), *Four Statements on the Race Question* (1969) and the *Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice.* Clearly around the world societies had shifted their **axioms** and **assumptions**. This shift was to have implications on government policy moving forwards.

By 1965, the major Australian political parties had removed restrictions from their approaches to immigration. With the Migration Act (1966), the Liberal and Country Party government of Harold Holt restored immigration equality, basing criteria on skills rather than race. The immigration of non-Europeans began to increase and immigrants to Australia are from many different countries. As in Australia's past, these immigrants brought their religions with them and set about establishing facilities that would enable them to express their tradition. In the 21st century the largest religion in Australia remains Christianity, though other religions continue to grow.

Since 1970 there have been a number of anti-discrimination Acts passed by the Australian Government: the Racial Discrimination Act in 1975, the Sex Discrimination Act in 1984, the Disability Discrimination Act in 1992, the Age Discrimination Act in 2004 and the Religious Discrimination Act, which is currently before Parliament. As Australia does not have a Bill of Rights religious groups are reliant on the Constitution (Clause 116 Freedom of Religion) and legislation passed by some states and territories for clarification of rights when conflict occurs. The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) has a Human Rights Act and Victoria has a Charter of Human Rights, both of which protect freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief. At times these rights come into conflict with each other.

There have been a number of challenges to freedom of religious speech to which the High Court has resorted to a range of legislation to restrict what is said by religious people who claim to be voicing beliefs. In 2004 the ministers of an evangelical group in Victoria, Catch the Fire Ministries, were charged with incitement to religious hatred after accusations by the Islamic Council of Victoria that they had vilified Muslims. They were found guilty under the 2001 Religious and Racial Tolerance Act on the grounds that they had 'presented [Islam] in a way which is essentially hostile, demeaning

Fairfax Syndication/Matt Golding

FIGURE 3.14 A cartoon highlighting the implications of a religious group making political statements that could be seen to be political and inciting hatred. It is a breach of the 2013 Charities Act. Catch the Fire Ministries (now Reformation Harvest Fire Ministries) had their status as a charity removed. What beliefs of Catch the Fire Ministries are highlighted in the cartoon?

and derogatory of all Muslim people, their God, Allah, and the prophet Mohammed and in general Muslim religious beliefs and practices' (Justice Higgins). The legislation was shown to value religious tolerance over freedom of speech. At the time, spokespeople from all of the major religions – Anglican, Catholic, Jewish, Quaker and Muslim – were supportive of the anti-vilification legislation. However, other groups argued that this was a suppression of the right of one religion to comment on the beliefs of another and so is problematic. In 2010 the High Court of Australia accepted the right of the Adelaide City Council to restrict the speech of Samuel and Caleb Corneloup, who used religious beliefs as a basis for expressing views that were anti-Muslim, anti-foreigner, anti-woman and anti-gay on the basis that the council was protecting the safety of the general public.

Questions of religious freedom and free speech have more recently been tested in the Israel Folau case (2019) in which he accused Rugby Australia of wrongfully dismissing him after he expressed statements that he said were an expression of religious beliefs, but were seen to be homophobic by the general public. This case was settled in private, but tensions between freedom of speech of religious groups and anti-vilification laws remain.

Australia as a nation has signed international treaties that are synchronised with other nations in agreeing to a number of rights; that is, 'freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief'.

Australia is often described as 'the lucky country' because of resources but also because of immigration. Australian society is devoid of an entrenched feudal upperclass because 19th-century migration brought with it revolutionary democratic ideals and worldviews from post-Enlightenment Europe. Immigrants may have come from societies with a class structure but when attempts were made to create one here, they were mocked as the 'squattocracy'. Newly arrived refugees and migrants liked the considerable social mobility within Australian society.

On any given day in contemporary Australia, people of different religions all over the nation attend their local cathedrals, synagogues, temples, mosques, churches, secular spaces of meaning and sacred sites, and celebrate important festivals and religious occasions in their homes or neighbourhoods. Some Australians attend their place of worship regularly, while others only attend on particular occasions. One may attend a place of worship daily, whereas another may only go once or twice a year, for a wedding or funeral, if at all. Almost one million young people attend religious schools in Australia – including Christian, Islamic and Jewish schools – a trend that is increasing. Although there are still some in the broader community who remain resistant to government policies that promote multicultural values and the principle of religious freedoms, there have been few barriers to non-Christian people attaining high positions in government, the law, the army and other professions of respect.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AND FREEDOM

Skills: analyse, explain

1 What have been the effects of the Anti-Discrimination Acts upon Australian society?
2 How have individuals been influenced by the Anti-Discrimination Acts?
3 Discuss why there is tension between freedom of speech and freedom of religious speech.

RELIGION: GOVERNMENT POLICIES, TRENDS, INTERACTIONS – FEDERATION, 1901 ONWARDS

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES

At the heart of First Nations Peoples' struggle to practise their spirituality has been government policies that destroyed their custodianship of the land. The policy of *Terra Nullius* that denied their existence from 1788, restricted their ability to operate as spiritual people in a sacred land. It meant that in some regions they only had restricted access to sacred sites and so could not always practise ceremonies or tell their sacred stories on their own country; their social structures were disrupted. Across the 20th century non-First Nations people chipped away at the myth that Australia was an empty land when the British arrived. There was the Wave Hill Walk-off (1966), which became the nation's longest strike. It came to an end with the iconic image of Prime Minister Gough Whitlam pouring the Earth into the hand of Vincent Lingiari, the leader of the protest. This critical event became memorialised in the song *From Little Things Big Things Grow* (1993) by Paul Kelly and Kev Carmody. In 1992 Eddie Mabo took the Queensland Government to the High Court, arguing that he and the Meriam people were the traditional owners of his island in the Torres Strait, Mer. This recognised the *Terra Nullius* was a legal fiction and acknowledged the land rights of the First Peoples. This ruling, and the progress towards a treaty with traditional custodians by State Governments, has led to a return to culture as witnessed in the rebirth of languages, the renaming of sacred sites with Aboriginal names and the renewal of ceremonies – for example, Garma Festival by the Yolgnu people. The *Uluru Statement of the Heart* (2017) remains unfinished business in this process of treaty making, land rights and sovereignty.

THE ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART

Skills: identify, interpret, explain

1 Download and read the statement, from the Uluru Statement website
2 Read and highlight the sections that refer to the spirituality of the people who wrote this invitation to the Australian public.
3 Write a personal response to the authors of the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* which includes references to your own belief system or the belief system of a religious tradition to which you belong (250 words).

National Sorry Day, now held annually in Australia on 26 May, was one of the recommendations of the *Bringing them Home* report (1997). The report was part of a Commonwealth Government inquiry into the forced removal of First Nations children from their families during more than 150 years – up until the 1980s. The report highlighted the absolute failure of this policy, and the psychological distress and long-term effects that it has had on families and individuals – at the time and still today.

In 2008 Prime Minister Kevin Rudd issued a public apology to the Stolen Generations, acknowledging the cruelty caused by this policy. Many Australian churches, such as the Uniting Church, have also apologised to First Nations Peoples for the far-reaching and devastating harm that has been caused by these policies. This public apology set in motion the government policy of 'Closing the Gap' in life expectancy between First Nations Peoples and other Australians. Progress in this area helps to preserve the health of elders and their capacity to pass on knowledge.

RELIGION: GOVERNMENT POLICIES, TRENDS, INTERACTIONS – FEDERATION, 1901 ONWARDS

JUDAISM

Acculturation and **assimilation** of immigrants were government goals to encourage a harmonious society. The Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, known as the White Australia Policy, did not list Jews but nevertheless authorities categorised Jews as white aliens – an ambiguous, transitional category. Visa applicant nominations would be considered for close relatives from any European country, but with officials granted the discretion to accept or reject applications based on perceived desirability. The distinctive characteristics and ethnicity of Eastern European Jews were of concern to the government, threatening the homogeneity of 'White Australia'.

In July 1938, 32 nations met at the Evian Conference, Switzerland, to try and solve the enormous refugee crisis caused by Jews fleeing the unprecedented brutality of Nazi Germany and Austria after attacks, mass arrests, the closing of Jewish institutions and the full destruction of Jewish economic life. The majority of nations were unwilling to help these refugees. Australia's delegate, Mr T.W. White, declared that Australia did not have a racial problem and did not want to import one. Therefore, no refugees would be admitted. The doors to Australia were even closed to schemes trying to save young German Jewish child refugees. Meanwhile the Australian borders were open to hundreds of British child evacuees. This opposition to accepting German Jewish immigrants was rooted in concerns about security, the need to maintain a cohesive society and safeguarding national economic interest. Chaim Weizmann, scientist and a leader of the British Jewish community, noted after the Evian Conference that the countries of the world were divided into two camps, those who wanted to get rid of Jews and those who refused to let them in.

During World War II, refugees fleeing Germany and Nazi-occupied countries were classed as enemy aliens by British and Australian governments. In 1940 the *HMT Dunera*, an extremely overcrowded British passenger ship, arrived in Australia after a horrific 57-day journey in dreadful conditions during which the ship was hit by a torpedo. It carried 2000 men, mostly Jewish refugees and also some Italian fascists and Nazi prisoners of war who were refused entry or deported from Britain. Both governments soon realised their misunderstanding of the Jews' predicament as non-combatant German refugees fleeing the horrors of Nazism. But so the governments would not lose face, the men were sent to internment camps in Hay, New South Wales. The internees were later offered the chance to return and fight in the British armed forces.

Martin Auer/Wikimedia Commons/CC BY SA 3.0

FIGURE 3.15 Austrian Jewish refugee Georg Auer was shipped to Australia as an enemy alien on the *Dunera*. He was kept in an internment camp until 1942, when he joined the Australian army where he served until 1946. This document was issued by the Australian Department of the Interior in lieu of a national passport to expedite his return to Austria. Why would Georg Auer be unlikely to wish to return to Austria as this Government document implies?

Arthur Calwell, post-war Australian Minister for Immigration in 1945, used the slogan, 'populate or perish' to emphasise the importance of immigration for national development and defence. He welcomed all people covered by existing legislation and rejected the religious and racial intolerance campaigns against this migration policy. Calwell encouraged close relatives of Holocaust survivors to apply to come to Australia and for Jewish Welfare Societies to process these applications. Between 1946 and 1954, 17 000 Jews, mostly Holocaust survivors, arrived from Europe and Shanghai.

A significant number of Jews came after the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, a further 10 000 arrived by 1961. The Suez Crisis of that same year triggered an exodus of Jews from Nasser's Egypt. Jews from Middle Eastern countries, even Sephardim (Jews who had lived in Spain and Arabic lands) of comparatively light complexion, were effectively barred by the White Australia Policy, enshrined in the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 that was not repealed until 1972. An easing of this barrier following Jewish community representations to government facilitated the entry of several hundred refugees from Egypt. Many Jews were also among those who migrated from Britain between 1945 and 1972 under the Assisted Passage Scheme of the Australian Government. Adult migrants were charged the very cheap fare of £10 (around $20) for the sea voyage to Australia. The 'Ten Pound Poms' sought to establish a better life for themselves. These Anglo Jews brought with them both Orthodox and Liberal Judaism.

Australia's migration post-war policies welcomed the economic growth migrants provided. Whereas the early Australian Jewish community was made up of mainly British-born adherents, today more than half of the current Australian Jewish population were born in Australia. According to the 2019 Monash University Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation Survey of the 2016 census, it enumerates Jewish migrants (in descending order of numbers) came from South Africa, Israel, the Former Soviet Union, United Kingdom and United States. Jewish adherents are not of a single ethnic, racial, linguistic or political background. They came to Australia for a variety of reasons such as avoiding religious and racial persecution, leaving behind unstable political circumstances and war, for economic improvement, and for family reunion.

Post-World War II federal government policies encouraged private school growth with subsidies for building school libraries, science laboratories, assembly halls and sports facilities. This enabled several Jewish schools to be established and flourish along with various Christian and Catholic schools who benefitted from these allocations.

FACTORS AFFECTING JEWS

Skills: identify, explain, analyse, interpret

1. What trends can you discern in the development of the Jewish community in the 20th century?
2. Why are Jews not an identifiable ethnic or racial group?
3. Why do you think migrant and ethnic groups choose to live in close proximity to each other?
4. How might living far from your religious community affect one's your religious commitment?
5. There are several documentaries, books and articles about 'The Dunera Boys'. Also the Jewish Museum in East St Kilda has resource material. What sort of internees were on board *HMT Dunera?* Find out about their fate during the voyage and what happened to them afterwards.

RELIGION: GOVERNMENT POLICIES, TRENDS, INTERACTIONS – FEDERATION, 1901 ONWARDS

CHRISTIANITY

The effect of the policy to have a 'White Australia' moved the focus of the mainstream community to religious rather than racial differences. This impacted on people's employment opportunities, location of geographic settlement and the political parties they followed. Between Federation and the 1970s this trend in discrimination based on religious affiliation was entrenched in Australian society and kept Catholics in working-class positions and Protestants in the upper and ruling class of the nation.

It was commonly known which workplaces, government and private, would accept which of the religious groups. The railways, the port and the police in Victoria were dominated by Catholics whereas what is now Australia Post, the legal and medical professions were dominated by Protestants. Suburbs were divided along main roads with one side being government-supported housing commission houses for lower working-class Catholics and the other side of the road

Californian bungalow homes that housed Protestants. In rural areas there were towns whose identities were shaped by the dominant religious groups, for example towns in the Wimmera that were predominantly Lutheran. Politically, the working class, who were mainly Catholic, became politically active through unions in the 1890s and with Federation they founded in 1901 the Labor Party which became the party of choice for Catholics. There were a range of small parties such as the Protectionist Party, the Free Trade Party and the United Party which, on the whole, represented the interests of landholders and wealthier members of the community whose religious affiliation was often Anglican or other Protestant denominations. With the outbreak of World War II these parties united to form the Liberal Party of Australia (1944) which became the government of power until 1972.

This was also a period in which the trend was for religion to impact on most aspects of a citizen's life in terms of how they shaped their own identity, the choices they made in careers and relationships and the way they were judged by society on the whole. This trend was fed by the fact that most clergy, both Catholic and Protestant, were trained in Britain. This antagonism between denominations changed with the Church of England of Australia establishing their independence from England in 1962, and the introduction of the practice of appointing Australian, not Irish, Catholics as bishops and leaders of Congregations. The opening up of Australia to migrants from Europe in the 1960s and from the sub-continent and Asia from the 1970s brought the arrival of both Catholics and Protestants whose worldview was very different from the hostilities that survived since the First Fleet between Catholics and Protestants of British origin. It also allowed for more positive relationships between different Christian denominations and other faith traditions.

With regard to Christian Orthodoxy in Australia, the Eastern, Russian, Albanian, Antiochian, Serbian Orthodox communities, and others, have similar stories to tell as the Greek Orthodox about their beginnings and development in Australia over the 20th century. Migration was restricted, even for Europeans, under the White Australia Policy. However, Greek sailors had from the Gold Rush period abandoned ship, deciding to try their luck in Australia. The first Greek Orthodox churches were established in Sydney and Melbourne in the early decades of the 20th century and by the 1960s most states and territories had Greek Orthodox places of worship and, by the 1960s, a monastery was established in New South Wales. It was common at this time for Greek migrants to change their names to ones more acceptable to British migrants and to assimilate into mainstream life, but in their homes they continued to follow the traditions of culture and religion. In 1964 the federal government began to provide funding for the establishment of religious schools and this allowed the Greek Orthodox Church to begin building their own schools – a trend that has continued. This has helped to shape Melbourne, in particular, which is said to be the third largest Greek city in the world.

The 1960s was a time of radical social change globally and the impact on Christianity and its practice in Australia was substantial. This was the time when the large demographic of post-war babies (the baby boomers) came of age. On the whole they refused to accept the inevitability of conflict between races and religions and instead had a mantra of 'peace' and 'love'. Conflict was instead with their parents who were still attached to a pre-war view of the world (the generation gap). It was a time of inter-religious and inter-racial marriage that broke down barriers. The United Nations had been established and it gave the world the Declaration of Human Rights that said individuals should have the right to freely practise their religion. The Catholic Church called

Vatican II, a council of the Church that reformed the relationship the Church was to have with society. It was a vision of reforming the world from within society instead of isolating itself from the community. It accepted the integrity of both other Christian traditions and world religions. It recognised Christianity's role in the persecution of the Jewish people. These international movements helped to reshape Christianity in Australia.

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FIGURE 3.16 Sheik Abdullah Khan, chair of the Islamic Cultural Centre; Australian Catholic University Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Hayden Ramsey; Bishop Michael McKenna, chair of the Bishops Commission for Christian Unity and Interreligious Dialogue; and Dr Ibrahim Abu Mohammed, the Grand Mufti of Australia, with the signed interfaith commitment statement. How does society benefit from interfaith dialogue?

Across the 20th century there arose religious leaders who were also interested in interfaith dialogue. There are global forums that Australia's religious leaders participate in, such as the Parliament of World Religions. In Australia there are bodies such as the National Council of Churches, the JCMA (Jewish, Christian, Muslim Association) and at a student level there is the Building Bridges programme run in schools.

There is also a developing movement towards Ecumenism whose aim it is to find unity in Christianity through dialogue between Christian denominations. This began in 1944 as a response to Christianity's role in the war. The best example of ecumenism's success has been the establishment of the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) through the dialogue between the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregationalist Traditions to form one Uniting Church. There has been substantial work done in this area internationally between Catholics and Lutherans in signing the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification in 1998. There are groups dedicated to promoting ecumenism in Australia through joint worship – for example, the Palm Sunday marches for refugees in Melbourne and ecumenical gatherings to sing Christmas carols or people attending the local churches of other Christian denominations on Pentecost Sunday.

TRENDS INFLUENCING CHRISTIANITY

Skills: identify, summarise, interpret, discuss

1. After reading this material identify the dominant trends in Christianity before 1960.
2. After reading this material identify the dominant trends in Christianity after 1960.
3. Using your summaries of the pre- and post-1960 trends, write a short paragraph (100 words) on what changed the way Christians related to each other in this period.
4. Looking at the trend in Christianity in recent times, what do you think will be the shape of Christianity in Australia in the future?
5. Discuss whether religious diversity in Christianity in Australia is a good thing.

The records in R. Fogarty's book *Catholic Education in Australia 1805–1950* show that between 1888 and 1950 Catholic education expanded from 508 to 1199 parish primary schools. By 2020 further expansion saw a total of 1755 primary and secondary schools. This growth in education was the basis for Catholics to become socially mobile and there is evidence of this in the number of Catholics found in leadership positions in politics, the law and medical fields. Their success led to the government reviewing government aid for schools in 1970. The Whitlam Government in 1973 introduced a needs-based funding model. Today a range of religious groups benefit from government funding in order to support their schools. In Victoria there is significant growth in religious schools with Adventist and other Christian denominations, Buddhist and Islamic traditions, now committed to religious education.

EXPRESSION OF COLLECTIVE RELIGIOUS IDENTITY THROUGH ASPECTS OF RELIGION

CONTEMPORARY FIRST NATIONS SPIRITUALITY

The traditional owners of Victoria now have a public event at which they share their collective identity with the people of Melbourne. The annual Melbourne Arts Festival now opens with a Tanderrum ceremony held in Federation Square. This ceremony is a gathering of all the clans of Victoria, the Wurundjeri/Woiwurrung, Boon Wurrung, Taungurung, Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung language groups of the Eastern Kulin Nation. Each mob draws from their own language and songlines to reveal the sacredness of the ceremony and the sacredness of the place. It draws in the broader community through sharing the spiritual experience with the elders and their communities.

Just as Tanderrum is a powerful way of expressing the oneness of people and the land, nationally the expression of this belief has become central to defining the collective identity of First Nations Peoples through broadly accepted protocols that encourage the ritual of having a person from a local clan perform a 'Welcome to Country' ceremony. In doing this the local people's spirituality is acknowledged and the nature of the ceremony in their area expresses particular beliefs that are integral to their identity.

When an elder cannot be present for a Welcome Ceremony, then the community is asked to perform an Acknowledgement of Country as a way of showing respect to the people of a living culture who are custodians for the land. In doing this the people recognise the collective identity of the First Nations Peoples whose spirituality is part of the area. Another ritual that many will have

seen that expresses the beliefs of the people is the smoking ceremony. This is a healing ceremony in which bad spirits are removed.

These public rituals have become powerful tools for First Nations Peoples to share with the Australian community their beliefs and have their collective identity recognised. They are a small start to healing the damage that was done to their spiritual practices by colonisation.

ASPECTS OF RELIGION IN SPIRITUALITIES OF FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES
Skills: describe, research, draw conclusions

1. What aspects of religion are evident in Tanderrum? In what ways do these aspects support each other to express beliefs?
2. Research the activities that happened during National Aboriginal and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week in the last 12 months through their website and write a paragraph outlining how these activities use the aspects of religion to express the collective identity of Australia's First Nations Peoples.
3. Watch *10 Canoes or In My Blood it Runs* or episodes from *Cleverman*. Discuss the ways First Nations Peoples are using film to express their collective identity to the rest of the nation. Is this an effective way to educate, inform and shape Australia's spiritual identity?

EXPRESSION OF COLLECTIVE RELIGIOUS IDENTITY THROUGH ASPECTS OF RELIGION

CHRISTIANITY

The collective identity of the Catholic Church in the colony's beginnings was influenced by changes to the leadership within the aspect of social structures. Tension existed between the largely Irish Catholic community and the government until the Church appointed members of the English Benedictine order to administer the Catholic Church in the colony. This was a new direction as it gave the government in Britain a way of providing Catholics in the colony with leadership that was British and whose vision of the Church was not in conflict with the Church of England and the sovereign. Father Ullathorne arrived in 1833 to be the first vicar-general in the colony and the first bishop was also a Benedictine, John Bede Polding, who arrived in 1835. Polding had a vision for the colony that was both spiritual and pastoral. He declared Sydney an Abbey Diocese in 1843 and gained permission to build a Benedictine Monastery in 1845. It was to set an intellectual and less political tone for the Church in the colony; it was to be an Australian Church. He said:

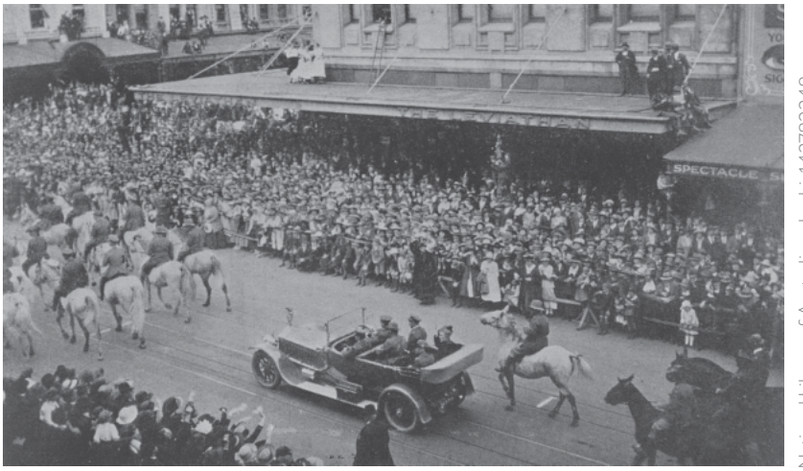
> Before everything else we are Catholics; and next, by a name swallowing up all distinctions or origins, we are Australians; from whatsoever land we or our parents have arrived hither, be it from Ireland, from France, from England, from Scotland, from Germany, we are no longer Irishmen, Frenchmen and Englishmen and Scotchmen, but Australians, and the man who seeks by word or writing to perpetuate invidious distinctions is an enemy to our peace and prosperity...
>
> The Pastoral Letter of John Bede Polding at the commencement of Lent 1856.

Polding promoted in the Catholic community his vision for a socially just society. He was known for his great care of the convicts and their families and he aimed to establish a Catholicism that was in tune with the spirituality of Australia. To this end Polding established relationships

with the First Nations Peoples and argued for their rights in public forums. He led the writing of a Pastoral Letter on the Christian duty to the Aboriginal people in 1869 in order to influence government policy.

> We have dispossessed the aboriginals of the soil … in natural justice we are held to compensation … Alas! It is shocking to think of what has, in fact, been done. With very little, with short-lived exception, injustice, neglect, cruelty, and a million times worse, the actual teaching of vice, have branded the annals of white men. The stain of blood is upon us – blood has been shed far otherwise than in self-defence – blood in needless and wanton cruelty …
>
> The Pastoral Letter of the Archbishop and Bishops of the Province, 1869, pp. 14–16.

However, by 1847 it was obvious that his vision was not economically viable and a new direction began in the social structure of Catholicism in Australia. What replaced the English Benedictine vision of Bishop Polding was an Irish Catholic Church for Australia. The appointment of bishops demonstrated the Church's willingness to establish an Irish Church and the enthusiastic acceptance by the community for the appointment of Irish bishops showed their desire to express a Catholicism that was linked to the world that remained in their hearts as their home.



National Library of Australia, nla.obj-143782348

FIGURE 3.17 A Catholic show of strength at the 1920 St Patrick's Day Parade – Archbishop Mannix is in the car. What aspect of religion is evident here? What does this gathering suggest was the attitude of those who attended, both to their religion and to broader society?

In the 20th century the social structure of the Catholic Church remained strongly hierarchical and was used to express the Catholic identity of the Church in Australia. The highpoint for Irish Catholics came with the appointment of Daniel Mannix (1864–1963) as Archbishop of Melbourne.

Mannix was articulate and determined to raise the living standards of Catholics. When Prime Minister Hughes proposed conscription to ensure troops to fight in World War I, Mannix became the spokesperson for the anti-conscription movement. He was a hero for the working class and oppressed. His longevity as archbishop helped him to establish a firm Irish Catholic identity that endured until his death and the arrival of migrants from Mediterranean Europe. It was a Catholicism that was anti-establishment, anti-authoritarian and fiercely loyal to the idea of Irish independence in what they believed to be their true 'home' – Ireland. Religiously, Australians had not yet abandoned their Anglo/Celtic identities for the egalitarian Australian ethos of mateship.

At that time Australia was strongly sectarian. Some workplaces would not hire Catholics if they applied, Protestants and Catholics did not intermarry, tension was rife between the denominations. Catholic children on the streets called their neighbours 'Proddy dogs' as they were in turn called 'Catholic frogs' and stones were thrown. Cracker night in November was celebrated as a reminder of the ruling class' distrust of Catholics as the stories of 'home', England and Guy Fawkes were told. Each year the orange and green worn on St Patrick's Day reminded the community of the violent tensions that remained in the Catholic 'home' of Ireland.

RELIGIOUS COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

Skills: identify, explain, discuss

1. Why does discrimination help a religious community to develop and maintain a collective identity?
2. Which religious groups in Australia today are having their religious identity strengthened through discrimination? Which aspects of religion are they using to respond to this tension?
3. Are processions and largely public displays of religious identity a positive or a negative for society?
4. Which symbols are mentioned in the article to indicate collective identity?

In the 1950s and 1960s Mannix, and the Catholic Church's identity in society, were strongly influenced by a European approach through political journalist and commentator B.A. Santamaria. His vision for religion was not linked to Ireland and was more intellectual and politically astute about global trends. He was shaped by the encroachment of communism in Europe and its attraction to members of the Labor Party in Australia. He was pivotal in splitting the Labor Party through the establishment of the Democratic Labor Party (DLP). Santamaria recognised the collective power of Catholics in Australia in shaping policy, both locally in discussions of education funding but also in foreign policy. He was savvy in his use of the new information technology – television. His views led to debate and division in the Catholic Church that stretched from the public arena in the union movement, to the pulpit and around the kitchen table. He demonstrated that lay Catholics had a place in the social structure of the Church.

Significantly the sectarianism that divided the nation was not supported by Prime Minister Robert Menzies, who was a Scottish Presbyterian. In 1964 he told an audience 'whether we be Catholic or Protestant or Jewish or Muslim, the end remains clear: We have an overwhelming duty to serve our country on the highest level and to the best of our talents.' It was a position that brought criticism of him from those who wanted the public displays of street processions by Catholics stopped; however, Menzies resisted this pressure in favour of a commitment to religious freedom in the nation.

The power of Santamaria's organisation, 'The Movement', came to an end with the more tolerant approach of Vatican II, the death of Mannix and the election of Gough Whitlam as prime minister of Australia. This was the start of the period we recognise today, in which the collective identity of Catholics changed radically as tensions between Christian groups subsided, ecumenism was born and tolerance was cemented by the Baby Boomer generation whose ethos was peace, love and harmony. It was a period when inter-marriage between Christian groups became common and religion became taboo as a discussion in family gatherings. Images of the Sacred Heart were no longer mandatory in Catholic homes and the nightly rosary disappeared. Anti-discrimination laws resulted in Catholics no longer being an oppressed group in the community and the hard work of Catholic educators had turned this religious group into a socially mobile community climbing the ladder to positions that included the prime ministership (Paul Keating, Kevin Rudd, Tony Abbott to name a few).

RELIGION AND POLITICS

Skills: observe, explain, discuss

1. What did B.A. Santamaria and 'The Movement' contribute to the collective identity of Catholics in Australia?
2. Why would the Catholic Church and the Labor Party share similar membership in this period?
3. Discuss whether religious people should use their beliefs to influence politics.

The waves of migration that shaped the development of Australia since the Gold Rush determined the dominant streams of religious practice over time to the present day. Australia, although an isolated island continent, has consistently been impacted by major global events including revolutions, wars, disasters and extreme poverty. The people who have arrived as a result of such events have brought with them their religions, local beliefs, superstitions and celebration of festivals. Each wave has shared these either through inter-marriage or neighbourly relationships. The result of this has been the beginnings of an interpretation of each religion that has an Australian character.

In 2008, Pope Benedict XVI visited Australia for World Youth Day (WYD). This week-long celebration of Catholicism, which focuses on youth, is celebrated every two to three years in different locations around the world. The Sydney festival was attended by 26 cardinals, 420 bishops and thousands of priests and approximately 500 000 young people from around the world. The Final Mass in Sydney was the largest gathering of people in Australia's history with attendance numbers estimated at 300 000 to 400 000 people. The Final Mass is the last event in WYD celebrations.

There are times in history when values shift and a hope-filled period follows. The challenge of these periods is that they call for courage and vision by leaders to take advantage of opportunities for strengthening and growth. The UCA was a community facing this type of challenge. They were formed in 1977 through uniting three Christian denominations – the Congregational Church, the Methodist Church and most of the Presbyterian Church of Australia. Their willingness to implement change meant the existing structures of the three denominations needed to be reviewed as they came together as one. Prior to uniting, the churches had mutually found a desire to be an Australian church. They wanted to be a church focused on Christian unity rather than antagonism and competition; and they wanted a vision that was focused on addressing questions of social justice in Australia. They finally agreed upon a structure; the Uniting Church is non-hierarchical. Instead there are a number of interrelated councils that have particular areas of responsibility and can make decisions in those areas. These four independent, yet interconnected, councils are: the Congregation (local) the Presbytery (regional) the Synods (state) and the Assembly (national). Each council has a chairperson but the chair does not have controlling authority. All members of the Uniting Church – male, female, ordained or lay – can be a part of these councils. Decision making in these councils is by consensus.

When the three Churches combined into a new entity called the Uniting Church, they felt the need for a new symbol to represent their creed. The following text discusses the meaning of the UCA's logo.

> The logo of the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) shows the cross of Jesus Christ, in its light and love, standing over a darkened world – redeeming it through grace and truth. By that cross people are bound to Christ and each other. The Holy Spirit, symbolised by the dove with the wings of flame, empowers and guides us to be witnesses to Jesus Christ. The wide U at the bottom points to the fact that we are uniting; as a semicircle it also reminds us that the renewing of both Church and world are as yet incomplete.

Uniting Church in Australia

FIGURE 3.18 The emblem of the Uniting Church in Australia. Which of the symbols used in the logo is dominant? Why was this symbol emphasised?

EXPLORING UNITING CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

Skills: identify, interpret, explain, synthesise

1. Australia is the only country using the name 'Uniting Church' – everywhere else it is called the United Church. What reasons might there be for Australia using the term 'uniting'?
2. What are the implications of the structure of authority of the Uniting Church for the way in which members of the tradition are able to participate in the tradition?
3. What issues relating to social structure and other aspects would this 1977 challenge to unite the denominations have presented to the members of the participating churches?

Newspix/Craig Greenhill

FIGURE 3.19 A Hillsong service at the Sydney Entertainment Centre. Which aspects of religion are being expressed in this service?

The Pentecostal Church is made up of a number of different churches that place an emphasis on experiencing the Holy Spirit in their services through music, dance, trances and speaking in tongues. Pentecostalism emerged from the Protestant (non-Catholic) tradition. It is unique in Australia in that it has not grown and developed as a result of patterns of migration but has emerged from members'

dissatisfaction with other Christian movements. The first Pentecostal Church was founded in Australia, in 1909, by Sarah Jane Lancaster, a former Methodist from Williamstown, in Melbourne. In the last two decades, the Pentecostal Church has expanded rapidly, and its adherents attend regularly; however, they do not always attend the same community but tend to 'congregation hop'.

PENTECOSTALISM

Skills: research, outline, interpret, synthesise

1 How does the Pentecostal Church in Australia express its collective identity?

Overall, Christianity in Australia in the 21st century in its many denominations is an eclectic mix of reactionary, orthodox and progressive beliefs and practices which impact on the expression of each community's collective identity. For the adherent there is a congregation or community able to facilitate the expression of their beliefs and meet their pastoral needs. Christians can worship in awe-inspiring gothic cathedrals, small intimate community chapels, historic monasteries or in halls and large stadiums, with each highlighting their own understanding of the relationship with God.

Essential in the expression of beliefs in Christianity are symbols such as the cross, crucifixes, stained glass windows, paintings and statues in Orthodox, Catholic and High Anglican churches. Whereas some Pentecostal groups do not use traditional religious symbols, they instead use symbols of a unified community speaking to a modern world to express their collective identity.

Expression of beliefs through the social structures in Christianity now range from strictly hierarchical interpretations of institutional churches such as the obedience of the Opus Dei community in Catholicism to denominations that use more democratic models, such as the appointment of ministers by parishes in the Anglican tradition or the election of leaders in the four non-hierarchical councils of the Uniting Church. Between these two models is the Vatican II structure of mainstream Catholicism, which turns the hierarchy on its head by teaching that those with power should be servants of all – though the implementation of this teaching is still in process.

From the 1600s CE the proclamation of the Gospel message is a way of distinguishing between the collective identity of different Christian traditions. In the Protestant tradition the proclamation of the Gospel and the Letters of St Paul is generally open to all members of the group, especially in evangelical communities. The breaking open and exploration of the Word of God is the central focus of prayer. It is the adherent's gift to be able to read and interpret the sacred texts. The proclamation of the Good News is often lengthy, personal, passionate and aimed at inspiring the congregation.

In the Orthodox and Catholic traditions the Scriptures are taught through catechesis, particularly in a homily delivered by a priest who has had academic training in a seminary, though the rigour of this can vary greatly. Catholicism and the Orthodox tradition are more focused on encountering God through sacraments – outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace. So the Eucharistic bread and wine, and the presence of an altar, are essential artefacts in the expression of the tradition's belief in the need to give thanks for the sacrifice made by Jesus Christ for the salvation of God's creation – especially humankind. Their collective identity is as a Eucharistic community.

The contemporary media give most attention to the expression of the collective identity of different religious traditions and their denominations by focusing on their stances on ethical issues. Texts such as press releases, or reports by authorised groups within traditions, are used

by Christian denominations to advocate for a vision of society expressed in their interpretation of sacred texts. These stances are sometimes supported by public gatherings or street marches in order to influence government decision making. In the Uniting Church, Anglican and Catholic denominations this is often seen in their support of groups which they deem have been treated unjustly by governments. At the moment First Nations Peoples, asylum seekers and refugees, and protection of the Earth are particular foci. There are specific groups within traditions that take strong stances to express their ethical views that provides them with a collective identity that shapes their lives and the public perception of their religious traditions – for example, the Right for Life movement which argues against abortion, Broken Rites which aims to develop awareness of clerical abuse, **PFLAG** which supports and advocates for **LGBTIQA+** persons and **ACRATH** which aims to end modern slavery. Through work and advocacy these groups have developed a distinctive Christian identity.

COLLECTIVE IDENTITY IN CHRISTIANITY

Skills: describe, research, review, analyse

1 Describe the collective identity of the Christian community to which you belong or that you have researched.

2 From your understanding of history as explored in this chapter and in Chapter 2, discuss how different emphasis on Christian beliefs has led to diversity in Christian identities in Australia.

EXPRESSION OF COLLECTIVE RELIGIOUS IDENTITY THROUGH ASPECTS OF RELIGION

CHINESE SPIRITUALITY

Australia's Chinese population has been increasing since the 1930s. There is now a significant number of people from China, Malaysia, Hong King and Singapore who are influenced by Confucian, Taoist and some Buddhist religious thought that is linked to the Lunar New Year. Australia has some of the most celebratory and distinctive festivities of anywhere in the world outside of China for this festival. The Dragon or Lion Dance is a central feature that shows the community chasing away any evil spirits and welcoming in wisdom and good fortune. To aid this, sacrifices are made to the ancestors. Each year is connected to a particular animal of the Chinese zodiac that shows the passage of time and the influence of the spirit world on history.

EXPRESSION OF COLLECTIVE RELIGIOUS IDENTITY THROUGH ASPECTS OF RELIGION

HINDUISM AND SIKHISM

Both of these traditions observe the Festival of Lights, Diwali, celebrating the victory of light over darkness. In order to develop an understanding of this festival in the broader community, the Indian and Australian governments have joined to establish a group called 'Celebrate India'. Each year in Melbourne there is a celebration of this religious event via costume, dance, food and art through Mandala making based on a ritual display of the importance of light. Even some of Melbourne's trams are painted at this time to make the Melbourne public aware of the coming of Diwali.

Getty Images/ Umang Gajjar

FIGURE 3.20 Melbourne's Diwali celebrations in Federation Square. Which aspects of religion are evident in this image of the Diwali festival?

During the bushfires of 2020 and the COVID pandemic the Sikh community expressed their commitment to hospitality through a collective effort of feeding those who were affected. This commitment reflects the work of the Sikh community in their sacred site of the Harmandir Sahib in Amritsar, the Golden Temple. It is a regular expression of their beliefs that normally happens at their local temple, but during these disasters the volunteers responded to the need to help others.

Fairfax Syndication/SIMON SCHLUTER

FIGURE 3.21 Sikh volunteers provide meals for bushfire victims in 2020. What symbols are used to show the collective identity of the Sikh men?

EXPRESSION OF COLLECTIVE RELIGIOUS IDENTITY THROUGH ASPECTS OF RELIGION

JUDAISM

Jews consider themselves as belonging to *Am Yisrael*, a nation or people, in addition to theological and cultural dimensions of their collective identity.

The earliest Jewish settlers in Australia struggled to maintain their Jewish identity when they were so few in number and scattered across the colonies. But as their numbers grew, especially in larger towns, they formed Jewish burial societies and created Jewish sections of cemeteries. They formed small congregations for worship and to celebrate the Sabbath and festivals, which in turn led to the building of community meeting places – synagogues and other social and welfare institutions.

As the Jewish population grew in number and economic stability, their confidence in the new Australian environment was reflected in their social structures. When Melbourne expanded, Victorian Jews chose to live in close proximity to each other to ease their integration into Australian society while maintaining their Jewish culture. They built synagogues in walking distance which ran Hebrew and Jewish studies classes and established kosher butchers and food stores in their neighbourhoods.

Jews acted on issues of concern to their religious community through social welfare organisations developed to support those in need such as orphans, the elderly and those living in poverty. These organisations still exist today, catering for the needs of the wider Jewish community. They include *Bnei Brith*, a fellowship lodge and women's organisations such as the National Council of Jewish Women.

Gradually Melbourne's Jewish communities spread from central Melbourne and Carlton into neighbouring suburbs of Elwood, Caulfield, Kew and Balwyn. In more recent times there are flourishing Jewish communities in South Caulfield, Bentleigh, East St Kilda, Toorak and Malvern. These suburbs all have synagogues, stores where kosher food may be purchased, adult and children's classes for learning Hebrew and engaging in their Judaism as well as an assortment of youth groups.

Joyofmuseums/Wikimedia Commons/CC BY SA 4.0

FIGURE 3.22 Jewish Museum of Australia – which has educational sections on Jewish history generally and in Australia, rituals, symbols, synagogues and stories of migrants – provides guided tours of the museum and offers a changing display of various arts. What does such a venue communicate about the collective identity of the Jewish community in Melbourne?

The high number of Holocaust survivors and their families in Melbourne in particular makes them very sensitive to cases of anti-Semitism and discrimination against individuals, especially Jews, but also many are active in supporting refugees of all backgrounds. The Holocaust Museum and the publication of many local survivor autobiographies are a conscious effort to inform the wider Australian public about the horrors of the Nazi era and through education to counter prejudice and discrimination.

Today, public celebrations of Jewish festivities are held in parks in the Jewish neighbourhoods, and even in Federation

Square in the city, where everyone of all faiths is invited to participate with them. Jewish music performances and artists are prominently displayed in the newspapers and on advertising posters. There is a popular annual Jewish Film Festival and the Melbourne Jewish Museum, all evidence of the proud stance collectively held by this community.

Though there are many sub-groups within the Jewish community in regard to countries of origin, languages spoken at home, range of religious customs and degree of observance to tradition, their collective identity is bound strongly by their shared history. Rituals, prayers, festivals, fast days, sabbath and community celebrations of births, bar and bat mitzvahs, weddings and funerals are all occasions for Jews to collectively share and proudly display their Jewish roots and culture.

JEWISH COMMUNAL IDENTITY

Skills: describe, explain, analyse

1 Why is it inaccurate to call Jews a racial group?

2 In what ways do Jews display their communal identity to the wider community?

EXPRESSION OF COLLECTIVE RELIGIOUS IDENTITY THROUGH ASPECTS OF RELIGION

ISLAM

In the colonial period Islamic collective identity was expressed in the building of the nation's first mosque by Afghan camel drivers in Maree, outback South Australia. Evidence of the growth in the community and its stabile presence in Australian society was seen in the building of the Great Mosque in Adelaide (1885) by their descendants. This mosque has become a place to visit for Muslims coming to Australia. Around 1884, the confidence of the Islamic community in Melbourne was expressed when 70 Muslims gathered to celebrate Eid by praying together in a gathering in Albert Park. It was reported at the time that 'during the whole service the worshippers wore a remarkably reverential aspect'.

The introduction of the White Australia Policy in 1901 largely put an end to growth in the Islamic community in Australia, although Muslims from the Balkans and Albania were fair-skinned enough to be allowed in. The Albanian Islamic community mainly settled in Shepparton and built Victoria's first mosque and became an active and thriving part of the local community. They now have four mosques in the city and an active Interfaith Council which includes all major faiths including Islam. An example of their ability to express their collective Muslim identity is found in the 'Cultural Kitchen Project' in which the different religious traditions can share their traditional foods at the time of major religious festivals like Eid.

By the 1960s Australia was welcoming Islamic migrants from Turkey in particular. Also the Civil War in Lebanon (1975–90) led many Lebanese to Australia and today the largest ethnic group in the Australian Muslim community is Lebanese, followed by Turkish. Over this same period, growth in the Sunni tradition has led to the establishment of community organisations

that lobby governments for funding for schools, halal certification and government grants. These organisations are also the public face of Islam when spokespeople are needed. The Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC), founded in 1964, now has branches in each state. In 1988 they appointed a Grand Mufti of Australia as a leading figure in their social structure.

Contemporary Australian Islam is ethnically diverse with people from more than 60 countries. Each of these communities has their own culture and way of expressing their collective identity. Evidence of this is seen in the breadth of the denominations, sects and their beliefs. The largest denomination is Sunni, but there are also communities of Shi'a, Ahmadiyya, Ibadi, Sufi, Isma'ili and Druze. The difference in the expression of their collective identity is seen in the architecture of the mosques. There are Turkish mosques whose structures echo the Sultan Ahmed Mosque (Blue Mosque) in Istanbul and are inscribed with Ottoman calligraphy. This is expressing a collective identity in their community that has a two cultures, one identity approach. On the other hand, there is the mosque at the Australian Islamic Centre at Newport (Melbourne) which dramatically adapts an Islamic aesthetic to the Australian context. It shows a community wanting to express its collective identity as both authentically Muslim in an Australian way. An example of the adaptation to an Australian context is the lack of minarets on this mosque. The call to prayer here and in all Mosques in Australia now happens internally, and is not heard beyond the Mosque premises. This recognises that the Muslim communities exist in suburbs in which the broadcast call to prayer would be disruptive of others and not serve the traditional purpose it would have in a majority Muslim nation. This exclusion is compensated for through the inclusion of dramatic use of light, colour and water that reflect the significance of these in Islam. As a third example there is the new mosque built in Punchbowl in NSW, which also does not have traditional minarets, but still has a primary focus on projecting the call to prayer into a community that is over one third Muslim.

Shutterstock.com/Pawonike Gallery

FIGURE 3.23 Muslim community in Perth WA celebrates Eid Al Adha by coming to celebrations together in a park. What does this image indicate about the collective identity of Muslims in Australia?

Currently the identity of Islam in Australia reflects its diversity not only in denominational adherence and ethnic background (with more than half of the population being born overseas) but also its diversity in the degree of adherence to religious norms. Demographically the tradition is very young both in its time in the nation and in the age of its membership. It is a youthful tradition that is on the journey to finding a distinctive Australian identity. Also, the census shows that Muslims face the challenge of having, overall, a lower socio-economic status than the mainstream. This means there are many challenges that, overall, lead to their collective identity being expressed in a myriad of ways.

ISLAMIC COMMUNAL IDENTITY

Skills: identify, analyse, explain

1 Why are sacred places and spaces so important for Islam in Australia?

2 What example of collective identity mentioned above best reflects the view of Islam that you held before reading? Would you focus on a different example now?

PERSONAL MEANING AND IDENTITY EXPRESSED THROUGH ASPECTS OF RELIGION

OVERVIEW

The colonists, when they arrived in 1788, would have seen evidence of an ancient people's personal search for meaning and identity told in the stories and symbols of the rock paintings that marked out sacred sites; in the burial rituals of decorated hollow logs that contained the remains of the dead; and in environmental practices such as **Cool Burning** that showed their spiritual relationship of interdependence with the land.

The early penal colony did not allow for any public alternative expression of beliefs. Attendance at the Church of England services was compulsory. Personal expressions of belief were important as they helped the convicts to maintain not only their religious beliefs but their links to their homeland. There are stories of Catholic convicts saying rosaries and conducting prayer services in their homes when they were emancipated.

With the arrival of free settlers and the end of transportation, public places of worship became important for the personal expression of faith. The first grand buildings in New South Wales were the churches built through the sacrifice and labour of members of different Christian traditions. This spread to the other colonies and places of worship developed for the Jewish, Muslim and Chinese religions, facilitating expression of their beliefs and their identity as individuals of faith. Artefacts and stories from this period highlight the way these early settlers expressed their beliefs through the aspects of religion.

In 1812 Michael Hayes, a Catholic emancipist, wrote:

> The Catholics here are destitute of prayer and other religious books. Three thousand or more prayer books would be required as well as catechisms for the children born here … A Roman Catholic priest or two, to get the sanction of government at home and come here, would derive more from a living than a parish priest in Ireland.

Although a Catholic priest Jeremiah O'Flynn did arrive without permission in 1817, his pastoral ministry was brief. There is a story that he left a sacred artefact – a consecrated eucharistic host – which became a precious focal symbol for Catholics who met in secret to pray in the homes of William Davis and James Dempsey. This use of symbol, artefact and ritual helped sustain the individuals in their Catholic identity until the sanctioned arrival of Fathers Therry and Connolly in 1820.

In the 1860s a young woman's Catholic faith, and her compassion for the poor, led to her adopting a lifestyle that not only allowed her to find personal meaning in her life, but over the following decades impacted on thousands of other young women who followed her example. Mary MacKillop began a religious order of Australian nuns called the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart. She established a code of practice, or the Josephite Rule, for the order that made them self-governing and required them to be dedicated to a life of poverty and service by educating and caring for the destitute. Her strong commitment to leading an ethical life often resulted in her being in conflict with the Catholic hierarchy, even leading to her excommunication. She appealed to Pope Pius IX for assistance and he recognised her order and her governance of it. Her nuns wore a simple and distinctive brown habit that led to them affectionately being called 'The Brown Joeys'. Mary MacKillop's personal expression of her faith through beliefs, social structures, ethics and spiritual experiences made her a model for the Australian Catholic Church and she was canonised the nation's first saint in 2010.

Alamy Stock Photo/Amer Ghazzal /ArkReligion.com

FIGURE 3.24 Sculpture by Judith Rolevink, 2009, of St Mary MacKillop in Mary MacKillop Plaza, St Francis Xavier Cathedral, Adelaide, South Australia. What does this sculpture show about Mary MacKillop's personal meaning and identity?

In Australia under the White Australia Policy a personal commitment to finding meaning through religious belief overwhelmingly meant loyalty to either Protestantism or Catholicism. There remained small and resilient communities of religions other than Christianity, but these were very small minorities who often hid their identities because of the nation's policy of assimilation.

However, this changed with the post-war migration. Evidence of personal faith was seen in people's dress, jewellery, religious artefacts in gardens or in houses. Although Australia was intended to be a secular country living by the values and ethos of an Anglo/Saxon/Celtic heritage, by the 1970s it became clear that this was neither desirable, practical or the reality of Australian life. It was evident that Australia was a multicultural country and the government officially recognised this in the policies and rhetoric of the 1970s. Today, people's expression of religious beliefs and their symbolic and ritual practices are openly discussed, debated and shared.

PERSONAL MEANING AND IDENTITY EXPRESSED THROUGH ASPECTS OF RELIGION

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES

Have you seen *The Sapphires*? This film explores in a creative format the world of First Nations Peoples in Northern Victoria on a mission called Cummeragunja. The story of this community shows the complexity of the relationships between First Nations Peoples and white settlers in the early years after Federation and the Yorta Yorta's resistance to assimilation and their refusal to abandon their identity. A leader in this community was William Cooper (1861–1941). He adopted Christianity but maintained his commitment to land rights and his people's spirituality. He moved to Melbourne when he was expelled from the mission for complaining about the NSW Aborigines Protection Board removing his people's right to farm their land. He was a leader who began the first organisation with all Aboriginal membership, the Australian Aborigines' League. He enlisted the support of the Australian Workers Union. He was the first to lead a delegation and petition the government to give his people constitutional recognition and land rights, but was unsuccessful. He worked tirelessly to collect 1814 signatures to petition King George VI, but the government refused to send his petition. His persistence did lead the government to establish a day in recognition of Aboriginal people called Aboriginal Sunday (1940) on which Aboriginal people could celebrate their culture. This day has developed over the years to be what we now know as NAIDOC Week. It should be noted that William Cooper has been honoured internationally. His commitment to justice led him to lead a protest march to the German Consulate in Melbourne in 1938 to protest the treatment of the Jewish people by Nazi Germany. His name is remembered at the Holocaust Memorial, Yad Vashem in Israel. His life demonstrates his people's commitment to continuing their culture. The Yorta Yorta have fought tirelessly to gain recognition of their culture and links to the land throughout the 20th and into the 21st century.

EXPRESSING PERSONAL MEANING AND IDENTITY

Skills: identify, explain, analyse, research

1. Refer to the map of Victoria (Figure 3.2) and locate the lands of the Yorta Yorta.
2. How is the land an aspect of religion for First Nations Peoples?
3. Explain the link between political action and the preservation of First Nations Peoples' spirituality.
4. How did William Cooper engage in interfaith interaction?
5. Research two of the following and describe how understanding of their identity and personal meaning in life have led them to use their talents as Yorta Yorta people to educate the rest of Australia about their spirituality: Sir Douglas Nicholls, Marj Tucker, Geraldine Briggs, Jimmy Little, Artist Lin Onus and David Wirrpanda, Deborah Cheetham, Isaiah Firebrace.

In the 1960s there came to prominence a young First Nations leader from the Arrernte people. He had grown up in poverty in Alice Springs, but because he was identified as having talent he was offered the opportunity to take up a scholarship in Adelaide. His disconnection from his mother and culture was distressing for him, but it proved to be fortuitous for First Nations Peoples. He gained attention through his skill as a soccer player and played professionally in England. His desire to change the living conditions of his people became stronger so he returned to Australia and enrolled in university. At this time First Nations Peoples were forced to live outside of rural towns as 'fringe dwellers'; they were not afforded the rights of other Australians. Charles Perkins organised a student protest called The Freedom Rides, in which a bus of students went into rural towns highlighting the discrimination that was experienced by First Nations Peoples to the press and TV cameras who followed the bus. It was a powerful moment in Australia's history. Perkins went on to be an advisor to government and to advocate for his people and his culture. His legacy lives on in his daughters and grandchildren who have used their skills to advance First Nations Peoples' spirituality through promotion of First Nations artists (Hetti Perkins), exploration of First Nations Peoples' cultures in films and TV productions (Rachel Perkins), and through portrayals of First Nations characters in film (Madeleine Madden).

EXPRESSING PERSONAL MEANING AND IDENTITY

Skills: explain, analyse, discuss, research

1. How can making films be a strong way of promoting First Nations Peoples' spirituality?
2. To what extent could the work of the Perkins family be seen as expressing their spirituality?
3. Discuss as a class the following statement: Spirituality and politics do not mix.
4. Research artists who have been supported by Hetti Perkins. Using one artist as a focus explore how their art reveals something about First Nations Peoples' spirituality.

Getty Images/Don Arnold

FIGURE 3.25 Bangarra Dance Theatre. Which aspects of religion are used in the performances of this company?

In the 1990s First Nations Peoples' spirituality was receiving more mainstream interest both in Australia and overseas. A group called Bangarra Dance Theatre was established in 1989, and an Nunukul and Munaldjali man, Stephen Page, became its artistic director in 1991. His brothers, David and Russell, joined him as the group's success in exploring First Nations Peoples' spirituality was acclaimed in the wider society. In the years that have followed Bangarra has provided Australia with insights into First Nations culture that has helped to shape understanding of the relationship between storytelling, the land and the spirit world. Concepts like songlines have been explored. Dance, music and imagery have been linked to give the broader community a more sophisticated and challenging understanding of not only First Nations Peoples' spirituality, but also their own spirituality as Australians. The importance of dance as an expression of spiritual identity is also emphasised by Patty Mills, the first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander basketball player to represent Australia in four consecutive Olympic Games. He uses his high profile as an international basketball player to teach pride in their culture to First Nations children. He uses his authority to work with the players in the Australian team by teaching them about his language and culture. In a documentary he said:

> I'm Patty Mills and I come from Ynunga people of South Australia and the Muralag and Kokatha tribes of the Murri Islands in the far east Torres Strait. I think it comes back to identity and being able to understand who you are and how to be seen as that identity and how that can educate and teach people about who you are and where you are from. I started to do traditional dance around the same time that I learnt to walk … dancing was for me, along with traditional songs and music, a very strong gateway into my culture.

EXPRESSING PERSONAL MEANING AND IDENTITY

Skills: analyse, reflect

1. Are Bangara dance performances a clear expression of beliefs through the aspects? Explain your answer.
2. After reading this material draw three conclusions about why the progress in recognition of First Nations spirituality has been largely through the Arts sector.

PERSONAL MEANING AND IDENTITY EXPRESSED THROUGH ASPECTS OF RELIGION

ISLAM

Until well into the 20th century the White Australia Policy restricted entry to Muslims. The few that were within the Australian society kept a low profile in expressing their Islamic identity. Those Muslims who have arrived over the last 50 years initially were also private in expressing their identity. But as the Islamic community grew in numbers and security within the Australian society they have built mosques enabling a more communal and public expression of the personal meaning and identity they find in their religious tradition.

In 2016 Waleed Aly's acceptance speech at the Logies made headline news throughout Australia in both the traditional press and social media. His profile as Australia's most prominent Muslim

Getty Images/Wendell Teodoro

FIGURE 3.26 Waleed Aly and Susan Carland pictured at the opening of *Hamilton the Musical* in Melbourne. What does their attire suggest about their personal identity as Muslims?

through his work on *The Project* (Channel 10) had made many of his editorial pieces talking points around the proverbial office water cooler. His speech on that night highlighted his and his wife's adherence to Islam. He was revealing the challenges that face a Muslim in contemporary Australia. What he produced was a brave and notable oral text that voiced his pride in his religious identity and the ethical responsibility it brought with it. He said:

> There have been a lot of people in the last week or two that have made it really, really clear to me that me being here right now really matters to them. And it matters to them for a particular reason. That reason was brought home shudderingly not so long ago actually when someone, who is in this room and I'm not going to use their name that they use in the industry, came up to me and introduced themselves to me and said, 'I really hope you win. My name's Mustafa, but I can't use that name because I won't get a job.'
>
> I am incredibly humbled that you would even think to invest in me in that way, but I'm also incredibly saddened by it because the truth is you deserve more numerous and more worthy avatars than that and I don't know if and when that's gonna happen but if tonight means anything – and I don't know if it does – but if tonight means anything it's that the Australian public – our audience – as far as they're concerned, there's absolutely no reason why that can't change.

EXPRESSING IDENTITY AND PERSONAL MEANING

Skills: identify, discuss, explain

1. Working in pairs list the high profile Australian Muslims you know (you should think broadly about areas such as politics, sport, the arts, science).
2. Referring to your list, discuss whether there are enough high profile Australian Muslims to give the wider community an understanding of Islamic beliefs and culture. If not, consider why.
3. Discuss which channels or Australian shows include multicultural people as presenters and key characters. To what extent do your searches confirm Waleed Aly's comments about Australian television and other media?

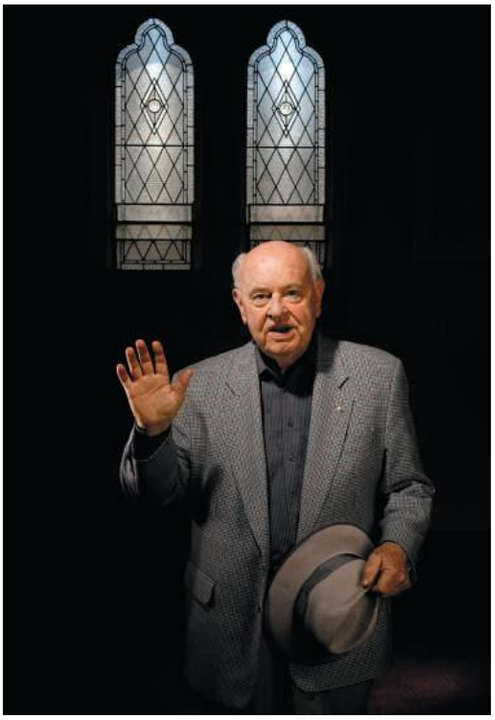
PERSONAL MEANING AND IDENTITY EXPRESSED THROUGH ASPECTS OF RELIGION

CHRISTIANITY

Over much of the lengthy period from Federation, Christianity in Australia has been characterised by the historic tensions between denominations. This became so much a part of society that it was commonly known that religion should not be discussed in general conversation. For Australian Christians their personal meaning and identity was grounded in belonging to a particular denomination. They described themselves as Methodist, Presbyterian, Catholic, Lutheran, Baptist, Congregationalist, Quaker, Anglican, rather than Christian. Their personal meaning and identity was heightened and reinforced by their membership of a particular local religious community. This local church community provided not only their religious support and expression but also much of their social life as well.

Reverend Tim Costello has throughout his adult life been a prominent Christian who through books, television and public addresses used his religious beliefs to underpin his advocacy work on behalf of communities he sees as being oppressed by a society that has unjust structures. In his various roles he has consistently, publicly declared the influence of Jesus Christ in guiding his ministry. In an interview he described the impact of his Christianity this way:

> I was blessed to grow up in a Christian family. So the concept of grace, even the practice of grace, was there in my home. I don't take for granted the fact of having a loving family. I know so many people come from families where there's been divorce. There's sometimes been domestic violence. There's often been a lack of love. So in some ways the grace was first experienced by parents who love God, who love me, who could discipline me, but also show that there was a thing called acceptance, not based on me doing better. Often Christianity is heard by people outside as, 'You failed and you should do better and you must try harder.' Actually, that's a deformed view of Christianity. Christianity is, 'You failed because you lost an encounter with the God who made you with the purposes for which He's made you.' Those purposes, in this understanding of faith, say you will fail and God will forgive, and he will give you opportunity to actually experience unconditional acceptance so that you can be set free at another level, at a high level, to live and work according to God's purpose. So for me, grace started in the family. Very practically, I learned in my early legal practice, that I wasn't too different from the people I was representing. I might have a law degree, I might have a respectable life, but the nasties were inside me: envy, and resentment, and careerism, of greed. And grace actually deals with me acknowledging those nasties and handing my life back to God, and it happens daily. It happened in a born again experience for me in my teenage years. But those things are daily. This God who accepts me, even though I sin. There's a wonderful book by Philip Yancey who said, 'God loves me no matter what I do, God doesn't love me less because of what I've done. He loves me. Period, end of sentence.' That, for me, is grace. That has been life changing for me.



Fairfax Syndication/SIMON SCHLUTER

FIGURE 3.27 Father Bob Maguire at the time when he was reluctantly retiring from his role as parish priest in South Melbourne. Why might Fr Bob not be wearing any artefacts that show his priesthood?

Father Bob Maguire, a Catholic priest in Melbourne, found his life changed through his commitment to the impoverished of the St Kilda area. He served for 35 years in a parish in neighbouring South Melbourne and began a charity that provides essential aid to those who arrive on his doorstep. His idiosyncratic expression of his beliefs has found an audience on radio, television, social media and from the pulpit of churches. His call for change is regularly in the context of his reading of his sacred texts of the Gospel and the Letters of St Paul. In an interview he described how he perceives God:

God will be at home with us.

God's knocking on the door!

Knock, knock, knock. Excuse me.

Yes, who is it?

God.

Well, hang on. Do you want us to come out?

No, no, no! I want to come in!

What do you want to come in for?

I'm going to come in and wait on you - serve you.

You have the choice to open the door. This changes the whole concept of God.

We've got to let this doorknocking God in.

UNDERSTANDINGS OF GOD

Skills: describe, analyse, debate

1. Explain in our own words what Tim Costello means by the term grace.
2. How is this concept of grace linked to the aspect of spiritual experiences?
3. Describe or draw the image being used by Fr Bob Maguire showing the relationship between God and humans.
4. What is the Christian belief he is expressing about God's relationship with people?
5. Is Fr Bob's image of God appealing, challenging or frightening? Why?

PERSONAL MEANING AND IDENTITY EXPRESSED THROUGH ASPECTS OF RELIGION

HINDUISM

While Hinduism may still be seen as a minority religion in Australia, it is also one of the fastest growing. Today, Hindus in Australia are well-educated professionals in fields such as medicine, engineering, commerce and information technology. One such immigrant is Dr Jayant Bhalchandra Bapat who came to Australia in 1965 and worked as a university lecturer in organic

chemistry. In the 1980s he became a *purohit* or Hindu priest, feeling that his personal meaning and identity was in undertaking the responsibility to provide for the religious needs of the Hindu community, which had few temples or priests at that time. As a priest it was his role to guide ordinary Hindus regarding the rules and regulations for fasts, performing festivals and *pujas*, ceremonies and rituals. When he began as a lay priest, the small Hindu community, despite having different Indian ethnicities and languages, was united. Bapat is concerned that now that the Hindu community has grown substantially it has become more divided. Bapat sees unity as a necessity if the Hindu community wishes to grow and flourish in Australia. His personal commitment to Hinduism makes him keen to help his co-religionists integrate into the broader Australian community while maintaining their distinct culture and language. Bapat notes, 'It is possible to be a Hindu in Australia – within limits'.

One difficulty Bapat notes is eating strictly vegetarian when buying meals out of the home as the same knife to cut the vegetables may have been previously used to slice meat. He is also concerned that the Hindu culture's subordination of the role of women in the family and community has been very slow to change even in Australia. The lack of Hindu or Indian politicians in Australia is also witness to the need for further acceptance and integration of and by Hindus into the Australian culture. But he is hopeful that Hinduism's religious tolerance and lack of fundamentalism, its respect for elders and other religions will all ease its successful establishment in Australian society, enabling individuals to develop their personal meaning and identity in an Australian way.

Another Hindu Australian is Vimala Raman who trained as an Indian classical dancer. In Hinduism a young girl has the opportunity to learn about the gods, the sacred stories, the religious myths through a process that begins in early childhood and is culminated in a performance of classical Indian dance that is a profound expression of a personal commitment to the beliefs that give meaning to her life and shape her identity. The dance that is performed, and for which she has trained most of her life, is called *Bharathnatyam* and the public performance is called the *Arangetram*. The preparation for this performance has involved intensive study and guidance under an approved guru. The dance is accompanied by prayer. Each element of the performance expresses the beliefs held personally by the dancer. The *Arangetram* can take up to three to four hours. It is a spiritual experience for both the dancer and the audience as the *Bharathnatyam* leads them to spiritual enlightenment through prescribed music and movement.

Fairfax Syndication/Tim Bauer

FIGURE 3.28 Vimala Raman, Indian classical dancer.

BEING HINDU

Skills: describe, analyse, explain

1 For both of the Hindu individuals mentioned above, identify which aspects of religion motivated their choices in life.

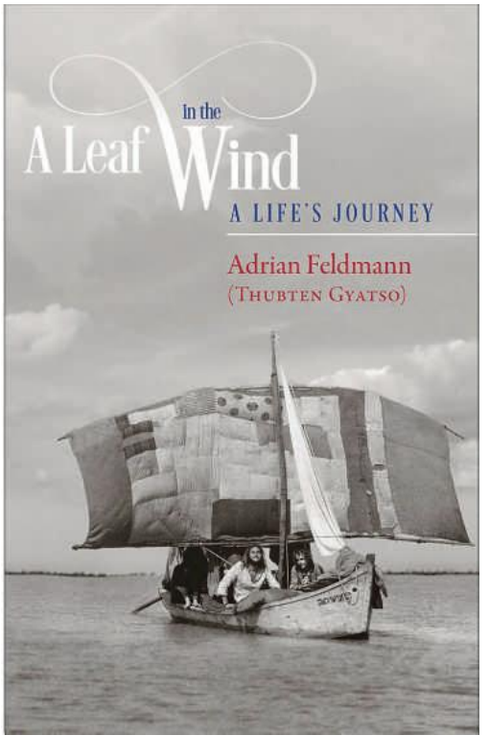
2 Why is Dr Bapat concerned for the future of the Hindu community?

3 In what ways does Vimala Raman express her Hindu beliefs?

PERSONAL MEANING AND IDENTITY EXPRESSED THROUGH ASPECTS OF RELIGION

BUDDHISM

Buddhism has a long history of appeal to European Australians. Even during the decades of the White Australian Policy when migrants from Buddhist countries were restricted, Buddhism appealed to Europeans on an intellectual, ethical and spiritual basis. The associations of Australian Buddhists did not have a strong public presence but after the demise of the White Australian Policy in the 1970s the various waves of migrants changed the nature of Buddhism in Australia. Neighbourhood houses were converted to Buddhist centres and gradually temples were constructed giving a very noticeable public presence to the symbols and worship rituals, places and spaces of Buddhism. These venues welcome visitors and are open to sharing their beliefs and ritual practices so that the Buddhist way of finding personal meaning and identity can be understood and hopefully appreciated by members of other religious traditions and the wider society. Following are some examples of Australians who follow the Buddhist way.



Adrian Feldmann - Thubten Gyatso

FIGURE 3.29 Australian Buddhist monk Thubten Gyatso pictured on the cover of his book, *A Leaf in the Wind* (Lothian Books, Melbourne, 2005). How does this cover photo give a sense of his devotion to Buddhism?

The spiritual journey to find personal meaning and identity led Melbourne-born Thubten Gyatso to become one of the first Westerners to be a monk in Tibetan Buddhism, taking vows of morality and celibacy and refraining from intoxicants. His commitment to the tenets and way of life of the Buddhist tradition resulted in a desire to share his Buddhist convictions. This developed into his role as a spiritual and Buddhist philosophy teacher, lecturing extensively in Australia, the USA and Mongolia. His outreach to others also led him to establish Dharma centres around the world, including in Australia. Those Tibetan Buddhist institutes he helped establish in the capital cities of Australia have flourished due to the influx of Buddhist refugees and the attraction of the Buddhist worldview and lifestyle to increasing numbers of Australians from diverse backgrounds, including different religious traditions. He would like to see Buddhist monks and nuns more active in wider society as seen in the example of Christian churches. Thubten Gyatso states, 'Simply, my belief and my conviction in Buddhism, is that it is a complete and unmistaken presentation of the reality of existence.'

Melbourne-born Robina Courtin was one of the first women in the world to become a Buddhist nun. Ordained in 1978 into the Gelugpa tradition she has become an important figure in Buddhism in Australia and the world. Her desire to find truth and happiness led her to Buddhism and her most significant work of being companions to people in prison. In 1996 she formalised this work by founding The Prison Project, which has aided more than 20 000 prisoners globally. Her public expression of her personal beliefs through this work has led many others to join Buddhism and her ministry. She has written many texts about the application of Buddhist thought, had an award-winning film (*Chasing Buddha*) made about her, and appeared in many television talk shows about her life and her Buddhism. She expresses her beliefs with humour and humility. She conducts lectures at venues all around the world and guides pilgrimages to sacred sites. She has said:

> According to Buddha, attachment is effectively the main source of our suffering in day-to-day life. A big surprise! We usually confuse it with love, which is necessarily altruistic and which is the source of our own happiness and the capacity to help others. Attachment is necessarily I-based: dissatisfaction, neediness, expectation, manipulating others to get what I want. Love, however, is other-based: open, kind, clear, the wish that others be happy. How do we distinguish them? That's the key to practice. Through meditation, becoming our own therapist … we can learn to unpack and unravel our emotions and lessen attachment and the other delusions and grow love, compassion and the rest for our own sake and the sake of others.

BEING BUDDHIST

Skills: describe, explain, analyse

1. For both of the Buddhist individuals mentioned above, identify which aspects of religion motivated their choices in life.
2. How does Thubten Gyatso demonstrate his commitment to Buddhism in his everyday life?
3. How does Robina Courtin understand love and how to achieve it?

PERSONAL MEANING AND IDENTITY EXPRESSED THROUGH THE ASPECTS OF RELIGION

JUDAISM

Throughout the colonial and post-Federation periods, Australian Jewry generally continued to retain many of the aspects of their religious identity, though observance varied and intermarriage was common. Nevertheless, a strong ethical inheritance of Judaism permeated their involvement in Australian life, shown in setting up and supporting Jewish and non-Jewish charities and educational institutions. Civic duty was also important to Australian Jews witnessed by being part of the Australian forces in all the wars in which Australia has been engaged and their deaths are

remembered on many synagogue honour boards. Following are examples of how some members of the Australian Jewish communities expressed their personal meaning and identity through religious and communal activities.

Sir Isaac Isaacs (1855–1948) though not observant of Jewish practices or synagogue attendance in his daily life, was very committed to his religious tradition. His involvement in Jewish texts, stories, ethics and community were a feature of his personal commitment to Judaism. He wrote for the Jewish press on religious and biblical subjects, especially the inter-testamental period, and was a frequent speaker at Jewish functions. He believed that Jewishness was not a matter of race or nationality but only of religion.

In the early 1940s Isaacs attacked political **Zionism**, supporting the British stance on opposing the establishment of a Jewish State in British Mandate Palestine. This strident stance lost him popularity in the Australian Jewish community as awareness of the devastating Nazi holocaust of European Jews was growing and a homeland was seen as a way of assisting their urgent need.

Isaacs expressed his strong sense of ethical responsibility in exercising his civic duty in the many positions he held. He was a master lawyer, judge and prominent figure in federal politics, active in drafting the Australian Constitution. He was appointed Attorney-General of Australia 1905–1906 and later Chief Justice of Australia 1930–31, the first Jew to attain this lofty position. Isaacs became the ninth Governor General of Australia from 1931 to 1936 and the first Australian born candidate to this eminent position.

Malvina Malinek

FIGURE 3.30 Malvina Malinek OAM, Romanian born Jewish communal and national advocate for women's rights and an opponent of anti-Semitism. How does the title of her book *Across the Black Sea: In Pursuit of Social Justice* indicate the influence of Judaism in her life?

The arrival of thousands of Holocaust survivors from all over Europe changed the nature of the Jewish Communities in Australia. Their prime focus was on Jewish survival and supporting the establishment of the State of Israel rather than the Anglo-British sentiments of the earlier Australian Jewish community leaders.

This new post-war focus can be seen in the activities of Malvina Malinek OAM, a research biochemist and hospital scientist who arrived in Australia as a 12-year-old in 1949 from Romania. Her traditional Orthodox Jewish family upbringing ensured she saw Judaism as the most important influence in raising her family and engaging with her Jewish community and the wider Australian society. But her liberal attitude has seen her become a member of the Progressive Movement of Judaism. Malinek's life of local, communal and civic service has been guided by her Jewish ethics and teachings. She is an active participant in Jewish community affairs and debates, as well as a prolific letter writer to the major newspapers, hotly defending her views on Israel's historical right to exist as the homeland of the Jewish people.

> Judaism does not teach us to hate others, only to improve ourselves as we pray every Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) to the Almighty to forgive our sins, not the sins of others towards us. I have always admired the wisdom of our sages in our various Torah books and the way they adapted the teachings to the needs of the people at the time. For women, the health of the mother is paramount as she has to look after all her children. Therefore, the mother always takes precedence over her unborn child. The father has responsibilities towards his wife and children prescribed in the Torah.

> As I started my Science studies, I realised how clever the dietary laws of Kashrut are to preserve the health of the people, long before the world knew anything about the importance of personal cleanliness, infectious diseases and the various organisms infecting the animal world used in the human food chain. All in all, our Jewish religion taught me everything about being a good person and to help others to overcome their disadvantages.
>
> Interview with Malvina Malinek by Shayndel Samuel, 12 May 2022.

In pursuing her understanding of ethical responsibility Malinek has been an active member and leader in Jewish and non-Jewish women's organisations where she continued actively condemning anti-Semitism, encouraging equality for women in the Jewish and wider community, interfaith cooperation and supporting Israel politically and practically. She eventually became president of NCJW Vic in 1973 and in 1985 she became president of National Council of Jewish Women Vic in 1973. She represented issues of concern to Jewish women at several conferences of the International Council of Jewish Women.

The next generation of Australian-born Jews continue to live out their traditions applying them to contemporary life issues. Kathy Kaplan OAM, is Founder and President of Impact for Women, a charity run completely by volunteers, committed to making a grass-roots, practical and common-sense difference to Victorian women and children escaping extreme violence at home. Kaplan is passionate about her involvement in interfaith and intrafaith work based on her conviction that, as one human family, it is possible to produce something good for the whole of humanity when we are respectfully united in and through our diversities. Kathy is highly involved in the Jewish religious community having been president of Temple Beth Israel; the chair of its Education Committee and the secretary of Progressive Judaism Victoria. Kaplan also serves on the small team of volunteers who prepare the dead for burial according to Jewish ritual law. Her beliefs, ethics and actions are firmly entrenched in her Jewish tradition as can be seen in this speech given to her synagogue community:

> The Jewish community's fabric comes from strong principles and ethics. We Jews have always been at the forefront of the human and civil rights movements. *Tzedek, tzedek, tirdof* (Justice, justice you shall pursue), is one of our most potent mandates with *piku'ah nefesh* (to save a life) being of prime importance to eradicate or reduce this scourge of family and domestic violence. As Jews, as humans, it is our responsibility to bring about a better world through *tikkun olam* (repairing the world). Abuse victims live in a metaphorical *sukkah*, an insubstantial temporary shelter, every single day, never knowing when the next gust of abuse will sweep away the sparse protection over their heads. Each of us needs to open our eyes, heart and mouth to speak out against family violence and become change agents to ensure that our neighbours and families are safe in their homes. Please take whatever action you can to help build a world where every home is a *sukkat shalom*, a shelter of peace, of justice, a place of calm and confidence for every person around the globe.
>
> Extracts from a speech September 2012 with permission by Kathy Kaplan.

Kathy Kaplan

FIGURE 3.31 How does this image indicate that Kathy Kaplan has found fulfilment in living her religious beliefs and ethics?

BEING JEWISH

Skills: identify, interpret, analyse

1 For each of the Jewish individuals mentioned above, identify which aspects of religion motivated their choices in life.

2 How did Sir Isaac Isaacs' life display his strong ties to his Jewish faith and community?

3 What particular Jewish beliefs and ethical principles motivate Malvina Malinek OAM in her community involvement?

4 How does Kathy Kaplan OAM use Jewish texts and ethics to justify her drive to help others in the community?

INTERACTION BETWEEN SPIRITUALITIES, RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS AND DENOMINATIONS WITH EACH OTHER AND THE WIDER AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY

Interfaith interaction in Australia began in the 1600s CE between the First Nations Peoples and the visiting Muslim Macassan fishermen who came to harvest and process sea cucumbers. Among the First Nations Peoples of the coastal areas of Northern Australia there are stories that describe the Muslim prayer rituals and indicate that there was a syncretism of Islamic beliefs and Yolgnu people's spiritual practices. This suggests that the interactions between the traditions were peaceful and informative.

But the arrival of the Europeans in 1788 to establish the penal colony of NSW brought interaction that was neither productive nor harmonious. Europeans dismissed the spiritualities of the First Nations Peoples as primitive and pagan. The Europeans believed that First Nations Peoples were in need of conversion to Christianity. So their spiritualities were repressed and replaced with Christian stories, beliefs and ritual practices.

During the early colonial period the dominant religion was Christianity. The Anglican tradition was the official religion of the colony supported by government authority and financial help. Other Christian denominations, including the large numbers of Catholics, had little opportunity or resources to express publicly the religious identity or practices of their denomination. This period was not harmonious; indeed there were physical conflicts such as at Castle Hill in 1804.

As the colonies developed there was contestation between the Christian denominations that were Protestant with the Catholic denomination, carrying over the intolerance between the traditions from their various European homelands. This was a long-lived disharmony between Christian communities in Australia, which was expressed in avoidance and hostility between religious communities and in political policies and in the formation of religious aligned political parties. Although with the arrival of the liberal thinker Governor Bourke, there was a short period where religious tolerance was emphasised and all denominations of Christianity were funded for church buildings.

During the 1860s there began an Ecumenical Movement among Anglican communities separated by their emphasis on particular beliefs and religious practices that created the description of High and Low Anglican Church. But the Catholic tradition was not party to any of these Ecumenical interactions until well into the 20th century.

Over this same period of colonial Australia, the Jewish tradition began as a small group with private observance as the dominance of the Anglican Christian tradition through its official status as the State religion made it difficult for other traditions to publicly worship. Jewish religious practices were limited also by the absence of rabbis and communal structures. Jews were even buried by Christian clergy in Christian cemeteries. Those families who owned property could buy a private plot in the Christian cemeteries. Although not intended as such, this burial of Jews in Christian cemeteries and by Christian clergy could be seen as an interfaith interaction, though certainly an unequal interaction. Although anti-Semitism existed it was not a prevalent force, nor was it institutionalised or entrenched as in European society. As more Jewish free settlers arrived the resources of the community improved. Jews were involved in a wide range of trades and businesses with successful interaction with the mostly Christian residents of their society. But this social and business level of interaction and the resulting social mobility of Jews in Australian society did not involve interfaith interaction.

There were small numbers of other religious traditions represented in the colonial period. There were Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists within the community, but their interaction was more on business and occupation levels with the wider society, including members of other religious traditions. There was no intentional interfaith interaction between these faiths and other religious traditions in the colonies. The exception of religious traditions interacting was some elite groups of Westerners who studied particular Eastern traditions and established institutions for social, theological and philosophical discourse. But they were not involved with interfaith activities.

Ecumenical interaction was not on the agenda of most individuals and communities and interfaith interaction was even less likely to be considered as all Christian denominations saw The Truth contained within Christianity. This situation did not substantially change until the 1960s although there had been numerous earlier overtures towards ecumenical interaction from some Protestant denominations. As a whole, Catholicism did not participate in these, though individual clerics, religious and members of the laity did. During World War II the Anglicans initiated interfaith contact with Jewish leaders. In 1961 the Catholic Church attempted to begin a Council of Christians and Jews but it did not eventuate until 1991 with the establishment of the Council of Christians and Jews. This now includes Muslims.

However, in a bigger forum, in 1893 there was a worldwide major step forward in the interaction between religions and between Christian denominations. The first World's Parliament of Religions was held in Chicago, USA. It was an unprecedented event bringing together representatives of Confucianism, Taoism, Shintoism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Islam and Christianity, including Catholicism that had been tentative about interacting with Protestant Christians due to the history of negative relations. The Parliament had a number of objectives including:

- to create the opportunity for the inaugural conference of leading representatives of the great historic religions of the world in the hope that it may assist more secure international peace
- to present the important distinctive truths held and taught by each religion and to present the important truths the various religions hold and teach in common
- to develop relationship among diverse faiths, through friendly conference and mutual good understanding, though not striving to achieve any formal and outward unity.

Such objectives seem to avoid any emphasis of supremacy of one religion but this was still part of the thinking of the time as seen in the reason for non-participation in the parliament by the Archbishop of Canterbury (Church of England), who emphasised that there was one religion and it is Christianity. Therefore, for Christianity to be part of a Parliament of Religions it had to be assumed that all religions were equal.

Although it was intended that the Parliaments would be held in different countries every three to five years, there was a gap of 100 years due to the events of Revolutions, two World Wars, Depressions and the Cold War. The second Parliament occurred in 1993, returning to Chicago. Since then the Parliaments have been more frequent: 1999 in South Africa, 2004 in Spain, 2009 in Melbourne, 2015 Utah, USA, 2018 Canada, 2021 (virtual, due to the COVID-19 pandemic). Already in preparation is the 2023 Parliament. It is again in Chicago, USA with the theme of 'Call to Conscience, Defending Freedoms and Human Rights'. This focus indicates that the concerns of the Parliament have moved a long way from those of 1893.

Effeietsanders/Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain

FIGURE 3.32 Opening address by Swami Vivekananda of the Jain tradition for the 1893 World Parliament of Religions. What does this image show about the participants in this event?

Getty Images/ Robert Cianflone

FIGURE 3.33 A speaker at the 2009 Melbourne Parliament of World's Religions. What does this logo on the banner behind him suggest has changed about the participants in the Parliament?

Ecumenical interaction was minimal and low key between some Protestant traditions, though this blossomed in the 1970s with the formation of the Uniting Church of Australia. Although Pope John XXIII in the documents of Vatican II had freed the Catholic Church to move into interfaith and ecumenical interaction, the Australian leadership was slow to positively respond. There was a strong legacy of intolerance and distrust of other traditions, but it was changing rapidly. At an institutional level there were few organisations promoting interfaith and ecumenical activities but at personal levels there was an openness to interacting with others of different Christian denominations and other faiths.

Religious intolerance is still evident in Australia. Expressions of anti-Semitism have taken the form of serious attacks on the religious sites of the Jewish community throughout Australia; for example, in a short period in the 1990s five synagogues in Sydney were subjects of arson attacks. In Melbourne a Jewish Kindergarten was set alight in Doncaster and bomb threats made to communities. In Adelaide Jewish graves were desecrated. Such events continue to occur but are generally of a minor nature and infrequent.

Hindu temples also have been the focus of attacks. Residents have put pressure on councils to restrict the building of temples and some have been vandalised and destroyed. In 1991 the Hindu community purchased land, where there had been an Anglican Church, in The Basin, an outer eastern suburb of Melbourne. The conflict that arose resulted in the temple being set on fire in 1999. In 2018 Barathiye Mandir Temple, in Western Sydney's Regents Park, was attacked by vandals who destroyed religious artefacts and set fire to the premises.

In the 21st century the Islamic community has been subject to similar protests and harassment over the building of a mosque in Bendigo. In this case many of the protestors did not come from Bendigo and much of the local community supported the local Islamic community in their work to build a sacred place for their religious practice. Other tensions between Muslims and the broader Australian community arose due to events such as 11 September 2001, the Bali bombings (2002), the War on Terror (2001–21), the Cronulla Riots (2005), the siege at the Lindt Café in Sydney (2014) and the terrorist attack in Bourke Street (2020). There were reactions in the wider Australian society that were often negative, even violent, fuelled by a media focus on radical expressions of Islamic identity. In a show of solidarity against both terrorism and Islamophobia, in November 2014 about 3000 Shi'a Muslims marched peacefully in the annual **Ashura** Procession in Sydney to mark the death of Imam Hussein, with many placards declaring this was Islam, not the actions of ISIS. The praise for this demonstration from within Islam and the broader community was evidence that the pain that was being caused to the Muslim community in Australia was uniting groups in solidarity.

AAP Image/JENNY COCKERELL

FIGURE 3.34 Shia Muslims chanting 'down with ISIS' join the Ashura procession in Sydney 2014. In what ways is this an interfaith interaction?

For First Nations Peoples the destruction of a 46 000-year-old sacred site, the Juukan Caves (2020) by Rio Tinto mining company shocked not only Australia but the world. This moment highlighted a lack of understanding of Australia's First Nations Peoples, spirituality at an institutional level, as it was done with approval by the government of Western Australia. Sacred places and spaces are important for the expression of people's personal spirituality and religious beliefs, which makes their damage and destruction a potent means of causing pain and suffering to religious and spiritual people and potentially provoking social unrest.

The 2019 'Australia Talks' survey of around 54 000 Australians conducted by the ABC showed that Australians believe religious discrimination remains; however, they do not seem to see this as a major concern. Overall, they see religion as a private concern and not the most important factor in defining identity. An explanation for this could be that Australia is the most religiously diverse country in the world (G. Bouma, Monash University). It is not that we have so many different religious traditions and denominations, but that the minorities are increasingly large and growing. It could be that these communities have migrated to such a distant continent in order to find a life in which there is peace and tolerance and so do not want to enter into conflict over religious beliefs or practices. For this reason, students tend to assimilate into the dominant culture at school, but return to homes that take religious belief and practice very seriously, as witnessed in marriage and funeral rituals.

One of the major ways in which religions interact in Australian society is through providing charity. Many religions heed their own teachings on values and ethics, and provide charity for all – including non-believers – at the lowest socio-economic end of society. Many charities have a religious background, including the Salvation Army, the Brotherhood of St Laurence, the St Vincent de Paul Society, Jewish Care, Muslim Aid and Mission Australia. They bridge the gap between social security payments and the actual cost of living. All perform a large range of activities in this effort to assist those living in poverty in Australia. According to ACOSS (Australia Council of Social Service) and University of New South Wales (UNSW) in their joint report 'Poverty in Australia 2020', despite living in a wealthy country, 1 in 8 Australians live in poverty and over 1 in 6 children live in poverty.

Religions address inequality by providing accommodation, women's refuges, opportunity shops and soup kitchens. A number of charities, including Uniting Care (an agency of the Uniting Church), also run houses for troubled youth and the elderly who cannot afford help privately. There is also an emergency relief service for drug and alcohol users, which links the services of many religious charities together.

RELIGION AND CHARITY

Skills: research, explain, interpret

1 In a country where there is government assistance, why is it necessary for religious charities to assist poor people?

2 Examine a charitable activity by a religion in detail. Outline the teachings on charity by the religion. What specific actions is the religious charity doing to enact those teachings?

Religions can have an important and beneficial effect on a society. Not only can they offer a society the opportunity to celebrate, commemorate or grieve, they can also contribute to a society's richness and identity. Unfortunately, however, the interactions of different religions in Australian society have not always been positive and beneficial. There are sometimes differences and conflicts between the values and beliefs of different members of society.

Australia is a multicultural, secular country where religious tolerance is promoted by the federal government, which channels funding into interfaith initiatives, indicating a positive attitude to religious freedom in contemporary Australian society. There are a number of organisations and events (many of which have existed for decades) that are trying to foster these connections, such as:

- Interfaith Building Bridges programme for senior school students
- Harmony Day
- Better Balanced Futures
- ACOSS
- Jewish Christian Muslim Association of Australia (JCMA)
- Council of Christians and Jews
- Australian Intercultural Society
- Women's Interfaith Network
- Ecumenical and Interfaith Commission
- Kingston Interfaith Network
- Centre of Melbourne Multi-Faith and Others Network
- Australian National Dialogue of Christians, Muslims and Jews
- Interfaith Network of the City of Greater Dandenong
- Interfaith Centre Melbourne
- Regional Interfaith Dialogue
- World Conference of Religions for Peace
- Parliament of the World's Religions.

EXPLORING INTERFAITH

Skills: research, explain, outline, interpret

1 Research one interfaith organisation or initiative from the list above and answer the following questions:
   a What does the organisation or initiative offer and what purpose does it serve?
   b Who is its target audience?
   c What has it achieved, according to those who organise and participate in it?
   d Should such organisations have government support?

CHAPTER 3

REVISION

A Short-answer questions

1 If 'no religion' is not a religion, why is it included in statistics on religions?
2 Why has it become usual for people and organisations to begin presentations with Acknowledgement of the Land of the traditional First Nations Peoples?
3 Why are Asian religious and philosophical traditions appealing to Australians?
4 List the trends that changed the central position of religion in Australian society.

B Extended-response questions

5 Attempt to explain what it means to be an Australian. What evidence, events or literature do you draw on to substantiate your analysis? Is religion part of the Australian identity? Why? Why not?
6 In what ways are Anzac Day 'pilgrimages' to Turkey and battle sites in Europe similar to, and different from, religious pilgrimages?
7 How have government policies affected the spiritualities of First Nations Peoples?
8 How is adherence to the spiritualities of First Nations Peoples similar to, and different from, adherence by members of a religious tradition?
9 What is the connection between immigration policies and religious composition?
10 How did a convict's emancipation change their religious adherence? What role did churches play in colonial Australian society?
11 What positive interactions have religious traditions and denominations had with each other and with wider society?
12 Create a survey of four questions to explore whether students in your year level have experienced discrimination based on religion. During a break from classes, survey at least four people. Next class collate your results with others in the class then draw conclusions on whether Australian society is tolerant of people with religious beliefs.
13 Discuss to what extent recent Australian governments' opposition to accepting refugees is rooted in the same concerns as in the 1930s: security, the need to maintain a cohesive society and safeguarding national economic interest – or were there other factors at play?
14 View or read media about the proposed Religious Discrimination Bill. Why would statements based on religious views, which may be considered offensive and vilifying by others, need protection by article 42? (Refer to the article, "'Too great a cost': The High Court's ruling in the Garlett appeal highlights the need for a Human Rights Act" on the Australian Lawyer Alliance website.)

C Essay questions

15 Discuss the impact of government immigration policies on the religious composition of Australia. In your discussion, use any points raised in this chapter and related material from wider research.
16 Discuss what has happened to the spiritualities of First Nations Peoples as a result of their experiences of colonisation. In your discussion refer to multiple sources, including this book and related materials as well as the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

INTERVIEW

Interview a person, at school or from the wider community, who has participated in a religious charity, volunteered at an opportunity shop or done mission work.

Some suggested questions

- Why do you donate your time (or money) to a religious charity?
- What inspired you to donate your time (or money)?
- What has kept you donating time (or money)?
- Why do you think that charities are needed in Australian society?
- Why contribute to or work for a religious charity?
- Are you a member of a religious tradition?
- How does charity fit in with your personal belief system?

Task

- Write a 300-word summation of the person's answers.
- Write a 200-word reflection (what and why) on your own experiences with charities.

Remember to practise good interview etiquette. This includes sending the questions to the interviewee in advance; listening attentively to the responses so you can ask follow-up questions that may not be on your list; and sending a thank you note.

Weblinks
Various for Chapter 3

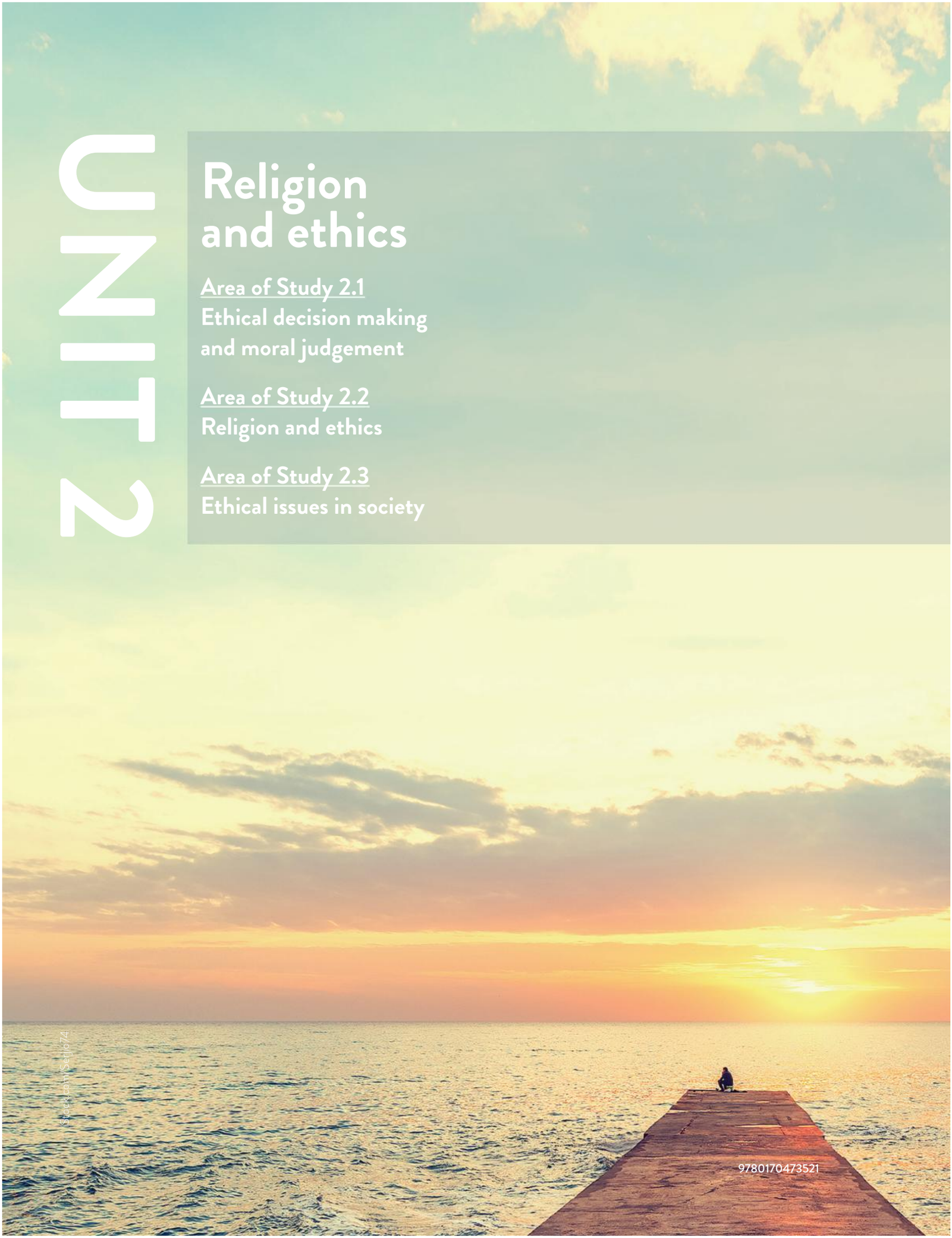
UNIT 2

Religion and ethics

Area of Study 2.1
Ethical decision making and moral judgement

Area of Study 2.2
Religion and ethics

Area of Study 2.3
Ethical issues in society



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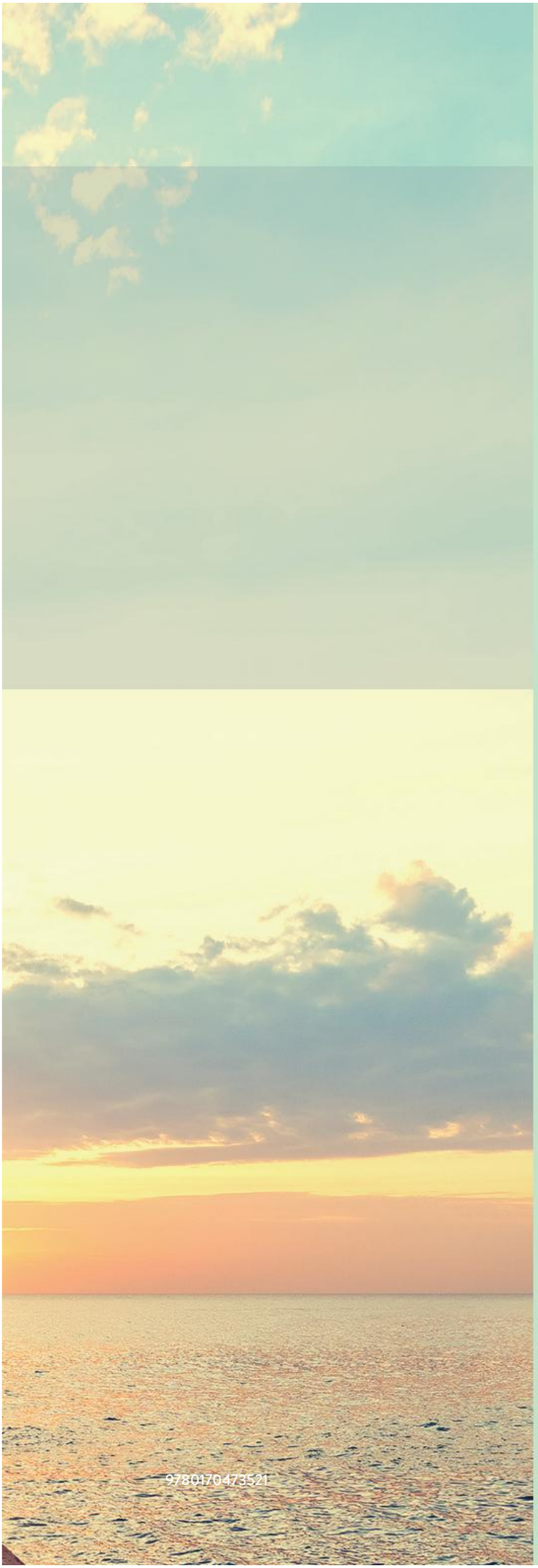

Chapter 4

THINKING AND DECIDING

Outcome to be demonstrated

Explanation of the variety of influences on ethical decision making and moral judgement in societies where multiple worldviews exist.

Focus questions

- What are ethics and morality?
- What are the concepts (including aspects of religion) used in ethical decision making?
- What are some different methods of ethical decision making and which theories support them?
- What is an ethical issue?
- How is an ethical issue analysed?

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Worksheet
Terminology

WHAT IS ETHICS?

Ethics is the analytical study of how and why people make ethical decisions. Ethical decisions are about what is right or wrong, good or bad, moral or immoral behaviour for individuals, groups, communities, organisations and society. They involve consideration of a number of concepts and methods of ethical decision making. These concepts and methods constitute a particular vocabulary for the study of ethics. This vocabulary assists a person to be clear and logical in their ethical thinking and decision making.

Ethics involves an investigation of what is happening and why. This can be focused in contemporary society, in the future or in an ideal social context. The investigation also explores what should be occurring in both the real and ideal situations. The past can be explored in a similar way.

People who study ethics look at the way in which human beings struggle to discover their culture's ideals and how to apply them in their everyday lives to ensure moral behaviour from themselves or others. In ethics studies, the concepts of good and bad, and right and wrong, are critical markers of what a particular society and culture prescribes as good and right obligations and proscribes as bad and wrong actions for its citizens.

In a society with multiple worldviews (pluralist society) where a separation exists between religion and the state, there are additional issues to consider for ethical decision making. There are many different religious traditions with different ethical perspectives. There are competing ethical perspectives of secular lobby groups (including atheist, humanist and rationalist groups). There are the ethical perspectives of various branches of knowledge represented by university academics, research scientists and the legal system. There is the diversity of ethical perspectives represented in voter referenda and elected governments. There may be a bill of rights or constitution that declares all ethical perspectives to be equally valid and part of the consultation process of a government's ethical decision-making process.

In religion, good and bad, and right and wrong, are ways of describing actions and ideas that bring human beings closer to or take them further away from the divine or ideal human characteristics. Good and bad, and right and wrong, being the opposite of each other but remaining interdependent, mean that it is hard to understand one without the other.

In some cultures and religions, these opposites are not polar but more of a ratio that is not entirely one or the other. For example, in Taoism, and many other Asian philosophies, a concept called Yin and Yang describes the relationship between opposing forces in nature, such as negative and positive energies; male and female; good and bad. The interconnectedness of the opposing forces produces some interesting ideas, such as 'one cannot have good without bad'. Some philosophies do not see opposites but prefer a harmony between the forces, such as the Middle Way of Buddhism.

In Western thought, one side is said to be dominant over the other – the 'good' side is usually given precedence, and this can also be seen in other examples, such as mind and body, light and dark. It can even be argued that evil is not the opposite of good but the absence of it. Whichever way one argues, 'good' and 'right' usually suggest behaviour and ideas that are approved of by society, while 'bad' and 'wrong' indicate actions or ideas that are disapproved. The concepts of good and bad may be universal but the ideas that the term relates to can vary depending on the culture and the historical period.

RIGHT AND WRONG

Skills: reflect, interpret, analyse

1. As you were growing up which behaviours were you taught were wrong or bad?
2. Why were they wrong?
3. During those same stages of your life which behaviours were you taught were right or good?
4. Why were they right or good?
5. To what extent do you now agree with those identifications of behaviours?

WHAT IS MORALITY?

Morality is about actual human behaviour – what a person does according to what they think or are told is right and appropriate. What is perceived as right is influenced by the various elements of culture, the individual's experiences and the development of the individual's thinking and reasoning capacity. Morality relates to the behaviour of individuals, groups, institutions, businesses, governments and international bodies.

The basis of morality is usually laws, secular and religious. Or morality may be based on an alternative rule system that is socially enforced because it is followed by the majority of people (normative behaviour). In Australian newspapers in the 1950s, it was socially acceptable for job advertisements to specify to which religious tradition or denomination applicants should belong. The implication was that applicants who were not of the specified religion need not apply. Although today such advertisements would generally not be permitted due to their discriminatory nature, it is an example of the social acceptance and enforcement of an alternative system of rules. In attempting to be moral an individual may have to balance or establish priorities between the laws of the country in which they live, the moral laws of their religion and the social expectations and standards of their ethnic culture of origin. Morality goes further than laws and can be highly effective in maintaining social relationships. A community may place sanctions or punishments (such as exile or expulsion) on an individual for infringing the community's morality.

A large number of moral laws and rules originated in religions, and religious morality still retains a strong connection to the laws of the state. Nevertheless, religions are only one starting point from which major questions about how one should behave can be approached.

Individuals can also derive their understanding of morality from other sources, such as philosophy and political ideology, which may or may not overlap with some religious perspectives. Basically, each person has the capacity to develop a 'moral compass' to indicate the right thing to do in any given situation. However, a person's thinking and justifications for their behaviour can sometimes be misinformed and misguided.

There has to be some uniformity or commonality of morality in a society, for if individuals were all given different ideas and directions, the society of which they are a part might flounder. For the overall security and functioning of a society, all members of a society have a responsibility to inform and nurture themselves and others in knowledge and understanding of what is right. Immorality and a faulty moral compass indicate a failure of society to raise the individual into knowing the difference between what their culture, philosophy and religion define as 'right' and as 'wrong', as well as a failure on the part of the individual, who may know what is right, to act accordingly. However, a particular culture's definition of right and wrong does not necessarily relate to those of another culture, though the various bodies of the United Nations have developed universal principles of right and wrong that would apply across cultural differences.

ROLES OF CONCEPTS AND INFLUENCES IN ETHICAL DECISION MAKING

ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

Ethical statements about what is the right way to act in an ideal world are known as **ethical principles**. For example, an ethical principle such as 'the sanctity of life' is a reasonably unanimous ethical perspective. But through using various methods of decision making and differing moral values or codes of behaviour, the principle can translate into very different actions. These variables raise questions such as whether the principle should be applied at all costs and in all circumstances; or whether all life, including plant and animal life, is sacred; or whether the principle applies only to human life, or to only some humans. There can also be conflict between ethical principles. A classic example of this is between the principle that killing another human is wrong and the principle to protect human life including oneself. This conflict of principles arises particularly in situations of war.

Ethical principles focus on the highest good. Many professions and organisations whose work enables the provision of some benefit to society or moral good have established their ethical perspectives, which includes statements of the ideals – the ethical principles and sets of related rules and regulations intended to carry out the principles.

Ethical principles are the foundation of ethics – they are what the values, rules, goals and approved ways of behaving are organised around. Any ethical theory, philosophy, religion, committee or individual needs to ascertain what the ethical principles are before they can begin to think about what is the right policy or behaviour.

MORAL VALUES

Moral values are the universal or cultural ideas that are important for the morality of individuals and for society. They are ideas such as honesty, compassion, respect, mercy, justice, forgiveness, integrity, tolerance. In ethical thinking and decision making, values are very important as they work together with principles to determine the behaviour of an individual and a society. In ethical decision making values can be in tension with each other. For example, to be completely honest in a situation may exclude exercising compassion or the honesty could be disrespectful, especially in some cultural situations. So there can be a difference between the ideal value and the practised value. The potential for conflict between competing moral values is part of societies that have multiple worldviews.

There are many differing moral values represented in a pluralist society. In theory, however, such a society, if democratic, functions under an ethical principle of equality for all in which the needs of all are acknowledged and potentially provided for. But everyone's needs cannot be fulfilled at all times. In the process of trying to cater for the needs of all, the particular needs of minority groups and their cultural values can be overtaken by those of the majority. This may lead to a conflict of values, which can occur for a number of reasons and at different levels, such as between an individual and society, between family members, between communities and wider society, within the workforce, between states, between nations, or on a global level.

AUSTRALIAN VALUES

Skills: define, explain, outline, interpret

Read the Australian Government's 'Australian values statement' below and answer the questions following.

> **Australian values statement**
>
> You must sign this statement if you are aged 18 years or over.
>
> I confirm that I have read, or had explained to me, information provided by the Australian Government on Australian society and values.
>
> I understand:
>
> - Australian society values respect for the freedom and dignity of the individual, freedom of religion, commitment to the rule of law, Parliamentary democracy, equality of men and women and a spirit of egalitarianism that embraces mutual respect, tolerance, fair play and compassion for those in need and pursuit of the public good
> - Australian society values equality of opportunity for individuals, regardless of their race, religion or ethnic background
> - The English language, as the national language, is an important unifying element of Australian society.
>
> I undertake to respect these values of Australian society during my stay in Australia and to obey the laws of Australia.
>
> I understand that, if I should seek to become an Australian citizen:
>
> - Australian citizenship is a shared identity, a common bond which unites all Australians while respecting their diversity
> - Australian citizenship involves reciprocal rights and responsibilities. The responsibilities of Australian citizenship include obeying Australian laws, including those relating to voting at elections and serving on a jury.
>
> If I meet the legal qualifications for becoming an Australian citizen and my application is approved I understand that I would have to pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people.
>
> Signature of Applicant .....

1. What does this statement reveal about the importance of values? According to this statement what are Australian values?
2. To what extent is it reasonable for the Australian Government to expect those who visit, move here or become citizens to sign this document?
3. Should all Australians sign this document as well? Why or why not?
4. Choose one of the values listed in the statement and explain it, giving an example of a situation in which it applies.
5. Which values of Australian society are not listed? Choose one with which you identify and give an example of a situation in which it applies.
6. Refer to your school's website or handbook to find the values of your school. Which of the values listed in the Australian Government's statement are similar to the values of your school?

NORMATIVE STANDARDS

Normative standards describe actions and inactions of which a culture approves and disapproves. These may or may not be codified in rules or laws. For example, infidelity in a relationship, which goes against the ethical principle of monogamy in marriage and committed relationships, is immoral but it is not illegal. The principle may be socially enforced by family and friends or members of a religious community who choose not to associate with the 'cheating' partner.

SOCIAL NORMS

Social norms of behaviour that become accepted as 'rules' because they are what everyone does, whether it follows or goes against the law or against morality. The fact that they are norms does not make them moral. For example, there are speed limits on all roads but many people exceed them. In this example the norm goes against the law and is morally questionable. The hope is that norms of social behaviour will correspond with laws and morality, although this is not always the case.

MORES

Mores (pronounced 'morays') are the customs and conventions of society, groups and individuals that are important for acceptability but that are not usually enforced by law. This includes the expectations associated with the membership of groups, clubs, organisations and religious communities, social conduct, social etiquette and even deportment and grooming. For example, when greeting another person in Australia, it is customary to shake hands, while in Japan a person bows to accompany a greeting. Peer pressure is a strong example of social coercion and the power that a group can have in determining its own mores, and enforcing them. This is especially seen when individuals adopt different behaviour, or wear certain items of clothing, because the group expects it. When these group mores are put into practice, often without question, they become the norms at least for that group, which may be small or represent large numbers in society. Some mores are time bound and culturally and socially specific. The mores associated with common decency reflect this as the following examples, while still in effect, have become less prevalent:

- giving up your seat on public transport for an elderly or disabled person, a mother with small children or a pregnant woman, or for a full fare-paying ticket holder if you are a student with a concession ticket
- helping another passenger to lift a pram onto or off public transport
- giving back, rather than keeping, the incorrect change that a shop assistant gives you
- returning someone's lost wallet with all of its contents
- helping someone less able to cross the road.

ABNORMALITY

Moral values, normative standards, social norms and mores are intended to influence the behaviour of a society for good and deter 'abnormal' behaviour. Since a wide variety of behaviour is tolerated as 'normal', there are certain behaviours outside of this definition that are labelled 'abnormal'. Society manages behaviour that is abnormal through the criminal justice system and the mental health system or by declaring a member an outcast or exile from the community or group. Abnormality is important in ethics because everything from Supreme Court judgements to disapproving words from a peer is based on what a 'normal' person would do in a particular situation. Deeming a person

'abnormal' and trying to determine what is 'right' and 'just' is more difficult to do. Abnormality is an important concept because it provides a society or group with anti-role models, the treatment of whom transmits a powerful message to others to conform to legal, social, religious and cultural expectations.

NORMATIVE STANDARDS AND NORMS

Skills: define, identify, explain, interpret

1 Identify an approved normative standard of behaviour in your school.
2 Identify a disapproved normative standard of behaviour in your school.
3 Identify two social norms observable in Australian society and discuss whether they are legal and moral.
4 As a class, in pairs or individually, brainstorm examples of mores of common decency that you have performed or witnessed.
5 Identify a famous or infamous person who has been labelled 'abnormal' in some way by the media or wider society. Which actions of the person's behaviour are regarded as abnormal?

LAWS, RULES, DUTIES, OBLIGATIONS

Laws are a system of rules to regulate the behaviour of all people at all times. They may be the laws of a country or a religion. Laws are enforced by penalties or punishments through a social or religious justice system. Laws of a country and those of a religion may come into conflict.

Rules are to regulate people in particular groups and while they may be strictly applied within the group the consequences of breaking the rules relates only to the members. Rules are more flexible, personal and localised than laws. They can be adjusted or completely changed more easily than laws, which have to go through political and legal processes to achieve change.

Duties and obligations are what should or ought to be done because they are one's responsibility in association with particular laws or rules. But duty is related more to observing laws, fulfilling one's legal responsibility, while obligation is more related to the moral responsibility to abide by rules of a group. There is another understanding of duty which shows how the concepts of duty and obligation can be interrelated. For example, in employment a person has various duties for which they have an obligation to their employer to fulfil.

MORAL CODES AND ETHICAL CODES

Moral codes or codes of conduct are a formalised set of rules usually developed by the members for establishing the expected and required behaviour of individuals in a particular group or organisation.

Ethical codes are formalised sets of principles and related rules established by an external or overarching ethical authority to govern the procedures and conduct of organisations such as businesses, medical practitioners, health care workers, armed forces, government departments and services, religions and religious welfare agencies.

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FIGURE 4.1 Influences on conscience. Why is this image not an adequate depiction of conscience?

CONSCIENCE

Conscience is the developed ability of a human being to know right and wrong, and to make decisions and carry out actions based on this. Conscience is more than just knowledge, as it encompasses intuition and strong emotions. Conscience is formed by the many influences encountered in life and its formation goes through stages of development as people gain knowledge and wisdom.

INTUITION

Intuition is a feeling based on emotional intelligence, natural law and life experience. Wisdom could be said to be the accumulation of intuition and reflection upon experience and observation.

WORLDVIEW

A **worldview** is the way in which an individual, group or society interprets the totality of existence and world history or civilisation and how they choose to act based on this interpretation – for example, rather than thinking in terms of nation states, believing that we are all one people on one Earth.

ASSUMPTIONS

Assumptions are statements or ideas that are believed to be true without any supportive evidence, and which are used as part of reasoning and as a basis for decision making. Assumptions are an important starting point for developing a reasoned argument or viewpoint on an ethical issue, but when false assumptions are drawn on, other parts of the decision-making process become questionable, too.

REASONING

Reasoning requires thinking in a **logical**, **objective**, considered and sensible way. But an ethical decision can occur in a split second and be justified in a simple manner: 'It felt like the right thing to do.' This feeling may have involved a person's conscience, intuition, personal or religious morality and an assumption – all of which may not have been consciously considered at the time of the decision. But for an analysis of an ethical issue, a person needs to be aware of these various factors and consider them in a reasoned manner.

ETHICAL AUTHORITY

An **ethical authority** can be any idea, thing or person that is used to support an ethical perspective. Not all claimed ethical authorities are **authoritative.** Despite the person using the particular ethical authority being totally convinced of their veracity, others may not see that authority as convincing, reliable, acceptable or **valid** as an authoritative source to back

up an argument. Also, it is possible to misuse even authoritative ethical authorities through misquoting or applying them to areas unrelated to their expertise. Determining the ethical authority and their credibility can assist people to determine and evaluate the thinking behind an ethical perspective or decision.

EXPLORING ETHICAL AUTHORITY

Skills: define, outline, explain

1. Compile a list of five authoritative ethical authorities.
2. Compile a list of five unreliable ethical authorities.
3. Religious traditions regard their scriptures as authoritative ethical authorities. How might their ethical authority be misused in an ethical debate?
4. Find examples of misused authoritative ethical authorities and explain how they are misused.

WHAT IS AN ETHICAL ISSUE?

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FIGURE 4.2 Extreme body piercing. Is this example of body piercing an ethical issue?

Before determining the definition of ethical issues it is important to understand what makes something an issue. **Issues** are anything about which there is disagreement. But **ethical issues** are matters about which there is disagreement over what is the related morally right and appropriate behaviour for human beings. There will be at least two conflicting viewpoints, often many more, making resolution of the matter more complex, perhaps even impossible. Such complex ethical issues are described as ethical **dilemmas**. The varying viewpoints will be expressed using moral language such as right, good, just, worthy, moral or as wrong, bad, unjust, unworthy and immoral. All ethical issues exist in specific locations, cultures, times and places, and these contexts will influence the knowledge and thinking about the issue and determine the methods for decision making used by the different parties involved as influencing or influenced by the decision making. These different parties are the contributors**,** those interested in making the decision and those influenced by the decision in the ethical issue. There is often some confusion about whether a matter is an ethical issue or simply something about which there is a disagreement, as moral language can be misused as a means of persuasion. A group of friends disagreeing over which film to watch are not debating an ethical issue, even though the suggested film or the suggestion itself may be described as bad or good. Yet a disagreement between parents and children over the right to watch a particular film may be an ethical issue, as the parents may regard the film as promoting unacceptable, even immoral values and standards of behaviour.

DISCERNING ETHICAL ISSUES

Skills: select, identify, evaluate

1 Which of the following statements would or could be ethical issues?
   a Killing is wrong.
   b I love feeling free.
   c The Mona Lisa shows ideal beauty.
   d Students should follow the school rules at all times.
   e The design brief is that every aspect of the building must reflect an advanced use of green technologies and design ideas.
   f Truth must always be told.

3 Compose a statement that you consider definitely not an ethical issue.

4 Compose another statement that could be an ethical issue.

5 Discuss these with another student, small group or class.

METHODS OF ETHICAL DECISION MAKING

There are many methods used to apply ethical decision making, coming from philosophy, sociology, psychology, jurisprudence, critical theory and religion. The overall methods explored here are deontological (ought ethics) and utilitarian (outcome ethics), virtue ethics and character ethics. They have variations of emphasis within them and some of these variations will be discussed below.

DEONTOLOGICAL: OUGHT ETHICS DECISION-MAKING METHOD

This method for ethical decision making is based on considering what should be done to achieve the good. Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), the originator of deontological theory, based his theory on his belief that actions should not be done as a means to an end but as an end in themselves. So in his thinking one should not do something wrong in order to achieve good in the end. Both the means and the end that he saw were good.

People who use ought ethics as their method for making ethical decisions may vary in the way they apply the method. For some there are actions and behaviours that are always good and therefore should be done in all circumstances because they are good and therefore the right thing to do. Conversely, they would regard some actions and behaviours as always bad and wrong and therefore should be avoided in every circumstance. This total and consistent application of ought ethics, is known as absolutism. But how do these absolutists determine what is always good and what is always bad?

Absolutists base their decision making on what they have been taught or shown or have learnt to be unquestionably good and right by their family, education, religion and society. They follow religious beliefs, virtues, principles, rules, codes, authoritative opinions or official statements, obligations, duties and norms that they regard as unchangeable and can be applied objectively by any person, group or society. In ethics, this means that a person, group or society can judge another from a position of moral superiority. Absolutists make their decisions considering only what should be done because it is good and right in itself. Ought ethics does not allow for a wrong action to be justified on the basis of having achieved good. But what is not considered by absolutists are the consequences of the decision.

Others who use ought ethics to help them decide what to do in an ethical situation may consider competing goods as well as the consequences of possible decisions. They are also guided by religious beliefs, virtues, principles, rules, codes, authoritative opinions or official statements, obligations, duties and norms but are aware that to achieve the good may be complicated and far from straightforward. This may mean that they refrain from doing one action they know to be 'the good' because it may have negative or harmful consequences. Instead they may make a decision to act in a way that has more favourable consequences, or at least has results that are less harmful, yet is still good.

UTILITARIAN: OUTCOME ETHICS DECISION-MAKING METHOD

Utilitarianism, also called consequentialism, is concerned with consequences of actions. Those who apply this method to ethical decision making start with what things are good and then move to consider which actions will achieve that good to the greatest degree. This may involve actions that are questionable, even immoral, yet good is the outcome.

This is applying the principle that the end justifies the means – a principle that is unacceptable to deontologists.

Some who apply outcome ethics argue that there is nothing that is always right or always wrong. For them, rightness and wrongness are relative to the situation, the person and the culture. Therefore, no person or group or society can judge another from a position of moral superiority. This particular form of outcome ethics is called relativism and, sometimes, cultural relativism. This is the opposite of absolutism.

Susanna Newcome (1685–1763)
Newcome promoted a form of ethical hedonism, the view that there is only one true good – pleasure – and happiness is the totality of pleasure. Ethical hedonism played a significant role in the subsequent development of utilitarianism by later thinkers Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill.

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Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832)
Create all the happiness you are able to create; remove all the misery you are able to remove. And for every grain of enjoyment you sow in the bosom of another, you shall find a harvest in your own bosom – while every sorrow which you pluck out from the thoughts and feelings of a fellow creature shall be replaced by beautiful flowers of peace and joy in the sanctuary of your soul.

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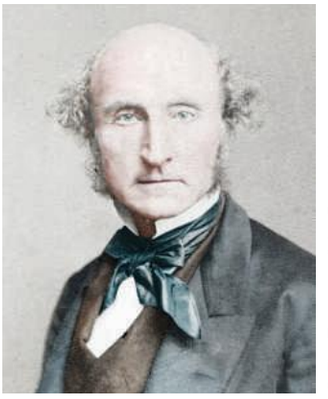

John Stuart Mill (1806–1873)
To do as one would be done by, and to love one's neighbour as oneself, constitutes the ideal perfection of utilitarian morality.

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FIGURE 4.3 How do each of these philosophers explain what is good, and therefore moral?

VIRTUE ETHICS AND CHARACTER ETHICS

These approaches to ethics assume that if a person's character is developed by the formation of moral virtues, they will inevitably make sound ethical decisions in most situations. Neither virtue nor character ethics is concerned with rules, principles or outcomes. Rather, they focus on the concepts of character and moral virtue. Both would advise that one acts according to what a virtuous or person of good character would do. But what is a virtuous person and how does one become virtuous?

This is a person with ideal character traits (virtues), which are natural but need developing. What are these virtues? Those emphasised by Aristotle (384–322 BCE) are friendliness, truthfulness, courage, temperance, liberality, wittiness, magnanimity, patience, proper ambition, magnificence, modesty and righteous indignation.

He argued that once these ideal traits were normative in a person's character they would reliably guide their ethical decisions. So a virtuous person would make ethical decisions based on the application of their innate and nurtured virtues. And a virtuous person could be relied on to make ethical decisions that would achieve the Good. Both virtue and character ethics focus on the person exercising their virtuous character. Developing a character that is informed by the moral virtues and applying those virtues to guide ethical decision making happens throughout a lifetime and evolves as the person gains the ability to balance competing virtues and avoid excesses.

Though the focus of virtue and character ethics is the formation of a moral person, they are also concerned with answering big picture questions for society such as 'How should humans behave?' 'What behaviour makes one a decent human being?'

NATURAL LAW

For some, natural law is based in behaviours observable in the natural world. For others, the theory of natural law asserts that all creatures have been created by God with what they need for life. They have intuitive desires for what was designed as best for them. In humans these natural characteristics are to enable living a good (moral) life. God wants humans to want good things so the world according to natural law theory is predictable, sustainable and functional to facilitate this. There are seven basic goods for which humans have instinctual desire. They are: self-preservation, reproduction (providing for continuation of humanity), to educate offspring (thereby providing for their survival and continuing humanity), to know God, to live socially, to avoid offence (which would threaten social existence and self-preservation), to avoid ignorance (naturally inquisitive for knowledge, which also assists survival). So right acts are those done in accordance with these natural instincts.

APPLYING DIFFERENT METHODS OF DECISION MAKING

Skills: interpret, analyse, explain

Imagine there is a scientific project that can assure the happiness of the whole human race is immeasurably increased by the elimination of poverty, lasting universal peace is achieved, disease is conquered. But the project was dependent upon the condition that one human whose life is mysteriously prolonged is to be kept involuntarily in a state of continuous and agonising torture.

1 Choose three of the above methods of ethical decision making, and explain how and why they would respond to the project proposal.

Applying a single principle

If an ethical principle of maximising environmental protection and conservation was to be applied to the construction of a town, every decision – from the economy, laws, town planning, community groups, and education to people's behaviour – would need to reflect this principle. The government could insist on carbon taxes and offsets for heavy industry. It might also establish business grants to encourage the development of 'green' businesses and to adapt existing businesses to the new model. All local council decisions would need to reflect environmental protection and conservation concerns, and laws would need to codify all the minimum requirements to enact the principle right down to environmental considerations of rubbish collection.

According to such an environmental ethical principle, it would be moral to recycle and immoral to dump unsorted waste or litter. It might even filter down to neighbours reporting on each other for violations, such as wasting water, cutting down a tree or having a 'burn off' to reduce flammable fuel around a house. An individual could feel guilty for not applying the ethical principle as severely as others, who may be fanatical about it and feel morally superior because they live to a greater extent by an environmental code and hence believe they are more 'ethical'. The benefits of having a natural environment could even come at the expense of other principles, such as those of private property and people's safety.

For example, if a resident decided to remove trees from around their house and property they would violate the long held green values of councils that strictly regulated which trees could be chopped down and could be charged and fined.

Of primary concern in considering construction of a town is the suitability of land for human habitation. Beautiful vistas and secluded surrounds may not avert the dangers of steep and difficult access on a dirt road (often only one way in and out), surrounded by highly inflammable / combustible eucalyptus forest, almost waterless, with little to no preparation for fire. Inexpensive land does not necessarily mean that it is wise to choose to build in the area, especially if the locale is fire prone. The devastation of Black Saturday in the King Lake and Marysville areas and of the 2020 fires in Mallacoota are examples of human habitation that was always vulnerable in high fire risk regions.

>

The survivors of those fires acknowledge they have learned a lot about fires and now about the land. They are looking at both differently. They have challenged themselves, their communities and the local councils to question the wisdom of permitting building in such areas. And even with permission to build, they want different strategies for the construction of appropriate buildings. Councils have introduced restrictive building practices, detailing which materials can be used and the design features of the building to fit the fire hazard locale.

Also being debated is the question of how to maintain the land in a way that reduces fire danger. The land management strategies, including burning practices of Australia's First Nations Peoples, is being closely explored for insight into how to live safely in high fire risk areas. Much of the forested bush land of today is not pristine forest but regenerated old logged country. The trees are too many and dangerously packed together. Members of the First Nations Peoples living in fire-prone areas are urging restructuring the land, thinning the tree growth and growing edible native grasses that can be cropped to keep the forest floor clear of fire hazard.

Sue Forrester

FIGURE 4.4 Overlooking the Yarra Valley, Victoria. One of the devastated houses that did not make it through Black Saturday. What is the wisdom of building in such a high fire risk environment?

EXPLORING AN ETHICAL DILEMMA

Skills: outline, explain, interpret, synthesise

1. Draw a Venn or tree diagram of the ethical dilemma described above in the discussion about Victoria's bushfires. Put the highest ethical principle in the centre. Is it difficult to determine which principle should go in the centre? If so, why?
2. As a class, discuss the various points and issues everyone has identified. Consider the different opinions and update your diagram, adding any points that were raised with which you agree but which you had not considered.
3. What do you think 'ought' to be done? Should people be restricted from clearing their land? Consider the environment, land values, future use of the land, the safety of people and their private property, the value of ecosystems and the rights of animals.
4. How might your perspective on this ethical issue, and your judgement about what 'ought' to be done, change if you were:
   a. a supporter of the Greens political party?
   b. a person who lives in the city but wants a holiday house?
   c. a farmer who wants to grow trees for pulp?
   d. a victim of bushfires?
   e. a farmer who is a member of Australia's First Nations Peoples?
5. Research the ethical debate engaging the Communities in flood affected Brisbane and NSW. Which ethical principles are in conflict?

REVISION

Short-answer questions

Answer the following questions in your own words. In your responses, remember to use synonyms for the term you are explaining. That way you build your vocabulary and show that you clearly understand the terms in the questions.

1. Explain the difference between ethics and morality.
2. What is immorality?
3. What is amorality?
5. What is the conscience?
6. Define what it is that makes something an issue.
7. What makes an issue become an ethical issue?
8. What are moral codes?
9. What are moral values?
10. What role do moral values have in ethical decision making?
11. What is the difference between idealised and practised values?
12. What is normative behaviour?
13. What is intuition?
14. What is the role of reasoning in ethical decision making?
15. Define the term 'ethical authority'.
16. Identify a major ethical authority in Australia.
17. Define the term 'ethical principles'.
18. Identify a major ethical principle that influences Australians in their moral behaviour.
19. Identify a major ethical code that guides Australians in ethical thinking and moral behaviour.
20. Why should a person be moral?

Worksheet
Methods of ethical decision making

Weblinks
Various for Chapter 4

EXTENSION

Methods of ethical decision making

Answer these questions in your own words. In your responses remember to use synonyms for the term you are explaining. That way you build your vocabulary and show that you clearly understand the terms in the questions.

1 Explain the following approaches to ethical decision making, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each approach:

Ought ethics	**Utilitarianism**	**Relativism**
Outcome ethics	**Virtue ethics**	
Absolutism	**Natural law**	

2 What would a **utilitarian** decide about whether a school counsellor should disclose confidential information about a student? How would they arrive at the decision? What values, principles and ethical authorities would they consider?

3 What would a **person applying virtue ethics** decide is the first and most important thing to consider in responding to any ethical issue? How would they arrive at the decision? What values, principles and ethical authorities would they consider?

4 What would be the ethical perspective of a **relativist** towards the use of flogging as a punishment in some countries? What would be the reasoning behind their perspective? What values, principles and ethical authorities would they consider?

5 What would be the ethical perspective of an **absolutist** towards abortion? What would be the reasoning behind their perspective? What values, principles and ethical authorities would form their perspective?

6 What would proponents of the **natural law** say about euthanasia? What would be the reasoning behind their perspective? What values and principles would form their perspective? What ethical authorities would be used in their decision making?

7 Write an extended response discussing the following statement: 'There is no right or wrong in human behaviour. It's all just a matter of doing what is necessary or preferable at that time in the particular situation.'

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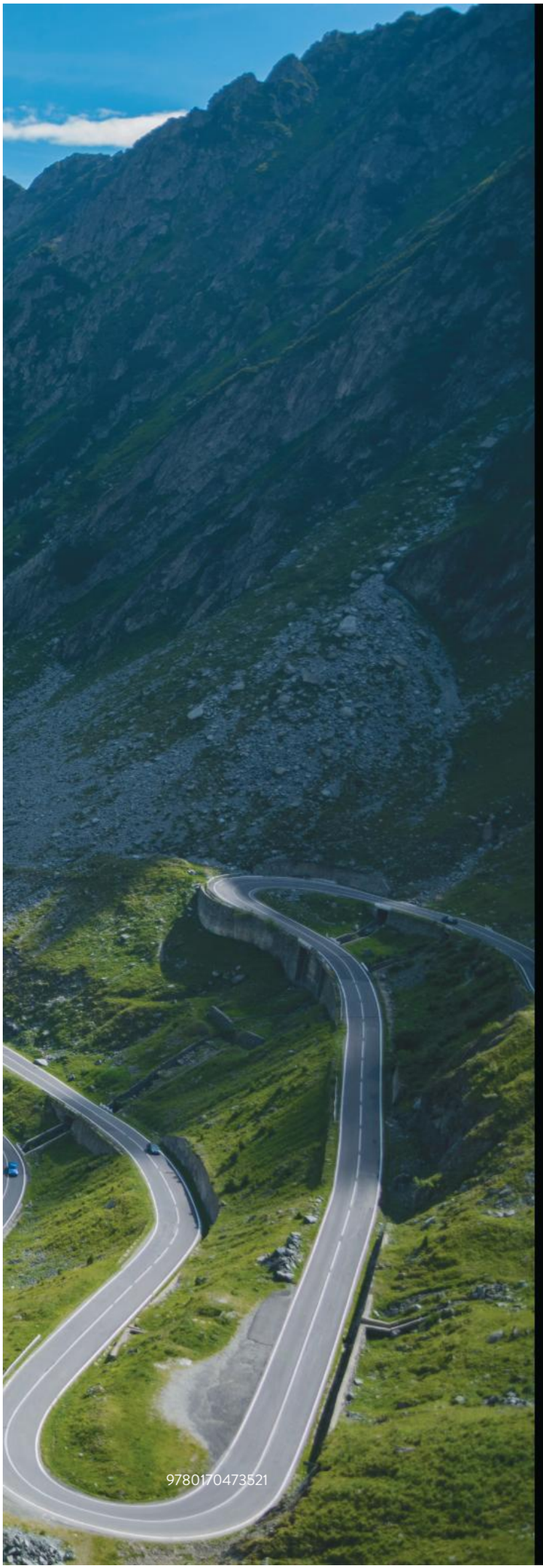
9780170473521



Chapter 5

RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS: ETHICAL THINKING

Outcome to be demonstrated

Analysis of how ethical perspectives and moral judgements are made by spiritualities, religious traditions or denominations in pluralist societies

Focus questions

- What is an ethical perspective?
- What are the ethical perspectives of two religious traditions represented in a pluralist society?
- What concepts and factors, including aspects of religion, influence the development of these ethical perspectives?
- What ethical decision-making methods are used in applying these perspectives to moral judgements?

Worksheet
Terminology

ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES

A perspective is a way of looking at something, an event, a situation, an issue, life. It has a guiding principle, maybe more than one that can be complementary or sit in tension with each other, perhaps even in conflict. Ethical perspectives enable a person to define, explore, analyse an ethical issue by applying the concepts and factors involved in ethical thinking and the methods of ethical decision making.

RELIGIOUS ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES WITHIN PLURALIST SOCIETY

The ethical perspectives of religious traditions, which may be based on perceived divine command, are usually about ideal visions for society, and what 'ought' to happen but may not be happening now or in the foreseeable future. In the past, religions had great influence over the secular authorities. In many religions the leaders were also high-ranking members of the ruling group, and participated directly in regulating morality. Such an influential position still may happen in contemporary societies where there is a dominant religion. But today in pluralist societies, religions often have a contributory or advisory position, being one voice among the many worldviews represented in the society. They may have no overt political power and their ability to influence a secular and pluralist society is more limited, perhaps only affecting a religious community rather than the wider society. Regardless of this limitation, the government, court system and various ethical committees in a pluralist society may still draw on ethical perspectives from religion to inform public debates and contribute to decision making on ethical issues affecting society. Many of these religious traditions have highly evolved ethical structures due to the long period of their development. Each has a particular ethical perspective or emphasis, despite the fact that they have a large number of ethical principles and moral values in common, such as the 'Golden Rule'.

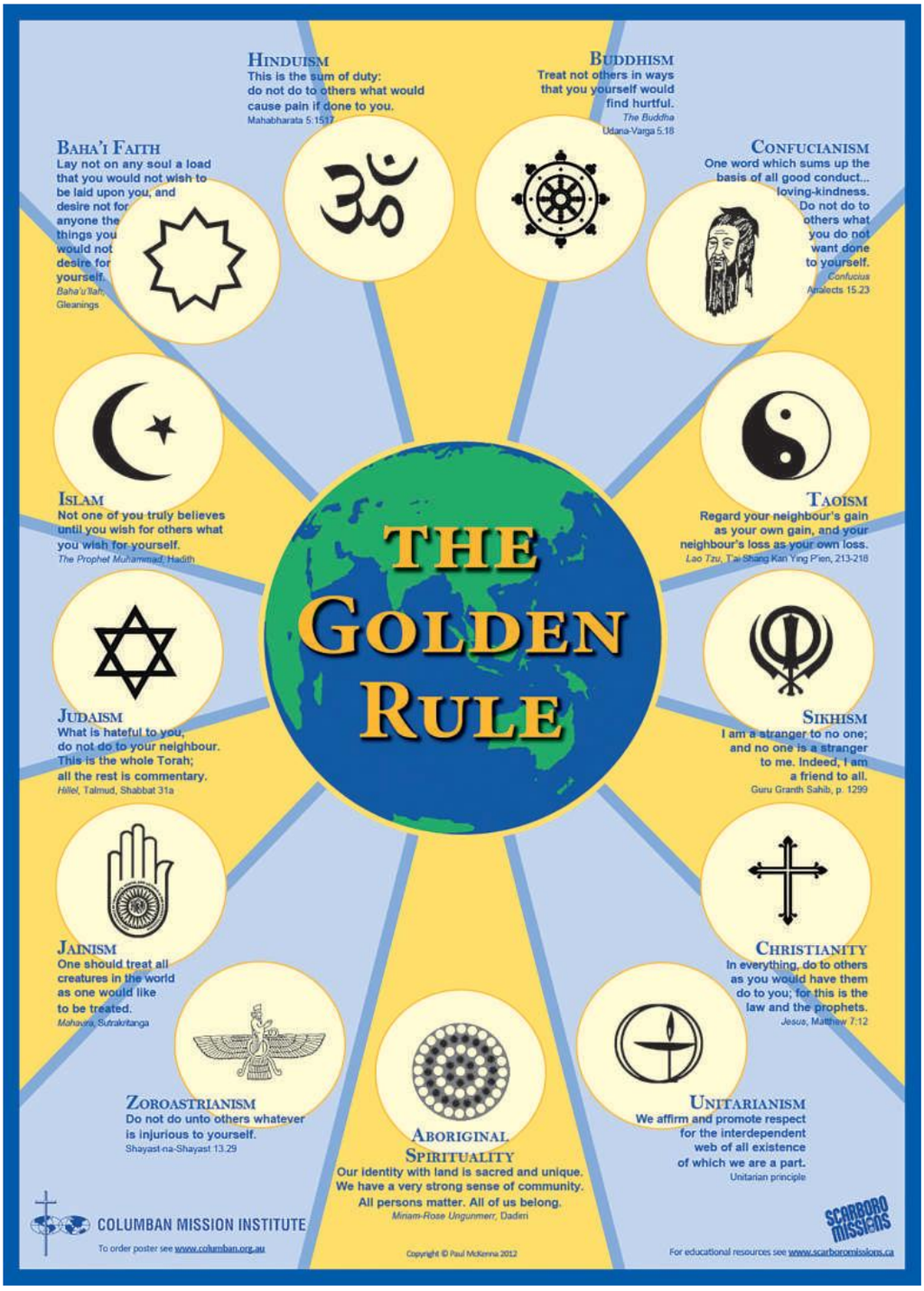
Many religious traditions teach that human persons have dignity or worth because they are made in the image and likeness of a god. This means that all people, regardless of age, gender, ability, physical appearance, intelligence, race, strength, health or morality, are creatures of a god and have human dignity. This value cannot be taken away or lost. This makes all people by their very nature equal in dignity and rights, and precious.

IMPACT OF THE GOLDEN RULE

Skills: describe, explain, interpret

1 Describe a situation involving the use of social media in which it is difficult to apply the 'Golden Rule' teaching. The situation could be from personal experience or observations you have made.

2 Using the situation you have described, outline:
   a the effects or consequences of not applying the 'Golden Rule'
   b the effects or consequences of applying the 'Golden Rule'.



Saint Columban's Mission Society, www.columban.org.au

FIGURE 5.1 One of the most basic rules for moral behaviour is known as the 'Golden Rule'. In slightly different words, this rule is found in all of the major world religions and in many ancient religions. Why is this rule 'golden'?
*Note Aboriginal Spirituality in the diagram refers to the spirituality of First Nations Peoples.

ETHICAL FRAMEWORKS

Each religious tradition has its ethical framework. Figures 5.2 to 5.7 outline the nature of ethical authority, and ethical perspectives, within First Nations Peoples' spiritualities, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism.

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES SPIRITUALITIES

Ethical authority

Ethical authority in First Nations Peoples spiritualities rests in the Elders, Creation Spirits, the Land, and community according to cultural tradition. The authority of the Elders is based on their wisdom through their custodianship of the land, their knowledge of the lore of the Creation Spirits and Creation Time and their service to the community. It is not an authority that is granted to everyone because of their age.

Relationship with the land and natural law or First Law (meaning the laws of nature that is not to be confused with the concept of natural law in Western ethics) underpins the ethical perspective that connects the land, the Creation Time, Creation Spirits and the people who are present-day representatives of the clan or nation. Creation Time is understood in both the past and the present and connects to the people through law and lore. Lore is linked to the sacred dimension, songlines and totems. The totem defines the role of First Nations Peoples in their relationship to the land and to other members of the clan. Variations depend on the specific nation's beliefs, practices, language and moral code.

The authority of Elders is undisputed and comes from their initiation into sacred knowledge and mutual respect by the various parties in a dispute. Traditionally, there was a head of the clan. There are separate roles for men and women, which are defined by their respective genders. The Elders, Aunties and Uncles, are involved in solemn cases when sacred prohibitions have been violated. They also make rulings on public and private wrongs using customary law. They can officiate in kinship disputes (especially when it concerns a family member) and make rulings.

Ethical perspectives and concepts

The ethical perspectives and concepts adopted by Australia's First Nations Australians are illustrated in the conflicting ethics of a Western utilitarian society that is based on wealth and productivity and the spirituality of conservation and sustainability principles espoused by First Nations Peoples.

Maintaining custodianship so that there is oneness with the land and all that exists on it is of primary importance. This is the way to ensure that peace and social harmony are maintained. Responsibilities to the land include physical and sacred maintenance of the land and the traditional culture. Consideration of consequences, good or bad, of an action are more important than the intention behind the action.

Ethical concepts include kinship, consensus, harmony, obligation, duty, sharing, peace, responsibility, survival and self-determination.

Other principles include sharing with the collective and communal moral values.

FIGURE 5.2 Ethical snapshot of First Nations Peoples Spiritualities

BUDDHISM

Ethical authority

For both Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism the source of ethical authority is the Tripitaka, the earliest collection of Buddhist teachings. It has been added to over the centuries and the whole vast collection is also known as the Pali Canon. It is the only text accepted by Theravada Buddhism. Mahayana Buddhism also accepts later *sutras* (teaching threads).

There is no independent moral standard. The degree of greed or selflessness, indifference or devotion in any action sets the consequence in motion. The consequence is the fulfilment of the act.

There is no concept of a personal or creator God as the source for ethical authority.

Ethical perspectives and concepts

Buddhists believe that suffering is the nature of existence and that escape from suffering comes from following the eightfold path and the ethical teachings of Buddhism. Nirvana is the end of suffering in the current lifetime and all future lifetimes. Enlightenment is the ultimate reality that brings one to nirvana. Enlightenment is the wisdom of emptiness that comes from the direct experience of all phenomena being illusory existence (*samsara*). All samsaric existence is therefore unsatisfactory because its nature is suffering (*dukkha*), impermanent (*annica*) and non-self (*anatta*). Enlightenment comes from realising that upon extinction all things are of one essence.

Buddhism teaches that moral behaviour flows naturally from mastering one's ego and desires and cultivating loving kindness and compassion. There are no moral absolutes in Buddhism and it is recognised that ethical decision making involves a complex connection of causes and conditions. But there is an underpinning principle of intentionality. Individuals are advised to examine their motivation and to evaluate the consequences of their actions in light of the Buddha's teachings.

Ethical concepts such as righteousness, free will, humility, courage, respect, trust, diligence, justice, generosity, compassion, mercy, self-discipline, forgiveness and harmony inform ethical perspectives and decision making.

FIGURE 5.3 Ethical snapshot of Buddhism

CHRISTIANITY

Ethical authority

The source of ethical authority in Christianity is God – one God, in three coequal 'persons' – the Holy Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Scriptures, seen as divinely inspired, are also ethical authorities. Each denomination has its own structures through Church leadership – local, state, national and international – that have ethical authority to formulate perspectives on ethical issues and advise individual religious leaders and members as to their rulings on ethical issues.

Catholicism. Based in Apostolic succession, represented in the Pope and the Magisterium in Rome. Conscience, intuition and reason are informed by Church teachings. Faith in the Church and its power to intercede, interpret Scripture and direct the religion are emphasised. Rules are made through universal church councils and supplemented by papal encyclicals. Saints, the Pope and priesthood can intercede for adherents. On certain limited occasions since 1870, the Pope has claimed 'infallibility' on matters of dogma. The Church has the ethical authority to interpret Scripture.

Orthodox. Both the Eastern Orthodox and the Oriental Orthodox traditions have hierarchical structures that vary according to national location or ethnic composition. The Churches have apostolic succession; the Holy Spirit is believed to guide Church decisions.

Protestantism. Ethical authority derives from faith, prayer and the Scriptures as well as the accepted sacraments. Christ has already suffered for everyone's sins so salvation comes through faith in him. The Five Solas of Protestantism emphasise that faith and Scripture are all that are needed. Religious leaders cannot intercede but they can write important theological theses. There is a focus on individual petition and redemption. A number of world movements exist, such as the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (Geneva). Through sharing ideas and approaches that are in keeping with the principles of Protestantism, ethical perspectives are formed.

Church of England. The Monarch of England holds the title of Supreme Governor of the Church of England. The Primate of All England and Metropolitan, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Primate of England, the Archbishop of York and the General Synod of the Church can make legal measures that are ratified by the Houses of Parliament – the laws of the land. Royal approval is required to ratify canons, which are more spiritual laws in terms of the Church. The Episcopate (bishops), prayer and conscience are important for guidance on ethical matters. Parts of the Church of England are more aligned with the Catholic Church and others are more aligned with Protestantism.

Pentecostal. The ethical authority of Scripture, the preacher or minister and the Holy Spirit is believed to be intimately involved in worship and the direction of adherents.

Ethical perspectives and concepts

The overarching ethical perspective is based on the relationship of love that each person of the Trinity has for the other, which Jesus loved and commanded humans to do likewise in love of one's neighbour. The ethical principle that human life is sacred underpins ethical thinking about attitudes and behaviour.

Ethical concepts such as righteousness, free will, faith, grace, humility, courage, respect, trust, diligence, justice, generosity, compassion, mercy, self-discipline, forgiveness, community and charity inform ethical perspectives and decision making.

FIGURE 5.4 Ethical snapshot of Christianity

HINDUISM

Ethical authority

The dominant philosophy (Smarta) in Hinduism regards the many gods as various manifestations of Brahman (the One God) who is infinite and without form. Sacred texts are the foundational authority for the Hindu ethical perspective. The Dharma Shastras are Hindu law books about morality and religious duty. These legal texts, as well as the norms of the people who knew the texts, are sacred. They provide guiding rules and principles for the order and regularity of society and righteous conduct. A person is born with their *dharma*, a result of their previous lives. It refers to the law of inner growth that supports them in the present and shows the way to their future development. Dharma determines a person's proper attitude towards the outer world and governs their mental and physical reactions.

The sects within Hinduism are not denominational in the same way that other religions are. Each is merely a different relationship to God but leads to the same ethical goal. In each sect there are Brahmin priests and holy men and women who establish themselves by their knowledge of Hindu texts and spiritual practices. This establishes them as ethical authorities who are consulted for spiritual guidance.

Ethical perspectives and concepts

Hindu ethics focus on the training of the mind to develop a disciplined spiritual life for the individual, to remove greed and egoism to attain the highest good.

The same objective of achieving the highest good is also the individual's duty (dharma) to society by helping others to rid themselves of self-centredness, cruelty, greed and other vices.

There is no absolute good or evil.

Wisdom is valued over knowledge.

There is acceptance of one's place in society.

The life of every living thing is valued.

Collective family structure is encouraged, where everyone works towards the betterment of the family as a whole. Everyone who has developed a social consciousness has a threefold duty: the duty to the gods for the benefits of the natural world is honoured through worship and prayer; the duty to the *Rishis*, the sages and saints who formed the spiritual culture, is fulfilled through study of the scriptures; the duty to the ancestors, providers of physical heritage, is honoured through procreation to preserve the lineage.

Ethical concepts such as righteousness, free will, faith, grace, humility, courage, respect, trust, diligence, justice, generosity, compassion, mercy, self-discipline, forgiveness and community inform ethical perspectives and decision making.

FIGURE 5.5 Ethical snapshot of Hinduism

ISLAM

Ethical authority

Ultimate ethical authority in Islam is God – One God, Allah, omnipotent, indivisible and personal, who is revealed through the Quran (sacred text), which is therefore also an ethical authority for guidance in moral behaviour and the basis of Sharia law.

Sharia law comprises two main sources of law: the Quran and Sunnah (or Hadith) as the primary sources, and ijma and qiyas are the secondary sources. Ijma refers to the consensus of opinion of Islamic legal scholarsof a given generation; Muslims are bound by it unless a new ijma emerges. Qiyas refers to analogical deduction based on provisions in the Quran and Hadith. It is administered differently across the varieties of Islam and their respective ruling bodies and across different Islamic countries, with some countries banning it from application to secular society. Other countries adopt a 'middle' path and use Sharia law as a model but ultimately defer to the constitution of their countries and law courts. There are also differences of interpretation and in what is included in Sharia law within the schools of Islam.

Sunni ethics relate to the example and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad continued by the first four caliphs and initially by the election of subsequent caliphs. The largest school of Islam, it draws on agreements from ijma (agreements of Muhammad's companions) and *ulama* (jurists). A process of qiyas (reasoning by analogy) is used to derive laws from the laws of Allah. Also, when possible, community support for a decision is assessed. This is consistent with the ethical principle of meritocracy that values individuals on their merit and gives leadership to the most talented individuals.

Shia believes that Muhammad's relatives and descendants (imams) inherited the tradition and are the spiritual and political leadership. They reject ijma and qiyas as a basis for interpretation. Instead they draw on *maniq* (logic) as a way to interpret laws from the Qur'an, the stories of Muhammad and the Dozen Imams.

Ethical perspectives and concepts

Islam understands that humans have an ethical relationship with the world in which they are representatives of Allah the Creator. In fulfilling their role in the world, the five pillars are the essential obligations and Sharia law will create an ideal society.

God is all-knowing but has given humans the freedom to choose between right and wrong guided by the revelation of God that assists human will, intellect and reason.

Ethical concepts such as righteousness, free will, faith, grace, humility, courage, respect, trust, diligence, justice, generosity, compassion, mercy, self-discipline, forgiveness, community, harmony, modesty and charity inform ethical perspectives and decision making.

FIGURE 5.6 Ethical snapshot of Islam

JUDAISM

Ethical authority

Ultimate ethical authority in Judaism is God – One God, omnipotent, immanent, indivisible and personal revealed through the words of the prophets that are recorded in the Torah (sacred texts). The laws are from God and no person is higher than the laws. Therefore, the sacred texts are also ethical authorities. Universal moral truths are contained in the stories and history of the sacred texts.

The various streams of Judaism have international, national, state and local ethical authorities. Their related rabbinic council interprets rabbinic teachings, Scripture and the law related to ethical issues and regulates itself. At a local level the rabbi of a synagogue can be a mediator in disputes and make rulings.

Ultra-Orthodox. Various Rebbes and Ravs lead their respective groups.

Modern Orthodox. Led by Rabbinic Councils at local, state and national levels, each with its own authority.

Conservative. Led by the World Council of Conservative Masorti Synagogues.

Progressive. Led by the World Union for Progressive Judaism.

In Israel. The ethical perspective of Orthodox Judaism informs many levels of society such as sections of Israeli law to do with education, citizenship, marriage and rule in Jewish law courts. Judaism infuses many levels of society, including the Israel Defence Force code of ethics, a religious unit of the army (the Nahal Haredi), religious law courts (*beth dins*), religious bodies supervising religious food regulations (*kashrut*) and religious burial societies.

Ethical perspectives and concepts

God is the source of ethics and morality for all human beings. Human beings have a special relationship to the divine, they are an image of God. Every human being's role is to do their part to perfect the world to bring about the kingdom of the Almighty. The ethical role of Jews in the world is to lead by example, to be a nation of priests and a model ethical society. Being good to fellow human beings is the way to worship God. The central ethical principle is 'do not do to others what is hateful to you'. The rest of Judaism is commentary, framing this ethical principle.

Ethical concepts such as righteousness, free will, faith, grace, humility, courage, respect, trust, diligence, justice, generosity, compassion, mercy, self-discipline, forgiveness, community and charity inform ethical perspectives and decision making.

FIGURE 5.7 Ethical snapshot of Judaism

ETHICAL THINKING IN RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

Skills: identify, interpret, explain, synthesise

Use the information provided in the ethical perspectives snapshots to answer these questions.

1. Choose one religious tradition and draw a flow chart to illustrate its levels of authority, from the highest source to the local level.
2. Discuss whether ethical authority needs to come from a divine source. Explain why or why not.
3. Why is the ethical perspective shared by monotheistic religions one of the most dominant in the world today?
4. Create a diagram to track a particular ethical ruling by an international body of a religion all the way down to the local level.
   - What happened to the ruling along the way?
   - What were the reasons for any changes?
   - How did the rulings of the religion's authoritative institution influence the moral judgements of the local communities of their religion?

APPLYING RELIGIOUS ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES AND METHODS OF DECISION MAKING

As demonstrated in Figures 5.2 to 5.7, in the pluralist society of Australia, religious traditions all have their own methods for regulating disputes between community members, the wider society and the tradition's ethical perspective on an issue. When a dispute involves contradiction or conflict between the religion and the government, the religious tradition is in a difficult position. It has to affirm what defines its identity and the identity of adherents, as well as respond to the issue and honour the law of Australia. What follows is an examination of three religious ethical perspectives that are engaged in a dialogue with mainstream Australian society. Each of these case studies examines the process by which the religious traditions develop and enact their ethical perspectives in a pluralist society, and advise their religious communities on how to apply them in their own lives.

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES' SPIRITUAL AND RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

For more than 60 000 years, First Nations Australians communities were extremely diverse, each having its own languages, religions, myths and unique ethical structures. In Australian First Nations spirituality and culture, the law is sacred, just as it is in Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Today, a number of different First Nations Peoples still follow traditional culture, and there are also those who do not live traditionally and have assimilated ethical structures of other religious traditions. A First Nations person might also identify with their traditional culture but be part of a different religion, such as Christianity in the case of Pastor Sir Douglas Nicholls and Islam for boxer Anthony Mundine. A person in this position may see their religious tradition's ethical perspective as more binding to them, or they may follow parts of both their religion and First Nations spirituality equally, or they may abide by First Nations customary law and lore. An individual who represents this dichotomy of identity is Pastor Sir Douglas Nicholls. In one of his sermons, Nicholls – a respected elder and preacher – made a poignant remark about First Nations Peoples' identity, which is also appropriate to ethics:

> And I want to suggest three things why you should bother about the Aborigines. Firstly, we belong to the great family of God He had made out of one blood all nations of men. Secondly, why you should bother about the Aborigines, we're a part of the great British Commonwealth of nations. And thirdly, we want to walk with you, we don't wish to walk alone.
>
> Pastor Sir Douglas Nicholls, Sermon, 1940

This statement clearly outlines that there should be no conflict of laws and that First Nations Peoples are equal in the eyes of God and should be equal participants in Australian society. In terms of ethics, this statement clearly defines the multiple layers of an ethical relationship about all human beings being related to one another. All Australians live under Commonwealth law and the destiny of all peoples should be side by side as equals, which is still an ideal at the current time. In his statement the ethical principles of First Nations and non-Indigenous cultures are clearly united, as is Nicholls' acknowledgement of Australian law.

Sir Douglas Nicholls

Pastor Sir Douglas (Doug) Nicholls (1906–88) was a Yorta Yorta man and activist who became pastor of the first Aboriginal Church of Christ in Australia at a time when discrimination against First Nations people was built into state laws. He advocated for human dignity to be allowed for all First Nations people.

As a young man, Doug Nicholls was a talented Australian Rules footballer and trained with the Carlton Football Club but the players refused to have him on the team because of his race. He moved on to Northcote, where he played for five years, being part of their 1929 premiership team, and then played for Fitzroy. In 1935, he was selected for the Victorian interstate team. He stopped playing football because of injury but continued as a coach and was also a distinguished boxer and sprinter, winning important races. Towards the end of his football career, he became active in religion and activism.

The paternalism and arrogance of the Church prevented Nicholls and other First Nations people from attaining the more important positions. Nicholls said that nothing would change until 'white people learn to think black'. He was the first in calling to dispel notions that the Bible could be used to justify the dispossession of First Nations peoples.

Fairfax Syndication/Fairfax Media

FIGURE 5.8 Pastor Sir Doug Nicholls. In what ways is he still a role model to Australians today?

Nicholls, the first First Nations person to hold a vice-regal office as Governor of South Australia in 1976, was awarded a Member of the British Empire (MBE) in 1957, an Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 1968 and was knighted in 1972. In 1962 he was named Father of the Year by the Victorian Father's Day Council for 'outstanding leadership in youth and welfare work and for the inspired example he set the community in his unfailing efforts to further the cause of the Australian Aborigine'. Nicholls reaffirmed the teachings of Jesus to 'love one another' (John 13:34–5), despite the reality of Church practice towards First Nations peoples in his day.

EXPLORING FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES SPIRITUALITY

Skills: identify, interpret, explain, research

1. What was Pastor Sir Doug Nicholls' ethical vision for Australian society?
2. How did Nicholls define the identity of First Nations Peoples?
3. What was his view on non-indigenous Australian society and religion?
4. Research the interaction between Christianity and First Nations Peoples in contemporary Australian society to discern in what ways the ethical perspectives of Christianity have changed.

Here is my country?

This is a version of an ancient and local Creation story from the traditional Kulin population; a story still told by local Kulin Elders today. It is a story of lost country, of lost respect and the wrath of the Kulin's all-powerful Great Creator, Bunjil. It is the drowning of the ancestral lands of the Boonwurrung, a place that we today call Port Phillip Bay.

> The bay, known traditionally as 'Nerm', was for millennia once the very best of hunting grounds for the Boonwurrung and Kulin people. However, at some point in the distant past, the population had become complacent and arrogant to the seemingly boundless gifts of the land.

Alamy Stock Photo/Alicia Fox

FIGURE 5.9 Artwork by Safina. What is the possible symbolism of the eagle form adopted by Bunjil?

They fought among themselves and, more and more, they began to over-exploit, to waste and deeply disrespect their precious country, their home – they believed that the land and Bunjil would always provide.

Bunjil's anger swelled and surged, until in retribution to such disrespect, he called the sea and allowed the waters to engulf the land and threatened to drown all the people in a great flood.

The Kulin cried out, realising too late their profound mistakes. Bunjil, however, heeding their desperation, strode out into the churning inundation and told the waters to stop. With two rocks, Bunjil made the Port Phillip Bay heads and told the water to run out and reunite with the sea.

Bunjil's rage and pain was quenched but for the survivors, Bunjil's retribution was remembered, and grave lessons learnt. The Kulin people returned to their old values, to respect the law and lore of Bunjil, and to always honour and never harm the land, or its children; for both are our future, as they are our past.

Dean Stewart (Wemba Wemba-Wergaia NW Victoria)
Director of Aboriginal Tours and Education Melbourne, 2016

This story is still told today in local Melbourne schools by the living descendants of both the Boonwurrung and Woiwurrung, the ancient first peoples of this land. However, when modern geologists did core-drilling samples of Port Phillip Bay, they found this piece of land had not been filled by the sea until almost 9000 years ago. So there is a local Melbourne First Nations Peoples story that is almost 4000 years older than the beginnings of the ancient Egyptian empire – a story older than the Quran, the Old Testament and any religion we know today by millennia!

ETHICAL PERSPECTIVE OF BUNJIL

Skills: identify, interpret, explain, synthesise

1. What reasons are given in the story for Bunjil's flooding of the bay?
2. How do the people stop the flooding?
3. Which ethical principles are referred to?
4. Which moral codes had the people violated?
5. Which environmental event provided the **existential** dilemma in the story?
6. Which traditional First Nations beliefs support the ethical interpretation of this event?
7. What are the origins of the First Nations Customary Laws?
8. How would this story apply to the ethical decision making of First Nations people today?
9. Do people today still view natural disasters as a punishment from God, the gods and/or Creation spirits? Find an example of a testimonial of a person who has interpreted an environmental disaster – such as a tsunami, devastating fires or a volcanic eruption – as a divine punishment. What are the positive and negative elements of such interpretations?

CHRISTIANITY

The message in Jesus' teachings emphasised the ideals of human behaviour and society, based on selflessness. Within Christianity the ideal ethical relationship with God is through love. Sending Jesus into the world was an **incarnation** of God's love. The ethical relationship between people, and with the world, is based on this selfless love.

The life of Jesus depicted within the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John varies in detail and emphasis, with some parts historical and others **allegorical**, but they are all essentially didactic (for teaching). The variances and differences between the four gospels are significant in terms of ethical authority. Because of these different emphases on the life of Jesus, the Scriptures become a source of interpretation about what constitutes moral living for Christians. However, as Jesus later came to be recognised as the Son of God, his teachings became imbued with the authority of God. Using Scriptures and sacred writings as the source of ethical authority is fraught with difficulties because there are different thoughts about how literally the message of the text should be interpreted. In Christianity, each denomination makes a claim on being faithful to the ethical authority of the early church. The ways in which different denominations of Christianity have interpreted the Scriptures have led to various ethical perspectives that define what is acceptable and unacceptable in the various denominations.

Engaging with philosophy: Augustine of Hippo

During the 400s CE, St Augustine began to develop Christian ethical thinking into a coherent philosophy. In his famous work *The City of God*, he describes an ideal city made up of righteous individuals (using ideas from Plato and Cicero). Augustine's premise was that ethical and unethical people would be mixed together in society until the end of time. He argued that human beings are responsible for immorality and wrote that they commit acts of evil because of their incorrect perception and deliberate turning away from God. His analysis of human sinfulness and godliness concluded that those in power needed to accept the ethical authority of **the Church** and behave accordingly.

St Augustine also developed the **just war** theory, a framework that justified Christian engagement in war. The basis of just war, he argued, was the idea that violent conflict could be justified in certain circumstances. Under this system, there were limits to what a nation could do in order to defend itself and clear distinctions between killing armed soldiers and killing civilians. There is a moderating ethical principle of proportionality, which means that when pursuing a military objective, the objective itself and damage to non-combatants and buildings should be minimised where possible. This means that if a city can be captured by assassinating a few key people, then that is preferable to a siege in which an entire city starves to death or are killed. In modern times, the principle of separating non-combatants from soldiers is extremely difficult in certain types of warfare.

St Augustine was highly sceptical of world politics, although his ideas were a utilitarian turning point for Christian communities and justified them arming and protecting themselves. Just war theory is still raised to debate the ethical nature of military conflicts today.

The principles of modern Catholic social teaching shown below offer traditional yet radical ethical perspectives to guide Christian moral behaviour.

- **Life and dignity of the human person.** Every person is precious, people are more important than things, and the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.
- **The dignity and rights of workers.** If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected – the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to organise and join unions, to private property and to ethical economic initiative.

iStockphoto/Grafissimo

FIGURE 5.10 What does this image suggest about the concept of a just war?

- **Call to family, community and participation.** People have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable.
- **Solidarity.** We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they live. Learning to practise the virtue of solidarity means learning that loving our neighbour has global dimensions in an interdependent world.
- **Rights and responsibilities**. Every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities – to one another, to our families and to the larger society.
- **Care of God's creation.** We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all creation, which has fundamental and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.
- **Option for the poor and vulnerable.** In a society marred by deepening divisions between rich and poor, the Catholic tradition recalls the story of the Last Judgement and instructs Catholics to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.

WAR AND JUSTICE

Skills: research, identify, explain, interpret, synthesise

1 List the possible justifications for going to war.
2 Which actions are prohibited, or is any action permitted if 'God is on our side'?
3 Which principles of Catholic social teaching are violated by war?

Engaging with philosophy: Thomas Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas sought to integrate the ethical perspective of Aristotle, an ancient Greek philosopher, into the Christian canon of thought. Aquinas looked to Aristotle to draw answers to major ethical questions of his day. He borrowed from the ancient Greek philosopher's ethical ideal of 'the good life' and recast this idea in his major book, the *Summa Theologiae* (1265–1274 CE).

In his development of Christian teaching, the natural philosopher Thomas Aquinas outlined a theory of natural law, that is, laws that can be observed and are inherent in human and physical nature, therefore they have universal truth. Aquinas thought that as humans were created by God and endowed with a likeness of God's creativeness and capacity for thought, they can by reason alone discover the principles of natural law. He argued that natural law provides an absolute standard for morality, though it does require a well-formed individual conscience in order to discern and apply it. Aquinas was also strong on virtue ethics. He emphasised four cardinal virtues of fortitude (courage), justice, prudence (wise judgement) and temperance (restraint, moderation) – all gifts from God, not acquired by human effort. Those so gifted would naturally live by those virtues.

God became the ethical ideal of Aquinas' version of the good life, which also implies that Heaven or living with God will be the fulfilment of a moral life. Aquinas' system allows an individual to examine the context of their entire life as a series of opportunities to make moral or immoral choices in order to achieve the good life at the end of their time on Earth. This system of practical moral judgement extends from the everyday person all the way to a number of different theoretical political models. His approach to ethically ideal worlds and the actual world of politics can be summarised in the following way:

- Define the ethical principles, morals and concepts at the heart of the issue or political system.
- Discuss the justifications and counter-arguments for a particular course of action.
- The action taken should comprise, or be possible to attain through, the exercise of moral virtues (a scheme adapted from Aristotle's ethics).

This scheme of ethical thinking is underpinned by both Aquinas' and Augustine's definitions of reason – thought and will should be exercised to moral ends. It is related to the fundamental elements of the good life. Aquinas argued that to determine whether something is good requires a comparison with something that is better. The highest good with which to compare something is God.

Aquinas' scheme still stands as a system of ethical thought that integrated **rationalism** from Aristotle and faith from the Christian religion. This relationship between reason and religion was not unlike those set out by St Augustine and Plato in that it melded the highest **pagan** thought on ethics with Christian **doctrine**. It also laid the foundations for what would become known as Western European culture, comprising the intellectual tradition of the ancient Greeks, the legal tradition of the Romans and the monotheism and ethical perspectives of Jewish and Christian religious traditions.

THE THEORY OF NATURAL LAW

Skills: interpret, explain, apply

1. State clearly in your own words two main contentions of the natural law theory as developed by Aquinas.
2. Explain what each of the contentions would mean when applied to making ethical decisions.
3. Apply Aquinas' theory of natural law to one of these persistent ethical issues: abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, stem cell research.

The Protestant traditions

From a Protestant perspective, one of the most profound interpretations of the ethical perspective of Christianity came about during the Protestant Reformation. In the two centuries preceding the Reformation, a Papal decree had been issued declaring that **salvation**, ultimate truth and political power came only through the Pope, as Christ's representative on Earth, and the Church's teachings.

Critics of the Church usually had to endure commissions of inquiry, in which the Church would send an envoy to investigate the claims, argue the case for Church doctrine and exert pressure on the individual or group to recant or risk being labelled **heretic**. This was often the prelude to a more serious trial, which could result in people being burned at the stake, and if such individuals still refused to recant, they were deemed to have lost eternal salvation. Several high profile critics had been through this process, so it was clear to people that criticism would not be tolerated. Yet valid reasons for criticism remained. For example, at the upper levels of society a number of European rulers were

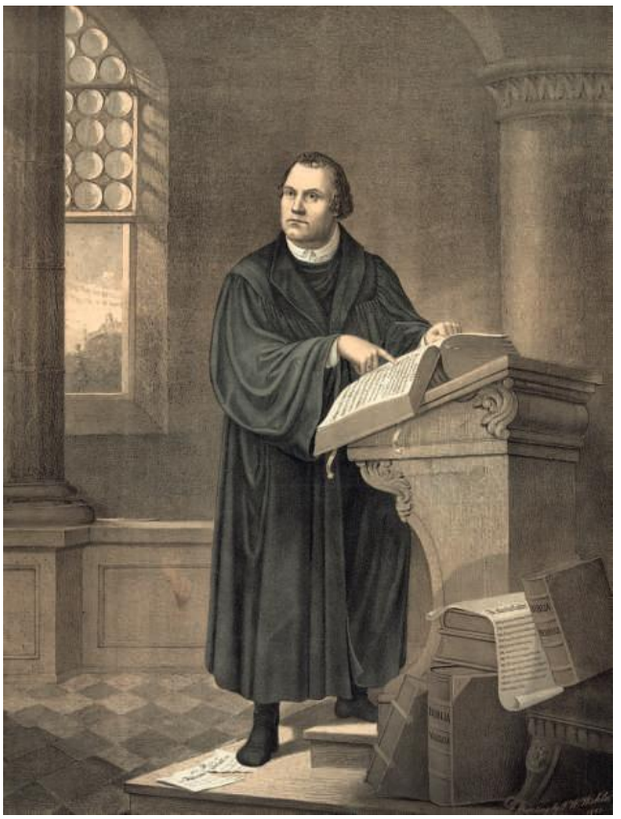


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FIGURE 5.11 Martin Luther protested that he could not recant as it would be dishonest to act against his conscience. How does Luther's understanding of conscience differ from what the Catholic Church taught at that time?

seeking to escape the papal taxation of their nations, especially when they could see little benefit for them in their taxes financing the construction of St Peter's Basilica in Rome. Another reason for criticism was the practice of the Church granting indulgences, which allowed people to 'work off' the punishment in purgatory for their sins already forgiven by priests. Initially indulgences were attained through doing pilgrimages and penance but by the time of the emergence of Protestantism, indulgences were acquired in a financial rather than spiritual manner. The ethical authority of **bishops** was also being undermined, as the position of bishop could be purchased rather than earned.

In this religious and cultural context, Martin Luther, a professor of Scripture and theology, supposedly chose the eve of All Saints Day (31 October), in 1517, to nail a copy of his 'Ninety-five Theses' on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. At least, that is the legend, but researchers generally accept now that this did not happen. Luther certainly wrote a letter to his superiors condemning the sale of indulgences and requested that the theology behind the practice be corrected. This letter included the 'Ninety-five Theses'. When a copy of the theses was translated from Latin to German and printed using the then innovative printing press, it was distributed across Germany. An envoy from the Pope was sent to force Luther to withdraw his statement, to which he replied that he could not and he burnt the Pope's letter commanding his obedience. Although forbidden to do so, Luther continued to write, print and distribute papers condemning various practices of the Church.

Luther's actions also alienated the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, who sought to punish Luther in front of a diet, or gathering of nobles from across the German states. The trial, held in 1521, became known as the Diet of Worms after the town of Worms, where it took place. During the trial, Luther again refused to recant because of reason and conscience, and because he did not believe the Scriptures proved him wrong. The Church pronounced him a heretic, although he did not suffer the same tragic fate as other decreed heretics, such as William Tyndale, an English scholar who translated the New Testament into English (in 1525–31), or the **posthumous** (after death) violation of John Wycliffe of England (died 1384), who translated the Bible into English, denounced all three Popes and is regarded as one of the earliest reformers. Luther was kidnapped and hidden away by a powerful noble, Frederick of Saxony. When in hiding, Luther began to translate the Bible into German, while the Holy Roman Emperor issued the Edict of Worms, which called on all to give up Luther to his fate as a heretic and oppress his followers.

This edict went largely unheeded and eventually Luther's Church became the official Church of many German states. Many kings and princes rushed to embrace the new Church for many reasons, including being freed from taxation and allegiance to the Pope.

The tide began to turn against the Catholic Church in favour of Protestant reforms. By 1550 there were a number of different Protestant Churches, such as Calvin's Church in Geneva and Knox's in Scotland, each with different liturgical practices, interpretations of the Scriptures, ethical perspectives and moral practices.

For the Protestants the papacy was removed from a central position of authority. By returning to the Gospels and early Christianity, Luther and subsequent reformers defined an ethical perspective based on Scripture, faith and the exercise of personal conscience that was to occupy a central position in Protestantism.

An English Reformation

In England, during King Henry VIII's reign (1491–1547 CE) and that of Edward VI (1547–53 CE), the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, oscillated between the Protestant reformers' position and that of the Catholic Church. He assisted in developing the supreme ethical principle of the divine right of kings, meaning that the king's right to rule was ordained by God. Changes he participated in made the English monarchy the highest position of governance and ethical authority. Still today the Queen of England is the head of the Church of England and the prime minister, as her representative, has a role in officiating and appointing certain positions in the clergy. Archbishop Cranmer created the *Book of Common Prayer* (1549–1662 CE), which was written in English as opposed to Latin. He also revised a number of doctrines, liturgies and other aspects, and composed a number of texts (including the 39 Articles, which became central to the development of the Church of England). Henry VIII managed to remove Rome's authority, which gave him the opportunity to expand his wealth and kingdom by sacking the Catholic churches and monasteries of England and assuming their extensive land holdings for himself and supportive nobles. It also enabled him to marry and divorce his wives. Although Henry VIII persecuted 'Papists' and Protestants alike, he retained an allegiance to Catholicism in the way in which he practised Christianity. When Edward VI came to power in 1547, the process of reform really began to take shape and Cranmer was able to accomplish most of his reforms.

Henry VIII (1491–1547), Cleve, Joos van (c. 1485–1541)/Burghley House Collection, Lincolnshire, UK/Bridgeman Images

FIGURE 5.12 King Henry VIII of England. Why did he enact the divine right of kings?

In 1553, when Mary I – who was strongly Catholic – came to power she made Cranmer recant his former positions. Although he did recant and restored his relationship with the Catholic Church, on the day of his execution he chose to assume his former positions and in so doing, became a martyr for the reformers. Mary I published his recanting and ordered that a different, more Catholic, version of the *Book of Common Prayer* be produced in order to stem the tide of public opinion in favour of the reformers. This return to Catholicism was short-lived, however, because Elizabeth I assumed power in 1558 and, in 1559, issued the Elizabethan Religious Settlement Law, which returned England's independence from the Pope, restored the 39 articles (in 1571) and became the major creed of the Church of England.

This law of religious tolerance enabled the establishment of the Church of England, and allowed reformers such as John Knox to return from exile and establish churches. The Church of England includes both 'High Church', which retains a number of elements of Catholicism, and 'Low Church', which emphasises participation and evangelism rather than ceremony and structure.

The Reformation created a number of different variants of Christianity, each with their own interpretation of ethical authority and their own Church hierarchies. But from a Catholic point of view, the Reformation was an assault on the Pope's authority to govern Western Christianity, which the Catholic Church fought on doctrinal, ritual, sacred textual and ethical grounds through the Counter-Reformation (1545–63) and through warfare between Catholics and Protestants around Europe for hundreds of years.

RELIGIOUS PROTEST

Skills: research, identify, explain, interpret, synthesise

1 Which 'higher' ethical authority did Luther draw on?
2 What was Luther reacting to in Catholicism?
3 How can the Church of England be said to have not fully embraced Protestant reform nor fully rejected Catholicism?
4 What was so significant about the translation of the Bible into German and English? How did this affect society?
5 Research one of following: Luther, Calvin, Knox, Wesley, Cranmer or another reformer. Outline their specific ethical perspective and method of decision making.

Diversity of ethical perspectives of Christianity in Australian society

From the beginnings of European settlement in Australia, the Christian tradition has been embedded in the ethical development of society. Although it was complicated by historical animosity between Protestants and Catholics, what evolved was a secularism that began to clearly delineate Church and State within Australia. The interaction between the world authorities for Christianity and the national representatives for Australia has been dynamic, as changes in legislation have required world religious authorities to act in a timely manner to deal with issues that have arisen. For example, in 1872, in Victoria, the passing of an Education Act to provide 'free, secular and compulsory' education posed a threat to religious education as government funding was withdrawn. This was seen by Australian Catholic communities as disastrous for the continuation of their membership because it threatened teaching in the religious tradition and its ethical perspective. Letters were sent to the Pope and Catholic communities everywhere, asking them to send members of religious orders to Australia, and they were encouraged to work without pay as part of their vows. This action allowed Australia's independent Catholic education system to be established, which went on to become a strong and successful model of religious education. Other variants of Christianity established day schools as well. Teaching the ethical perspective of the religion is one of the major focuses of Christian religious education.

National Council of Churches Australia

FIGURE 5.13 Leaders of the different Christian Churches at the National Council of Churches in Australia Forum. What does this image demonstrate about Christianity in Australia?

In the early days of the colony, the Church of England played a major role in society, determining the methods of punishment for the prison system (from flogging to solitary confinement to reflect upon their sins); working closely with the colonial governors to improve the moral standards of society; building churches and communities across the cities and towns of the country; and establishing an administration

(under the bishops) for the networks of dioceses. The dominant ethical perspective of the time was that those who found themselves in poverty or crime deserved to be there and were only in that position because they had failed to work their way up in society. This perspective was based on the idea that 'the worth of a man is determined by how industrious they are before their God and fellow man'. Society valued individuals who accepted their lot in life and worked hard to change it – it was believed that God would reward people materially in their lifetime with opportunities for improvement. This view was all-encompassing in colonial Australian society, and certainly was held by those in positions of authority.

The Christian ethical perspective has changed dramatically since colonial times. It is now far more understanding of inequality in society and has adopted a kinder stance towards society's weakest members, which was always part of Christ's teaching. There are many high profile Christian charitable organisations, such as the Brotherhood of St Laurence, the St Vincent de Paul Society, the Salvation Army, the Wesley Mission, World Vision and Uniting Care. The Salvation Army even offers a law firm that provides **pro bono** (free) legal representation for those in need, which is subsidised by other clients who use the firm for paid legal work. Christianity has also kept up with modern times by offering Internet church services that can be attended online, and Christian radio stations and television programmes exist to provide alternatives to secular broadcasts, to support isolated or incapacitated Christians and to redirect 'lost' or potential members to Christian communities and the Christian way of life.

Christian religious leaders can regulate their local communities to varying degrees. They are often called upon to mediate according to a prescribed set of rules or guidelines, in order that the rulings issued are in accordance with the particular ethical authorities and ethical stance of the denomination. Some adherents place more credence on church resolution methods than those under Australian common law, which is why the High Court ruling defining a religion serves as a caution against elevating religious ethical doctrines above the law (see Chapter 1, page 6 ?).

The ethical perspectives and moral codes of Christianity have influenced Australian society in a number of ways, including:

- the religious backgrounds of politicians affecting how they vote on particular policies, often recognised as a conscience vote
- religious political parties sometimes having the deciding vote in the Senate, the Upper House or in a minority government – in order to see a proposed legislation or vote succeed, the government may need to grant concessions to these parties on ethical issues
- in the censorship of material including films, the Internet and computer games, and in ratings committees
- in ethics committees requiring experts to interpret doctrine, Scripture and church teachings as they apply to new technologies, and to advise the government
- the codification as laws of some Christian religious principles
- the acceptance as norms of some religious principles, which are then enacted by a majority of people
- public holidays on Christian festivals.

JUDAISM

The ethical structure of Judaism around the world and in Israel, where parts of it are law, has been adapted to facilitate its operation in societies where different ethical perspectives are in place, such as in Australia. For many years of Jewish exile, Jewish communities were left to their own devices to rule themselves, and between the 500s and 400s BCE they drafted their oral history, myths, legends

and lore into what would later become the Torah. An ethical pattern emerged from the Israelite scribal process of writing down their collective history. It prompted the following major ethical questions:

- Why were they in exile in foreign lands?
- Had God abandoned them?
- How could they return to their homeland?

These existential questions have informed the Jewish ethical perspective, allowed the Jewish people to interpret later experiences of exile, and sustained them for thousands of years. The answers provided the ethical idea that they are in exile because of their sins and that sincere reflection and repentance would allow a return to the land of Israel, as promised in the **covenants** to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their families. The covenantal relationship is recalled each day in the ritual chanting of the Amidah Prayer for those who say it. In recent times, the covenant and the ethical perspective of bad things that have happened in Jewish history (as seen as consequences of sins) have been challenged by Holocaust theology as being no longer a valid belief or understanding for many who either experienced the tragedy or try to understand it.

In exile, the Jewish people – who had an alternative ethical perspective and separate law courts from the cultures in which they found themselves – had to deal with ethical perspectives that had a higher status than their own. To prevent a conflict between ethical perspectives, and with Jewish law, a law called *Dina d'malkhuta dina* ('the law of the land is the law') was endorsed. This means that there could be no confusion between Jewish law (Halakhah) and the laws of the country in which they resided. It was an expedient measure in accordance with the ethical principle of survival.

From the late 18th century, when Jewish people were increasingly accepted into the societies of Western Europe, there have developed four different movements of Judaism: Ultra-Orthodox, Modern Orthodox, Conservative and Progressive. These different movements meant that the interpretation of Halakhah ceased to be normative, and Judaism has since had no unified or singular voice with which to comment on the ethical dialogues of wider society. Instead, each movement has its own authority and interpretation of the ethical structure of Judaism, just like the different denominations of Christianity and schools of Islam. This makes it difficult to generalise about a unified system of Jewish ethics that would encompass all of the differences in religious practices, ideologies and even some of the major beliefs of Judaism. An example of this is the decision of Progressive Judaism, also called Reform and Liberal, to ordain women. In 1935 in Berlin, Regina Jonas was ordained the first female rabbi. It is only in recent times that other movements in Judaism have considered the possibility. But while there is a growing elite group of ordained Orthodox female clergy, recently two Orthodox umbrella organisations, the Rabbinical Council of America and Agudath Israel of America, officially decried the practice and forbade them from being hired to lead congregations. Whether these decisions have a practical impact or not, they have provoked a fresh debate on the issue of the role of women.

Despite differences in ritual practices and interpretation of beliefs, an overwhelming majority of Jewish movements follow rabbinic Judaism, the Torah (written and oral) and an interpretive process of the ethical and legal structure of Halakhah. The major differences between the movements occur depending on how literally the above are interpreted and how the community behaves in response; that is, whether a majority in the community see them as binding. This point can be a source of contention between the movements of Judaism, in which the Ultra-orthodox, on one side, claim Halakhah to be strictly legally binding, while Progressive Jews, on the other side, may agree or may see it as less of a dictate and more of a guide to the laws that they enact. If a person or a community in a particular world Jewish movement had an ethical issue and was seeking an answer from their religious tradition, they would consult their Scriptures

and rabbinical rulings; however, the four major world movements of Judaism would each attach different emphases. If the individual or community does not like the answer they receive from their own movement, they might prefer the response of a more or less traditional movement. At each level of the process of applying Jewish ethics, the individual, rabbi, council of rabbis or world movement may consult the multitude of Jewish sacred texts, rabbinic councils past and present, law codes and commentaries.

Each of the world movements has its own interpretation of the ethical structure of Judaism, and in all movements there is a local *beth din* (a court) in which religious matters and even social disputes can be settled. The rulings of this court have the legal status of mediations in the Australian legal system.

PERSPECTIVES OF JUDAISM

Skills: identify, interpret, explain, research

1 Which ethical perspective did the scribes of the Torah develop from writing down all of the stories of their ancestors, and the oral history and legends of their people?

2 What had happened to prompt Jewish communities to write the Torah in the 500s–400s BCE?

3 Which Jewish law has been put in place to minimise a conflict of Jewish law with the laws of the countries in which the Jews lived?

4 How was being isolated from the outside world an advantage for the Jews?

5 What does the appointment of female rabbis say about the interpretation of Jewish ethics and Halakhah by Progressive Judaism?

6 What does the decision to ban the employment of female rabbis say about the interpretation of Jewish ethics and Halakhah by Ultra-orthodox Judaism?

7 Research the ethical perspectives, on the same issue, of two different streams of Judaism and answer the following questions.
   a What differences are there in terms of the interpretation and application of Halakhah?
   b Which ethical principles, laws, moral values and obligations relate to non-Jews?
   c How do they enable Halakhah to operate in a society that already has its own legal system?
   d If there is an overriding ethical principle, under which exceptional circumstances would it be applied? When can it not be applied?
   e What do the acknowledgement of righteousness in non-Jews and the allowance for them to have a share in the Jewish afterlife say about the ethical perspective of Judaism?
   f If the written Torah cannot be changed, how do the other parts of the ethical perspective assist and allow it to react to new technologies and ethical issues?

CHAPTER 5

REVISION

1 Use the headings listed below as a model to construct a report on the ethical perspectives and methods of decision making of a religious tradition in a pluralist society. Add further headings you feel are relevant.

- Summary of the ethical perspective of the religious tradition
- The sources of ethical authority in the religious tradition
- Methods of ethical decision making used

2 Compare these three understandings of the good life.

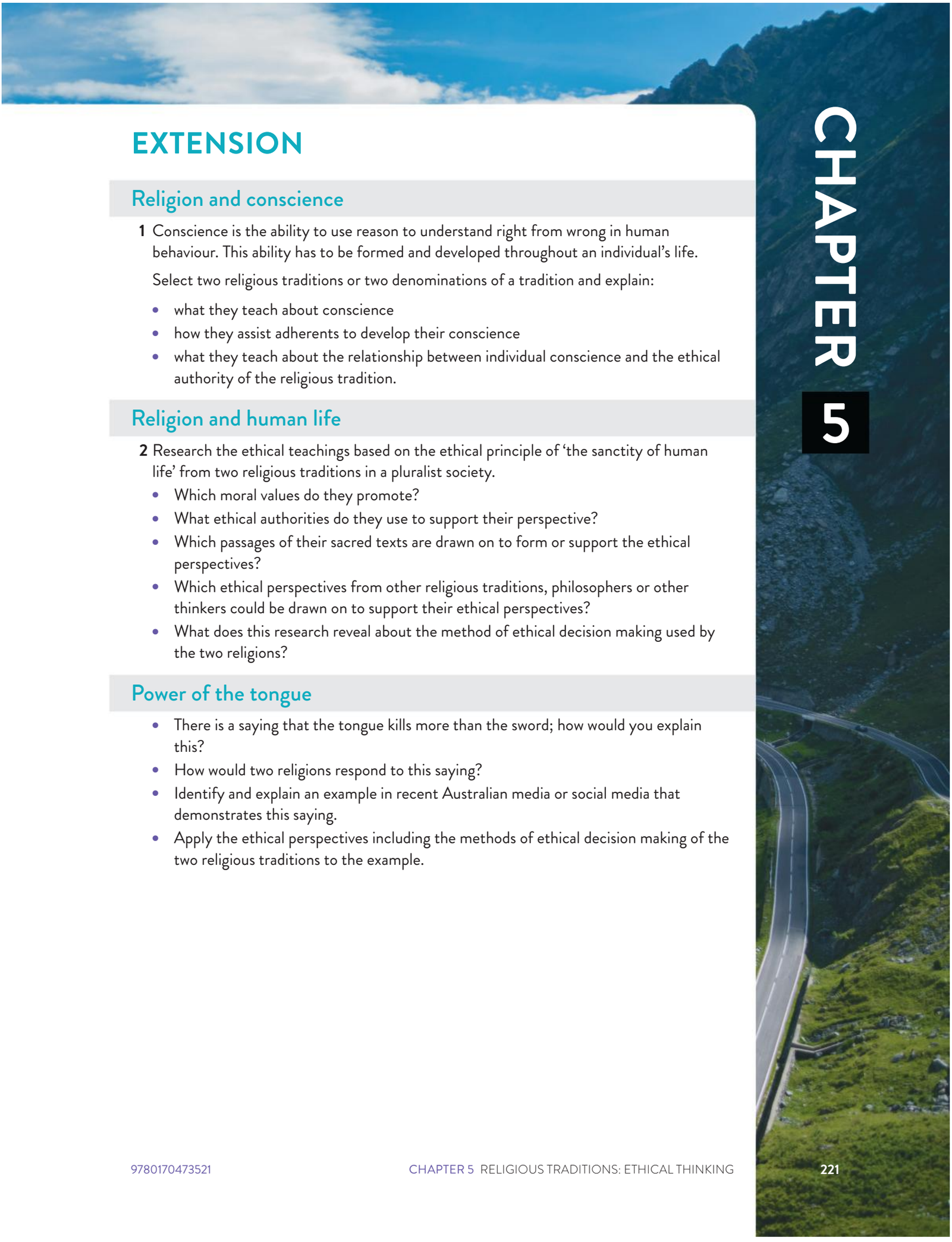
THE GOOD LIFE

Aristotle	Aquinas	Modern secular Australia
The good life involves living well or 'flourishing'. • birth into the 'right' family and class • being 30–40 years old (to have accumulated wisdom) • being healthy, surrounded by community and inexperienced in death and mourning • applying moral virtues consciously in a decision • evaluating an ethical decision on its own merits • making the eventual choice based on moral nature; an accumulation of knowledge, practical wisdom and habitual application • luck • being self-sufficient • living according to the will of the 'highest' being (God) The ultimate ethical goal or way to attain the good life is when a person chooses to do what they 'should' do according to virtue.	The good life involves God and happiness – in this life and the afterlife. • belief in God through the 'five proofs' for God • living • love within a marriage that creates life • seeking knowledge • participating in communal life • exercising rational thought, moral judgement and understanding God – the source of all that exists, all ethical principles, morality and actions that occasion it • living according to God's moral code • seeing God as the source of salvation The four laws: Eternal – physics, morality and revelation Natural law (moral law) – in which human beings apply reason to make ethical decisions Civil law – enacts natural law in society Divine law (revealed Law in the Bible) – which directs humans to eternal salvation and immortal happiness. The ultimate ethical goal is to do all that will allow one to encounter God upon the conclusion of leading a moral life.	To 'live life to the fullest' and make the most of every opportunity • material and deferred gains for industrious and purposeful work • a well-paid occupation • a good-looking and capable spouse • two or three children • two cars • a large family home • a boat and a holiday house or timeshare • a property portfolio/share portfolio • to pass on an inheritance to the children • to do service for one's nation (in community service, charity, the army or politics) • to donate money to charity or grand public works The ultimate ethical goal is to uphold the moral values of Australian society for the good of all citizens and to prosper.

a) What is missing in the features of the good life in secular Australian society today?
b) What are the limitations of both Aristotle's and Aquinas' systems of thought?
c) Why do Aristotle and Aquinas connect virtues and morality to God and the soul?

Worksheet
Religions responding to ethical decisions

Weblinks
Various for Chapter 5



CHAPTER 5

EXTENSION

Religion and conscience

1 Conscience is the ability to use reason to understand right from wrong in human behaviour. This ability has to be formed and developed throughout an individual's life.

Select two religious traditions or two denominations of a tradition and explain:

- what they teach about conscience
- how they assist adherents to develop their conscience
- what they teach about the relationship between individual conscience and the ethical authority of the religious tradition.

Religion and human life

2 Research the ethical teachings based on the ethical principle of 'the sanctity of human life' from two religious traditions in a pluralist society.

- Which moral values do they promote?
- What ethical authorities do they use to support their perspective?
- Which passages of their sacred texts are drawn on to form or support the ethical perspectives?
- Which ethical perspectives from other religious traditions, philosophers or other thinkers could be drawn on to support their ethical perspectives?
- What does this research reveal about the method of ethical decision making used by the two religions?

Power of the tongue

- There is a saying that the tongue kills more than the sword; how would you explain this?
- How would two religions respond to this saying?
- Identify and explain an example in recent Australian media or social media that demonstrates this saying.
- Apply the ethical perspectives including the methods of ethical decision making of the two religious traditions to the example.

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Chapter 6

ENGAGING IN AN ETHICAL SOCIETY

Outcome to be demonstrated

Examination of at least two debates on ethical issues in pluralist societies to which spiritualities, religious traditions and denominations contribute

Focus questions

- Why is the issue an ethical issue?
- Who are the religious contributors to the debate on an ethical issue?
- What are the ethical perspectives and moral judgements of the religious contributors to the debate?
- Which of the other aspects of religion are related to the ethical decision-making methods of the religious contributors to the debate?
- Who are the non-religious contributors to the debate on an ethical issue?
- What are the ethical perspectives and moral judgements of the non-religious contributors to the debate?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the various methods of ethical decision making used in the debate?
- What was the influence of the various contributors to the debate?

Worksheet
Terminology

ETHICAL ISSUES IN A PLURALIST SOCIETY

Ethical decision making in a pluralist society is complicated by factors that are not part of other societies where there are commonly held values and the socialisation structure merely needs to ensure compliance from defiant individuals.

In the public debates of a pluralist society, people contribute various opinions – from religious to non-religious – and may form lobby groups to assert an ethical position and influence political policy. The diversity of opinion on an ethical issue is such that two individuals from the same religious tradition, who are applying the same ethical principle, may approach the issue from different motives or priorities, use different ethical decision-making methods and reach different moral judgements. The characteristics common to pluralist societies include the following:

- There are multiple worldviews.
- An ethical issue for one group may not be so for another.
- There can be a lack of agreement on the cultural values that provide the foundation of the concepts of good and bad, right and wrong, just and unjust.
- It can be difficult to ensure agreement from individuals who have totally different worldviews.
- There are different understandings of ethical principles and moral codes.
- Equal status for all is implied by the ethical principles of a democratic, multifaith, multicultural society, yet equity sometimes requires quotas and discrimination.
- Compromises are often reached in decisions in which no one is fully content with the outcome.
- Some religious traditions are unable to compromise on certain principles that society requires of them, which can lead to conflict.
- The wants of the majority in a pluralist, democratic society are not always ethical.

All of these factors have a bearing on people's ability to recognise an ethical issue or situation. To do so requires a person to draw on competing systems of thought and rules to determine which are the most appropriate to the issue or what ought to happen to bring about an ideal situation.

The study of ethical issues in this chapter applies the ethical factors and methods of Chapters 4 and 5.

Arsineh Houspian

FIGURE 6.1
Australians taking a stand on the ethical issue of climate change. What does this image suggest about the Australian society?

CROWDFUNDING AND GOFUNDME

All major religious traditions have as an integral part of the aspect of ethics particular ethical principles, moral codes, teachings, normative standards and laws about charitable giving in order to alleviate the suffering of the poor or oppressed. In some religions, it is a condition for salvation or *moksha* (release from the cycle of reincarnation).

In the Buddhist tradition, giving must be total generosity. There must be no motivation that is about the benefit for the giver. What this type of giving does is help to perfect the giver – it is one of the *paramitas* or requirements for Buddhahood. If done in selflessness, it is evidence of the individual becoming aware of others and living in kindness. In Buddhism, this generosity (*dana*) is seen in the total reliance of monks on the community to meet their needs. The community comes to be one with the pain and suffering of those who have nothing through the development of empathy. It is this that is the spirit of giving in the Buddhist tradition.

In the Christian tradition, the most important behavioural lesson from Jesus Christ was to 'love one another as I have loved you' (John's Gospel). This meant a totally sacrificial love based in humble service. It was expressed as a key value in the early church according to the text of the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 4:32–35) in which the members of the believing community shared their possessions. In the Catholic tradition, the aim is to build the Kingdom of God and create a world of justice and peace. This charitable giving is a focus in the time of Lent with campaigns such as Project Compassion. In the Protestant tradition, the emphasis is more on putting into practice Christ's love and giving to philanthropic movements or in some denominations there is a set tithe that must be paid.

In the Hindu tradition, charitable giving is called *dana*, and it is part of the religious duties of all Hindus as part of the *dharma*, the Hindu understanding of the laws of the cosmos that includes codes of behaviour. It is believed that in helping others, the individual is helping Brahman as all people have within them a piece of Brahman, their atman. The social structure of Hinduism sees the family as an important part of the State, and so the welfare of all citizens is part of a Hindu's responsibilities. In the Hindu value system, material goods are not the source of happiness and peace, and so the detachment from them is seen as a spiritual good.

In Islam, charitable giving is the third pillar of the tradition. It is called *zakat*. There is a fixed tithe of 2.5 per cent of a person's wealth after necessities are taken into account. This money is used to aid the poor (*mustahik*) as instructed by the Prophet Muhammad. *'When a person dies his works end, except for three: ongoing charity, knowledge that is benefitted from, and a righteous child who prays for him'* (Muslim, Al-Tirmidhi). While *zakat* is mandatory, in Islam there is also *sadaqa,* which is money given through total generosity and is additional to *zakat*. This form of charity does not have to be monetary. Islam recognises help given to others or random kindnesses as a form of *sadaqa.*

In the Jewish tradition, there is the concept of *tzedakah*, which incorporates the notion that by charitable giving justice will be restored to the world. This is expressed in the *Aleinu* prayer that the Jewish people must repair the world (*tikkum olam*). *Tzedakah* is about giving in a way that acknowledges that a relationship is formed between the giver and the receiver. It encompasses a social responsibility that includes commitment. It is an important *mitzvah* (commandment). Traditionally Jewish homes would have a blue and white container in which coins were put so that children learnt to care for others in need.

Traditionally this charitable work was overseen by religious institutions, especially in countries that were virtual theocracies. Each had its own social structures with members whose role was to administer this charitable work. These organisations continue to exist, even in pluralist societies like Australia. However, in the 21st century, using the technology that is available, there has become

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FIGURE 6.2. What does this image suggest about charity? How is charity part of crowdfunding?

available to members of the society, religious and non-religious, the opportunity to give to charities and causes while exercising personal autonomy through using crowdfunding platforms such as GoFundMe.

The aims of GoFundMe would seem to be totally in tune with the ethics of the major religious traditions. The GoFundMe aim, according to their founders (Damphousse and Ballester), was to help people to help each other. So individuals and small groups raise money for personal needs that would otherwise be unaffordable; the most common campaigns are to raise funds for medical care, education expenses and care of animals, all of which have a strong ethical basis as they protect the life and well-being of humans and sentient creatures.

The religious traditions responded quickly to this new technology as a means of further fundraising. The economic journal, *Forbes*, advised non-government organisations (NGOs, including religious charities) to adopt crowdfunding as they could only see benefits for these agencies that do good in the community. They said crowdfunding allowed them to reach out to the world; to spruik their organisation or religion; to reduce their costs by downsizing their agencies that controlled fundraising traditionally; to gain new members and volunteers; to appeal to a younger demographic; and, importantly, to have donors feel like they were a part of the story of the person or group to whom the donation was going. GoFundMe – and sites like it – was viewed as an ethical and economically sensible tool to use. The impetus for the 2018 *Forbes* article was that in the year before donations to the Salvation Army in America had fallen by 18 per cent. For some, this was the first indication that GoFundMe was going to have a negative impact on the fundraising of religious groups. Nevertheless, church organisations at grassroots levels quickly adopted crowdfunding. After all, if a five-year-old wanting to help the homeless as a holiday project could raise US $30 000, then this offered enormous scope for doing ethical work.

Buddhists in Australia have used GoFundMe to finance Buddhist conferences.

A Catholic in Indonesia, with the approval of the parish priest, launched a campaign to raise money to build churches and schools to help families in remote rural areas. So far the money raised has helped build 126 churches where 115 000 now pray and have their children educated. The success has also allowed scholarships to be given to students who otherwise would not attend school.

In Judaism, GoFundMe helped to raise the funds to purchase a torah scroll that had been hidden since World War II in Poland and to have it restored and returned to its community.

The success of religious crowdfunding has spawned sites that are now specifically dedicated to raising funds for religious traditions. There is Jewcer in the Jewish tradition. The founder has said that their model has been exceptionally successful with Jewcer raising the success rates of crowdfunding campaigns from 30 to 70 per cent. He began Jewcer so that there would be a not-for-profit crowdfunder. 'Our priorities are helping people succeed more. With every initiative we literally get to be on their team, and we work with them on their message, and strategy, and don't just give them a tool, we join them in using the tool, so they know how to use it better' (www.jewcer.org/).

However, there are concerns about individuals using their religion as a point of marketing to fund causes that may not have the support of the tradition as an institution; for example, Jewcer has had campaigns for funding winter gear for the Israeli Defence Force and a second campaign to fund newspaper advertisements in the *New York Times* to hold Palestinian leaders accountable for racism, violent incitement and murder.

A Christian group started GiveSendGo, which raised millions of dollars in two days to fund an anti-vaccination campaign. The website was founded in response to GoFundMe removing controversial campaigns. This GiveSendGo site now has a reputation for facilitating the funding of extremist concerns and has been criticised as being in conflict with its Christian mission statement.

Religious traditions have not yet released formal statements on the ethics of crowdfunding, especially GoFundMe, which in 2017 had 50 million people give more than US$5 billion. Matthew Wade, Lecturer in Social Inquiry at Latrobe University, has taken the initiative and explored the ethics of this organisation. His work has opened a debate that highlights the concerns of others in this ethical issue. What follows are some of the observations that have been made in this discussion on the Radio National programme, 'The Minefield' on an episode called 'The ethical dilemmas of crowd-funding platforms' (a recording can be found on the Radio National website):

- Arguments that crowdfunding sites are like other social media sites, that is an opportunity for society to have a public square in which opinions can be raised and debated, are questionable. These sites are not a public square; they are businesses in which there are large profits to make, reputations to protect and a moral obligation to decide what they will allow themselves to be complicit with. This is highlighted when crowdfunding platforms provide unilateral support in the form of fundraising tools to finance intolerant or harmful campaigns such as anti-pluralistic, anti-democratic hate campaigns. These undermine the common good and can be seditious.
- Research on the motivation of people who give to causes based on a study of the *New York Times* annual Christmas 'neediest' list showed that people do not give to those most in need but, instead, to the causes they feel personally are the most worthy of their attention. This form of giving is random, subjective and aimed at the donor gaining pleasure from their giving. The research showed that people found pleasure in having the power to name causes as worthy or unworthy. It turns the process into something like a moral beauty pageant.
- Ethically this is a problem as it puts pressure on the beneficiary, their family and their friends who must do the emotional, confessional labour of articulating their suffering to others. For GoFundMe, two-thirds of the money raised goes to medical expenses, immediate emergencies such as disaster relief or funeral expenses. To succeed in this marketplace, people must commodify their suffering, and they must abandon their innate desire for privacy. Their chance for success is limited – many receive no funding; most receive less than 40 per cent of the funding they need. Only 12 per cent achieve their goal for medical expenses.
- There is inbuilt within this funding model a tool that reinforces the haves and have nots in society. Success is dependent on the skills of the beneficiary, such as how articulate, creative and technologically savvy they are. Statistics show that preferences are given to heroic interventions – for example, a person's cancer treatment – rather than addressing those who have chronic needs that are ongoing. The process of crowdfunding is cruel for many. It is causing psychological harm to people.

- These sites are having a negative impact on mainstream charities, which are often run by religious groups. In Australia, charitable giving is on the decline; volunteers are on the decline.
- The crowdfunding model individualises structural deficiencies by encouraging a compassion-based citizenship that is orientated around personal choices rather than thinking about how to address underlying structural issues in society. It is keeping society in a moral infancy. People do not form into moral adults aiming to address the great social ills of the world. This is quite different from traditional church-based charities that take the opposite approach by using their voice to advocate for change in structural injustices.
- Traditional funding, through religions, for example, build community. They are based on genuine relational pathways for raising funds, such as fetes, cake stalls and social events. These help to build a relational fabric in society as real people acknowledge a need in a way that involves emotional commitment. Crowdfunding instead displaces any real commitment to a relationship between people and relies on the colour of the story, turning the beneficiary into a sympathy entrepreneur.
- Crowdfunding's main strength is that it does give people agency. It makes them feel empowered as moral agents. It allows them to develop to some extent empathy for those who suffer. This is important in a modern world that can make people feel disempowered and cynical about institutions.

GoFundMe has recognised the ethical dilemmas that are produced in its funding model and has responded. In 2021, they made a submission to the US Congress arguing that they should not be society's safety net. They argued that the people need a government that addresses the shortfalls in public policy that are being seen in the patterns of projects appearing on their site. Clearly the health systems are not adequate to meet the needs of many in all the societies in which GoFundMe operates. They described what is happening as showing a drastic institutional failure.

CROWDFUNDING – EXPLORING AN ETHICAL DEBATE

Skills: outline, identify, explain, interpret, analyse

1 Outline three reasons why crowdfunding is an ethical issue.
2 In what ways is this issue a product of a pluralist society?
3 What is the role of charitable giving and philanthropy in society?
4 For the religious tradition you have been studying, what is its role in providing for members of society who fall outside of a safety net?
5 Should protection of the poor be the responsibility of government, the private sector or individuals in society? Explain your answer.
6 What ethical authorities are used as reference points in this debate?
7 Is crowdfunding a threat to the social structures of religious traditions or a tool for strengthening the social structures?
8 What aspects of religion play a role in this ethical debate?
9 Is GoFundMe overall a moral good in the world?

ANIMAL RIGHTS AND ETHICS

Zoos began as a form of entertainment – the animals were put into garden settings to enhance the experience of visitors. During the 20th century, there were a number of developments in the role of zoos and, by the 1970s, zoos were moving towards becoming places for conservation and the preservation of endangered species. They are also places loved by children and are a feature of children's education about animals and their environments, and about human responsibility towards animals. However, there has been a growing awareness of the ethics of animal rights. The line between human rights and the rights of animals has become blurred. For many, it is a matter of respecting all living creatures, and that means that housing animals in any form of confined space is unethical.

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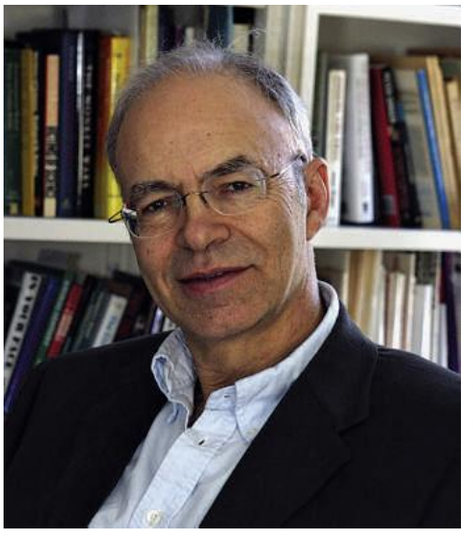
FIGURE 6.3 A marmoset gave birth to three babies in a German zoo. The mother was unable to feed all her young so zoo keepers hand-fed the babies. How are zoos, wildlife parks and sanctuaries restricting animal rights? How are they also protecting them?

ARGUING FOR ANIMAL RIGHTS

Those who call for the closure of any facility that encloses animals argue that it is now accepted that there are higher order animals, from monkeys to dolphins, that are able to problem-solve and use language and tools; are **sentient** (having awareness of self, others and environment) and so can experience pain in the same way as humans do; and have emotional responses such as loneliness, grief and shame. These characteristics demonstrate a high degree of intelligence, perhaps beyond that of a human baby or young child. Apart from imprisonment imposed by the legal system, any imprisoning of a human being is a grave offence, and it is argued it should be the same for animals.

Peter Singer, a contemporary Australian philosopher, has a special interest in the area of animal rights. He is a utilitarian in his ethical decision making. He argues that we live in a secular society and all creatures are part of the web of life. None should have a privileged place over any other and a human does not logically have a 'special' place and so should not have rights that are not afforded to other sentient beings.

Humans and higher order animals are both biologically complex and have self-awareness. Both make complex choices and do not act only on instinct. They both have shown that they have an awareness of the value of life and sorrow at its loss. Therefore, an animal's life is significant and should be treasured and protected – just as we would treasure and protect the life of a human – and so locking these animals in enclosures is unethical. All creatures should have the freedom to live a natural life, free from human exploitation, unnecessary pain and suffering and premature death. It is already recognised in state laws that animals must be protected from cruelty. What is needed now is legislation that forces the closure of zoos and sanctuaries.



AAP Image/Text Publishing

FIGURE 6.4 Peter Singer. How is his view of animal rights utilitarian?

ANIMAL RIGHTS

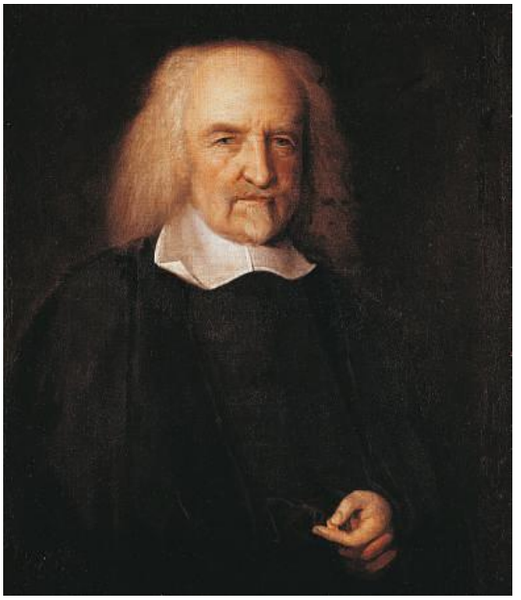
Skills: identify, explain, analyse, interpret, synthesise

1 Why do we have human rights? Should those reasons apply to any animals?
2 Why do we punish people for hurting other human beings? Do any of those reasons for punishment apply to hurting higher order animals?
3 What would be the benefits to animals of closing zoos and sanctuaries?
4 In what ways are zoos different from circuses?

ARGUING AGAINST ANIMAL RIGHTS

Those opposed to arguments for animal rights, including the closure of zoos, argue that closing zoos and sanctuaries would be based on a view that higher order animals deserve limited human rights. This position is unviable. Ethically, it would mean that humans should not use animals for any activity they would not use humans for: the world would need to become vegetarian; it would not be permissible to perform medical tests on animals for developing new drugs; we would not be able to have pets; we would need to end the use of animals in the workplace and in sport. It would also mean that the criminal code would need to expand to encompass any mistreatment of animals by humans and punish people accordingly.

The tendency to attribute human-like qualities to animals is pervasive in many cultures. An example of this in the modern world is the anthropomorphised Disney characters, such as Mickey Mouse, which take on many human-like attributes. The conclusions that are being drawn about animals are often shaped by assumptions that cannot be proven as we cannot have meaningful communication with animals.



Getty Images/DeAgostini>

FIGURE 6.5 Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679). Hobbes was concerned with material things (which developed into material philosophy) and had a bleak view of human nature. How is some of this viewpoint shown in his thinking about animals?

According to the 17th-century philosopher Thomas Hobbes, 'rights' must be earned or demanded. Because animals are unable to have 'sit-ins' in their cages, protest by closing the zoos or go on hunger strikes, they cannot be seen to be entitled to rights. Rights, by definition, belong to citizens of a State, and because animals do not play a part in the running of society, they do not have rights in the society. It is this view that underpins all laws in a democratic society, which is based on the contract between the citizen and the State, so 'animal rights' cannot be discussed as if they are the same as 'human rights'. Therefore, there are decisions that can be made on behalf of animals, such as the decision to keep animals in enclosures.

If the claim is that animals need freedom, does that mean all animals have freedom to inhabit anywhere? Kangaroos that are

damaging properties on the borders of our cities – should they have a 'right' to roam free in suburbia? Would the same be said of snakes, crocodiles and cane toads?

On a more fundamental level, some argue that it must be recognised that humans are superior creatures to animals. There is no evidence that animals understand a discussion of ethics; there is no evidence that they can enter into dialogue and negotiate or understand compromise. Animals do not have the same capacity for empathy or wisdom; they do not write poetry or create lasting works of art. There is no evidence that they understand concepts such as forgiveness, equality or justice. It is therefore clear that animals ought not to be given rights that are equivalent to human rights, and so it is not ethically unsound to enclose animals in zoos as long as their conditions are humane.

Zoos now perform a positive role in conservation. Animals that are endangered in the wild are having their populations supplemented or preserved through the breeding programmes in zoos and sanctuaries. Many of the animals in these environments have been there all their lives – they could not survive in the wild and so their release would be cruel.

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FIGURE 6.6 Do animals such as these feral cats have rights? Do humans have responsibilities to these animals?

RELATIONSHIP OF HUMANS WITH OTHER ANIMALS

Skills: identify, research, explain, analyse, interpret

1. What are the inherent differences between humans and animals? Do those differences exist even in intelligent animals, such as chimpanzees?
2. In a world in which we eat meat, wear animal skin, keep pets and use animal labour, would it be hypocritical to give some animals limited rights?
3. What would be lost if we gave such animals limited rights? Who might be affected?
4. What is the attitude to animal rights of a religion you have studied? Upon which beliefs of that religion is the attitude based?

WAR

The destruction of productive farmland, cities, homes, communities, families and thousands of lives in war is to be found somewhere in the world at any point in time. Sometimes they are conflicts between different ethnic groups in a civil war; other times there are nations embarking on military campaigns that threaten world peace. The invasion of Ukraine by Russian forces once again caused the world to question the ethics of war, to discuss the nature of war crimes and to ponder the possibility of nuclear devastation. Can the use of the force of war ever be justified? Can war be considered ethical in the 21st century when we look at the plight of thousands of refugees flooding across borders?

We live in a time that could be informed by philosophers like Hannah Arendt who said:

> Politically speaking, tribal nationalism always insists that its own people is surrounded by 'a world of enemies', 'one against all', that a fundamental difference exists between this people and all others. It claims its people to be unique, individual, incompatible with all others, and denies theoretically the very possibility of a common mankind long before it is used to destroy the humanity of man.
>
> Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 1951.

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FIGURE 6.7 Freedom Square, Kiev, Ukraine. What do the chains symbolise in this picture?

Religions have historically offered theoretical approaches to prevent war and the destruction Arendt depicts.

In the Christian tradition, Jesus Christ taught love of one's enemy and instructed his disciples to turn the other cheek, but by the 300s CE, the Church that evolved from Jesus' teachings found itself facing the conundrum of how to maintain the peace when it became part of the Roman establishment. St Augustine of Hippo, using the ideas of the Roman philosopher Cicero, proposed

a response in his work, *The City of God*, in the view that violence is at times justified. St Thomas Aquinas in the 1200s CE developed and formalised this argument into 'The Just War Theory' which recognised the importance of human life and, paradoxically, the role of government in protecting citizens through violence. Aquinas posed two key ethical principles and the conditions for each.

Jus ad bellum is a set of criteria that are to be consulted before engaging in war in order to determine whether entering into war is permissible, that is, whether it will be a just war. This is distinct from the set of rules that ought to be followed during a war, known as *jus in bello*.

The principle of *jus ad bellum* sets out the criteria that to be considered prior to entering into war to ascertain if doing so is justifiable. The conditions for consideration are as follows:

- There must be a just cause such as saving innocent people.
- There must be the right intention for going to war, to save lives.
- The injustice suffered by one outweighs the injustice suffered by another.
- Success must be likely.
- War must be a last resort; diplomacy should have been tried first.
- War can only be declared by someone with the political authority to do so and is responsible for justice.

The principle of *jus in bello* sets out the criteria for the conduct of a war to achieve a just and proportionate use of military force.

- The military must discriminate between who is the enemy and those who are not combatants; civilians, those providing medical care of combatants, doctors and nurses are not to be killed.
- The minimum force necessary is to be used to achieve peace.
- The means used are to be ethical and directly help to defeat the enemy.
- Prisoners of war are to be treated fairly.
- Every person bearing arms is morally responsible for their conduct. Following orders does not excuse or permit immoral conduct.

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FIGURE 6.8 This image depicts the devastation of civilian targets. Why is such deliberate destruction still happening given the criteria for conducting a just war?

In modern times, there has been added a third principle with its set of criteria. The principle of *jus post bellum* relates to how to restore justice after war. The criteria for achieving this are the following:

- Sovereignty of countries should be restored to how it was before the war.
- There has to be punishment of war crimes, violations of *jus in bello*.
- There has to be compensation of victims of violations of *jus in bello*.
- A peace treaty has to be signed.

The breadth and stringency of the criteria in the Just War Theory, if followed closely, would prevent war rather than facilitate it. It is a tool for ethical restraint. But leaders intent on war have not taken its wisdom into consideration. Nevertheless, Just War Theory has been used to develop international law concerning war and peace, the Geneva Convention and rules about military engagement with enemies.

Pope Francis I has used his authority to warn the world about the need to step away from the use of nuclear weapons. He has suggested that they make no war tenable. When in Hiroshima in 2020 he said, *'It has never been clearer that, for peace to flourish, all people need to lay down the weapons of war and especially the most powerful and destructive of weapons: nuclear arms that can cripple and destroy whole cities, whole countries … The use of atomic energy for purposes of war is immoral, just as the possessing of nuclear weapons is immoral.'* https://hiroshimaforpeace.com/en/hiroshima75/pope-francis/

In Islam, there is the concept of ***jihad*** (struggle) which can be applied to where war is permitted in self-defence. Such a war for self-defence must be fought without anger in a just and disciplined way to avoid hurting the innocent. War must be consistent with the justice of Allah. Peace should always be the goal.

In Judaism, teachings suggest that war is acceptable if it is to achieve justice or end oppression. But such a just war has to be fought for the right reasons such as:

- protection and self-defence
- prevention of a greater evil
- good combating evil
- restoring law and order
- efforts have already been made to avoid war.

Within this concept of just war, Judaism has traditionally identified two kinds of wars that can be fought. But any other kind of fighting is forbidden. Today it is questioned whether these two kinds of wars are applicable to modern situations.

There is *Milchemet mitzvah*, war which is a response to a command from God. It is an obligatory war to be entered into only after there has been an attack from an enemy.

There is also *Milchemet reshut*, a war of choice. It is optional and discretionary. It requires the permission of a Jewish authority. It can be fought only after peace has been offered and all efforts to avoid conflict have been attempted. The war must be ethical, fought for the right reasons. Civilians are to be unharmed. Damage is to be inflicted only where necessary. So buildings, crops, fruit trees and livestock are not to be destroyed preventing the community from re-establishing after the conflict.

During World War II, journalist and novelist, George Orwell saw modern warfare as inherently unethical, turning fragile life into collateral damage.

> As I write, highly civilized human beings are flying overhead trying to kill me. They do not feel any enmity against me as an individual, nor I against them. They are only doing their duty, as the saying goes. Most of them, I have no doubt, are kind-hearted law-abiding men who would never dream of committing murder in private life. On the other hand, if one of them succeeds in blowing me to pieces with a well-placed bomb, he will never sleep any worse for it. He is serving his country, which has the power to absolve him from evil.
>
> George Orwell, 'The Lion and Unicorn', 1941

In the 1960s, other perspectives on war were offered. The role of the individual soldier was questioned. If there were no soldiers, there would be no war. So the ethical burden of war was placed on the individual instead of the State. The then president of America, John Fitzgerald Kennedy in his 'Essays on Nonviolence and Conscientious Objection', reflected on this when talking about the Vietnam war: '*People have not been horrified by war to a sufficient extent ... War will exist until that distant day when the conscientious objector enjoys the same reputation and prestige as the warrior does today.*'

For nations and religions these just war principles and criteria still provide approaches for the study of both war and peace. They continue to provide the ideas and language for discussing war and the ethical dilemmas it creates. Recent events and technologies have raised more questions such as follows: Should the United Nations allow pre-emptive strikes? Who should pay for post-war reconstruction of Afghanistan? Should the world negotiate with the Taliban? Is it ethical to send troops into a nation as a humanitarian intervention? Should we continue to develop and use drones, robots and cyber weapons? Can nuclear war ever be justified?

CONSIDERING WARFARE

Skills: explain, analyse, interpret

1. What is the importance of theoretical principles like Just War Theory to the development of humanity?
2. How does Just War Theory aim to reduce death? Is this logical?
3. What aspects of religion are used in the debate on this issue?
4. In what ways can voices from the past help in informing decision making in the present?
5. Which contributors to the debate are responsible for the destruction caused by war?
6. Have a class discussion: Is war a necessary evil?
7. Research a current war and apply the principles of Just War Theory to discover if the war was justified.

WHISTLEBLOWERS

Whistleblowers perform a fundamental ethical function in society by bringing public attention to unethical behaviour by an organisation or within it. They are the people who have disclosed, for example, that tobacco companies were aware of the dangers of smoking long before smoking became public as a health issue; that toxic waste has been dumped into the environment; that there is corruption in police forces and that government cover-ups have occurred. Usually, whistleblowers are concerned employees who have observed something wrong or inappropriate in their work situation. Operating on an assumption that their employer would wish to be told of this, they report the matter to someone whom they expect to be an ethical authority in that environment. They operate on a basis of trust that others will want to know the truth and act to right a wrong. Often this is a big mistake.

Whistleblowers can be devastated by the responses they receive. They can be victimised in many ways: emotionally, physically, financially and with verbal abuse and character assassination. Their health can suffer and existing close relationships can be put under stress. Depression is a very real result of their treatment for attempting to do the right thing. It may not stop at them, either, but may also include their family and supportive friends and associates.

The ethics of whistleblowing has developed as a major debate globally due to the publication of cases on the Internet. Julian Assange, through WikiLeaks, and Edward Snowden, who leaked classified information from the US National Security Agency, have both demonstrated the power an individual can have in exposing State or corporate interests. At the heart of the issue is the right of the public to know and the freedom of the individual to speak out versus the argument that there must be limits put on these freedoms in order to protect the reputation of individuals, people's privacy, the commercial interests of companies and the nation's security. Most recently, the community's fear of the growing terror threat posed by extremists has provided governments with opportunities to restrict the freedom of their citizens without any widespread protest. The following are some of the cases linked to whistleblowing that have been prominent in the media.

ANDREW WILKIE

The following brief account of a prominent Australian citizen taking action on an issue that he deemed ethical demonstrates logical and controlled use of the factors involved in ethical thinking and the methods of ethical decision making. Just a week before the United States government launched its invasion of Iraq, in March 2003, Andrew Wilkie, an analyst in the Australian Office of National Assessments, resigned from his position and challenged the Australian government's reasons for joining the invasion. Wilkie, a key figure in the military intelligence organisation, took a principled stand against the Howard Government's claim that the main reason for going to war in Iraq was that the country had weapons of mass destruction. Wilkie undermined the Howard Government's depiction of this intelligence and caused significant damage to the prime minister's standing.

AAP Image/Alan Porritt

FIGURE 6.9 Andrew Wilkie addressing a meeting in defence of WikiLeaks. What ethical issues did Wilkie address in his criticism of the Howard Government?

Andrew Wilkie's stance was a serious challenge to the government because he presented his objections as a strong case of military ethics and he spoke with authority. His success as a whistleblower was due to a range of factors. Firstly, Wilkie kept the focus on the main issue, the integrity of the official reasons for Australia joining the attack on Iraq. He consistently countered the government line and did not get distracted by issues outside his expertise. He was clear about what the real ethical issues were and the need for an absolute justification when you go to war. Wilkie used the Geneva Convention as an outline of military ethics to look to for guidance.

Secondly, he spoke out in public. Rather than reporting his concerns through official channels, such as by writing a memo or talking to his boss, he contacted veteran journalist Laurie Oakes, who made Wilkie's resignation and revelations into a top news story. Wilkie stuck with this approach, doing numerous interviews and giving many talks in the following months. His approach was the antithesis of cover-up; however, for some in the military establishment, this behaviour was unethical as it breached the commitment an individual makes as a member of the armed forces when they sign up. For Wilkie, though, he faced conflicting ethical demands.

In 2010, the then Liberal Party leader, Tony Abbott, apologised to Wilkie on behalf of the Howard Government for its attempts to discredit him during the 2003 debate.

CONSEQUENCES FOR ETHICAL ACTION

Skills: research, analysis, drawing conclusions

1. Analyse Andrew Wilkie's ethical thinking and methods of ethical decision making.
2. Which source of ethical authority enabled Wilkie to challenge the ethical authority of the government of the time?
3. How was he, as an individual, able to cause major changes to make his society more ethical?
4. How can his decision and the subsequent consequences be considered ethical?
5. How has this decision changed Andrew Wilkie's life?

BERNARD COLLAERY AND WITNESS K

Another example of whistleblowing is in the protracted prosecution of Bernard Collaery and the undisclosed Witness K. An event that took place in 2004 has developed into a legal case that represents a serious threat to freedom of expression in Australia.

> There is a certain Alice in Wonderland quality about all this – everything has been turned upside down. The two people who acted in the national interest by disclosing alleged unlawful activity by Australia's intelligence service are the defendants in a criminal case. The government, which initiated the covert operation, has become the prosecutor. Something has gone very wrong.
>
> Spencer Zifcak, Allan Myers Chair of Law/Professor of Law, Australian Catholic University

After lengthy delay, the case will soon return to court but a recent ruling of the ACT Supreme Court has determined that significant parts of the trial will be in closed court. This decision was contested by Collaery's lawyer as '*Open justice is an essential part of our legal system, the rights of defendants and of our democracy.*'

AAP Image/Lukas Coch

FIGURE 6.10 Supporters of Bernard Collaery and Witness K outside ACT Supreme Court, August 2021.

The prosecutions arose from the disclosure of information related to a covert ASIS action to obtain information about Timor-Leste's claims to oil deposits in the Timor sea. In 2013, Timor-Leste went to the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague with concerns about an Australian surveillance action that had caused legal and commercial disadvantage. Bernard Collaery, former ACT attorney-general, represented Timor-Leste. Witness K, the former ASIS officer turned whistleblower, was to provide evidence.

But this process was interrupted by the following actions. Australian Attorney-General George Brandis prevented Witness K from giving evidence by confiscating his passport. He authorised invasion of homes and offices of Collaery and Witness K, acquiring a completed draft of Timor-Leste's case to present at The Hague. Charges of breaches of the Intelligence Services Act were brought against Witness K and Collaery.

Did the Australian government act illegally? It is asserted that in placing surveillance devices, ASIS criminally trespassed on Timor-Leste's cabinet sessions (by law, secret). It is also asserted that Australia violated international law in entering the offices of Witness K and Collaery and confiscating documents of the Timor-Leste government. The UN Convention on the Jurisdictional Immunity of States clearly states 'that nations and their property are immune from the domestic jurisdiction of other countries'. Additionally, Australian law upholds professional legal privilege, so in taking documents containing Collaery's legal advice to Timor-Leste, this principle has been violated.

This was contested by Brandis, claiming a greater principle – security of the Commonwealth – overrides that of professional legal privilege. But Australian governments are not permitted to act contrary to Australian law or the law of another country. Therefore, should disclosing information about government illegal actions be outside the bounds of Section 39 of the Intelligence Services Act?

CONSEQUENCES OF WHISTLEBLOWING

Skills: identify, explain, analyse

1 Identify the contributors to this ethical debate.

2 Which methods of ethical decision making are being used by the participants in this issue?

3 Discuss whether a conviction of the defendants (maximum two years' imprisonment) would be a travesty of justice.

INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS VERSUS THE COMMON GOOD

The 21st century is the age of information technology, and with the opportunities, excitement, entertainment and progress that accompany it, there are also profound ethical questions being raised. In particular, there is the tension between the individual's right to privacy and the common good of the community. One technological development is facial recognition technology. Once material found in science-fiction dramas, it is now on the verge of becoming a mainstream tool for security agencies, police forces, armed forces and even the retail industry. Leading the development of this technology are corporate entities such as Google and Facebook. Google claim that they can identify faces with nearly 100 per cent accuracy and that they almost have the capacity to link names with the faces. Facebook has said that it can actually identify people 83 per cent of the time even when their faces are not visible.

There are those who argue that this technology is ethically sound as it supports the protection of life and the good it will produce will far outweigh any evil. Their view is that privacy is not an absolute right and that the security of the nation and the community is more important. They argue that it will:

- give police forces concrete evidence that will link criminals to a crime and, in so doing, deter people from committing crimes
- provide border protection agencies with a tool that will facilitate airport security checks and may more efficiently and reliably stop terrorist attacks, as the computer will be able to match those in the queues with those on alert lists
- replace the need for ID checks, passports and most passwords
- make shopping easy as signs will recognise the client and direct them to appropriate shops.

Those against the technology argue that privacy is essential for the integrity of the individual, and that facial recognition technology:

- is surveillance without permission and a major breach of privacy – it is a civil liberties issue
- makes our faces public property when our face is profoundly our own
- will involve errors and these will be difficult to disprove
- in the hands of criminals is very dangerous as social media will link faces, names and addresses (through tracking of mobile phones), allowing criminals to have information that will assist them in robberies, assaults, kidnapping and identity theft
- will encourage hacking and theft of people's personal images.

DEBATING THE ETHICAL ISSUE OF FACIAL RECOGNITION TECHNOLOGY

Skills: identify, analyse, evaluate, research, interpret, synthesise

1. Why is facial recognition different from putting your image on a social media site?
2. Why should people value their privacy?
3. What might be three consequences of an invasion of privacy? Be specific in your outline of the consequence.
4. Have a class discussion about the benefits of social media versus the need for personal privacy.
5. Which ethical principle is the basis of the argument in support of facial recognition technology?
6. Which method of ethical decision making is being applied by those in support of facial recognition technology?
7. Which ethical principle is the basis of the argument against facial recognition technology?
8. Which method of ethical decision making is being applied by those against facial recognition technology?
9. Discuss: Which method of ethical decision making would you use when there is no clear-cut good?
10. You are put in a position where you have to choose between privacy and security. Which would you choose? Write 150 words explaining your choice.
11. How might commercial interests such as Google, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or retailers impact on the development and use of this technology?

LIFE AS A MINORITY

It has been said that the measure of how ethical a society is can be seen in the way in which it treats its minorities, its underprivileged and those without a voice or who are unable to access their voice in a pluralist society.

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FIGURE 6.11 Two social experiences in Melbourne. What does this image show about these experiences?

Melbourne writer Barry Gittins reflects in *Eureka Street* (Vol. 32 No. 11) that nightly in Melbourne hundreds of people seek support from churches and services. Winter brings an extra sting to the absence of adequate clothing and shelter, and health deteriorates. 'Misery rises as temperatures fall.'

Among those who see and care for the homeless of Melbourne is Major Brendan Nottle of the Salvation Army who says, 'the community needs to realise the truth of that old saying, "It takes a village." Simple things can make a profound difference in someone's life, like taking the time to have a conversation, sharing a smile or a cup of coffee. It sends a powerful message that we are all people.' Brendan Nottle says his responses to the people of the streets is 'more than a Christian response – it is the response of humanity as we are all our brothers' and sisters' keepers'.

Theodore Dalrymple (a pseudonym for Anthony Daniels, a psychologist who worked in a hospital and prison in Birmingham, England) discusses religious currents within the culture of the underclass in England, and the way in which religion can give a voice to the culture and world of the housing estates. The book from which the extract comes asserts that years of negating people's responsibility for their actions only leads to bigger issues and harsher consequences. Accordingly, the negation of personal responsibility by government agencies has destroyed the mores of the underclass living in the developed world and made them more violent and predatory than those of the underclass who live in developing countries. The following is an extract from his book, *Life at the Bottom*.

Overlooking the church – towering above it, in fact – is a 20-storey block of public housing … I know this particular block quite well, having paid two house calls as a doctor there, accompanied by the riot police to protect me, a very necessary precaution as it transpired.

Another of my patients who lives there has repeatedly stabbed herself in the abdomen (five times so far) in an attempt … to get the Housing Department – whose concern for its tenants makes the average aristocratic landlord of the 1700s CE look positively sentimental – to move her somewhere less violent. The department has so far stuck to its opinion that she is adequately housed, by which it means that she has four walls and a roof that is impermeable to water, if not to noise or intruders.

So I think I know what Marx meant when he wrote that religion is the sigh of the oppressed, the heart of a heartless world, the opium of the people. … inside this [local] Pentecostal church the pastor addresses a large congregation that knows only too well what it is to live in the shadow of lawlessness, where the antisocial behaviour, irresponsibility, lack of truthfulness and empathy of psychopathy rules. … This congregation has one striking feature: it is half black and half white. This is all the more remarkable because, within a few hundred yards, there are pubs that are racially segregated, where a man of the wrong race is as welcome as a blasphemer in Iran. But in the church the races are united by their mutual experience of the moral squalor that surrounds them and by the failure of the public authorities to tackle it in any way, or even to acknowledge its existence. Once more they seek assurance that their suffering is not without meaning. Congregant after congregant speaks of delinquency and drug taking, of illegitimacy and domestic violence, of criminality and cruelty. They all pray for the conversion of the world and, exulting in its imminent prospect, speak in tongues … uttered with the deepest feeling: it is a catharsis, a release.

The desperate search for order in the midst of anarchy often renders people vulnerable to self-proclaimed authorities who rush in to fill the moral vacuum. A patient of mine recently revealed to me the world of religious cults that flourishes, anonymously and unseen by the rest of us, in the modern city. … Despite its appearance of religious indifference, then, our city has an unexpectedly intense religious life. In an age of relativism, people seek certainty; when violence strikes randomly, they seek transcendent meaning; when crime goes unpunished by the secular power, they seek refuge in divine law; when indifference to others reigns, they seek community.

Theodore Dalrymple, *Life at the Bottom: The Worldview that Makes the Underclass*, Ivan R Dee, 2003, pp. 97–98

RESPONDING ETHICALLY TO THOSE AT THE BOTTOM OF SOCIETY

Skills: summarise, explain, analyse, evaluate, interpret, synthesise

1. How do you react to the life of the homeless and the underclass that is portrayed by Gittins and Dalrymple?
2. What roles does religion play in their lives?
3. Why are religious ethical ideals so important for these people?
4. What should society do to address the issues discussed above, according to an ethical perspective from a particular religious or philosophical tradition?

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FIGURE 6.12 Husband and wife being blessed as they make their marriage vows. What does the overlocking of hands symbolise? Why is a public statement of vows so important in marriage?

FORCED MARRIAGE

Issues involving relationships are often ethical as they go to the heart of what it is to be human, the importance of a person's emotional life and the right of a human person to be treated with dignity. Marriage is the closest relationship between humans, other than parenting, and so it must be undertaken in a way that respects the people who are making the vow and legal commitment with the intention of being partners for the rest of their lives.

In most religious traditions, this institution is based on principles of free will and personal autonomy; however, in some cultures, it is strongly linked to the ethical authority of the father and other male members of the family. The role of ethical authorities, principles and moral values which shape cultural norms – whether traditional or modern – play a large role in the ethical issue of whether people can be forced into marriage.

In Christianity, marriage is a sacrament, that is, a gift from God which is a tangible image of the covenant of love that God has with humans. It is a contract that enables procreation in a setting that allows the religion to be lived through the practice of values such as compassion, service and forgiveness. It involves there being both mutual consent and commitment. The closeness of the bond is found in Genesis 2:20–24:

> But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called "woman," for she was taken out of man.' That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

This text is also important in the Jewish tradition in explaining the importance of marriage as the union of man and woman that is blessed by God who is a silent partner in the relationship. In Judaism, marriage is integral to the survival of the religion and so marriage is not entered into without a solemn commitment that is ritualised with blessings and with the intention that the couple will be 'fruitful and multiply' (Genesis 1:28)

Marriage is a contract in Islam (*nikah*). It is the most important relationship, one of love and mercy. As the Quran says:

> And among His signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves that you might live with tranquillity with them, and He has put love and mercy between your hearts ...
>
> (Surat Ar-Room)

As in the Jewish tradition, marriage in Islam has a role in maintaining the longevity of the religious tradition. It is performed through a ritual that turns strangers into a husband and wife. In order to be a valid marriage, there are conditions that must be met, such as the age of the groom

being past puberty and there are restrictions between people who are related. Secondly, the bride must have given her consent. The Hadith outlines the form of consent:

> A deflowered unmarried woman [i.e. widow or divorcee] may not be married without her instructions; and a virgin may not be married without her permission, and her silence indicates her consent.
>
> (Sahih Muslim 1419a Book 16, Hadith 75 Bukhari)

> Also, in Islam a marriage is not valid unless the guardian has given consent: 'A marriage [contract] is not valid without a wali [guardian]'
>
> (Abu Dawud, At-Tirmidhi).

In Hinduism, marriage (*vivaha*) is a sacred ceremony in which the birth of children is seen to be most important – it is a religious obligation (*ashrama)*. Marriage is a rite of passage that binds both families forever. In 2018, the Chief Justice of India said that the Hindu Marriage Act held that a forced marriage, or a marriage without consent, is invalid.

Buddhism is unusual because it does not see marriage as a sacred state or ritual. It is rather a secular matter that is organised by the state. This is more in tune with the origins of marriage which came from a social practice in which the girl or woman was property whose transfer was negotiated by the men in the community in order to enter into a political or economic alliance.

Today, religions value the institution of marriage as it helps in the shaping of the community; it forms an important part of a tradition's social structure, and it is the institution through which the beliefs of the tradition are handed on generation after generation. As the dominant traditions in Australia are Christianity and Humanism for non-religious Australians, the values, norms and expectations of the community oppose any practice that does not include total consent on the part of both parties. This is the reason why secular authorities such as governments and police become important in the mandating of what is an ethical approach to the institution of marriage in a modern, pluralistic, Western society. Their role is to enforce ethical principles and normative standards that protect the rights of the individual, while enforcing what is for the common good of the community.

However, not all marriages according to Australian law are ethical. Religious and secular groups working in the area of human trafficking observed that there were women in Australia who had been forced into marriages against their will. In 2010, they advocated for these women by lobbying the Australian government to put an end to this practice and the nation currently outlaws this practice. Now, in law, forced marriage is considered a slavery-like practice, an abuse of human rights and a serious crime. Forcing someone to get married is a crime under the Commonwealth Criminal Code Act 1995 and is punishable by up to seven years in prison. If the victim is under the age of 18, the penalty increases to nine years' imprisonment, or 25 years' imprisonment if the child is taken overseas for the purpose of forced marriage. Australian Federal Police (AFP) have identified the groups who are most vulnerable as:

- people who are brought to Australia for the purpose of marriage, who discover when they arrive in Australia that the marriage they are entering into is not what they had agreed to
- people, often Australian citizens or permanent residents, who are taken overseas to be married against their will
- people, often citizens or permanent residents, who are forced to marry in Australia.

Forced marriage is a marriage that occurs without both people consenting to the marriage freely and fully. The issue of consent is central. A lack of consent means the person is not able to make this choice fully because they were coerced, threatened, deceived or did not understand the nature of marriage because of their age or mental capacity. Arranged marriages, a social norm in some countries, are allowed as long as both parties consent to the marriage.

During the 2019/20 financial year, the AFP received 92 reports of forced marriage, about half of the victims were under the age of 18 years; 70 per cent of the reports alleged that victims were taken offshore or the intent was for them to travel offshore for the purpose of forced marriage. The most vulnerable group seen by the AFP during this period was young females between the ages of 15 and 19 years, although boys can also be victims of this practice.

The motivations for forced marriage are usually concerned with the protection of wealth, land or reputation of the family; the avoidance of shame and the maintenance of honour. Parents may be motivated by the desire to control the sexuality of their child through forcing them into a heterosexual marriage or to prevent a child forming a relationship with someone who is not approved of because they are not of their caste, religion, ethnic or cultural group. All of the values that underpin these motivations are in conflict with the overriding values of Australia.

Secular society says forced marriage is a breach of ethics as it goes against the principles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 16 makes the following points:

- Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.
- Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.
- The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women general recommendation No. 21 states: '*A woman's right to choose a spouse and enter freely into marriage is central to her life and dignity, and equality as a human being.*'

In Australia, all religious traditions must respect the laws concerning marriage. Marriages conducted in a religious or cultural ceremony come under the auspices of civil laws, even if they are conducted overseas. It is a misconception that forced marriage is limited to certain cultural groups, religions or ethnicities. Forced marriage is a global issue. Plan International estimates that 14 million girls under the age of 18 marry each year and that it is suspected that many of these are forced marriages.

Forced marriage impacts on a range of people in the community as any party involved in helping this marriage to occur can be held accountable before the law. This includes families, friends, wedding planners or marriage celebrants and, in particular, the partner of the person being forced into the marriage unless they too are being forced into the marriage.

One of the justifications for Australia criminalising forced marriage is that it is in opposition to the ethical values that are inherent in the Australian character. Australia is an egalitarian nation that values a fair go for all. Increasingly Australians are coming to respect the rights of women, especially with regard to consent and the prevention of domestic abuse. Australia values personal freedoms, integrity and compassion. Forced marriage violates these values.

A consequence of forced marriage is the impact on the health of the person who has been the victim of this practice. There is evidence that they suffer from isolation, depression, self-harm, domestic violence and loneliness. They are not offered the opportunity to be educated or fulfil ambitions. Their lives can be spent in virtual slavery where they have no autonomy. They can become property instead of a person. Significantly, forced marriage is also inflicted on young people under the legal age of marriage in Australia, which is 18. Child marriage is unethical on many levels – it is physically, psychologically and emotionally damaging. It is a form of theft as it steals the childhood and innocence from a vulnerable human being.

In order to end this practice, groups have formed within religious traditions and denominations to advocate for those caught in forced marriage, to advocate for them with government officials, to support them pastorally and to educate the community in order to prevent forced marriage from

happening. The Salvation Army have been active in working with the Labor Party who have pledged to have a dedicated unit to support women caught in forced marriages. The Catholic Church's group Australian Catholic Religious Against the Trafficking of Humans (ACRATH) has been tasked by the federal government with producing materials that will educate the community so as to prevent forced marriage. The Australian Women's Muslim Centre for Human Rights have developed materials to educate and support women in the Islamic community.

Resource used in this piece: https://acrath.org.au/resources/forced-marriage/

THE ETHICAL ISSUE OF FORCED MARRIAGES

Skills: identify, explain, analyse

1. What makes this an ethical issue? Use dot points to list your reasons.
2. Identify the participants in this ethical issue.
3. Which methods of ethical decision making are being used by the different participants in this ethical issue?
4. Write a paragraph outlining the ethics of this issue using the following terms in your piece: ethical principles, social norms, moral values.
5. What other aspects of religion are involved in this ethical issue and how are they being used?
6. What is the relationship between religious and secular authorities in this issue?

COVID-19

Since 2019 changes have occurred as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic and its associated mutations, challenging us to think differently about the ethics of personal, communal, societal and governmental behaviour. The dangerous disease COVID-19 had its first outbreak in December 2019 spreading to many parts of the world through travellers, and led to several equally as virulent variants. This virus is known to cause severe pneumonia and death not only in the elderly and those with pre-existing health conditions but also in previously healthy individuals of all ages. This alarmingly contagious virus which is shaking healthcare systems all over the world is known to spread from one person to another through direct close contact when respiratory droplets and mist are released when the infected person coughs, sneezes, talks or breathes.

The disease has produced many ethical challenges both in itself and in the methods used in its management. Debates have erupted over the ethics of the inequitable distribution of vaccines globally, vaccine mandates, restrictions on civil liberties and the capacity of wealthy countries to deal with the virus compared with the poorest. Questions have also arisen over the acceptable limits of government intervention in trying to control the devastating effects of the pandemic on the population, especially for the elderly, the education system, the health system including mental health, employment and the economy.

People in Australia and in many other countries have had to make enormous changes in their daily lives. They have had to obey demanding new rules and accept new risks, while considerably restricting their movements, travel plans, disrupting their workplaces, separating families or forcing them to adapt how they interact. There has been much disagreement over the ethical ways to deal with these issues as the basic rules of life were being amended to deal with the pandemic. The main ethical challenges around COVID-19 are over disease-control measures, maintaining economic functions, the extent of actions by authorities and others, and the equitable distribution

Getty Images/Asanka Ratnayake

FIGURE 6.13 Public Transport of Victoria poster. What justification does Public Transport Victoria assume to request the wearing of masks on trains, trams and buses?

of assistance and resources. These concerns entail the ethical principles of autonomy, prevention of harm, ensuring justice, as well as protecting confidentiality, preventing shame or victim blaming, and discrimination. There are many areas of ethical contention over the way Australians personally and their governments, both State and federal, have dealt with the issues surrounding action to prevent the COVID-19 virus spreading further and causing even more damage. One of the major ethical issues has been over the need to protect the common good versus the rights of the individual.

Australian governments, both Federal and State, have taken a utilitarian approach in their decision making, guided by medical advice but also by political realities, to achieve their desired outcome: the prevention of the rapid spread of this pandemic and to minimise the number of cases and deaths which was a threat to the economy and the health system.

As an island continent, to prevent the rapid expansion of the pandemic, Australia stopped international travel early and took on other measures including hotel quarantine for all returned travellers. Policymaking based on public health advice led to campaigns put in place encouraging physical distancing; promoting cough and hand hygiene; setting up comprehensive testing and contact tracing; establishing immunisation centres; and providing personal protective equipment (PPE) for health workers to minimise exposure to the illness. All these decisions were justified as for the greater good:

- To bide time before effective vaccines could be developed and distributed to achieve herd immunity (disease resistance to COVID-19 in the population).
- By not allowing the virus to run rampant and put people who were immuno-compromised at risk.
- So as not to overwhelm an already burdened healthcare system.

The response by Australians to COVID-19 decisions by governments and health authorities – especially about preventing gatherings, screenings before entering a venue, closing schools, restricting visits to loved ones in a hospital or retirement home, and mandating isolation for the majority of COVID-affected suburbs – were met with a range of reactions from resigned acceptance to active protests. These actions were seen by some as too heavy-handed and an infringement of civil liberties. Compulsory mask wearing on public transport, in shops, factories and businesses and the drastic limitations on numbers allowed at weddings, funerals and the banning of social gatherings were seen by its opponents as a draconian infringement of individual rights. Meanwhile, crucial workers such as doctors, nurses and healthcare workers and those working in essential areas such as supermarkets, factories and other vital services felt their personal welfare was threatened by continued contact with the public as directed by the government.

There was increased communication and decision making between the states, territories and the federal government. Both State and federal governments were advised by medical professionals to enact legislation, using their emergency powers and bringing in police to assist in controlling the movement of people within and between the states, at the borders, in the city streets and in public spaces. Security personnel were used in the hotel quarantine and there were issues with breaches of this system.

Residents across the metropolitan Melbourne area endured six lockdowns over 2020 and 2021 where they were required to stay at home (except for work, education, access to care, household shopping and exercise). But in July 2020, nine public housing towers were singled out for a much harder lockdown. The speed and the manner of its implementation shocked the residents and the broader community, who perceived this action as heavy-handed, especially when 500 or so uniformed police surrounded the buildings and informed them of the situation. These public housing towers provide rental accommodation for people in need and multi-generation families from diverse backgrounds and ethnicities, including refugees and asylum seekers. Those residents who were employed held jobs such as essential workers in transport, social and health services, community organisations and small businesses entailing high exposure to the public with the consequent risk of infection. Thus this lockdown 'for the greater good' exacerbated the injustices and inequities of COVID-19 for older people, minority ethnic and indigenous communities, and those engaged in essential services who were all at greater risk. The effectiveness of government decisions dealing with COVID-19 is arguable. No one solution by the authorities has been totally successful as there are too many competing interests and arguments, many with valid justification for their views and actions.

RESPONDING ETHICALLY TO COVID-19

Skills: define, describe, explain, analyse

1 How is a pandemic different from an epidemic?
2 What powers and responsibilities do governments and other authorities have in dealing with the pandemic?
3 What authorities other than governments need to be involved in the decision making?
4 What responsibilities do individuals have to ensure less harm in the community from the pandemic?
5 How would you reply to the following questions posed by Hugh Breakey, Senior Research Fellow in moral philosophy at Griffith University's Institute for Ethics, Governance & Law, that address some of the contentious ethical issues related to COVID-19? Justify your response.
   a Is it morally wrong to refuse to be vaccinated?
   b Is it morally wrong to ignore social distancing rules and mask wearing?
   c Is it acceptable or even obligatory to inform authorities of rule breakers?

CHAPTER 6

REVISION

A Short-answer questions

Check your memory. If you need to, go to the appropriate heading in Chapter 4 to refresh your memory. You need to use the terms correctly in analysing your selected ethical issues.

Answer the following questions in your own words. In your responses, remember to use synonyms for the term you are explaining. That way you build your vocabulary and show that you clearly understand the terms in the questions.

1 Explain the difference between ethics and morality.
2 What is immorality?
3 What is amorality?
5 What is the conscience?
6 Define what it is that makes something an issue.
7 What makes an issue become an ethical issue?
8 What are moral codes?
9 What are moral values?
10 What role do moral values have in ethical decision making?
11 What is the difference between idealised and practised values?
12 What is normative behaviour?
13 What is intuition?
14 What is the role of reasoning in ethical decision making?
15 Define the term 'ethical authority'.
16 Identify a major ethical authority in Australia.
17 Define the term 'ethical principles'.
18 Identify a major ethical principle that influences Australians in their moral behaviour.
19 Identify a major ethical code that guides Australians in ethical thinking and moral behaviour.
20 Why should a person be moral?

Weblinks
Various for Chapter 6

EXTENSION

Researching ethical issues

1 In 2017 New Zealand legislated that one of the country's rivers was a legal person. Research the ethical principles and decision making methods used to justify this legislation.

2 Research why the International Court of Justice was established.

a. Which ethical principles underpin its work?

b. Why might a country not recognise the authority of this court?

3 Research the outcome of the Bernard Colleary case.

a. Which ethical principles guided the outcome?

b. Discuss whether justice was achieved by the outcome.

4 Choose two ethical issues being debated in a contemporary pluralist society.

Some possibilities: racism in Australia; First Nations Peoples issues; applying Sharia law in Australia; animal rights; climate change and environmental ethics; gender issues; refugee rights; treatment of the poor, the homeless, unemployed or disadvantaged; stem cell research; whistleblowers; religious freedom.

Also consider ethical issues at the local level of your suburb, council, parish, school, sports club.

5 Write a detailed report using the following process.

Process for analysing ethical issues:

- *The issue.* Describe the issue, establishing why it is an ethical issue and why it is of concern to Australia.
- *Contributors to the debate.* Identify the religious and non-religious contributors to the debate.
- *Ethical perspectives and methods.* Outline the various arguments of the different individuals, groups, organisations or institutions involved in the debate about the ethical issue. In this you should clearly identify the principles, values, assumptions and methods of ethical decision making used in their arguments.
- *Ethical authorities.* Identify who or what is being used to give credibility to the various arguments. Evaluate whether these authorities are appropriate and reliable for the issue under debate. Evaluate whether these authorities are being used logically and correctly in the debate.
- *Conclusion.* Identify any major change or result of the debate on this ethical issue. Explain whether such change or result is an ethical solution to the issue.

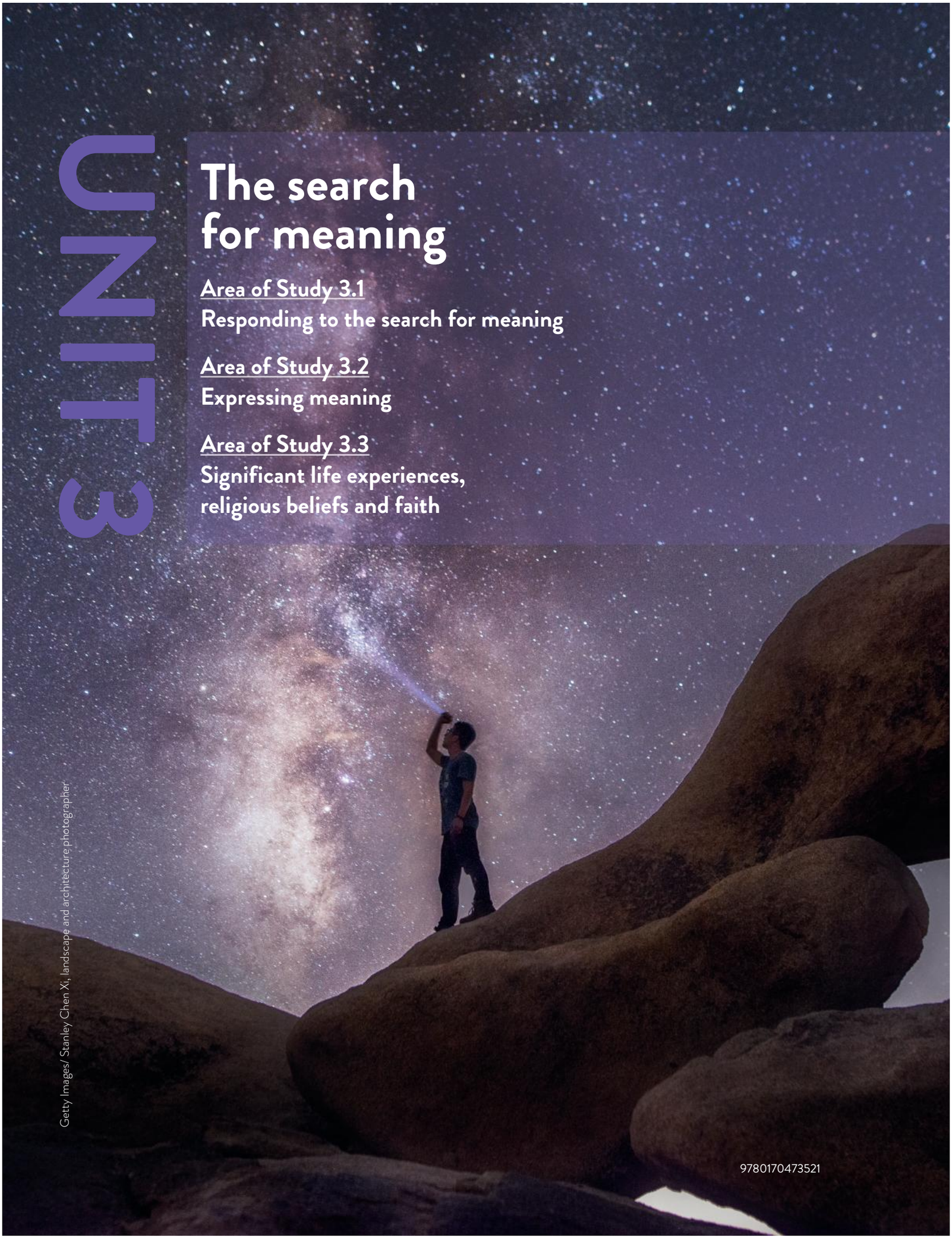
UNIT 3

The search for meaning

Area of Study 3.1
Responding to the search for meaning

Area of Study 3.2
Expressing meaning

Area of Study 3.3
Significant life experiences, religious beliefs and faith



Getty Images/ Stanley Chen Xi, landscape and architecture photographer

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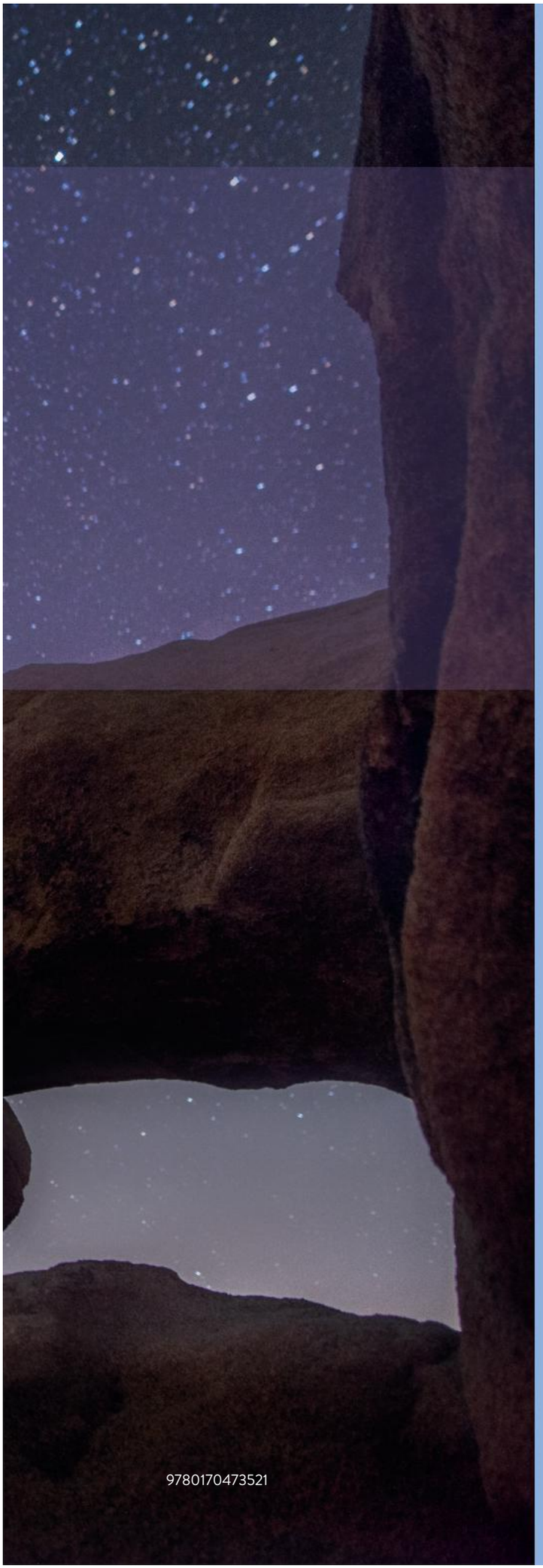

Chapter 7

QUESTIONS, POSSIBILITIES AND ANSWERS

Outcome to be demonstrated

Analysis of the nature and purpose of religion and religious beliefs

Focus questions

- What is the nature and the purpose of religion in the search for meaning?
- What is the nature of religious beliefs?
- What is the purpose of religious beliefs in the search for meaning?
- How does a particular religious tradition answer the following questions?
  - What are the beliefs about an ultimate reality?
  - What are the beliefs about the nature and purpose of human life?
  - What are the beliefs about the meanings of suffering?
  - What are the beliefs about life after death?
  - What are the beliefs about the relationship between ultimate reality and humanity?
  - What are the beliefs about how humans should relate to each other?
  - What are the beliefs about the relationship between humanity and the natural world?
  - What are the connections between these beliefs?

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Worksheet
Terminology

THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF RELIGION IN THE SEARCH FOR MEANING

When determining the nature of something, one looks to find any inherent features or characteristics. In the case of religion, one of its inherent features is its intended purpose, to give meaning to life and one's experience of it. Other inherent features of religion are the various aspects of religion that contribute to religion being a living response to the search for meaning across time and cultures.

The search for meaning is a fundamental human response to life, which is both universal and personal. Individuals experience moments when they have been amazed or overwhelmed by the vast quantity of detail and diversity in the world around them. This leads them to question life. What questions might come to mind? How does one deal with them? How do we make sense of the mystery and complexity of life?

Humans across time and place have similarly pondered the wonders of nature and life, and have reflected on the mysteries of how and why it all came to be, and how and why some things keep going while others cease to exist. Gradually, over millennia of human existence, the combination of keen observation, creative imagination and insightful and logical thinking have enabled humans to propose many answers to these questions of 'how' and to propose explanations for the 'why'.

Philosophers, **theologians**, scientists, artists, musicians and writers have all contributed to this ongoing search for the meaning of existence. Some explanations endure, standing the tests of time and culture. Other explanations that once satisfied are later disproved or rejected because of apparent or real failure to give meaning.

From the earliest of times, people have found themselves in communities sharing stories, asking the 'big questions' of life, grappling with moral problems and looking for inspiration. The Roman armies, as they marched and conquered, noticed this pattern of human behaviour. It was familiar to them from their own experience and, out of this recognition, came a word *religio* for this social movement. The Roman philosopher Cicero (107–47 BCE) linked *religio* to the verb *relegere*, meaning to re-read, to illustrate the need for communities to go over texts, eventually providing a collection of customs and laws to be handed onto future generations.

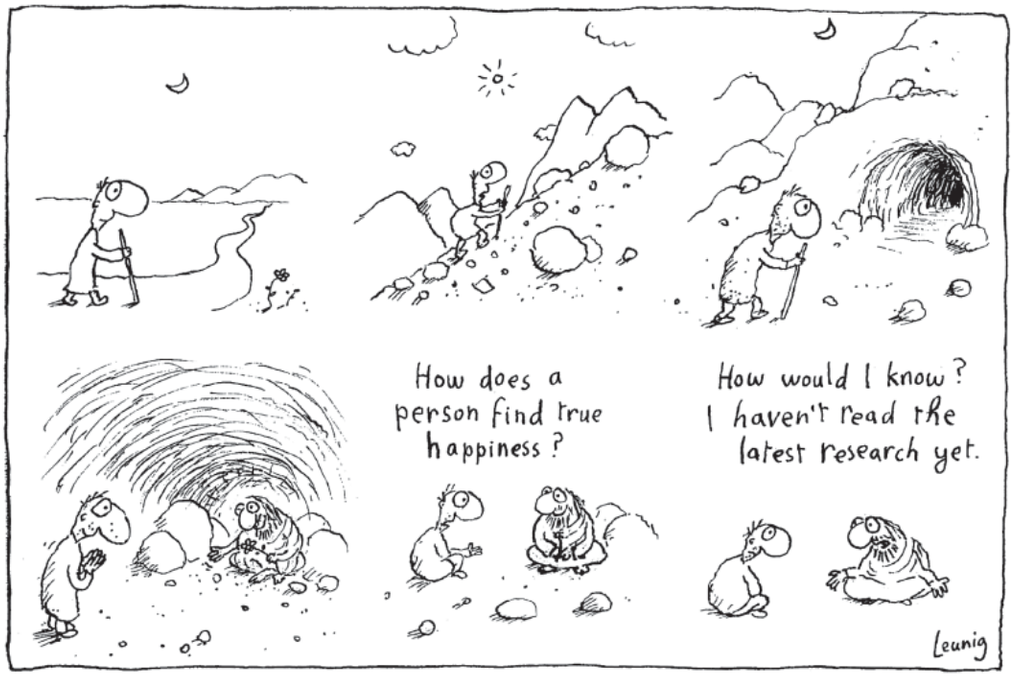
A later writer, Lactantius (240–320 CE), argued the word came from *religare*, meaning to fasten or bind or tie back to. This allowed for the development of a view that religion's purpose is to bind the individual with the transcendent and the individual with others in the community who shared the same worldview. Also religion had the purpose of reconnecting (to tie back to) humanity with its origins and true nature in relationship with the transcendent.

As the purpose of religion became important for the political administration of societies, a definition was necessary. Religion came to be seen as a system for organising and expressing respect in 'the worship of the gods' (in the words of Cicero, *cultus deorum*).

Modern sociologists (people who conduct the scientific study of the organisation of communities and features that define them) have suggested that the purpose of religion is to help shape society through providing ideas that support progress, such as the Protestant work ethic. Anthropologists (people who study humanity's past and present within a cultural context) have argued that religion expresses what the whole community believes to be the meaning and purpose of life. This is done through ceremony or ritual and in this way religion stabilises and unifies a society by giving an identity to its members. A more recent view is that religion's purpose is to provide a way of belonging – for both the community and the individual.

One way of clarifying the purpose of religion is to look at what religious traditions commonly offer the societies in which they operate. Often their purpose is to provide society with

- a belief in a transcendent authority or ultimate reality that provides the society with common values
- a **metanarrative**, or **truth narrative**, that provides a way of making sense of 'the world', including its origins and end
- a symbolic understanding of mystery or that which remains inexplicable
- rituals and symbols that designate significant moments in the life of the individual or the community
- ethical principles and moral values that guide human behaviour
- objects that are sacred and inspire the community through their beauty, either as ideas or as art
- a way of expressing individual or communal emotions
- a worldview that gives an individual's life meaning and purpose.



© Michael Leunig

FIGURE 7.1 The search for happiness. What response would religious traditions give to answer this? How does a person find true happiness?

These purposes are also part of the nature of religion. While there are many viewpoints about what religion is, it is agreed they share some common features, called the aspects of religion. Aspects of religion contribute to religion being a living response to the search for meaning across time and cultures. There is difference of opinion about these, too, but generally the following are recognised as relevant to all religions though with different emphases: beliefs; sacred stories; spaces, places, times and artefacts that have become sacred to a religion; texts, both sacred and in other forms composed over time; rituals; symbols; ethics; social structures of the religion; and the spiritual experience that is nurtured and facilitated by the other aspects. These aspects of religion are explained in detail in Chapter 1.

RELIGION – ITS NATURE AND PURPOSE

Skills: explain, interpret

1. Explain in your own words the nature of religion.
2. Explain in your own words the purposes of religion.
3. What do the quotation marks around 'the world' in the second dot point on the previous page imply?

In a world that is becoming increasingly **pluralist** and **multicultural**, societies are being faced with difficult tensions, even conflicts. Some of these are grounded in differing perceptions of religion and its purpose in society. Examples can be seen in the economic arena in discussions of materialism, state support of education and taxation of religions. In the social dimension, there are debates about gender and social responsibilities. There are discussions about the state handing over responsibility for social welfare to religious denominations. Also, there are political discussions concerning secularism and political bias.

RELIGION INTERACTING WITH SOCIETY

Skills: define, interpret, research, summarise

1. Which areas of society are influenced by religions?
2. Define materialism and then explain why religious traditions would oppose it.
3. Look at the websites of the Victorian Catholic Organisations Archdiocese of Melbourne, the Anglican Church of Australia, the Uniting Church of Australia, the Islamic Council of Victoria, the Jewish Community Organisations and summarise the range of services offered by these traditions.

Today in pluralist societies the nature and purpose of religion are under stress because there is so much fluctuation. Some traditional mainstream religions are declining in membership while others are maintaining or increasing their numbers. The influence of religious traditions upon society has lessened. The influence of Eastern religions is growing (refer to Chapter 3). There has been a shift towards **spirituality** for those who are not comfortable with the extremes of either mainstream religions or atheism. Religious communities in these groups focus more on providing symbolic outlets and an experiential community. There are **sects**, some cults and new religious movements that mix Eastern and Western ideas. Though small in number, these offer sociologists a way of exploring the needs of contemporary society and the influence of **syncretism** as West and East meet. Some of these groups have developed religions around the integration of body, mind and **soul** with holistic health becoming the purpose of religious membership. There has been an increase in political religious adherence, where people are linking religious beliefs with political ideology, leading to a rise in more **fundamentalist** groups.

So even with such diversification in religions it seems that religion as a concept will endure as it performs a necessary function in society. However, the definition of religion will differ over time, place and cultural group as society's needs evolve.

Newspix/Peter Clark

FIGURE 7.2 Many churches, notably the Anglican Church in Gosford, NSW, feature billboards that reflect on contemporary political and social issues. Which of the stresses on religion is represented in this image?

RELIGION – CHANGING

Skills: interpret, analyse, research

1. Discuss why each of the following might be a stress on religion:
   - decline in membership
   - being a new and developing religious movement
   - engaging with political or legal requirements.
2. How might meditation practices be seen as an example of religious syncretism?
3. List three other examples of religious syncretism in Australian society.

THE NATURE OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

The ideas that become religious beliefs arise from people's engagement with life and their testing of insights and understandings that have been handed down to them through generations by family, culture and religious teaching. Within religious traditions, there are particular beliefs that give the tradition their particular identity. Some of these emerged at the inception or foundation of the tradition and helped to define the tradition from other groups at the time. These beliefs shape the tradition's worldview; the beliefs that underpin this worldview are the **fundamental beliefs** of the tradition. Over time, further religious beliefs develop that are not integral to the tradition's survival but which shape the character or identity of the tradition; these beliefs are sometimes referred to as **subsequent beliefs**. It is often these beliefs that help to distinguish between denominations and branches or sects of a religious tradition.

FUNDAMENTAL AND SUBSEQUENT BELIEFS
Skills: define, research, explain, identify

1 Referring to the explanations above, identify a fundamental and a subsequent belief in the tradition you have been studying.
2 How do they contribute to the unique identity of that tradition?

THE PURPOSE OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS IN THE SEARCH FOR MEANING

One of the main ways that religious traditions assist in the universal quest to find meaning in existence is in offering answers to the fundamental questions in life, such as:

- What is the origin of all that exists?
- Is there a power greater than humans in the universe?
- What is the purpose of human existence?
- How should we live?
- Is there life after death?

These are deep-seated existential questions that most people ask themselves at some time in their lives. For many, their religious tradition offers positive, life-affirming answers that give meaning to human existence. Religious traditions offer a variety of answers to these 'big questions' in many distinctive ways, but the starting point for many religious traditions are their beliefs about an ultimate reality. An understanding of these beliefs about ultimate reality becomes the focal and connecting point as the individual or the community explores the ideas of a religious tradition and the connections between them related to: the relationship between humankind and ultimate reality; the nature and purpose of human life; the meaning of suffering; questions about death and life after death; the relationship between humans; and the relationship between humans and the natural world.

ADDITIONAL BIG QUESTIONS
Skills: explain, interpret, synthesise

1 What other 'big questions' does your generation want answered that religious traditions might or should address?

A study of the beliefs of Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism can be found on Nelson Net.

Buddhist beliefs
Hindu beliefs
Sikhism beliefs

BELIEFS ABOUT ULTIMATE REALITY

Ultimate reality is one way to name that cosmic force beyond human understanding, perceived by believers in some religions to be the dynamic power that creates and controls the universe. In the **cosmology** of many religions, there is a god figure, spirit, force or divine principle that is considered the supreme power in whom resides wisdom, enlightenment, omnipotence and moral values. Yet the world's religions hold very different, even irreconcilable, views on ultimate reality.

The lack of any transcendental being in some religions such as Buddhism lies in stark contrast to the personal God of monotheistic religions. Yet even the monotheistic religions of the world hold diverse positions concerning the nature of the personal God. Even within the many branches of Eastern religions, there are vast differences in the understanding of ultimate reality.

BELIEFS ABOUT ULTIMATE REALITY IN CHRISTIANITY

Ultimate reality for Christianity is one God who is triune, which means there are three 'persons': Father, Son and Holy Spirit in relationship. Other beliefs about this God are that God is the Creator of all that exists and created *ex nihlio* (out of nothing). God is omnipotent (all powerful), omnipresent (all present) and omnibenevolent (all good). God is eternal, good, loving, caring, compassionate, forgiving and yet fierce in just judgement. Some of these attributes can be seen in the myth of Genesis 3 where humanity exercises free will, rebels against the Creator, experiences shame and faces the consequences of their actions.

> So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves. They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.
>
> Genesis 3:6–8

The ultimate reality in Christianity is ultimately Divine Mystery as seen in the paradoxes that underpin a God who is both one and three; both transcendent and immanent; both just and merciful.

Alamy Stock Photo/JTB MEDIA CREATION, Inc.

FIGURE 7.3 Painting of the Holy Trinity, Holy Trinity Cathedral, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. What understanding of the Trinity does this image convey?

GOD REVEALED IN SCRIPTURE

Skills: identify, interpret, analyse

Read these extracts from Genesis 1:26; 2:3; 2:18; 3:22–24 and then answer the following:

1. Identify the beliefs about God contained in these biblical extracts.
2. Discuss how these beliefs are developed within a particular religious tradition you are studying.
3. To what extent do the sacred texts and stories of a religious tradition you are studying reveal the nature of ultimate reality? Offer evidence to support your answer.

Christians have the belief that God is self-revealing and this revelation is expressed in the Christian scriptural texts. For some Christian traditions, revelation comes only through Scripture, but in Catholic Christianity the belief is that God's self-revelation is through both Scripture and tradition. An expression of fundamental beliefs in Christianity is found in the credal statements made by the early Church. An example of this is the Nicene Creed.

> We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and Earth, of all that is seen and unseen.
>
> We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made.
>
> For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.
>
> We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.
>
> We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

Anglicans Online website

CHRISTIAN BELIEFS ABOUT ULTIMATE REALITY

Skills: summarise, explain, identify, interpret

1. List the beliefs about the ultimate reality that are described in the Nicene Creed. Explain those beliefs in your own words, quoting the relevant phrases.
2. What other beliefs about the ultimate reality are held in Christianity?

BELIEFS ABOUT ULTIMATE REALITY IN ISLAM

In Islam, the word 'Allah' is the personal name of God, though there are many titles for Allah, such as Lord of the Worlds, the Creator, the Almighty, the King, the Compassionate, the Merciful and Master of the Day of Judgement. There is only one god and Allah is God. There is nothing comparable to Allah, who has power over all that is. The Prophet Muhammad answered questions about Allah with an answer directly from God:

> In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. Say, 'He is Allah, the One. Allah, the Absolute. He begets not, nor was He begotten. And there is nothing comparable to Him.'
>
> Quran, al-Ikhlas (Monotheism) 112

Shutterstock.com/Vladimir Melnik

FIGURE 7.4 Muslims at prayer. Which belief about Allah does the prayer posture symbolise?

Humanity and the universe were purposefully created by Allah to worship and serve Allah, as only Allah is worthy of worship. Everything that happens is permitted or caused by Allah. Allah is the source of all knowledge, and it is to Allah that all must pray and serve with reverence.

The Quran is the main textual source for an understanding of ultimate reality for Muslims, but there are also many scholars over the centuries who have recorded words of wisdom to explain the will of Allah to adherents of Islam.

ISLAMIC BELIEFS ABOUT ULTIMATE REALITY

Skills: summarise, explain, research

1 Explain in your own words the beliefs about ultimate reality contained in the passages below.

> There is no god but I, so worship Me.
>
> Quran, al-Anbiya (The Prophets) 21:25

> He is Allah. There is no god but He, the Knower of secrets and declarations. He is the Compassionate, the Merciful
>
> He is Allah; besides Whom there is no god; the Sovereign, the Holy, the Peace-Giver, the Faith-Giver, the Overseer, the Almighty, the Omnipotent, the Overwhelming.
>
> He is Allah; the Creator, the Maker, the Designer. His are the Most Beautiful Names. Whatever is in the heavens and the Earth glorifies Him. He is the Majestic, the Wise.
>
> Quran, al-Ĥashr (The Mobilisation) 59:22–24

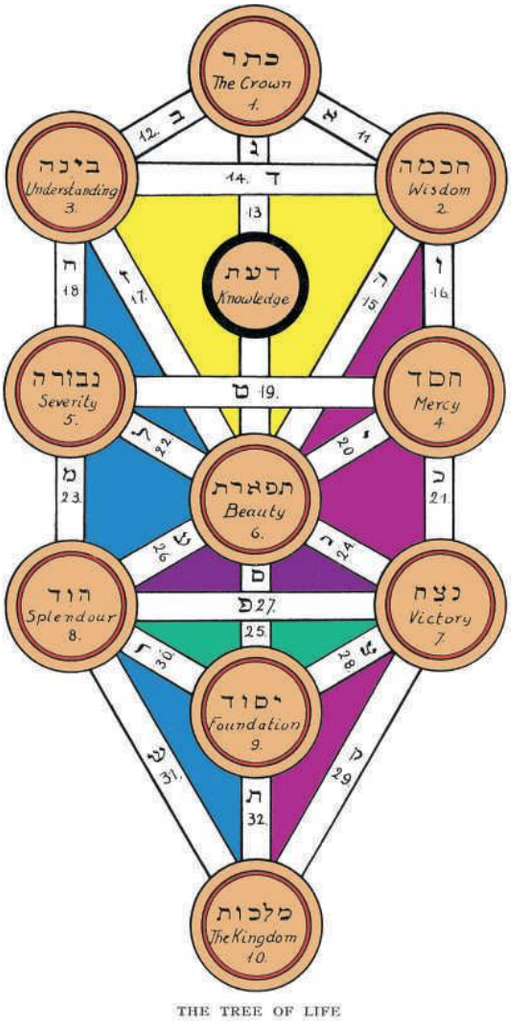
2 Using your own words explain what it means to say Allah is Transcendent.

3 Using your own words explain what it means to say Allah is Immanent.

4 Now using a website such as https://99namesofallah.name/ research the 99 names of Allah to create a list of Allah's qualities under the headings 'Transcendent' and 'Immanent'.

BELIEFS ABOUT ULTIMATE REALITY IN JUDAISM

In Judaism, God is understood as both an **ineffable**, omnipotent Creator and **transcendent** force in the universe, and an **immanent** spiritual guide who cares for each and every person. These beliefs about God are remembered in the 'Adon Olam' hymn, composed in the 11th century by Solomon ibn Gabirol, which is sung at the end of the Jewish morning prayer service to praise the Creator, not only as the Almighty God of all creation but also as the dependable rock upon whom humans can rely to care for them personally in their hour of need.



Alamy Stock Photo/Chronicle

FIGURE 7.5 The Jewish Kabbalistic Tree of Life displays the ten *sephirot*, manifestations of God, leading to the divine spark manifested at its crown. What attributes of God are shown in this diagram?

Lord of the Universe who reigned before anything was created.

When all was made by his will He was acknowledged as King.

And when all shall end He still all alone shall reign.

He was, He is, and He shall be in glory.

And He is one, and there is no other, to compare or join Him.

Without beginning, without end to Him belongs dominion and power.

And He is my God, my living God to Him I flee in time of grief,

And He is my miracle and my refuge, who answers me the day I shall call.

To Him I commit my spirit, at the time of sleep and awakening,

even if my spirit leaves, God is with me, I shall not fear.

N. Scherman (ed.), *The Complete Artscroll Siddur*, Mesorah Publications, 1990, p. 294

BELIEFS ABOUT GOD IN ADON OLAM

Skills: summarise, research, explain, interpret, synthesise

1. Explain in your own words the beliefs about ultimate reality that are described in this Jewish hymn Adon Olam. Quote the relevant phrases from the hymn to support your explanations.
2. How does the description of the nature of ultimate reality change in the last part of this hymn?
3. What other beliefs about ultimate reality are in Judaism?

BELIEFS ABOUT THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF HUMAN LIFE

Religious traditions offer a framework to help understand human existence. These frameworks developed from religious worldviews that ascribe human existence to purposeful creation and design; or to accident; or as part of a process of violence – emerging from a pre-existing entity or by transformation from one form to another. Religious worldviews variously describe the nature of humans as both good and evil; infinite (soul, divine spark) and finite; free and predestined; sharing divinity, or creative and destructive. Depending on how a religious worldview depicts the nature of humans, the purpose of human existence may be identified as procreation, acting responsibly, being compassionate, attaining salvation, removing attachments to this life and the next, accepting inevitable suffering, submitting to servitude or various combinations of these.

Within the religious tradition there may be **primeval** myths about human origins, beliefs on the relative importance and role of humanity on Earth and teachings that express moral values. All of these assist people in finding positive meaning in their lives and provide an understanding that there are tasks or goals they are born to complete. The aspects of religion assist adherents to express these ideas in a variety of ways to clarify the meaning of the beliefs and internalise them in their daily lives. The beliefs about the nature and purpose of human life are interconnected to those about the nature of ultimate reality.

BELIEFS ABOUT THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF HUMAN LIFE IN CHRISTIANITY

Building on its origins in ancient Judaism, Christianity developed its own understanding of the nature and purpose of human life. The Christian view is that the human person is created in the image and likeness of God (*imago dei,* Genesis 1:27) and has been blessed with a soul which gives the capacity to think as intellectual creatures; to make ethical choices through developed consciences; to be creative and become co-creators with God having been given a vocation to be life-giving agents of God; and to be able to pray and in so doing communicate with God in order to be in relationship with God. In this way, beliefs about the nature of the human person are inextricably linked to an understanding of the beliefs about God. All of these qualities give humans a nature that distinguishes them from the rest of creation. However, the nature of the human person includes struggle with fragility. Humans by nature suffer; humans by nature die.

Paradoxically, the nature of the human person is also that they are destined to be immortal, to have everlasting life and to experience the *beatific vision* (*Benedictus Deus*, Pope Benedict XII) of being face to face with God at the end of time.

In the Orthodox traditions, this is called the doctrine of *theosis*. It is based on the thinking of St Athanasius who said: 'God became man so that man might become god' (*On the Incarnation* 54:3). In the Orthodox tradition, life is a process of establishing that godliness so that it can be completed at the Last Judgement. A discussion of human purpose must therefore include consideration of the belief that there will be a second coming of Jesus.

The belief that Jesus Christ is God incarnate and fully human comforts people in times of despair, directs them in times of uncertainty and gives them hope as they come to terms with the inevitability of suffering and death due to their mortality. The belief that Jesus Christ is fully divine

and defeated death by rising from the dead offers the promise of eternal life for those who work to create God's Reign on Earth by living an ethical life.

The imitation of Jesus Christ *(Imitatio Christi)* is the way of the Christian life which provides a very concrete understanding of the Christian's purpose in this world. At the sacrament of Baptism they become one with Christ and are given the ministry of becoming *persona Christi* (in Anglicanism and Lutheranism) or *alter Christi* (Catholicism) which means to be another Christ in the world. Teresa of Avila (1515–1582) expressed it this way:

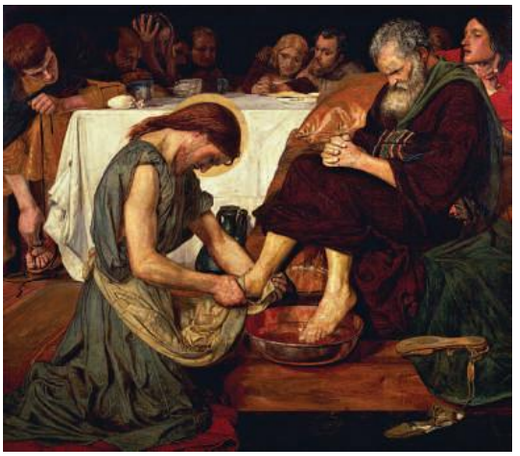
> Yours are the eyes with which He looks
> Compassion on this world,
> Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good,
> Yours are the hands, with which He blesses all the world.
> Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
> Yours are the eyes, you are His body.
> Christ has no body now but yours.

The Way of Perfection, by Teresa of Avila

In the narratives of the life of Christ in the sacred texts – the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John – the Christian finds examples of how to live. In very concrete, yet symbolic, actions adherents have illustrated to them how Jesus' message of 'love of neighbour' is to be applied. A poignant example is found in the Gospel of John when Jesus at his last meal with his disciples models for them the humility and self-sacrificing love they must practise.

> Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. And during supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper, laid aside his garments, and girded himself with a towel. Then he poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded.

John 13:1–5



Getty Images/DeAgostini

FIGURE 7.6 *Jesus washing Peter's feet*, by Ford Madox Brown (1821–1893). What is the significance of washing feet?

Evidence that this way of life modelled by Jesus was meaningful and gave purpose to the lives of the earliest of Christians is found in St Paul's letters to the community in Philippi. He writes:

> If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 2:1–5

Bishop Rowan Williams (1950–), of the Anglican Tradition, has expressed the Christian imperative to follow Christ this way:

> Once we know that God is 'for us', we open up to the gift that God wants to give us – which is a share in his own love and freedom and mercy. We breathe with his breath – that's part of what it means to say that we receive God's 'Spirit', which makes us live like Jesus 'in tune' with God. If we have really taken the message in, we shall live lives of selfless generosity, always asking how the gifts given us – material or imaginative or spiritual or whatever – can be shared in a way that brings other people more fully alive. And we shall be able to trust the generosity of others and be free to receive what they have to give us. Generosity, gratitude, confidence that when we fail we are still loved – all of this focused on Jesus' life and death and resurrection. That's where we start in the lifelong job of being a Christian.
>
> Rowan Williams, 104th Archbishop of Canterbury

In the Roman Catholic tradition, the purpose of living this life extends to spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ as the present-day disciples of Christ. It is expressed this way in the **catechism**:

> 1 Those who, with God's help, have welcomed Christ's call and freely responded to it are urged on by love of Christ to proclaim the Good News everywhere in the world … All Christ's faithful are called to hand it on from generation to generation, by professing the faith, by living it in fraternal sharing, and by celebrating it in liturgy and prayer.
>
> Catechism of the Catholic Church, Prologue © Libreria Editrice Vaticana

Newspix/Justin Brierty

FIGURE 7.7 The housing conditions of Australia's First Nations Peoples were addressed by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. What health issues might arise if people live in extremely overcrowded conditions? Why should a Christian be concerned about housing for Aboriginal people?

NATURE AND PURPOSE OF HUMAN LIFE

Skills: summarise, explain, interpret

1 Summarise what the above passages on Christianity say about the nature of human life.

2 Summarise what the above passages on Christianity say about the purpose of human life.

3 How in everyday life could a person 'wash the feet' of others?

PRIORITIES

Skills: define, interpret, explain

Read this speech by Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu on the Christian life and answer the questions below it:

> [The poor] give you the opportunity of being good, to show that we are family and the whole world is our home … In family you don't say, 'This baby is a nuisance' and making no contribution to the welfare or the family. She doesn't bring anything in, all she does, well actually I mean she does, is eat and eat and eat, sleep, sleep at the most awkward moments, awake at even more awkward moments, and sometimes is smelly. But which one of us would ever have said, 'So this child must not be loved, this child must not be fed, this baby must not be clothed, this baby must not – No, no, we don't say that. We pour out extravagantly on a child who brings in nothing … No, no. In a healthy family we say to each according to their need, and from each according to their ability.
>
> Now apply that in the world; could we, with clear conscience, spend the amount of money we spend on defence, instruments of destruction and death, when we could have used a tiny fraction of that and you would ensure in Australia, all your Indigenous people would have nice houses. They would have running water; they would have electricity … Not because we are doing them a favour, because they are family, and God says, 'I have only you to tell the world that they are all my children, that they all must recognise they belong.' God says, 'I invite you, can you be those who invite on my behalf. I want to embrace all, all, all, so that there are no outsiders, all are insiders. There are no aliens, all belong, black, white, yellow, red, tall, short, beautiful, not so beautiful, rich, poor, lesbian, gay, all, all, belong.' And God says, 'please can you help me …'
>
> Anglican Bishop Desmond Tutu, *Who is my neighbour,*
> 'The Religion Report', ABC Radio National, 1 December 1999,
> Reproduced by permission of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation –
> Library Sales © 2016 ABC

1 Why does Archbishop Tutu use the image of family to explore Christian responsibility?

2 Is this an effective image to use to explain the meaning and purpose of life from a Christian point of view? Why or Why not?

3 What is the relationship between God and the human person in this speech?

4 Archbishop Tutu was asked to speak on the topic, 'Who is my neighbour?' Read the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37). Who in Desmond Tutu's speech is Jesus? Who is the Pharisee? Who is the Samaritan? Who is the man who has been attacked by robbers? Who are the robbers?

BELIEFS ABOUT THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF HUMAN LIFE IN ISLAM

In Islam, humankind are separated from the rest of creation because Allah has given them three divine gifts: intelligence to distinguish the true from the false, a will that can freely choose between them and the power of speech to worship. Humans therefore have a special place in creation. Allah created human beings with a purpose. Part of understanding the nature of human life is to learn to view the world as a deception or an illusion and worldly pleasures as part of the illusion. There is an idea that within the illusion Allah tests his worldly adherents, challenging them to worship Him unopposed and without equal. Absolute obedience to Allah is shown by adherents when they perform the Five Pillars and other duties. These include:

- devoutly saying from memory the main statement of faith in Islam (*shahada*)
- enacting prayers in the prescribed way, which is required five times daily (*salat*)
- sharing their wealth with the poor (*zakat*)
- observing the ritual fast for a month during Ramadan (*sawm*)
- making a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a lifetime (*hajj*).

The purpose of life in Islam is to live according to these Five Pillars. That is, for Muslims to frame their faith with the way they live their lives, in line with the particular legal interpretation of the Quran, Hadith and other sacred religious writings. According to scholars, different legal interpretations define the schools of Islam, and there may be some distinct explanations or emphases of the meaning of life. Most Muslim scholars interpret *jihad* as meaning to overcome base human instincts and desires through performing the Five Pillars and living by various legal duties (sharia), some of which relate to ***jihad***, such as honouring parents, working hard in a legitimate occupation and being a good person. An adherent whose deeds are in accordance with the teachings and laws of Islam can become an example and thus promote the religion of Islam to others.

Alamy Stock Photo/ZUMA Press, Inc.

FIGURE 7.8 Muslims awaiting zakat. What type of zakat is being distributed in this image?

NATURE AND PURPOSE OF HUMAN LIFE
Skills: summarise, define, interpret

1 Discuss whether having a code to live by, such as the Five Pillars, restricts or enhances the freedom of the believer.

2 Read the following surahs and explain how they show the nature and purpose of human life.

> Your Lord said to the angels, 'I am creating a human being from clay, from moulded mud.'
>
> Quran Surah 15:28

> When I have formed him and breathed into him of My spirit, fall prostrate before him.
>
> Quran Surah 38:72

> Allah is the Provider, the One with Power, the Strong.
>
> Quran Surah 51:58

> We created man in the best design.
>
> Quran Surah 95:4

3 Explain the connections between the beliefs that underpin the Five Pillars of Islam.

BELIEFS ABOUT THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF HUMAN LIFE IN JUDAISM

Judaism has the belief that human beings are made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27). Thus, their nature is to be co-creators with God, meaning that their purpose is to responsibly manage the rest of creation. Judaism understands the world as a garden that needs tending and nurturing by human beings, just as God looks after humanity with love and compassion.

Because of the belief that humans are made in God's image, human life is highly valued. In Jewish law, the primacy of human life is expressed in the notion of *piku'ach nefesh* (saving life), where one must do everything possible to save a human life. Most Jewish laws can be set aside to avoid endangering a person's health or safety (Babylonian Talmud, *Yoma* 85b). However, when helping another, it is forbidden to place one's own life at more risk than the other person is in already.

Jews look to the **Torah** (which literally means 'instruction' or 'guidance') as their guide in determining purpose in life. It makes them aware of their God-given duties and shows the ways of attaining a meaningful and fulfilling life, personally, for the community and for society. According to Kabbalah (Jewish mystical tradition), Jews are in this world to elevate the entire creation. Every physical object possesses sparks of holiness, so by using an object in the way ordained by the Torah, the sparks are released and can ascend as God intended at creation.

iStock.com/edelmar

FIGURE 7.9 Reading the Torah. When reading from the Torah scroll, why is a pointer used?

HUMANITY IN GENESIS 1–3

Skills: identify, summarise, explain, interpret

1 In your own words explain the beliefs in Judaism about the nature and the purpose of human life contained in the passages below.

> The sum of the matter, when all is said and done: Revere God and observe His commandments! For this applies to all mankind.
>
> Ecclesiastes 12:13

> I call heaven and Earth to witness against you this day: I have put before you, life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life – if you and your offspring would live – by loving the LORD your God, heeding His commands, and holding fast to Him.
>
> Deuteronomy 30:19–20

> For this reason was man created alone: to teach you that whoever destroys a single soul ... Scripture says he is as guilty as though he had destroyed a complete world; and whoever saves a single soul ... scripture praises him as though he had saved an entire world.
>
> Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 37a

> The foundation of Judaism and the basis of all true religion is the realization that existence is purposeful, and that man has a purpose in life. Both man and nature have meaning because they were created by a purposeful Being.
>
> Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, *Handbook of Jewish Thought*, 1:1 and 1:2

2 Summarise what the passages of Genesis 1:27–30 and 2:15–20 say about the nature and the purpose of human life in Judaism. Support your statements with quotations from the Genesis passages.

3 Read Genesis Chapter 3 and identify the beliefs about the nature and the purpose of human life in Judaism.

4 Discuss whether these beliefs are sufficient for a modern, environmentally conscious audience.

BELIEFS ABOUT THE MEANING OF SUFFERING

Suffering is the experience of physical, mental, emotional or spiritual anguish. Suffering can be inflicted by external forces beyond an individual's control; for example, a natural disaster such as an earthquake, or an individual or loved one contracting an incurable illness.

Suffering can also be inflicted by people upon each other, either individually or communally – as in wars, political, ethnic or religious suppression, economic deprivation, neglect, ridicule, bullying, ostracism, hatred or lack of care for one's fellow human beings.

There are people who avoid watching the news on TV or social media because they feel overwhelmed by the suffering they see depicted. However, as much as we try, suffering cannot be ignored. It is the permanent companion of some people, the surprise that arrives uninvited for others, the enemy that many people fear. At some point most people will confront these very big questions: Why do we suffer? Is suffering part of what it is to be human? Is suffering the result of people's personal wickedness? Can suffering be meaningful? Can suffering be transformative? What should be one's attitude and approach to suffering?

BELIEFS ABOUT THE MEANING OF SUFFERING – CHRISTIANITY

In the second creation myth in the *Book of Genesis*, which explores questions of suffering, it appears that suffering was not part of God's initial creation. According to Christian beliefs, goodness is bestowed upon humanity by God who is all good. Humans are social beings who have been given the role of co-creators with God in the world; they have the authority to name creatures; however, God also blessed humans with free will giving them the capacity to reject God's love. In the myth of Genesis 3, this free will was chosen by Adam and Eve when they metaphorically ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and so suffering entered the world. Failing to be attentive to God, the Christian tradition teaches, is not the path to happiness; people can only be fully human by following God's teachings; by adhering to God's commandments (Matthew 19:17); and by recognising God's will through the human conscience (*Dignitatis Humanae*).

The tendency to **sin** is explained in some Christian denominations by what St Augustine of Hippo (354–430 CE) called **original sin**. St Augustine suggested that evil is an absence of good and not an actual evil being, saying: 'Evil has no positive nature; but the loss of good has received the name "evil"' (Augustine, *The City of God*, XI, Chapter 9). He believed that if enough people did good, evil would be removed. However, as a consequence of the first sin of pride by Adam and Eve, they fell from **grace**, and pain, suffering and death entered the world. This is depicted in Genesis 3 when the couple attempted to be creators rather than accepting their creaturehood; their pride and greed fractured their relationship with God, thus separating all humans from God and rendering all humanity in need of salvation. It is this wilful damage to the relationship with God, with oneself, with others and with creation that is the definition of sin.

It is through baptism that Christians are united with God and original sin is washed away; it is in the Sacrament of Reconciliation in some denominations that the relationship is repaired. In the Gospels, Jesus teaches that all are in need of conversion, that all need a change of heart – John the Baptist calls the people to 'repent, and believe in the good news' (Mark 1:15).

Sin is a cause of suffering, but it is forgiven in Christianity. Jesus teaches that forgiveness is an essential aspect of the Christian response to sin. 'Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned' (Luke 6:37). The goodness of God is revealed as being redemptive as God sent his Son Jesus Christ to atone for the sins of humankind so that they might ultimately have salvation and pain and suffering will be wiped away.

In some Christian traditions, the authority of the omnipotent God is emphasised, recognising God's authority in predestining who will be saved and who will be damned. In this understanding,

it is God's grace that saves humans who are frail and subject to sin. This was part of the teachings of John Calvin, a Protestant reformer in Europe during the 1500s CE. With this position comes an acceptance of worldly suffering in the hope of, with God's mercy, eternal happiness.

Another Christian understanding was expressed by Protestant Lutheran Paul Tillich (1886–1965). According to Tillich, creation and the fall are not part of a utopian vision in the past or future but rather a human 'state of estrangement' from their existence. In his theology, the belief is that this estrangement is the cause of suffering.

Although this emphasis on sin as a cause of suffering is found in Christianity, most traditions accept that suffering and its causes are ultimately inexplicable. The beliefs about the meaning of suffering found in the Book of Job, explored below in both Islam and Judaism, is also in the canon of the Christian Bible. Pope John Paul II when speaking to a congregation at Lourdes, a sacred site at which people yearn for miracles, explained that suffering is part of the mystery that is God and so cannot be fully understood or simplistically explained. He said:

> This is the meaning of suffering, which is truly supernatural and at the same time human. It is supernatural because it is rooted in the divine mystery of the Redemption of the world, and it is likewise deeply human, because in it the person discovers himself, his own humanity, his own dignity, his own mission ... Through Christ and in Christ, the riddles of sorrow and death grow meaningful.
>
> Pope John Paul II (1984 at Lourdes)

In the Christian tradition, there is the belief that the suffering of believers is alleviated by the knowledge that Christ suffered. Some people seeking miracles or forgiveness or personal peace inflict pain on themselves in order to be one with Christ in his passion at the time of their suffering. For the Christian community in general, a time when this alignment with the suffering Christ happens is Lent, the preparatory period when Christians reflect on their lives and reject those things within themselves that inhibit them from being Christ-like – they are called to have a change of heart and turn back to God. It is a period of **penance** and self-denial in preparation for **Easter** and entering fully into the sorrow of Christ's passion and death and into the joy of his **resurrection**.

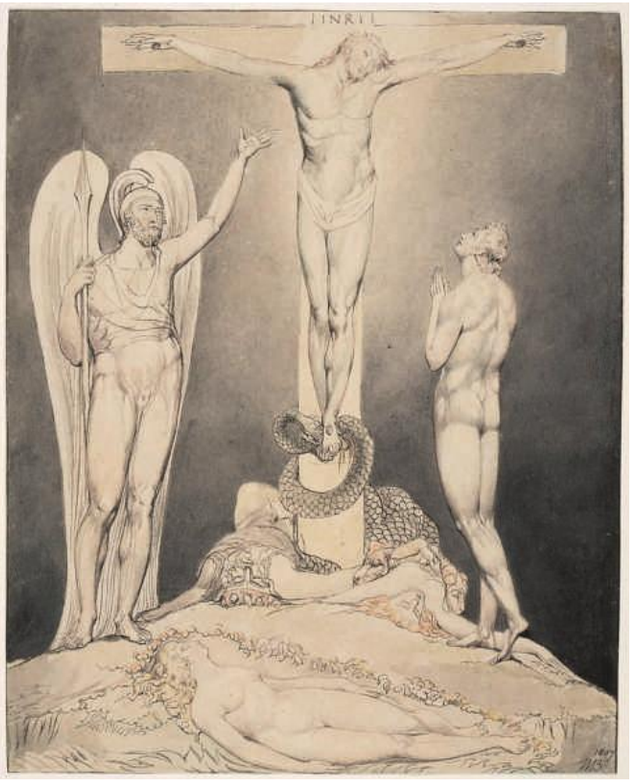
In the Catholic tradition, the question of suffering focuses more on what the individual does with their suffering. Do they 'take up their cross' (Matthew 16:24) and follow Jesus? Do they allow the suffering to transform their lives so that they have a change of heart, a *metanoia*? Does it make them more compassionate?

Bridgeman Images/Luisa Ricciarini

FIGURE 7.10 The Garden of Eden. How does this image show the suffering that is caused by original sin?

Alamy Stock Photo/dpa picture alliance archive

FIGURE 7.11 Pilgrims on their knees approach the epiphany chapel of the Holy Mary in front of the old pilgrimage church in Fatima, Portugal. What belief about the meaning of suffering might induce them to cause themselves this pain?



Alamy Stock Photo/The Picture Art Collection

FIGURE 7.12 This sketch by William Blake is of the Archangel Michael telling Adam of the Crucifixion that is to come as presented in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. At the base of the cross are the personifications of sin and death, defeated. The serpent is killed by the nail in Christ's feet. Is this an image of hope or despair for those who suffer?

Influential English poet and essayist John Milton (1608–1674) was a Protestant Christian whose epic poem *Paradise Lost* (1667) was inspired by the biblical stories of creation. In his poetry, Milton attempted to convey insights into God's wisdom and influence over humankind. At one point in the poem Milton shifts the moral responsibility from man to God, asking why God is so cruel as to allow suffering that God knows will happen. He asks, what is the point of it all?

> Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay
> To mould me Man? Did I solicit thee
> From darkness to promote me, or here place
> In this delicious garden?

John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book 10

Milton knew suffering in his personal life. He also would have known the words of St Paul who accepted that his pain had a purpose, just as Christ's suffering was not meaningless. As St Paul suffered in jail expecting death, he said:

> I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. (Philippians 3:8–11)

SUFFERING AND MEANING

Skills: summarise, explain, interpret, analyse, compare, contrast

1 In your own words explain two beliefs that provide meaning for suffering and explain how they are connected to each other.

2 What religious stories do you hear in rituals at your school that help to explain the meaning of suffering?

3 Why is it important for a person to find an answer for the meaning of suffering?

BELIEFS ABOUT THE MEANING OF SUFFERING – ISLAM

According to Islamic tradition, humankind was meant for happiness not suffering. So suffering does not have a meaning in the context of a divine plan. Humans are the creation of an all-wise and most merciful creator. Allah gave humans life and, with that, also gave them the freedom and authority to do good, but they also had the freedom to indulge in evil. Suffering, therefore, only has meaning in the context of the individual seeking to reform themselves so as to be in full relationship with Allah. God provides freedom as a way of testing humans (*Surah Al-Shams* 91:7–10). This gives suffering meaning for those who suffer, as it is an indication that the individual has not responded to the test in accordance with the teachings of the Quran. As Allah gave *Iblis* or *al-Shaytan* (the Devil) and the *jinn* (demons) permission to lure humans into evil deeds (*Sa'd* 38:41), the adherent can recognise temptation as an opportunity to submit to the teachings and example of the Prophet in order to avoid suffering. In this way, suffering gains meaning as its avoidance is an opportunity for personal development in the Islamic tradition. The Quran thus states that God created humanity on the path of good, and evil came into existence only because of humanity's deviation from that correct path. Human deviation was the result of the free will God bestowed upon humanity (*Yunus* 10:19) and so suffering has meaning as it is a call to struggle and follow the dictates of reason and faith in order to reform one's soul. These teachings are reinforced in the words of the Prophet, when asked, 'What is the major ***jihad***?' He replied: 'The ***jihad*** of the self (struggle against oneself)' (Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Hadith no. 31).

However, the sacred texts of Islam do show that not all suffering is the result of poor personal decision making and that the meaning of suffering is still a matter of personal exploration in terms of the person's relationship with Allah. Suffering in Islam, if not as a result of the misuse of free will, is given meaning by the belief that it is a gift that has been given for the purification of the lives of the believer; it can be a teacher as the individual turns to Allah for answers. Pain in any form, therefore, is meaningful as it makes the believer one with the one God as they surrender to God's authority. This is demonstrated in the story of Ayyub.

The Quran recounts the story of Ayyub (Job), which is also found in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, to explore the question of **theodicy** and to find meaning for suffering. The Prophet Ayyub was a model of humility and faith in Allah. He was very patient. He suffered from a number of calamities but did not utter a single word of complaint. His farm was attacked by thieves who killed many of his servants and stole all his cattle. Ayyub thanked Allah. Later, the roof of the house fell down and many members of his family were crushed. Ayyub held fast to his faith in Allah. He prayed, recognising that possessions and children were gifts from Allah. Then his body was covered in sores. His false friends attributed his calamities to his sins. They ridiculed and looked down upon him. But Ayyub prayed to his merciful God and Allah in mercy accepted his prayer. Allah commanded the prophet to strike the Earth with his foot and water from a spring gushed forth. He bathed in the water and was cured. Allah gave him back all that had been lost. Ayyub praised Allah for his goodness and mercy.

Alamy Stock Photo/Sipa USA

FIGURE 7.13 A man and his children place flowers as a tribute outside the Al-Noor Mosque under a sign declaring 'Allah bless our country, Land of love and compassion'. What does this sign indicate about the Muslim's attitude to the New Zealand response to the massacre of over 50 worshippers at two mosques by an assailant in Christchurch, New Zealand on 15 March 2019?

SUFFERING AND MEANING

Skills: summarise, interpret, research

1 What understandings of the meaning of suffering are suggested in the following surahs?

> We will certainly test you with some fear and hunger, and some loss of possessions and lives and crops. But give good news to the steadfast.
>
> Those who, when a calamity afflicts them, say, 'To Allah we belong, and to Him we will return.'
>
> Upon these are blessings and mercy from their Lord. These are the guided ones.
>
> Quran 2:155–157

2 Identify two other beliefs held by the Islamic tradition about the meaning of suffering.

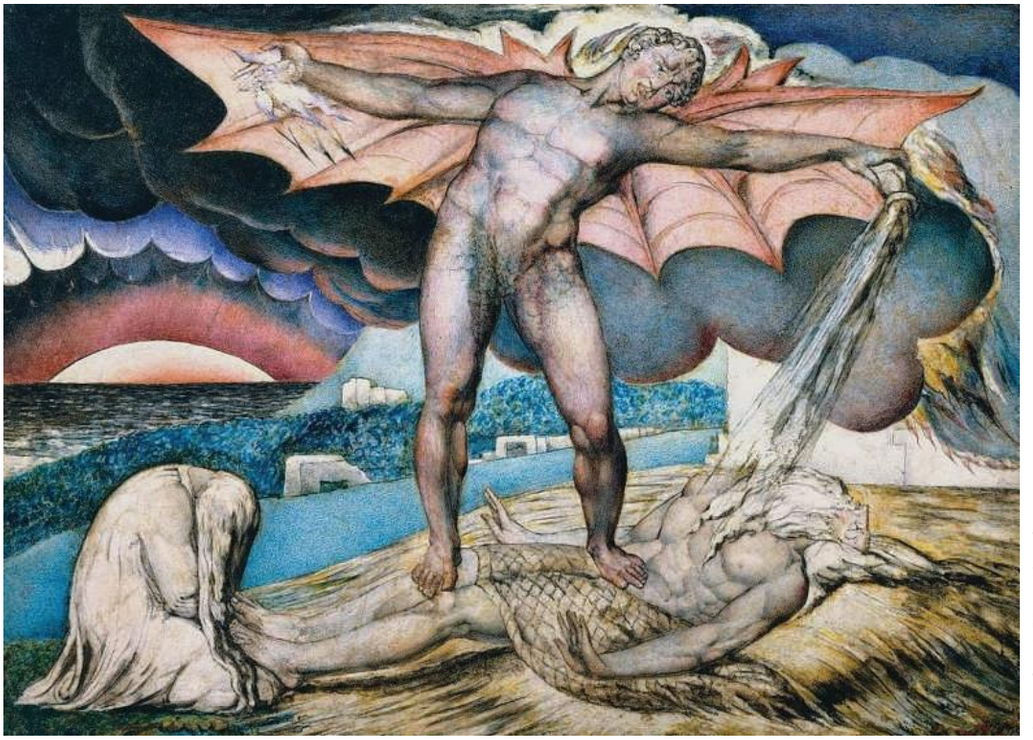
BELIEFS ABOUT THE MEANING OF SUFFERING – JUDAISM

There is a range of meanings for suffering to be found in the Jewish Bible and in rabbinic texts such as the Talmud. No single meaning is solely accepted. In every era, Jewish scholars have devised ways to understand the meaning of tragedy and pain.

The notion that suffering is sent as divine reward and punishment is found frequently in Jewish literature. The meaning of suffering is understood as a just punishment, a consequence of human freedom working against God's plan, such as in the biblical stories of Adam and Eve, Cain and his brother Abel, the Tower of Babel.

Suffering can be probationary, a test (of faith), as in the story of the binding of Isaac (Genesis 22:1). It can be understood as vicarious (acting or done for another) and sacrificial, such as in Isaiah's suffering servant (Isaiah 53:6, 11).

In Judaism, suffering can be understood as retributive (you get what you deserve) as a consequence of sin (Deuteronomy 11:16, 17). It can be understood as disciplinary and educative (to teach a lesson) as in Job 5:17. The Book of Job in the Bible questions the meaning of suffering. To Job his misfortune and pain were unfair, and undeserved. Job's friends all try to convince him that his suffering means he has sinned in some way and therefore is deserved. But Job finally concludes that suffering is a mystery, part of the mystery of their Creator whom humans can never really understand. This explanation for suffering connects to the belief in God being the True Judge over humanity Who justly decides the fate of humans. It also links to the nature of humanity who may misuse their freewill and follow their evil inclinations.



Alamy Stock Photo/Artefact

FIGURE 7.14 William Blake's *Satan Smiting Job with Sore Boils*, 1826. Why might Judaism, Christianity and Islam see the importance of the same story?

Another understanding of the meaning of suffering can be found in the belief that wrong doing, which brings pain, misfortune and anguish can have consequences that continue for generations. The bad example of parents, for instance, and not teaching God's ways to their children and grandchildren can bring suffering upon them. According to the ancient text of Exodus:

> [God will] visit the guilt of the parents upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generations of those who reject Me.
>
> Exodus 20:5

In Judaism, affliction can also be understood as spiritually ennobling and making one a better person (Psalm 94:12). They may be sufferings of love sent by God and good things may come from them (Talmud *Berachot* 5a:24). Suffering may enhance rewards in the world to come (Talmud *Kiddushin* 39b). It can also be revelational when one encounters God through suffering (Job 42:5). Suffering can also be seen as messianic, leading to redemption at the end of days (Ezekiel 37).

Another meaning for suffering is from the rabbinic sages who suggest people should look at their own actions, not God, to find an understanding for suffering (Talmud *Berachot* 5a).

Thus, adherents of Judaism can find a range of answers for the meaning of suffering guided by their tenets about the unchangeable nature of God and humanity's frail nature to help them understand how to express their anguish, or maybe find comfort and to guide them in their future behaviour.

SUFFERING AND MEANING

Skills: summarise, explain, interpret, research

1 What meanings for suffering are explained in Jewish texts and stories?
2 Which of the traditional meanings for suffering ring true for you? Explain why.
3 Which meanings for suffering are not so acceptable to you? Explain why.

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BELIEFS ABOUT DEATH AND THE AFTERLIFE

Just as meaning can be found in life and in suffering, it can also be found in death. Religions since time immemorial have constructed beliefs, rituals, codes of behaviour and prayers to mark the death of a human being. These assist not only in overcoming the loss of a loved one but also in justifying the death in theological terms. Most traditions have developed a **theodicy** and an **eschatology** to explain death and the afterlife to their adherents. Related beliefs refer to the mystical union of physical reality with the divine and the ultimate destiny of humanity including the end of time.

BELIEFS ABOUT DEATH AND THE AFTERLIFE – CHRISTIANITY

In Christianity, there is the belief that death is not the end; it is the point at which a new stage of life is entered. Ultimately, death is a mystery, but Christians believe that it has been revealed that there is life after death – as the Nicene Creed says, 'I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and life of the world to come'. The Christian makes sense of death by looking at the example of Jesus Christ, his death and resurrection. This emphasises the belief that Jesus Christ's saving sacrifice on the cross blessed humanity with the gift of eternal life.

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FIGURE 7.15 A baby being baptised. Water is poured over the baby three times to symbolise their death and rebirth in the life of the Christian community. What other artefact that symbolises new life is in the image?

In Christianity, the belief is that death has meaning, which is to restore the relationship between God and humanity. This belief is connected to the belief that God created humans as very good and blessed them, thereby bestowing upon them something of God's self. Therefore, there is the belief that death was not a part of God's original intention for humanity. It was a tragic consequence of sin. But this was changed through Jesus Christ's resurrection. The unconditional love of God is spelt out in John's Gospel, 'For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life' (John 3:16).

Because of Christ, death in Christianity is not without hope. If Christians have died with him, they will also live with him. The funeral rite says, 'Life is changed, not ended' with death. Jesus says, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die' (John 11:25) And in John 14:1–3, Jesus consoles by teaching, 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.'

> Through Baptism, the Christian has already 'died with Christ' sacramentally in order to live a new life; and if the Christian dies in Christ's grace that physical death completes 'dying with Christ' and the incorporation into him through his redeeming act.
>
> Paragraph 1010, page 263 Catechism of the Catholic Church for Australia, 1994
> ST PAULS/Libreria Editrice Vaticana

The belief that Christ has died has risen and will come again is embedded in the Easter liturgies of the Christian tradition. Even though death is an inevitable part of the human condition, Jesus' death by crucifixion is not meaningless as it is believed he died for the atonement of sins and the redemption and salvation of humanity.

The theology in the Roman Catholic tradition is that eternal life has two final destinations: heaven and hell. Heaven is the eternal presence of God, and hell is the eternal separation from the presence of God. The Catholic Church teaches entry into heaven is by living a moral life and bringing the Reign of God on Earth through the values of peace, love, harmony and justice. In the tradition, there are different opinions as to whether all human beings will go to heaven. Pope Benedict XVI, when he was known as **Cardinal** Ratzinger, argued that humanity has free will and that there must be the possibility of rejecting God. God allows humanity to choose. However, Swiss theologian Urs von Balthasar disagreed and argued that, because God is merciful and Christ saves, it is possible that all will go to heaven regardless of choices made during life, that eternity with God will be irresistible.

DEATH AND THE AFTERLIFE

Skills: describe, summarise, explain, interpret, research

1. Read the passages from the Gospel of Matthew 25:31–36 and 25:41–43, and describe the Christian beliefs about death and the afterlife that are stated or implied.
2. What other beliefs about death and the afterlife are held by adherents of the Christian tradition you are studying? How do they relate to each other to give meaning to death?
3. How are Christian beliefs about death and the afterlife expressed in the religious aspects of rituals and symbols of the tradition you are studying?

BELIEFS ABOUT DEATH AND THE AFTERLIFE – ISLAM

In Islam, death occurs at a time pre-ordained by God. Death is seen as the will of Allah. As with the other monotheistic traditions, Islam also places importance on the afterlife (*al-akhirah)*. According to the Islamic tradition, good deeds are rewarded both in this life and in the hereafter. To receive such rewards, Muslims demonstrate their adherence to the beliefs of *Tawhid* (oneness of Allah) and *al-Ikhlas* (sincerity) to Allah by doing good deeds that are consistent with the divine plan. These deeds should be purely for the pleasure of Allah and not out of self-conceit or to seek appreciation or praise from people. All deeds must be in accordance with the Quran for as the Surah says:

> We shall set up scales of justice for the Day of Judgement, so that not a soul will be dealt with unjustly in the least, and if there be (no more than) the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it (to account): and enough are We to take account.

Quran Surah 21 Verse 47

Alamy Stock Photo/GRANGER - Historical Picture Archive

FIGURE 7.16 An image of the seven heavens in Islam. The arrow represents Muhammad. What beliefs about the afterlife does this image portray?

In the Hadith, it tells of Muhammad's journey to Heaven with the Archangel Gabriel in which he met the prophets at each of seven heavens before coming before God. (Some scholars believe that 'seven' is a symbol for 'many' heavens.) The Quran confirms this understanding of heaven in the following: 'So He formed the *heaven* into seven *heavens* in two Days, assigning to each its mandate. And We adorned the lowest *heaven* with "stars like" lamps "for beauty" and for protection. That is the design of the Almighty, All-Knowing' (Fussilat 41:12).

After the resurrection of the bodies at the end of time, Allah will be revealed as the definitive One who encompasses everything. For humanity, according to the life the adherent has led and the mercy of Allah, there is the possibility of paradise (the *ahl al-tawhid*) or hell (*Jahannam*), a place of torment for people who have committed *shirk (*the sin of worshipping something other than God). The dead will cross the bridge (*Sirat*) and those who are destined for paradise will find the crossing easy into paradise which is depicted in the Quran as a garden of peace and plenty:

> And God will guard them from the evil of that day and will cast on them brightness and joy; and their reward for their patience shall be Paradise and silk! ... Verily, this is a reward for you, and your efforts are thanked.

Surah 76 Verses 11, 22

Yet there is also the belief in Islam that adherents, even those in hell, have the opportunity to ask for forgiveness and may be forgiven, just as Adam asked for forgiveness and was forgiven by Allah. After death, for all except for martyrs, there is a period of coming to terms with actions taken in life called *barsakh*, during which others can make amends on the individual's behalf. But on the Last Day, the Day of Reckoning, the Hour of Judgement, all will become clear. The judgement of Allah will be just. Those who have not listened to Allah, and the false prophets, will fall from the bridge into the eternal fires.

DEATH AND THE AFTERLIFE

Skills: summarise, explain, interpret, research

1 Describe the Islamic beliefs about death and the afterlife that are stated or implied in the passages quoted above.
2 What other beliefs about death and the afterlife are held by adherents of the Islam?
3 How are Islamic beliefs about death and the afterlife expressed in other religious aspects, such as rituals and symbols of the Islamic tradition?

BELIEFS ABOUT DEATH AND THE AFTERLIFE – JUDAISM

There is no single theodicy to explain death in the Jewish tradition; rather, there is a range of explanations to find meaning in the demise of a human life. The afterlife is also acknowledged and expressed in a variety of ways, rather than one belief dominating the Jewish imagination. The deep respect for every human being is reflected in the codes of behaviour stipulated for the treatment of the body from the time of death until its burial.

In the Jewish tradition, *ha'olam hazeh* (this world) comprises earthly existence with all its limits, and *ha'olam haba* (the world to come) is where the soul goes when a person dies, with the potential for union with *Shekinah* (the divine presence). Heaven is a spiritual Garden of Eden, where the soul experiences the greatest closeness to God.

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FIGURE 7.17 A member of the Jewish family in mourning lights a candle which will burn for seven days. This candle symbolises both the soul of the deceased and the *Shechinah*, the light of God's presence. How might this ritual bring comfort to the mourners?

The existence of the afterlife is not stated explicitly in the Torah, but angels – God's intermediaries, who act as functionaries to carry out God's will – are found in many Bible sources. Biblical angelology includes cherubim holding flaming swords to guard the gates of Eden after Adam and Eve are banished (Genesis 3), an angel who tells Abraham that he and Sarah will have a child (Genesis 18), an angel that prevents Abraham killing Isaac when he is about to sacrifice his son (Genesis 22), Satan (God's testing angel) who puts Job's faith on trial with a series of tragedies and afflictions (Job 1), angels in the vision of the prophet Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1) and the many angels that appear in the stories of the post-biblical rabbinic tradition.

Judaism has a strong concept of reward and punishment in the afterlife. *Gehinnom* (hell) or *sheol* (the pit, the depths) is where the soul is cleansed of its impurities. The soul is in a kind of limbo if it is not suitably enhanced in life by the performance of good deeds and observing the teachings of the Torah. Reincarnation of the soul is a necessary step in its perfection on the journey towards its Eternal Source. These beliefs are reflected in Jewish funeral and mourning rituals and liturgies. Even the Kaddish mourner's prayer, instead of expressing sorrow, praises God in the face of death, starting with the words 'May His Great Name grow exalted'. The following quotations show a range of thoughts about why people die, from it being part of the natural life cycle to it being punishment for sin.

DEATH AND THE AFTERLIFE

Skills: summarise, explain, interpret, research

1 Describe the Jewish beliefs about death and the afterlife that are stated or implied in the passages quoted below.

> A time for being born, and a time for dying.
>
> Ecclesiastes 3:2

> May my death be an atonement for all the sins, iniquities and transgressions of which I have been guilty against You.
>
> From the *Viddui*, Deathbed Confession

> We know, O Lord, that Your judgement is righteous … and it is not for us to murmur at the method of judging.
>
> From *Tsidduk Vadin*, Burial Service

> This world is like an anteroom [entrance area] to the world to come.
>
> Mishnah *Pirkei Avot* 4:21

> The pious ones of the nations of the world, they have a share in the World to Come.
>
> Maimonides, Mishnah Torah, *Repentance* 3:5

2 What other beliefs about death and the afterlife are held by adherents of the Jewish tradition? How do those beliefs relate to each other?

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BELIEFS ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ULTIMATE REALITY AND HUMANITY

In order to establish meaning and purpose for human life, religious traditions develop beliefs to establish what should be the relationship between their ultimate reality and humanity. These beliefs about relationship arise from the beliefs about their ultimate reality and are connected to their beliefs about the nature of human life. Beliefs about relationships affect how people think and behave towards their ultimate reality. They also establish what adherents would expect from their ultimate reality towards them. Therefore, beliefs about the relationship between themselves and their understanding of ultimate reality have an impact upon the way they lead their lives. Ultimate reality if perceived as a supreme being is connected to a belief that humans can be in a relationship with the supreme being, though usually not on an equal footing. This relationship may be both immanent and personal at times, and distant and transcendent at other times. Metaphors can be used to describe this relationship in various ways, such as parent–child, master–servant or spiritual guide–faithful follower.

BELIEFS ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ULTIMATE REALITY AND HUMANITY – CHRISTIANITY

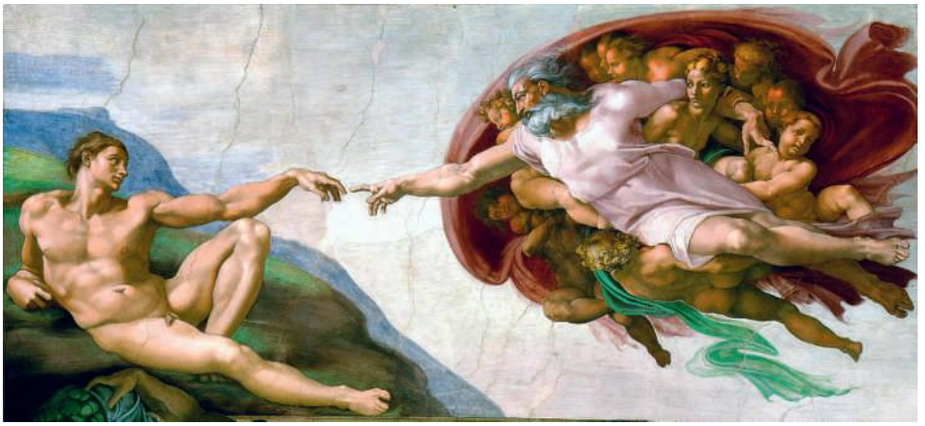

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FIGURE 7.18 The Creation of Adam, a fresco in the Sistine Chapel by Michelangelo (1475–1564). What are the strengths of this depiction of the relationship between God and humanity; what are the weaknesses of this depiction of the relationship?

For Christians, the belief in a loving God dominates the understanding of the relationship between humanity and the ultimate reality. Every Christian child is taught that God loves them. There is an inherent belief that God created each individual in love and for love. St Augustine of Hippo (354–430 CE) reflects on this in one of his sermons saying: 'Love is the unique gift, the fountain that is yours alone. The Spirit of God exhorts you to drink from it, and in so doing to drink from himself.' Augustine uses a metaphor to explain creation of humans as an overflowing of God's love (https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/study/module/augustine). In the New Testament, Jesus teaches this relationship of love when he instructs the disciples on how to pray, addressing God as 'Our Father' by using the intimate Aramaic word 'Abba' for the father. This prayer of Jesus has become the Lord's Prayer. Jesus' image of this relationship between Father and human is illustrated in the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–32), which shows a relationship in which God is loving, merciful and forgiving as the son (humanity) struggles with the tendency to break this relationship through pride, selfishness and neglect of the relationship.

This relationship between ultimate reality (God) and humanity in the Christian tradition has been explored through the interpretation of the belief that there is a covenantal relationship between God and humankind. Covenant theology, which in Christianity is a continuation of the Jewish belief that God established a binding relationship with humanity from the time of Abraham, has given both Protestantism and Catholicism a key for interpreting the Scriptures in order to understand the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the history of redemption and salvation. The covenant forms a binding relationship between God and God's people. The interpretation of the covenant in the Scriptures varies in the differing Christian denominations but, in general, the covenants made by God and the Hebrew people are recognised as leading to the new covenant made through Jesus Christ. A text that is often referred to is the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah which is seen to foreshadow the coming of Christ:

> 'The days are surely coming,' says the Lord, 'when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt – a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband,' says the Lord. 'But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after these days,' says the Lord. 'I will put my Law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God and they shall be my people.
>
> Jeremiah 31:31–33

Some Protestant denominations discuss the covenantal relationship by focusing on three covenants:

- The covenant of works. This is based on the belief that the first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam; and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience. (The Westminster Confession of Faith 1646, Chapter 7 verse 2)
- The covenant of grace. This is based on the belief that there is a huge distance between God and humanity that is bridged only through God's graciousness. The Westminster Confession of Faith (Chapter 7 verse 3) expresses it as 'Man, by his fall, having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace; wherein He freely offers unto sinners, life and salvation by Jesus Christ; requiring of them faith in Him, that they may be saved, and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life His Holy Spirit, to make them willing, and able to believe.'
- The covenant of redemption. This is based on a belief that there is an agreement between the Father and the Son so that the Son agrees to become incarnate, suffer and die to atone for humanity's sin while the Father undertakes to raise the Son from the dead and glorify Him.

In Roman Catholic Christianity, the emphasis in covenantal relationship is on salvation history. This is the narrative of the interaction between God and humanity as it unfolds through the myriad of stories in the Bible telling of the self-revealing God relating to individuals and peoples with whom God has entered into a reciprocal agreement of faithfulness and care.

From a Roman Catholic perspective, the covenant is what underpins the sacrament of Eucharist, which profoundly remembers and gives thanks for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ that is the basis of a 'new and everlasting covenant'. In the words of the consecration in the liturgy of the Eucharist, the priest recounts the words of Jesus Christ saying.

> On the night he was betrayed, he took bread and gave you thanks and praise. He broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:
>
> Take this, all of you, and eat it: this is my body which will be given up for you.
>
> When supper was ended, he took the cup. Again he gave you thanks and praise, gave the cup to his disciples, and said:
>
> Take this, all of you, and drink from it: this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me.

The Catholic Catechism offers an insight into what this remembrance of Jesus' words and actions means in terms of understanding the relationship between God and humanity.

> By his Revelation, 'the invisible God, from the fullness of his love, addresses men as his friends, and moves among them, in order to invite and receive them into his own company'.

For the Catholic, the response to this invitation to friendship is faith as:

> By faith, man completely submits his intellect and his will to God. With his whole being man gives his assent to God the revealer.

GOD AND HUMANITY IN RELATIONSHIP

Skills: summarise, synthesise

1 Jesus says, 'do this in memory of me'. Why is remembering such an important part of the relationship between Christians and God?

2 Use the material provided above to write a 200-word outline of the relationship between the beliefs about the human person and God in the Christian tradition.

BELIEFS ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ULTIMATE REALITY AND HUMANITY – ISLAM

In Islam, the relationship between God and humanity is one of total surrender of creature to Creator. This belief is connected to the beliefs about Allah, who is One, the Creator, the source of all life, the author of a divine plan, the master of order and the sustainer of life. Humanity is seen as the highest expression of the glory of Allah who has given humans intelligence to help them to act ethically; free will so that they can choose right from wrong; and the gift of speech so that they can worship God in prayer. Since God is generous, people should devote all of their energy to behaving as His most grateful servants, therefore the life that a person lives should be in praise of the generosity of Allah to whom they submit. People should do their best to act in line with divine attributes that have been given to them that set them apart from the rest of creation. This relationship is expressed in the first surahs of the Quran:

> In the Name of Allah—the Most Compassionate, Most Merciful.
> All praise is for Allah—Lord of all worlds,
> The most compassionate, most merciful
> Master of the Day of Judgement.
> You alone we worship and you alone we ask for help.
> Guide us along the straight path
> The path of those you have blessed

Quran 1:1–7

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FIGURE 7.19 What does this image convey about the relationship between Allah and humans?

GOD AND HUMANITY IN RELATIONSHIP

Skills: identify, explain, synthesise

1 Explain the beliefs about the relationship between Allah and humanity that are in the passages below.

> He placed at your service whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on Earth – all is from Him. In that are signs for a people who think.
>
> Quran 45:13

> When My servants ask you about Me, I am near: I answer the call of the caller when he calls on Me. So let them answer Me and have faith in Me that they may be rightly guided.
>
> Quran 2:186

2 Write five statements in your own words that describe the relationship between Allah and humanity and find a quotation in the Quran to provide evidence for each statement.

BELIEFS ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ULTIMATE REALITY AND HUMANITY – JUDAISM

Judaism teaches that God relates to people in as many ways as people choose to relate to God (Rabbi Howard Greenstein). In Jewish belief, God is distant and formidable yet loving and approachable. The Jew's relationship with God is both a formal legal one, bound in mutual covenant stipulations, and a personal one of faith in the righteous Judge of all the Earth. God is sovereign over the world and all in it while humans are God's subjects (Ecclesiastes 123: 2). God is a father to humanity who are His children, but also the bride groom in a marriage contract with the people of Israel. The prophet Jeremiah spoke of Israel as an unfaithful wife who became a harlot abandoning her godly spouse (Jeremiah 5:7–8). Metaphors are used to describe this relationship in various ways, such as parent–child, master–servant or spiritual guide–faithful follower. God is not only the unknowable transcendent sovereign over humanity but also the immanent parental figure rewarding good and punishing those who are disobedient to God's will. God is also the healer of the sick and personal saviour and redeemer of the nation in times of distress (Psalm 146:7–9).

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FIGURE 7.20 What Jewish beliefs about the relationship between God and humanity are implied in this image?

The covenant relationship begins when God says to Abraham, 'Go forth from your native land, and from your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and curse him that curses you, and all the families of the Earth shall bless themselves through you' (Genesis 12:1–3). God's protection of the Hebrews is assured when God tells him in a vision: 'Fear not, Abram. I am a shield to you; your reward shall be very great' (Genesis 15:1). The covenant specifies the mutual obligations. In exchange for the many

good deeds that God continues to do for the Jewish people, they must keep God's laws and try to bring holiness into every aspect of their lives to reinforce this sacred relationship.

Centuries later, the prophet Isaiah sets out God's plans for the people of Israel. The prophet eloquently expresses the belief that God chose the Jewish people for this special mission, but history affirms that Israel chose God.

> I, the LORD, in My grace have summoned you and I have grasped you by the hand. I created you and appointed you a covenant people, a light of nations, opening eyes deprived of light, rescuing prisoners from confinement, from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.
>
> Isaiah 42:6–7

On the most holy day of the Jewish year, *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement, Jews who view themselves during the High Holy Day season as both dependent on God and also unworthy of favour, pray all day for forgiveness for their sins from their stern yet merciful God. The central prayer, Avinu Malkeinu, pleads, 'Our Father, our King, treat us generously, even though we have little merit'. The Yom Kippur prayers plead, 'O God of mercy, forgive us, pardon us, grant us atonement!', as the long list of national, communal and personal sins are recited. God on this day is recognised as the righteous Judge of all humanity.

GOD AND HUMANITY IN RELATIONSHIP

Skills: summarise, synthesise

1. Use the material provided above to write a 200-word outline of the relationship between humans and God in the Jewish tradition.
2. 'The relationship with the ultimate reality is the most important relationship.' Discuss this statement by referring to the beliefs in a tradition you have been studying.

BELIEFS ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMANS

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Religious traditions serve as a guide to the relationship between human beings and the degree of responsibility people have to their fellow humans, including guidelines for peaceful and moral coexistence in human society. These beliefs about human relationships are connected to the beliefs about ultimate reality and to those about human nature and purpose. Some traditions focus on individual responsibility, while others emphasise a strong collective accountability or stress the need for both in human society. Some religions are exclusive in nature and clearly decree that their beliefs about relationships apply only to those in their religious community. Such exclusive thinking is connected to the belief that only members of that religion have a right to salvation, and not members of other religious traditions.

BELIEFS ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMANS – CHRISTIANITY

In Christianity, the beliefs about relationship between humans are founded in the belief about the relationship of the Trinity, the three persons of the one God. This is a relationship of unconditional love. St Augustine says that God is the Lover, the Son is the Beloved and the Spirit is the Love that binds them together and overflows into creation. Jesus modelled this unconditional love in his life

and teachings about how humans should relate to each other. In the Gospels, Jesus often taught through parables about how to relate to others. Of particular significance is the parable of the Good Samaritan that shows how all-encompassing the notion of love of neighbour is in Christianity:

> Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he said, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What do you read there?' He answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.' And he said to him, 'You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.'
>
> Luke 10:25–28

On other occasions, Jesus taught very directly through actions – a clear example of this was the defence of the woman caught in adultery (John 8) when he challenges those who have not sinned to cast the first stone and none can do this. In Jesus Christ's teachings and actions, Christians have spelt out for them the relationship that should exist between humans. Jesus' central teaching was that those who follow him need to establish the Kingdom of God. He did not clearly define this concept but, instead, spoke of and lived a life that was aimed at developing a society in which the relationship between humans was marked by love, peace, justice, harmony, forgiveness, mercy and radical inclusivity. When asked by the disciples how they should pray, he taught them what has become The Lord's Prayer which focuses on God's reign. It says, 'thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us …'

This vision for the relationship between humans has always been one that was seen to be counter-cultural. In challenging the values of society those who live out Kingdom relationships are subject to suffering, but Jesus told his disciples, 'No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends' (John 15:13).

St Paul, in a letter to the people of Corinth, explored the importance of a relationship of love in the early Church community.

> Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.
>
> 1 Corinthians 13:4–8a

For the Christian, the relationship between humans is not only aspirational but also profoundly practical and, at times, political. The focus on establishing the Reign of God was a feature of the early Church communities, which were known for the radical sharing of their property, 'All who believed were together and had all things in common' (Acts 2:44). Christianity from its beginning has encouraged a Gospel interpretation focused on social justice.

This emphasis on social justice has been particularly strong in some Christian denominations. It is seen in the Brotherhood of St Laurence in the Anglican tradition, St Vincent De Paul Society in the Catholic tradition and the Salvation Army in the Protestant tradition. The emphasis in this work is underpinned by the view that Christ has passed to them the responsibility of working with the Holy Spirit in their times to create peace, justice, harmony and love.

The Uniting Church of Australia, for example, takes a particularly strong stand on issues of social justice. Below are the key elements of its vision statement:

- to bear witness to the unity of faith and life in Christ, rising above cultural, economic, national and racial boundaries
- to engage in fearless prophetic ministry in relation to social evils which deny God's active will for justice and peace

- to act with God alongside the oppressed, the hurt and the poor
- to accept responsibility for the wise use and conservation of the finite resources of this Earth for the benefit of all.

Uniting Church in Australia, June 1977

In the Roman Catholic tradition, the relationship between human persons is spelt out in the Principles of Catholic Social Teaching. Each of these principles has to be applied to the circumstances of the times in human history which involves interpreting Scripture in order to enable God's will to be 'done on Earth as it is in heaven' (Lord's Prayer).

- The Dignity of the Human Person
- Common Good – Call to participation in community
- Solidarity
- Rights and Responsibilities
- Preferential Option for the Poor
- Dignity of Work
- Care for God's Creation

Alamy Stock Photo/Abaca Press

FIGURE 7.21 Pope Francis I washing the feet of 12 prisoners at a youth detention centre in Rome. Which principle of Catholic Social Teaching is Pope Francis acting out in this action?

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMANS

Skills: summarise, explain, research, synthesise

1 Provide four key words that would be essential in discussing the Christian understanding of the relationship between humans and explain the significance of each.

2 Use the gospels to find a Jesus story that shows his commitment to each of the following: peace, justice, love, forgiveness, mercy and radical inclusivity.

BELIEFS ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMANS – ISLAM

Islam teaches that salvation for its followers is found in living a life that is pleasing to Allah. This requires followers to be respectful of other religions because religious freedom is embedded in the texts of Islam. The Quran teaches the qualities of Allah and it is these that the adherent must emulate; for example, there is a doctrine of compassion for others, with devotees ridding themselves of emotions, such as anger, that are destructive. One of the Five Pillars of Islam is the obligation to do charity (*zakat*); this is both a religious duty and a source of blessing. The followers of Allah must make room for those who suffer and reach out to bring justice. As a result, interest charges on loans (*riba*), is forbidden under **Sharia law**, because it interferes with the natural bonds between humans, allowing selfishness and the rich to dominate the poor.

Getty Images/ Micheline Pelletier

FIGURE 7.22 2006 Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus, a Bangladeshi banker and economist, with women of the villages he has helped. Muhammad Yunus is the founder and managing director of Grameen Bank which successfully applied microcredit, the extension of small loans, to entrepreneurs too poor to qualify for traditional bank loans. How is Yunus fulfilling Islamic teachings on how to treat others?

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMANS

Skills: summarise, explain, synthesise

1 Explain the beliefs, about how humans should relate to each other, that are implied in the passages below.

> The servants of the Merciful are those who walk the Earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, say, 'Peace'.
>
> Quran 25:63

> Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you for your religion nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: for Allah loves those who are just.
>
> Quran 60:8

2 Provide four key words that would be essential in discussing the Islamic understanding of the relationship between humans and discuss the significance of each.

BELIEFS ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMANS – JUDAISM

Within the various historical contexts of Judaism's development is the central idea that to worship God, Jews have to treat their fellow people ethically. This is extended beyond fellow Jews, to include all humankind. To earn God's favour on Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement, Jews must present themselves in synagogues after completing the obligation to acknowledge wrongs they have committed to people directly. Only then can they ask for forgiveness from God. The sanctity of treating others ethically echoes resoundingly throughout Jewish sacred texts. Even the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) encapsulate this idea, with a significant number of them concerning relations between humans rather than those between humans and God. The highest commandment for which a number of others may be broken is *pikuach nefesh* (to redeem a soul); in other words, 'to save a life is to save the world'.

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FIGURE 7.23 Jewish care for the elderly. How is respect for the elderly shown in this photograph

The ancient rabbis differentiated behaviour between people as correct and incorrect by using simple analogies to indicate the moral character of a person. There are four character types among people:

- One who says, 'What's mine is mine and what's yours is yours' is selfish.
- One who says, 'What's mine is yours and what's yours is mine' is unlearned.
- One who says, 'What's mine is yours and what's yours is yours' is pious.
- One who says, 'What's yours is mine and what's mine is mine' is wicked.

Adapted from *Pirkei Avot*, Chapter 5, Mishnah 13

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMANS

Skills: explain, interpret, analyse

1 Explain the beliefs about relationship between humans expressed in the passages below.

> What is hateful to you, do not to your neighbour: that is the whole Torah, while the rest is the commentary thereof; go and learn it.
>
> Babylonian Talmud, *Shabbat* 31a

> Therefore the man was created singly, to teach that he who destroys one soul of a human being, the Scripture considers him as if he should destroy a whole world, and him who saves one soul of Israel, the Scripture considers him as if he should save a whole world.
>
> Babylonian Talmud, *Mishnah Sanhedrin* 4:9

> These are the obligations without measure which enhance our world whilst building credit in the world to come. They are: honouring one's father and mother, engaging in deeds of compassion, arriving early for study, morning and evening, dealing graciously with guests, visiting the sick, providing for the wedding couple, accompanying the dead for burial, being devoted in prayer, and making peace among people – and the study of Torah encompasses them all.
>
> Mishkan T'filah Progressive prayer book, page 44, Central Conference of American Rabbis, New York, 2010

2 Provide four key words that would be essential in discussing the Jewish understanding of the relationship between humans and explain the significance of each.

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BELIEFS ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMANITY AND THE NATURAL WORLD

Different faiths have a variety of views on the relationship between human life and the rest of the natural world. Cultures whose survival depends on the land, and that derive their existence from hunting and agriculture, have developed complex belief systems in regard to the relationship between human beings and the natural world. In many traditions, this relationship is based on the interpretation of their sacred texts. Developments in agriculture and then industry in Western civilisation have been based on an interpretation of the Bible, Genesis 1 in particular. Definitions of terms such as 'dominion' and 'subdue' (Genesis 1:26–28) outside the original historic and language context of Hebrew and Aramaic, and with very literal understanding of their Western languages

meaning, have been used to justify the exploitation and destruction of the environment. Since the last decades of the 20th century, the growing awareness of environmental degradation and climate change has challenged religious traditions to explore their teachings on the relationship of humankind with the rest of creation. Religions that developed on the sub-continent have embedded in their belief systems respect for life through their commitment to veganism or vegetarianism. This commitment is becoming increasingly popular as an expression of spirituality in Western culture.

Religious traditions, in their sacred texts and, in particular, their creation myths (sacred stories told in ancient times to explain religious belief about the origins of the universe), explore the relationship between humankind and the natural world in which they live and upon which they rely. This relationship raises questions concerning the role of humans as fellow creatures, protectors, sustainers or exploiters of the natural world.

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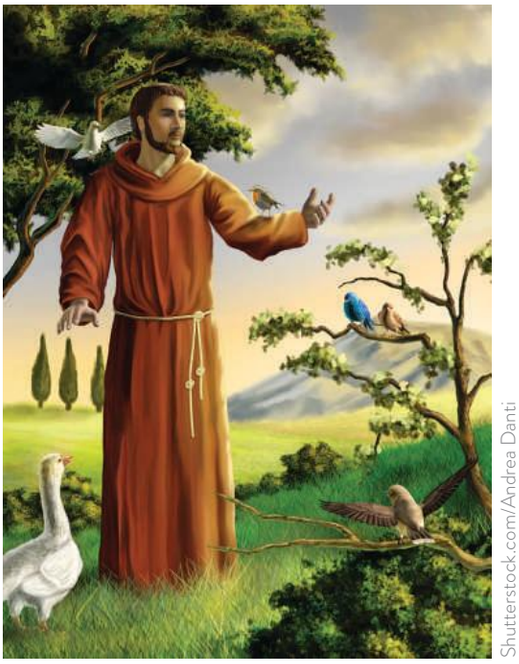
FIGURE 7.24 Hands holding up the world. What does this image imply about whose responsibility it is to look after the world?

BELIEFS ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMANITY AND THE NATURAL WORLD – CHRISTIANITY

As with most religious traditions, the Christian liturgical calendar followed the rhythms of the natural world. The Christian appreciation of the natural world is evident throughout history in the theologians of the tradition. This awareness of nature became particularly evident in the Middle Ages when the already established view that the natural world was a source of God's revelation developed. St Bonaventure, a contemplative medieval scholar, wrote that the natural world was God's book through which God is revealed. Hildegard von Bingen, a Benedictine abbess who lived in the Rhine Valley, wrote and painted using the natural world as the inspiration for her theology. Her knowledge of the natural world and its capacity to heal is still a reference point for scholars today. However, it was St Francis of Assisi (1181–1226) who still inspires those who work for the protection of the environment.

In the Catholic tradition, in 1979 Pope John Paul II proclaimed St Francis of Assisi the patron of ecology. The pope cited him as being 'an example of genuine and deep respect for the integrity of creation ... St Francis invited all creation – animals, plants, natural forces, even Brother Sun and Sister Moon – to give honour and praise to the Lord' (© Libreria Editrice Vaticana). St Francis became the inspiration



Shutterstock.com/Andrea Danti

FIGURE 7.25 St Francis of Assisi. What evidence is in this image of St Francis' attitude to the natural world?

for Pope Francis I's **encyclical** on the environment, *Laudato Si'*, 2015, in which he articulates an integral ecology in which everything and everyone is interrelated and interdependent.

However, Christianity, as the religious tradition that supported the ruling governments at the time of the Industrial Revolution, must carry some of the burden for the damage that was done to the environment during that period. This was a radical shift in the 18th to 20th centuries from agricultural-based societies to communities focused on mechanisation and factories supported by new forms of transport. This led to an explosion in the use of fossil fuels. This 'progress' wreaked havoc on the land and waters of the Earth, and was supported by a theology that recognised the God-given right for humans to 'subdue' the Earth based on a misinterpretation of Genesis 1:28. This was an attitude that was fed by some streams of **Humanism** and developments in science and technology. These attitudes persist in some religious groups today and facilitate the continued exploitation of the Earth's resources.

AAP/Mary Evans Picture Library

FIGURE 7.26 The Industrial Revolution transformed the English landscape during the 18th and 19th centuries. What evidence is in this image of environmental damage?

In recent years, in most Christian denominations, there has been renewed study of Genesis that has developed into an eco-theology that speaks of stewardship of the Earth with care and respect for all creatures. Genesis 1 is seen to be a religious myth that speaks religious truths. The validity of science, including evolution, has been recognised. To try to end the misconception that Christianity and evolution were in conflict, Pope Francis told the press in 2015, 'God is … the Creator who brought everything to life … Evolution in nature is not inconsistent with the notion of creation, because evolution requires the creation of beings that evolve.'

In the contemporary world, there has been a shift in humanity's understanding of the relationship they should have with creation. In a Christian view, the damage that has been done to the environment could be seen as something that damages the relationship people have with the Creator and so is sinful. The natural environment is not merely a resource for the benefit of human beings but has intrinsic value as part of God's good creation. In 1991, the Uniting Church in Australia declared that, 'Nature has a right to the protection of its ecosystems, species, and populations in their inter-connectedness'. This understanding is based on the Christian belief that the Creator 'calls us into a special relationship with the creation – a relationship of mutuality and interdependence. We believe that God's will for the Earth is renewal and reconciliation, not destruction by human beings' (Uniting Justice Australia).

Christian agencies have been established to educate the community on care for the Earth using religious beliefs as authority. Here are two examples from the Catholic and Anglican communities.

> We invite all people of goodwill to journey with us in the most critical and urgent of tasks – of safeguarding the integrity of Creation, acting on climate change, protecting Earth's fragile ecosystems and providing a voice for the victims of environmental degradation, injustice and pollution.
>
> Catholic Earthcare

> The Christian faith is certainly about personal salvation. But it is more than that: Christianity is first and foremost a concern for the whole created order – biodiversity and business; politics and pollution; rivers, religion and rainforests.

> The coming of Jesus brought everything of God into the sphere of time and space, and everything of time and space into the sphere of God. All things meet together in him: Jesus is the point of reconciliation. Therefore, if Christians believe in Jesus they must recognise that concern for climate change is not an optional extra but a core matter of faith.
>
> The Australian Anglican Environment Network

This relationship raises important questions for theologians in the poorer nations on Earth. Leonardo Boff, a Brazilian theologian who established the Base Christian Communities movement to protect the interests of the poorest of the poor expresses the response of the poor in Latin America to the degradation of their lands by wealthy interests from other first world countries. In 2001, he was recognised for his exemplary response to urgent challenges by the International body, Right Livelihood. In his Acceptance Speech of the Award he said, 'The Earth, with its impoverished sons and daughters, needs liberation. We all live oppressed under a paradigm of civilisation that has exiled us from the community of life, which is related to violence against nature and which makes us lose the reverence for the sacredness and majesty of the Universe. We have forgotten that we are only a link in the immense current of life and that we are co-responsible for the common destiny of mankind and Earth.'

There are, however, members in all denominations of Christianity and some whole denominations who hold the belief that Genesis 1 is literally accurate and so do not accept the revised interpretations of the text and consequently reject the teachings of science on evolution. For some of these individuals and groups, a theology of creation, **Creationism,** has become a definitive feature of their beliefs. However, being a Creationist does not exclude one from being concerned about the environment. For example, the Adventists have a website Caring for the Environment, also their *Spectrum Magazine* has the Adventist Church's Official Statements on Climate Change, the Environment and Stewardship of the Earth.

HUMANITY AND THE NATURAL WORLD

Skills: summarise, explain, analyse, research, compare, contrast

1. Refer to the Glossary definition of **Creationism** and discuss the possible social and environmental consequences of this interpretation of Genesis 1.
2. Use the website of Catholic Earthcare or Anglican Ecocare or Anglican Communion Environmental Network or Uniting Justice Australia or the Adventists' *Spectrum Magazine* to list the Christian theological arguments for protecting the Earth.

BELIEFS ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMANITY AND THE NATURAL WORLD– ISLAM

In the Quran, Muslims are instructed to look after the environment and not to damage it. Muslims have to look after the Earth because it is all Allah's creation and it is part of a person's duty to Allah:

> And it is He who spread the earth, and placed in it mountains and rivers. And He placed in it two kinds of every fruit. He causes the night to overlap the day. In that are signs for people who reflect. On earth are adjacent terrains, and gardens of vines, and crops, and date-palms, from the same root or from distinct roots, irrigated with the same water. We make some taste better than others. In that are proofs for people who reason.
>
> Quran Surah 13:3–4

So Muslims see themselves as being responsible for the world that Allah created and have to make their own ethical decisions about how to do this. For as stated in the Surah 6:38, all creatures are considered to be deserving of respect as they live in communities as humans do.

In 1986, the Islamic tradition was part of an interfaith gathering to ponder and develop a joint policy focused on nurturing right relationships between humanity and the natural world. In the resulting Assisi Declarations on Nature Islam stated:

- The central concept of Islam is *Tawhid* or the Unity of God. Allah is Unity; and His Unity is also reflected in the unity of mankind, and the unity of man and nature. His trustees are responsible for maintaining the unity of His creation, the integrity of the Earth, its flora and fauna, its wildlife and natural environment. Unity cannot be had by discord, by setting one need against another or letting one end predominate over another; it is maintained by balance and harmony. There Muslims say that Islam is the middle path and we will be answerable for how we have walked this path, how we have maintained balance and harmony in the whole of creation around us.
- So unity, trusteeship and accountability, that is *Tawhid*, *Khalifah* and *Akhirah*, the three central concepts of Islam, are also the pillars of the environmental ethics of Islam. They constitute the basic values taught by the Quran. It is these values which led Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, to say: 'Whoever plants a tree and diligently looks after it until it matures and bears fruit is rewarded.'
- For all these reasons Muslims see themselves as having a responsibility towards the world and the environment, all of which are the creations of Allah.
- Unlike many other religions, Muslims do not have any specific festivals in which they give thanks for the harvest or the world. Instead they give thanks to Allah regularly for his creation.
- In order to separate Islam from other religions, the Islamic year is only 354 days, this means that the months and festivals happen at a different time each year and so there is no particular festival which falls during a period of harvest.

The Assisi Declarations, WWF International Conference, September 1986, Muslim declaration by Dr Abdullah Omar Nassef, Secretary General, Muslim World League.

Alamy Stock Photo/Andrew Hasson

FIGURE 7.27 Europe's first eco-friendly mosque. Award-winning design that adheres to Islamic traditions as well as being environmentally friendly with low impact on neighbouring buildings, landscaped setting, rainwater storage, solar energy, natural building materials, zero carbon footprint. How does it reflect the teachings of Islam about the relationship of humanity and the natural world?

HUMANITY AND THE NATURAL WORLD

Skills: interpret, analyse, research

1. After reading the declaration extracts above, list the beliefs that shape the Islamic response to environmental issues.
2. Research an Islamic environmental organisation, such as 'Green Ramadan' and relate the work it is doing to the beliefs you have listed from the above extracts of the Muslim Declaration.

BELIEFS ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMANITY AND THE NATURAL WORLD – JUDAISM

There is no single source on Jewish attitudes to nature but there are many references scattered throughout the tradition's sacred texts covering laws about trees and plants, the treatment of animals and caring for the local environment. The liturgy also includes many prayers thanking God for food and other benefits from the land. The Jewish calendar refers explicitly to the agricultural seasons and their links to religious celebrations, especially the festivals of *Pesach* (Passover), *Sukkot* (Tabernacles), *Shavu'ot* (Feast of Weeks) and *Tu Bishvat* (the New Year for Trees), when it is customary to plant saplings. Thus care for the world and all in it is linked to the belief that humans have a privileged position in God's created world and therefore must take on the responsibilities and obligations expected of them.

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FIGURE 7.28 Festival of *Shavu'ot* symbols. What are the Jewish beliefs about the relationship between humans and the natural world that connect the Torah scroll, the Ten Commandments and the agricultural produce in this *Shavu'ot* image?

Judaism sees science as a God-given intellectual tool offering another way of looking at God's world. It has allowed current scientific knowledge to be an element considered in making *Halachic* (legal) decisions. The Big Bang points to scientific evidence that the world had a beginning, implying that it emerged in a creation, which is consistent with the Jewish belief that everything is ultimately one unity. Einstein's theory that matter is energy facilitates belief in spirituality; while the probability theory, which provides mathematical insight into random phenomena, allows for God's providence, that God intervenes in the human world. Thus, in Jewish theology, God is seen as the best explanation for the facts of the world.

Jewish responses to looking after the world can be noted also in the *kabbalistic* (Jewish mystical tradition) notion of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) and in the modern eco-kashrut movement that combines following Jewish dietary laws with vegetarianism and ecological responsibility in the way that food is grown, manufactured, packaged and sold. Thus, Jews connect their beliefs about the nature of God's creation to their purpose on Earth.

HUMANITY AND THE NATURAL WORLD

Skills: identify, summarise, interpret

1 List the beliefs in Judaism about the relationship between humans and the natural world contained in the passages below.

> The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and tend it.
>
> Genesis 2:15

> So out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that would be its name.
>
> Genesis 2:19

> When God created the first human beings, God led them around the Garden of Eden and said, 'Look at my works! See how beautiful they are, how excellent! For your sake I created them all. Take care not to spoil or destroy My world, for if you do, there will be no one to repair it after you'.
>
> *Midrash Ecclesiastes Rabbah* 7:13

> Honi the circle-drawer was walking down the road, when he saw a man planting a carob tree. Honi asked, 'How many years will it take for this tree to bear fruit?' The man answered that it would take 70 years. Honi said, 'Are you so healthy that you expect to live that long to enjoy its fruit?' The man answered, 'I found a fruitful world, because my forebears planted for me. Thus I shall do for my children and their children'.
>
> Babylonian Talmud, *Ta'anit* 23a

> If you should be holding a sapling in your hand when they tell you the Messiah has arrived, first plant the sapling, then go out and greet him.
>
> *Avot d'Rabbi Nathan* 31

2 According to Genesis 1 and 2, what is the relationship between humans and the animal kingdom?

3 According to Genesis 1 and 2, what is the difference with humanity's relationship to plants with that to animals?

4 How do the rabbis in *Midrash Ecclesiastes Rabbah* and *Avot d'Rabbi Nathan* extend the meaning of the biblical laws?

5 What do the sources below consider is the correct relationship of humans to the rest of creation, particularly animals?

Exodus 20:8-10; Deuteronomy 22:4, 6-7, 10; Talmud, Tractate Shabbat 128b; Igg'rot Moshe, Even haEzer 4:92; Maimonides Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Rotzeah 13:1.

6 Research three other sources of Jewish texts that deal with how humans should relate to the rest of creation.

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

The beliefs explored in this chapter have been categorised to look at the wisdom provided by them in the various religious traditions. The beliefs have been chosen to illustrate the way in which they can provide answers to the 'big questions' in life. However, it can suggest that the beliefs are not interdependent. This would be a false assumption. Fundamental beliefs are part of an integrated system of beliefs that provides a cohesive, overarching narrative to the adherents of a tradition. Beliefs across the seven categories, complement each other by reinforcing a consistent understanding of ultimate reality in a religion. Beliefs about ultimate reality are the basis from which stem all the other beliefs about humanity, suffering, death and nature. Understandings of the concept of ultimate reality influence the way that the nature and purpose of humanity is explained, how humans should behave to one another as well as to the natural world. Notions about the meaning of suffering, death and the afterlife relate to ideas about ultimate reality, human nature and activity. It is through the interrelationship of beliefs that they act as an integrated whole to provide answers to existential questions. It is due to what is believed about ultimate reality that the other beliefs developed.

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN BELIEFS

Skills: identify, explain, interpret

1 Select one belief about the nature of humanity. Then draw a diagram with lines emanating from this belief showing its connection to beliefs in the other six categories listed in the 2023–27 VCE Religion and Society Study Design, page 21. In your diagram, briefly explain the connection of the selected belief to those from the other categories.

2 Choose *two* beliefs (one from each of two different categories) in the religious tradition you have been studying. In each, show the relationship between the beliefs and how they are expressed through the aspects of religion.

3 From the religion you are studying select an appropriate belief about ultimate reality.
   a Explain its connection with a belief about the nature and purpose of human life.
   b Explain its connection with a belief about the relationship between humans.
   c Explain its connection with a belief about the relationship between humans and the rest of the natural world.

4 Demonstrate the connection between beliefs about the meaning of suffering with beliefs about death and the afterlife.

CHAPTER 7

REVISION

A Short-answer questions

These questions are not specific to a religious tradition or denomination.

1 How could religion be defined?
2 What are the 'existential questions' from which religious beliefs have developed?
3 What is the purpose of religion for the individual?
4 What does religion offer society?
5 What is the nature of religious beliefs?
6 What makes a belief 'distinctive' to a religious tradition?

B Extended-response questions

These questions relate to a specific religious tradition or denomination. Make sure you cite your sources and provide quotations and examples.

7 Identify one religious tradition or denomination and refer to its beliefs to answer the following questions.
   a What is the nature of ultimate reality?
   b What is the relationship between ultimate reality and humanity?
   c What is the meaning of suffering?
   d What is the purpose of human life?
   e Is there life after death?
   f What is the origin of the universe?
   g What is the relationship between human beings and the natural world?
   h What should be the relationship between human beings? In what way is this connected to beliefs about an ultimate reality?
8 Write a dictionary-style entry that describes and explains the concept of death and the afterlife from the viewpoint of the tradition you are studying.
9 Explain the death and burial rituals in a religious tradition you have been studying, exploring the ways in which the community demonstrates their beliefs about the meaning of death.
10 Describe and explain the beliefs about the creation of the universe and the beginning of life on Earth in the tradition you are studying. Make sure you cite your sources.
11 To what extent are the Big Bang theory and Darwin's theory of evolution compatible with beliefs of the origins of the universe and human life in the religious tradition you are studying?
12 Outline the relationship between humankind and the rest of creation as expressed in the sacred texts of a tradition you have been studying. Give examples of what that religious tradition teaches about the treatment of animals and plants.

C Beliefs in prayers

One way of identifying the beliefs that underpin a religious tradition or denomination is to explore in depth the words of their most important prayers.

13 Identify three prayers that are a prominent part of the religious tradition or denomination you are studying.
14 Annotate each prayer, identifying the beliefs that underpin the prayer.
15 Write 300 words exploring the interpretation of the beliefs in these prayers. Use quotations from the prayers to support your statements.
16 Extend your discussion by exploring the context in which these prayers are used and their role in providing meaning in the life of members of the religious tradition or denomination.

D Aspects of religion

17 Select one religious tradition or denomination and construct a table, listing the nine aspects, a definition and an example of each aspect. Be careful to include the four elements in the aspect, 'spaces, places, times and artefacts'.

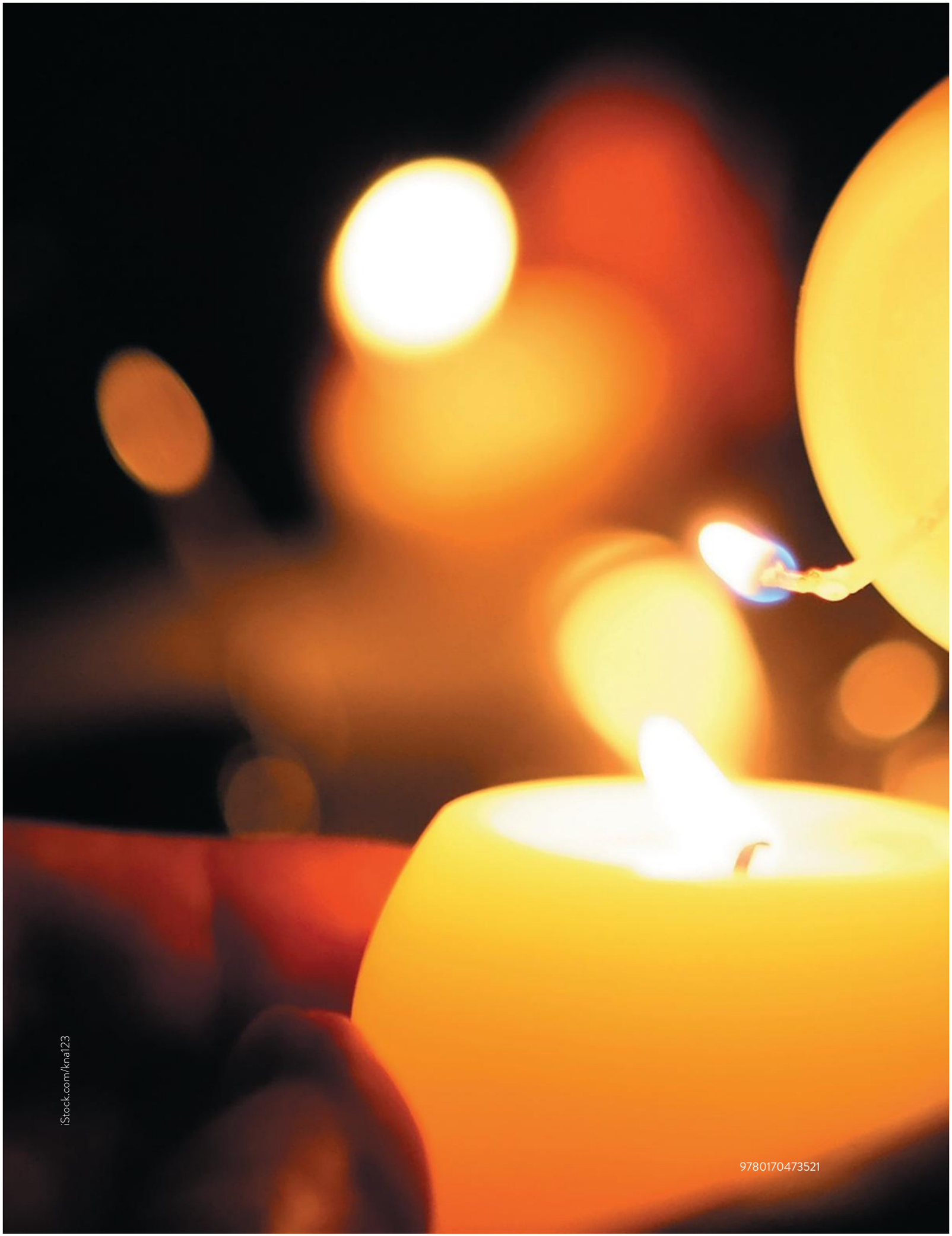
E Essay topic

> There is for me powerful evidence that there is something going on behind it all (behind creation) … It seems as though somebody has fine-tuned nature's numbers to make the Universe … The impression of design is overwhelming.
>
> Paul Davies (scientist)

18 Discuss to what extent this view is consistent with the understanding of the ultimate reality and the universe in a religious tradition you have been studying.

Worksheet
Aspects of Religion
Beliefs in prayer
Relationship

Weblinks
Various for Chapter 7



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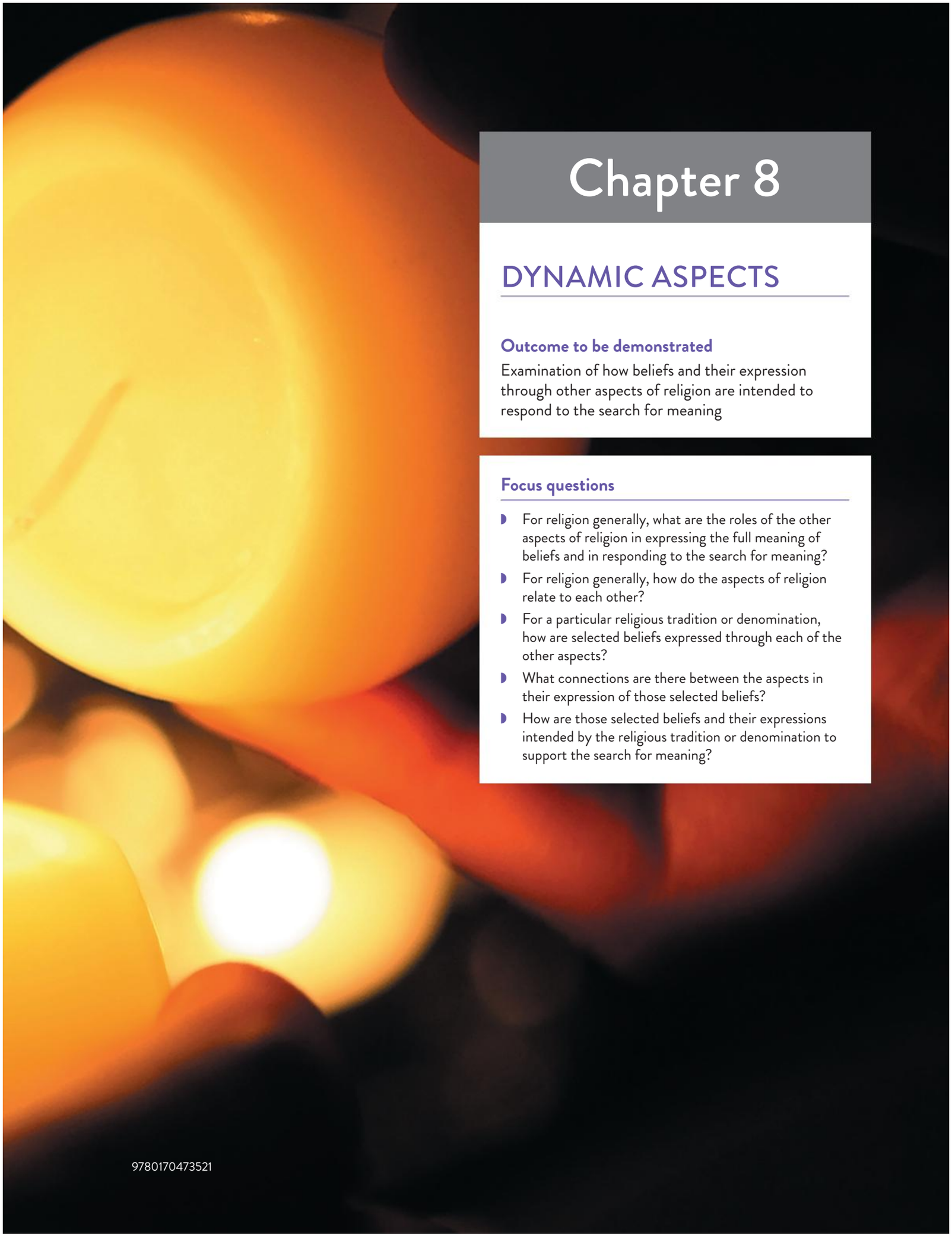

Chapter 8

DYNAMIC ASPECTS

Outcome to be demonstrated

Examination of how beliefs and their expression through other aspects of religion are intended to respond to the search for meaning

Focus questions

- For religion generally, what are the roles of the other aspects of religion in expressing the full meaning of beliefs and in responding to the search for meaning?
- For religion generally, how do the aspects of religion relate to each other?
- For a particular religious tradition or denomination, how are selected beliefs expressed through each of the other aspects?
- What connections are there between the aspects in their expression of those selected beliefs?
- How are those selected beliefs and their expressions intended by the religious tradition or denomination to support the search for meaning?

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Worksheet
Terminology

ASPECTS OF RELIGION

Have you noticed how the tone of the community changes at times of major religious celebrations when the streets are filled with symbols and colour and the community has an expectation that the world can be a better place? One explanation for these hopeful and emotional responses is that religious aspects, which operate together to support and strengthen each other, are expressing messages that the community yearns to hear. In these celebrations, the interrelationship between the aspects is complex and complementary, aiding beliefs to potentially attain their full meaning. There is a transformative power witnessed in the enthusiasm of adherents at religious festivals.

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FIGURE 8.1. Good Friday Easter procession in the streets of Quito Ecuador. Penitents in traditional purple costume wearing their cone-shaped hoods (*cucuruchos*) walk the streets completely barefoot and carrying giant crosses as a form of confession and affirmation of their beliefs. Which beliefs would they be affirming? How is the picture showing that the people are finding meaning through the expression of those beliefs?

Aspects are the features common to religions. Together they enable a rich study of the nature of religion. The aspects are beliefs; ethics; rituals; sacred stories; social structures; spaces, places, times, artefacts; spiritual experiences; symbols and texts. In combination, the aspects can be defined in these ways. They are:

- the concrete expression that gives meaning and purpose to religious communities and individual lives by aiding their engagement with an ultimate reality
- the framework that supports individuals and groups to live their beliefs
- the building blocks for a collective memory that gives meaning to life
- the means by which individuals within the community act as teachers, guides and inspirational role models

- the mechanisms by which a believing community introduces their children and new believers to the teachings and practices that shape their worldview
- the means of facilitating an ongoing engagement with expressions which allow religious members to develop further understandings of beliefs.
- the sources of a communal experience that strengthens the individual and the community by reinforcing their religious identity
- the means through which authority in the religious tradition operates in order to give guidance to adherents in their search for meaning

CLARIFYING ASPECTS

Skills: describe, clarify, explain, create

1 Create a mnemonic to help you remember the names of the aspects.

2 Working with a partner test your recall of the names of the aspects (remember they are all plural).

Alamy Stock Photo/Ira Berger

FIGURE 8.2 Hasidic Jews pray in the Rebbe's study at Lubavitch Headquarters in Brooklyn, New York, while the Bar Mitzvah boy blesses the Torah. What aspects of religion are evident in the image? What relationship do these aspects have with each other in the image?

ROLES OF OTHER ASPECTS OF RELIGION IN THE SEARCH FOR MEANING AND IN EXPRESSING THE FULL MEANING OF BELIEFS

ETHICS

Within the ethical teachings and practice of religious traditions there are principles, values, laws, normative standards, codes of behaviour and decision-making methods that assist individuals and communities to determine how to live their beliefs in daily life. In providing the means to determine 'What is the right way to act according to my beliefs?', the aspect of ethics enables members of religious traditions to reflect on beliefs, clarifying and deepening understanding of them, especially those about right relationship with ultimate reality and of humans with each other and with the rest of creation. Pondering and determining the right way to live is a formative process in the life-long search for meaning of individuals and communities of religious traditions.

Getty Images/AFP/Pool/Menahem Kahana

FIGURE 8.3 Pope Francis I speaks during a meeting with children from nearby Palestinian refugee camps on 25 May 2014 during a visit to the Dheisheh camp, on the outskirts of the biblical city of Bethlehem. Pope Francis I made an impassioned plea for the protection of children. What ethical principle about humanity is Pope Francis expressing? To which beliefs is the principle connected?

RITUALS

Rituals are repeated actions which follow a prescribed structure that provides both the individual and the community with the opportunity to enact their beliefs in a concrete way, expressing multiple intended meanings. Such enactments enrich the beliefs of an individual as they share their ideas with a community that is supportive of their worldview. The role of rituals is to enable adherents to find meaning in their beliefs and to demonstrate commitment to their beliefs and religious tradition or denomination by physically expressing it.

Alamy Stock Photo/Friedrich Stark

FIGURE 8.4 A Seventh-day Adventist congregation who meet together every Saturday (Sabbath) morning. What meaning of the Sabbath for Adventists is shown in this picture? How would this meaning assist Adventists in their search for meaning?

SACRED STORIES

Religious stories may be oral or written. Some are considered sacred because they encompass the origins, history and essential truths of the tradition. They may also be sacred stories, some of which are myths, epic poems, legends and morality tales. They pass on communal knowledge and values in an accessible way for young and old. For young children, these stories provide the introduction to the beliefs of their tradition, whereas for those who have gained wisdom, the same story may have layers of meaning for them, into which they can delve. In the sacred texts of each tradition, there is an overarching story that becomes the truth narrative of the tradition which addresses the big questions the believers confront in their lives in their search for meaning.

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FIGURE 8.5 Abraham being prevented from sacrificing Isaac by an angel. How does this image show both God's omnipotence and God's justice?

SOCIAL STRUCTURES

The social structures of religious traditions are the way they are organised to provide for the day-to-day needs of the community, to provide the pastoral care of the community, to provide teachers for the community, to teach the community and to provide a role, functions and terms of membership for the community. The social structures are marked by diversity, but all include roles for adherents. Within the social structure, there are those who provide spiritual leadership, management of religious community councils, oversight of educational and religious institutions as well as meeting the responsibilities of organising the engagement of the laity, youth groups, charities, hospitals and religious courts. For some, the structure emphasises a patriarchal or matriarchal family model; for others, it may be hierarchical and authoritarian; and for others, more egalitarian. Social structures provide a sense of permanence and security for adherents as well as a mechanism for providing ethical guidance and spiritual direction for the community and individuals to live out their beliefs with purpose and commitment. They establish the social culture of the community that is enjoyable to engage with and participate in for prospective and continuing members.

AAP/EPA/Pete Souza/The White House/Handout

FIGURE 8.6 The previous US President Barack Obama (right), first lady Michelle Obama (centre left) and their daughter Malia Obama (left) meet with Malala Yousafzai in the Oval Office, 11 October 2013. In what way is Malala Yousafzai part of the social structure of her religious tradition?

SPACES, PLACES, TIMES AND ARTEFACTS

Adherents more easily relate to and find meaning in beliefs when they are seen concretely expressed in the rituals and practices imbued with the special spiritual significance associated with the symbolism of particular spaces, places and artefacts, and commemorated and enacted at times that have particular spiritual or religious meaning.

Spaces

A space is a designated area of sacred focus within larger holy places. Such spaces could be altars, shrines, tombs and prayer areas. Their role is to enable the experience of the sacred and the demonstration of commitment.

Places

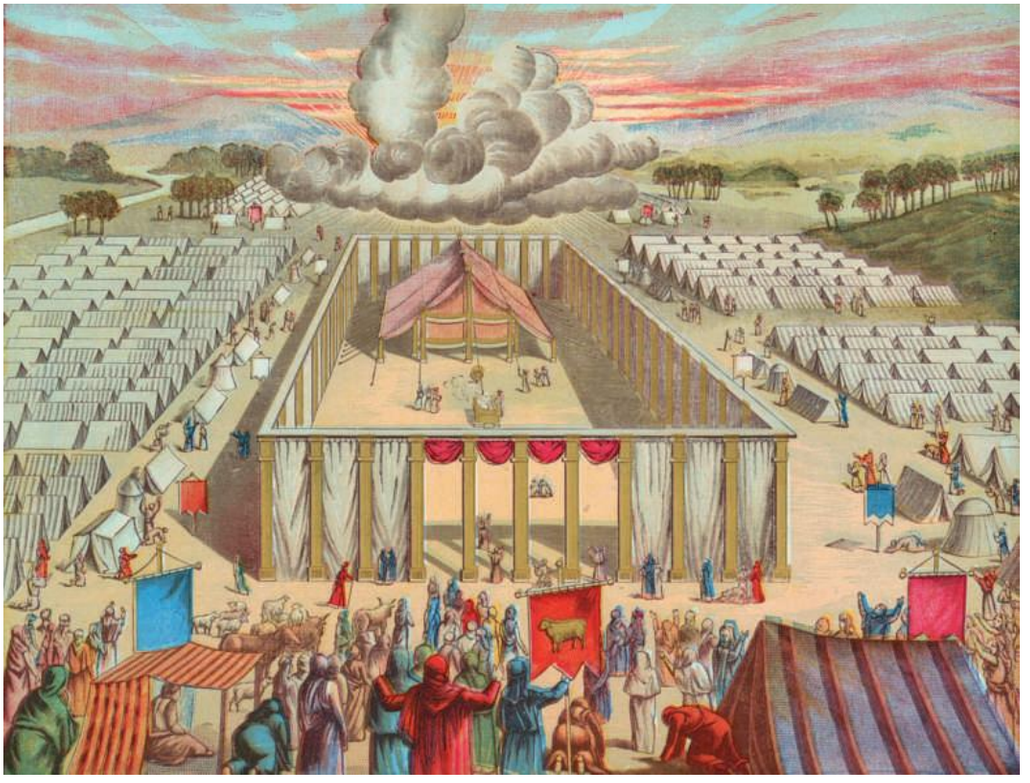
A place is a particular site such as mountains, rivers, caves, trees, forests, shrines or buildings such as synagogues, mosques, temples and churches, cities and even countries that represent the presence of the sacred. Their role is to provide physical sites for expression of beliefs through worship.

Times

Times refers to the organisation of daily, weekly, monthly and annual ceremonies, prayers, festivals and rituals. Their role is to separate the secular time from the divine time. Also to provide times for meditative reflections and connection to ultimate reality. They establish the rhythm of life for adherents.

Artefacts

Artefacts generally are human-made items. They are a source of religious identity or focus for prayer, such as prayer beads, scrolls, icons, articles of clothing and relics. The role of these objects is to enhance the meaning of beliefs for adherents in a physical way and to facilitate worship. They also have the role of the social identification of members of the religious community.



The Tabernacle in the Wilderness, English School, (19th century)/Private Collection/© Look and Learn/Bridgeman Images

FIGURE 8.7 The Second Passover in the wilderness, recorded in Exodus. Which aspects of religion are represented in the image to indicate the belief that the deity is present?

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES

Spiritual experiences are personal encounters with ultimate reality. Such experiences may be found in the wonders of nature; the joy of a birth; comfort in a time of distress; personal revelation through sacred texts; or communal experiences of spiritual ecstasy or an **epiphany**. The role of spiritual experiences is to touch the heart and mind of the adherent and bond them to the mystery of ultimate reality. Spiritual experiences can call members to a higher level of commitment or even conversion.

Alamy Stock Photo/Arclight

FIGURE 8.8 Pentecostal choir. What in this image suggests the choir members are engaged in a spiritual experience?

SYMBOLS

Symbols are the tangible expression of beliefs which are abstract ideas. Believers in a religious tradition wear, carry, display, kiss and treat symbols with reverence. Their role is to assist believers to remember and acknowledge beliefs, and to find personal meaning of beliefs through the versatility and power of symbols to be understood differently.

TEXTS

Texts are the records of the revelations, history, teachings and experiences of religious traditions. Some texts may be sacred, such as the scriptures of religious traditions. Religious texts may be written or oral, painted, sculptured, danced, played, sung, chanted. They can be in the form of story, poetry, meditation, commentary, interpretation, history, dogma, doctrine, hymns, prayers and prayer books, sermons, mystical writings, codes of law, instructional letters, reports from synods and religious councils. Some contemporary examples of texts include social media posts and press releases. Their role is to reveal ultimate reality. Further roles are to record, underpin, clarify, teach religious beliefs and inspire religious commitment. Texts also ensure the intergenerational transmission of beliefs.

FIGURE 8.9 Texts of religious traditions. Why are there different sizes for the types of texts? What other texts in religious traditions are there?

ROLES OF ASPECTS

Skills: explain, evaluate

1. Write a brief statement explaining the role of each of the aspects in general terms.
2. Rank the aspects according to their importance in giving meaning to life. Justify your ranking.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ASPECTS

The aspects of religion are interrelated, co-dependent, complementary and mutually supportive of each other. The other aspects act together to reaffirm and strengthen beliefs, to make them real in the lives of adherents, and to shape the identity of the believing community. Religious beliefs, and their expression through the other aspects, support meaning for members of religious traditions through clarifying, insightful, creative and nurturing words, actions and experiences. Some beliefs clearly find expression and achieve their full meaning in the combined effect of all the other aspects, while other beliefs may be demonstrated only in some of the aspects. Overall, it is through the combined impact of the range of expressions of a belief, in the other aspects, that a belief can move towards achieving its full meaning at least for that time and that culture.

ASPECTS WORKING TOGETHER

Skills: construct, explain, discuss

1. Design a diagram to show the interconnections between the aspects of religion in a major religious event of the religious tradition you have been studying.
2. Write a brief explanation of each of the different ways the aspects interconnect, using a variety of verbs.
3. In class discuss how the interrelationship between the aspects supports the full meaning of beliefs.
4. Select a religious festival and create a poster that would go around Melbourne on the side of a tram advertising the festivities. Your graphic must make use of all of the aspects, including the four elements of the aspect, 'spaces, places, times and artefacts'.

EXPLORING EXPRESSION OF BELIEFS

The next section of this text addresses the Study Design requirement to select two religious beliefs from the various beliefs that have been studied within the seven categories of belief in Area of Study 3.1.

To enable a breadth of expression through the other aspects to be explored, the two beliefs might be chosen from different categories of belief. The interconnectedness of beliefs from the same category of belief may not provide sufficient diversity of expression through the other aspects.

In selecting beliefs to explore in Outcome 3.2, you need to determine that they can be expressed in all the other aspects of religion listed in the 2023–27 VCE Religion and Society Study Design (p. 10). One way to understand and demonstrate the interaction of the aspects can be by exploring their dynamic process in major festivals or rituals.

The following material provides examples from Christianity, Islam and Judaism of selected beliefs demonstrating how those beliefs are expressed by the other aspects of religion. A festival of a tradition provides a rich context for the exploration of the beliefs selected from those studied in the categories of belief in Area of Study 3.1.

Online content
Buddhist beliefs
Hindu beliefs
Sikhism beliefs

Examples demonstrating how selected beliefs are expressed by the other aspects of religion for the traditions of Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism can be found on NelsonNet.

EXPLORING EXPRESSION OF A BELIEF THROUGH THE OTHER ASPECTS

Christianity: the belief that God is Trinitarian

As explained in Chapter 7, Christianity is both a monotheistic and Trinitarian religion. The belief about the ultimate reality, God, paradoxically states that God is both one and three – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. From the beginnings of this tradition an understanding of this belief came through religious practice of prayer, its expression of the belief. A maxim of the Church became: *Lex Orandi Lex Credendi,* which means the community believes what it prays. In the Catholic, Orthodox and most Protestant traditions this is best seen in the celebration of the tradition's most important ritual, the Eucharistic gathering on Sunday, which is a sacred time for encountering God, as it is

the day of the Resurrection. An exception is the Seventh-day Adventist congregation who meet together every Saturday (Sabbath) morning.

This Eucharistic ritual takes place generally in a Church, a sacred place that has been dedicated to God through being blessed. The ritual begins with the symbolic action of the Sign of the Cross where the adherents form a cross by moving their right hand from forehead to chest, across to the left shoulder and then to the right shoulder while reciting the text, 'In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'. This action expresses the belief in the Trinity and gives meaning to the belief by readying the person for the presence of God in the ritual that is to follow. The movement of the hand across the body in making the cross reminds the individual that they are committing their mind, heart and body to the work of God. In the Orthodox tradition, these gestures are made with three fingers together, a further symbolic reminder of the Trinitarian nature of God. Thus, the ritual gathering begins with an oral text and symbolic action, a declaration of faith in the belief that God is the Father, God is the Son and God is the Holy Spirit. This acknowledgement of the Christian ultimate reality shows the connection between places, times, texts and symbols to give life to the belief that God is Trinitarian.

Throughout the ritual of the Eucharist, there are prayers expressing the Trinitarian nature of God. An example, The Gloria, in which the authority and transcendence of the Trinitarian God is proclaimed.

> Glory to God in the Highest ... We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we adore Thee, we glorify Thee, we give Thee thanks for Thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty ... O Lord Jesus Christ, only begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father ... you are seated at the right hand of the Father ... with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father.

Such verbal expressions of the belief in God as Trinity enhance the meaning of the belief through being communal prayers in which their proclamation not only declares people's faith, but as a song of praise it shapes the group into a community committed to God. This building of a faith community is one of the roles of the aspects.

The Eucharistic celebration of the Christian traditions has two important rites. The first rite is the Liturgy of the Word in which the central focus is on selected texts from the Bible, which are contained within a **lectionary**.

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FIGURE 8.10 A girl at a lectern reading from the lectionary. What type of text is a lectionary?

The most direct expression of the belief that God is Trinitarian is found in the reading of the extracts from the biblical texts in the Liturgy of the Word when readings from the Hebrew Scriptures, the Psalms, the Acts of the Apostles, the letters of some Apostles and the Gospels are proclaimed *(kerygma)* by members of the community. In recognition of the importance of the Gospels in proclaiming the belief about the Trinity, the community stand to hear the *kerygma* of the second person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ during the reading. After this, the minister (Protestant traditions) or the priest (Catholic tradition) breaks open the Word of God (Gospel) for the community in their preaching to enable it to provide meaning through shaping how they will live their life. In some evangelical Protestant traditions, this is the central rite of the Sunday gathering as there is no Eucharistic meal.

The second rite in the Eucharistic celebration is the Liturgy of the Eucharist in which the focus shifts to the consecration (making holy) of the bread and the wine at the altar. In this rite, the social structures of the tradition play a part in expressing the belief about God as Trinity. In the Catholic Tradition, it is believed that Christ is present in the person of the priest in this ritual, but Christ is also present in the people gathered, in the Word proclaimed and in the Eucharistic bread and wine that will be eaten and drunk. In other Christian traditions, the bread and wine are seen as a powerful symbol of Christ's presence.

The belief about the Trinity in the person of the Holy Spirit is expressed in the calling down of the Spirit (*epiclesis*) in the final doxology, the important prayer of praise of God at the end of the Eucharistic Prayer to which the gathered community affirms what has been prayed in acclaiming the Great *Amen* (so be it), a statement of agreement in a single word.

> Through Him, with Him, in Him, in unity with the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour is yours Almighty Father. Forever and ever.

It is in the Liturgy of the Eucharist that, through *anamnesis*, that is, the power of the communal remembering of the Last Supper when Jesus Christ left the instruction to 'Do this in memory of me' (Luke 22:19), that the bread and the wine become the real presence of Jesus Christ in the ritual. This is a sacred moment that can bring about (engender) a spiritual experience. In some churches, bells are rung to highlight the moment and people bow their heads in awe of what Christ has done for them. The community in response gives thanks for Christ's saving act through the Eucharistic (thanksgiving) Prayer which is proclaimed at the altar. Using this word, altar, symbolically gives meaning to Christ's loving sacrifice. He is the 'Lamb of God' (*Agnus Dei*), whose sacrifice was to 'take away the sins of the world'. The sacred space of the altar is also symbolically a table at which the community is given spiritual food to eat so that they are nourished to establish God's reign of peace, justice and love. This is why this gathering is called the 'Mass' (from the Latin word, *Missa* 'to be sent out') by Catholics, because they are being sent out to live an ethical life as an expression of their belief in the Trinitarian God. The sacred time of the consecration and communion are moments of potential spiritual experience for those who fully engage in the ritual.

The belief that God is Trinitarian is expressed and given its full meaning through the integrated use of other aspects of religion in the Eucharist. This proclamation of a Trinitarian God of love, mercy, peace and justice gives meaning to the adherent's life by giving them an understanding of their purpose – which is to establish God's Kingdom when they step out of the sacred place and into the world.

A BELIEF EXPRESSED IN RITUAL

Skills: identify, describe, interpret, explain, analyse

1. In the Eucharistic ritual, which aspects express the belief that God is Trinitarian?
2. Explain how each of those aspects expresses the belief that God is Trinitarian.
3. What conclusions can be drawn about the relationship between the different aspects in the Eucharistic ritual?
4. In what ways does the expression of the belief through the aspects contribute to the search for meaning for the individual member of the religious tradition?
5. In what ways does the expression of the belief through the aspects contribute to the search for meaning for the community of the religious tradition?

EXPLORING EXPRESSION OF A BELIEF THROUGH THE OTHER ASPECTS

Christianity: the belief that Jesus Christ lived, died and rose to life

The Easter (*Paschal*) *Triduum* of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday is a central festival of the Christian Tradition. The Christian community commemorates and reflects upon the tradition's metanarrative focusing on the belief that Jesus Christ lived, died and rose to life. Although this may seem to be three beliefs, in the Christian Tradition, they are considered one belief about Jesus Christ. This is because the life of Christ has no meaning without his death and resurrection; his death has no meaning without his life and resurrection; and his resurrection means nothing without an understanding of his life and death. This unity of the three elements of the belief about Christ is ritualised in the *Paschal Triduum* as there is no dismissal rite between Holy Thursday and the Easter Vigil – the three ceremonies form one ritual.

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FIGURE 8.11 Holy Thursday ritual in which a Syrian Orthodox Archbishop washes the feet of members of the congregation representing Christ's apostles. What does this action say about what it is to be a leader in the social structure of Christianity?

On Holy Thursday, the sacred text of the Gospel of John is used to explore the belief that Christ lived and what it means for the lives of those who follow him. The Gospel text provides an expression of the *mandatum* (Christ's law) to 'love one another as I have loved you'. The sacred text on Holy Thursday, which tells the sacred story of Christ washing the feet of his disciples, is used to provide the script for the symbolic liturgical action of the foot-washing ceremony in which either selected, or all, members of the congregation wash the feet of each other. The concept of social structure expressed here is one in which even those who have the greatest authority, must be servant of all. This creates meaning by teaching the community what their role is, they must be 'Alter Christi' (another Christ in the world). They must be prepared to humble themselves in a world which, as St Peter illustrates in the Gospel, resists this and sees as shameful. Christ's life

is giving meaning to the suffering that will come with the ostracism faced by those who live the Christian life. This sort of suffering is given meaning in the beauty of offering unconditional love as found and modelled in the expression of the belief that Christ lived in the sacred texts, ethics, social structures and ritual of foot washing.

Getty Images/Win McNamee

FIGURE 8.12 A member of the congregation in a Good Friday service kissing the cross. What does the kiss symbolise?

The sacred texts of Good Friday, the second movement in the Triduum, generates meaning for the lives of adherents as they make plain the inevitability in life of suffering and death.

The sacred text of *The Passion* in John's Gospel (John 18:1–19:42) acknowledges that suffering and pain accompany death and, in so doing, acknowledges the reality of the experience of many of the adherents gathered. This helps them to accept their experience and gives meaning to it by showing that suffering can have a purpose, it can be redemptive. The sacred story makes it plain that Christ's terrible suffering had meaning. Christ had come 'to make all things new' (Book of Revelation 21:5). Christ's death was sacrificial. He is the Lamb of God (*Agnus Dei*) who takes away the sin of the world. He died to atone for the sins of humanity; to redeem humankind; and to bring about the salvation of all. Christ's passion as expressed in John's Gospel on Good Friday provides a model for Christians who face suffering of how to give meaning to that experience. It shows that the cross is a part of life, and it must be carried for the salvation of all. The texts are used in a way that provokes awe and wonder at the sacrifice made by the Son of God and this culminates in the symbolic action that emanates from the text, the veneration of the cross (artefact), where members of the community individually worship

at the foot of the cross. This can be a spiritual experience that gives meaning to suffering by showing that by adopting the attitude of Christ the person can be redeemed and saved through a personal transformation or *metanoia* (a change of heart).

The Easter Vigil uses the sacred texts of Salvation History to support the individual in their search for meaning by providing hope and, so, engendering meaning in the life of the community who across the past year will have confronted experiences that have tested their faith, such as personal or communal suffering, which will have been recalled at the Good Friday ritual. The proclamation of the texts (*kerygma*) begins with the sacred story of the Creation Myth of Genesis 1 in which God creates humankind in 'God's image and likeness' in order to be in relationship with God. This is followed by the narrative of God's liberation of the Chosen People from slavery in Egypt (Exodus). Next there is a reading from the Prophets, which speaks of God's promise to send a Messiah. All of this culminates in the sacred story of Christ's resurrection. All of these sacred texts offer sacred stories of hope through the fulfilment of the Messianic promise made to the Hebrew people. The role of these biblical texts is to reinforce the hope that comes with Christ's saving act which overcame suffering. This is made plain in the text of the major Easter proclamation, the *Exultet* – 'Christ has conquered! … Darkness vanishes forever! … Jesus Christ has broken the chains of death!' (www.stpeters-cathedral.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/0404-Easter-Dawn-Eucharist-with-Confirmation-6am-2021.pdf). In this section of the ritual, the symbol of light, the story of Salvation History and the sacred text of the resurrection come together to give full meaning to the belief that Christ rose from the dead. The time at which all these aspects come together should at best be the moment when the sun rises. This natural arrival of light into the world takes the community back to the time over 2000 years before when the resurrection occurred. In this the aspects of religion shape the community into a hope-filled people whose lives have meaning through their desire to also be people who will rise from the dead and enter eternal life.

The texts of the Easter Vigil give hope to all who are searching for meaning in suffering and even in death as it promises eternal life in the presence of a saving God who loves unconditionally and promises peace for eternity. This message of hope for those who suffer is made concrete in the use of the Paschal candle (artefact) as a symbol of the light of Christ entering the world on the Resurrection Day. It emphasises that this is part of people's individual story as they, as part of the ritual, light their individual candle from the Paschal candle. In doing this, they understand that the messages of the ritual of the Triduum are that: even if the Christian life causes suffering, their role is unconditional love; that suffering is inevitable, but it has meaning because it can be redemptive and salvific; and that suffering will ultimately be overcome after death and replaced with eternal life with Christ. The belief that Christ lived, died and rose again to life is central to the celebration of the Paschal Mystery; however, it is the integrated use of profound symbolic actions, ethics, texts and sacred stories at a sacred time of anticipation and joy that gives each movement of this ritual the power to touch the mind, heart and soul of the worshipper because beliefs gain their full meaning as they work together to address the 'big questions' and give life meaning.

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FIGURE 8.13 Clergy carry the Paschal candle during the Easter Vigil Mass. What emotions do we associate with darkness? What emotions do we associate with light? What then is the significance of the Paschal candle?

A BELIEF EXPRESSED IN EASTER TRIDUUM RITUALS

Skills: identify, explain, interpret, analyse

1. Across the rituals of the Triduum, which other aspects express the belief that Jesus lived, died and was resurrected?
2. Explain how each of those aspects expresses the belief that Jesus lived, died and was resurrected.
3. What conclusions can be drawn about the relationship between the different aspects in the rituals of the Triduum?
4. In what ways does the expression of the belief through the aspects contribute to the search for meaning for the individual member of the religious tradition?
5. In what ways does the expression of the belief through the aspects contribute to the search for meaning for the community of the religious tradition?

EXPLORING EXPRESSION OF A BELIEF THROUGH THE OTHER ASPECTS

Islam: Tawhid

Tawhid, the belief that there is one, unified and indivisible God, is the central belief that gives Islam its identity and from which its culture has grown. From this belief, there are other subsequent beliefs that shape the expression of this belief. An important expression of Tawhid is the pilgrimage of the Hajj which encompasses the pilgrim reflecting on the many qualities of Allah which reinforces the

belief that God is One. The Five Pillars of Islam, which each express Tawhid using different aspects of religion, begin with the *Shahada*, the statement of faith which is a text that affirms, 'There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet'. For this belief to achieve its fullness of meaning the statement must be said in the presence of others, which illustrates the need for a social structure in the tradition. This is made particularly evident in the final pillar of the Hajj, which is the culminating requirement that bookends the belief in one God and brings together all the other pillars. For this reason, in Islam, this pilgrimage is a compulsory journey to be undertaken at least once in a lifetime by every Muslim in order to restore and renew the relationship with their one God. It is a journey that takes place in the 12th month, the sacred month of *Dhul Hijjah*. It's a time when conflict and violence are forbidden and there is a strong focus on worshipping God. It is also the month that the Prophet made the first Hajj, which illustrates the way sacred stories can complement rituals.

The word Hajj means to set out on a journey to a significant destination. The Hajj is a journey in which the individual aims to repair their relationship with God through rituals that will purify them by having them recognise that they are slaves to the mercy and forgiveness of the one God who is their creator. The aim is to complete *Hajj Mabrur* (a truly successful Hajj) because it transforms the Hajji through detaching them from all else except God so that they visit and leave the sacred place, Mecca, the birthplace of the Prophet and Islam and the location of their Hajj ready to submit to Tawhid. This commitment of submission supports the Hajji as they search for meaning in their lives since it provides the core belief from which a response to all existential questions can be built. The sacred text of the Quran states the importance of the physically symbolic action of prostrating oneself in prayer.

> Behold! We gave the site, to Ibrahim, of the (Sacred) House, (saying): 'Associate not anything (in worship) with Me; and sanctify My House for those who compass it round, or stand up, or bow, or prostrate themselves (therein in prayer).'
>
> Quran, Surah *Al-Hajj* (22), Ayah 26

The rituals of the Hajj call the follower to obedience. The rituals include:

- *Tawaf*, which is when the adherents circumambulate the sacred space, the Kaaba, in an anti-clockwise direction seven times
- *Sa'i*, which requires pilgrims to walk between the hills of Al-Safa and Al-Marwah seven times re-enacting Hagar's distress in her search for water
- standing watch on Mt Arafat – Muslims stand vigil reflecting on the mercy of God, praising Allah and seeking forgiveness for the sins committed
- at Muzdalifah collecting stones to throw at three pillars at Mina, which are symbolic of the Devil in a ritual *Ramy al-Jamarat* in memory of the story of the devil's temptation of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) trying to convince him not to obey God's command to sacrifice his son. This physical action provides a powerful symbol of the action that must be taken in day-to-day life by adherents resisting the temptations of the devil
- celebrating *Eid ul-Adha*. Muslims celebrate this festival at the end of the pilgrimage; reminding them of Ibrahim's obedience. The pilgrims may sacrifice a lamb, symbolising the lamb provided by Allah to Ibrahim to replace the sacrifice of his son
- the final *Tawaf (Tawaf al-Wada)* ends the Hajj.

All of these rituals are linked to the belief in Tawhid through their connection to God as expressed in the other aspects. This is seen in the movement of the people in the *Tawaf* which physically symbolises the oneness of believers as they move in unity around what is symbolically the house of God. Their movement links them to heaven as they are moving in synchronicity with the angels in heaven. Their movement imitates a cosmic movement that draws them towards Allah

who has, through their solemn fulfilment of Hajj, given their lives meaning and purpose and is directing them to return to their homelands with their whole person dedicated to oneness with Allah.

Sa'i is based on the sacred story of Hagar's desperate search for water in the desert and her ultimate despair when she turns to Allah and pleads for his mercy. Allah responds with Ismail finding the water source that saves them. In this symbolic action of running between the mountains the adherent has made plain to them that only God can save and they must submit to faith in Tawhid and God will respond with mercy. Once again the pattern of sacred story linked to symbolic action gives fullness to the belief being expressed, which is, in this case, Allah's oneness.

The sacred text which refers to the Hajj follows directly from a reminder from Allah that the Day of Judgement will come (Surah 22:1–2). It will occur on Mt Arafat and all followers will need to face the consequences of the choices they have made in life. As they wait on Mt Arafat the participants in the Hajj are reminded of their mortality and their need for purification in order to be ready for God's judgement. It also links them to the Prophet Muhammad as this is the place where he delivered his final sermon to Muslims. In this sacred place with the recitation of sacred story and the reading of sacred text the Hajji is linked to both Allah and the Prophet Muhammad providing a confidence in their belief in Tawhid and the teaching that on the Day of Judgement God will be merciful.

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FIGURE 8.14 The Grand Mosque, Mecca during the Hajj. How might this gathering engender a spiritual experience?

The sacrifice of the animal is a reminder of the rewards that come with obedience to God through the retelling of the story of Ibrahim's obedience in following God's command to sacrifice his son but being saved from doing this through the intervention of an angel with him instead sacrificing a ram.

These rituals teach the adherent of the qualities of Allah such as God's greatness, mercy and forgiveness. Through them the Hajji comes to understand the need to recognise that they are servants and must submit to the will of God even if it causes physical, emotional and psychological stress. As the Quran says, '*O you who have believed, bow and prostrate and worship your Lord and do good – that you may succeed*' (22:77).

They also come to see the rewards in faith of this submission to the belief in Tawhid and respond by following the teachings in the sacred text, the Quran:

> Strive for "the cause of" Allah in the way He deserves, for "it is" He "Who" has chosen you, and laid upon you no hardship in the religion—the way of your forefather Abraham. "It is Allah" Who named you 'the ones who submit' "in the" earlier "Scriptures" and in this "Quran", so that the Messenger may be a witness over you, and that you may be witnesses over humanity. So establish prayer, pay alms-tax, and hold fast to Allah. He "alone" is your Guardian. What an excellent Guardian, and what an excellent Helper! (22:78)

The Hajj takes pilgrims to a city that is only open to Muslims. They have moved to the heart of Islam. It is a place that is safe from the judgement of the outside world, but it is also a place that challenges the believer to confront the diversity of Islamic belief and practice. In order to undertake this journey, they must prepare spiritually, financially and physically. Before leaving their homes, they must seek forgiveness from those they have harmed, repay debts and restore relationships they have damaged. On arrival, they must accept *Ihram* by submitting to a purification ritual and wearing the white garment of the Hajj. The white robes are symbolic of the purity they hope to achieve, it is a foreshadowing of the cloths they will be wrapped in at death, and they are symbolic of the oneness of God and of the *umma* (the community) who are all equal in the eyes of Allah. The women's garment does not cover their face, emphasising the equality of all in Islam. This submission to *Ihram* creates an environment in which spirituality is acknowledged and beliefs become central. All material goods are left behind (*dunya*), sexual relations are not allowed even among spouses, it becomes a time that is focused on the individual's relationship with God and Tawhid. The Hajj calls on the individual to seek purification through the mercy of God, who in turn is called on to apply this mercy to others. '*Allah shows mercy to those who show mercy. Show mercy to those on Earth, and Allah will be merciful to you*' (Abu Dawood and At-Tirmidhi).

Their life should be one that applies Islamic ethics. It must be a time when the individual oppresses no living thing, person or animal. The aim being that by experiencing a totally ethical period living in oneness with Allah this will lead the adherent to follow this lifestyle after the Hajj. This ethical life is exemplified in this Hajj story of the teacher Abdullah Ibn Mubarak (726–797 CE).

> On the way to the Hajj he encountered a woman gathering up a dead bird on the side of the road to cook for her starving children. He was shocked and reminded her that it was prohibited to eat dead animals. He was so moved by her situation that he gave her the money he was going to use for the Hajj and went back to his home. When people asked why he was home he refused to answer because one should not boast about their good works. When others began to return from Mecca he went to meet them and each thanked him for the help he had given them. He went home confused and distressed, but that night he had a dream in which it was explained that Allah had been so pleased with him that He had an angel who looked like Abdullah go on the Hajj and help others as Abdullah would have done. He was rewarded for the good works he had done and rewarded him for ten Hajj. This story provides a concrete example of the ethical life demanded by God and also the generosity of God found in the belief in Tawhid.

Recognition of the oneness of God is reflected in the physical presence of a unified brotherhood seen in the gathering in Mecca of a multitude of people sharing the same fundamental belief which is expressed in the *Shahada*. At the Hajj, Muslims of different lifestyle, race, ethnicity, skin colour, spiritual leaning – reactionary and progressive – and educational level, come together

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FIGURE 8.15 Muslim pilgrims touching the Ka'ba during Hajj. How does this action symbolise the belief that God is one?

to deepen their belief that God is one and that each member of the Hajj is equal. The Hajj demands that they treat each other with respect, generosity, tolerance, understanding and compassion. For those in need of charity, this aid must be provided. The Hajj provides a physical experience of the equality in the social structure of Islam as envisioned in the Quran and has the capacity and role of strengthening the *umma*. In this, the global social structures within Islam are found in the microcosm of the community gathered for the ritual in the sacred place and space of Mecca and the Kaaba during the Hajj. The spiritual experience reinforces the ethical principle of equality in oneness and supports the belief that the individual has a role within the brotherhood of all humanity that is guided by the All Merciful, the All Compassionate God who is one.

For those who complete the Hajj Mabrur (pilgrimage accepted by Allah) the pilgrimage is a spiritual experience. The frequent repetition of the prayer of love from slave to their master in the *Talbiyah* becomes a catalyst for change: '*Here I am O Allah, (in response to Your call), here I am. Here I am, You have no partner, here I am. Verily all praise, grace and sovereignty belong to You. You have no partner*' touches the heart and engenders an emotional experience brought on by the demands, strangeness and physicality of the rituals. The adherent comes to understand at a profound level that all of human desire and human action ought to begin and end in Tawhid. They leave Mecca feeling purged and changed for the better as they re-enter the world refocused on Allah and the awareness of their purpose in life as one who submits to the will of God.

A BELIEF EXPRESSED IN THE HAJJ

Skills: identify, explain, interpret, analyse

1. Across the rituals of the Hajj, which other aspects express the belief of Tawhid?
2. Explain how each of those aspects expresses the belief that God is one.
3. What conclusions can be drawn about the relationship between the different aspects in the rituals of the Hajj?
4. In what ways does the expression of the belief through the aspects contribute to the search for meaning for the individual member of the religious tradition?
5. In what ways does the expression of the belief through the aspects contribute to the search for meaning for the community of the religious tradition?

EXPLORING EXPRESSION OF A BELIEF THROUGH THE OTHER ASPECTS

Islam: the belief that there is an afterlife

Belief in life after death is central to the meaning and purpose of most Muslims' lives. Many Muslims believe that earthly life is relatively short and during this time they are preparing themselves for eternal life after death, *Akhirah*. Allah decides when a person dies and after their burial they will stay in their graves until *Yawm al-din*, the Day of Judgement. Then they will be raised from their graves and brought before Allah who will judge them on how they lived their earthly lives. Those who have performed more good deeds than bad will enter *Jannah*, or Paradise, a place described as a garden of everlasting happiness and peace where there will be no sickness, pain or sadness. Those who have performed more bad deeds than good will enter *Jahannam* or Hell, a place of physical and spiritual suffering. Since Allah is forgiving, merciful and compassionate, not all bad actions will be punished as Allah will forgive those people who have repented for their wrongdoings and those who have done some good in their lives.

FIGURE 8.16 An Islamic bereavement card. The card states 'Praise be to God' and hopes to meet their loved one again in *Jannah*, Heaven. The Quran reference is, 'Those who when any affliction smites them, they say: "Verily, we belong to Allah, and it is to Him that we are destined to return".' How might this bereavement card bring comfort to the mourner?

ETHICS

For Muslims, the primary ethical path to eternal life is to live a just life in the service of Allah. They view this life as a test and so they must try to fulfil their Islamic obligations and do as many good deeds as they can in order to reach *Jannah*. Since Muslims believe in the physical resurrection of the body after death, cremation is prohibited. Autopsy is usually forbidden within Muslim communities as they believe it desecrates the body as the deceased's body needs to go to the afterlife in as pure a state as possible. But organ donation is generally accepted as it can help save lives.

All funeral attendees, male and female, are expected to dress modestly and adhere to funeral etiquette. Additionally, shoes must be removed when entering a mosque prayer hall to ensure that no impurities are brought inside. These obligations, normative standards of behaviour, rituals and social structures are meant to highlight the importance of performing good deeds to ensure their own entrance to *Jannah* in time to come.

RITUALS

Immediately after the death of a Muslim, their eyes and mouth are closed, and the body is covered with a white sheet. According to a set of funeral rites and rituals, the body is washed three times by close family members of the same sex. Then the body is positioned with the left hand on the chest and the right on top of that, before being shrouded with the *kafan*, a large, white shroud

and tied with ropes to respect the dignity and privacy of the deceased. During the funeral rite, usually at a mosque, the body and attendees face the holy place of Mecca while prayers are said. The body is then transferred to the burial site and placed into the grave accompanied by prayers. For many, an important part of the burial rite is to place three handfuls of soil into the grave as a reminder of one's own mortality and eventual need of similar supprt from the community.

After the funeral and burial rites, mourners attend their mosque's prayer room to offer religious prayers for the departed, reciting verses that refer to the afterlife. They recite *Salat al-janazah*, the Islamic funeral prayer, which seeks pardon for the deceased and all dead Muslims in the afterlife. These rituals, together with the obligations associated with mourning and the social structure of the community at the burial, all reflect the belief in *Akhirah* (life after death) for Muslims and embed its importance in their lives.

SACRED STORIES

Stories of the angels, part of Allah's heavenly hosts, include the four Archangels, angels of mercy and angels of punishment, who record a person's good and bad deeds. After death, most Muslims believe that the deceased's soul is taken by Azra'il, the Angel of Death. The soul will enter *Barzakh*, a state of waiting, until the Day of Judgement. Allah sends two angels to question the waiting soul. If the questions are answered correctly, the good soul then sleeps during *Barzakh*. If the questions are not answered correctly, the soul is tormented by angels, known as punishment of the grave. This and other stories assist in teaching understanding of the concept of afterlife.

SOCIAL STRUCTURES

Traditionally, only men attend the burial; however, some Muslim communities also permit women to attend. Muslim funeral rites are led by an *imam* (an Islamic leader). After the funeral, the family will gather and receive mourners into their home. To help comfort the mourning family, many guests bring food offerings for the first three days after the funeral. These communal practices together with the rituals, ethics and texts of Islam spiritually support the mourner in the comforting hope of the deceased joining Allah in *Jannah*.

SPACES, PLACES, TIMES AND ARTEFACTS

The burial space for the deceased is prepared by lining its base with wood or stones to prevent the body touching the dirt. At a Muslim burial, the grave is placed perpendicular to Mecca, with the deceased's body positioned so their right side faces the Islamic holy city in readiness for their future resurrection.

The place of the Muslim cemetery or section of a metropolitan cemetery is dedicated to respectful remembrance of community members and allows grieving families to express their sorrow but also put faith in Allah's caring for their loved one in the afterlife.

Sharia, Islamic law, decrees that funeral arrangements must start immediately after the person's death. After the death, the family and friends often gather for memorial prayers and do charity and make donations in the memory of the deceased. Some muslim communities take the same action on anniversaries of the person's passing. It is hoped their prayers, rituals, ethical behaviour and social structures have influenced the fate of the soul of the deceased to reach *Jannah*.

Islam has had a bountiful history of the veneration of relics, especially of those attributed to the Islamic prophet Muhammad. Another artefact is the small stone or marker left to identify the

deceased's final resting place. Large or decorative headstones are not encouraged. Reference to the deceased resting in peace with Allah are common tombstone inscriptions. Thus spaces, places, times and artefacts connect to the belief that there is an afterlife and connect with the expressions of this belief in the ethics, rituals, texts and social structures of Islam.

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES

Islamic funerals are highly spiritual events and central to Muslim communities. In addition to offering comfort for the grieving mourners, they provide an opportunity to pray to Allah to have mercy on the deceased. It is normal for there to be crying and weeping at the funeral and even after, but this is done modestly as it is not appropriate to overly display one's grief. The emotions that stem from the funeral and mourning period deepen one's connection to Allah and the afterlife aided by the rituals, social structure, texts and ethics at this time.

SYMBOLS

Colours such as black and white have symbolic meaning in Islam. Black is associated with darkness and often is representative of Jahannam, Hell. The colour white is considered the purest and cleanest colour in Islam and the colour of the flag of Muhammad. The burial shroud is usually white linen reflecting this link to Allah and the afterlife in *Jannah*. These symbols assisted by the accompanying rituals, ethics, social structures and texts add richness of expression and understanding of the belief that there is an afterlife.

TEXTS

The main source of textual authority for Muslims is the Quran, which states that the good will receive reward, while the bad will receive punishment. As well as several readings from the Quran, prayers are recited at the funeral. The *Salat al-Janazah* beseeches Allah to forgive the dead as they rest awaiting final judgement. Other prayers ask for forgiveness for those who have repented and protect them from Hell. The texts teach, explain, interpret and connect all the other aspects to the Islamic belief in the afterlife.

A BELIEF EXPRESSED IN AN ISLAMIC FUNERAL

Skills: identify, explain, interpret, analyse

1. Across the rituals of the funeral, which other aspects express the belief that there is an afterlife?
2. Explain how each of those aspects expresses the belief that there is an afterlife.
3. What conclusions can be drawn about the relationship between the different aspects in the rituals of the funeral?
4. In what ways does the expression of the belief through the aspects contribute to the search for meaning for the individual member of the religious tradition?
5. In what ways does the expression of the belief through the aspects contribute to the search for meaning for the community of the religious tradition?

EXPLORING EXPRESSION OF A BELIEF THROUGH THE OTHER ASPECTS

Judaism: the belief that God is the Creator

One of the most fundamental beliefs about ultimate reality in Judaism is that God is the Creator and an important part of that creation is the day of rest, *Shabbat*, the Sabbath and it is the focus for exploring how the belief about God the creator is expressed in the other aspects.

ETHICS

Inviting others to share in one's *Shabbat* meal is seen as a *mitzvah* (religious obligation), enabling others to participate in celebrating God's creation. There are many laws and customs surrounding the Sabbath, detailing when and how to observe and celebrate God's creation. The Jewish code of ethics stipulates to keep holy the Sabbath day, and that even animals deserve a day of rest because they, too, are part of God's creation. The biblical injunction not to work on the Sabbath is expounded in great detail in the Talmud and later rabbinic works, including which activities are considered work, and exactly when the Sabbath begins and ends. These obligations constitute a concrete way to find personal meaning in God's creation and the role given to humans, through observing the laws.

RITUALS

God's role in creation is the focus of the Friday night Sabbath dinner rituals. They commemorate and celebrate God the Creator. The rituals include prayers before starting the meal, whilst lighting and blessing the candles, during washing hands, blessing wine, blessing the *challah* and blessing the children. These all praise the Creator and acknowledge that God is present always and everywhere. After the Sabbath meals, the reciting of *Birkat hamazon* (Grace after meals) with singing and gusto physically acknowledges the belief in God's role in creating and providing the food eaten.

SACRED STORIES

The part of the creation story in Genesis 2:1–4 in which it declares that God ceased creation on the seventh day, blessed it and made it holy. It is recited every Sabbath on Friday night to demonstrate God as Creator and the importance and holiness of God in Jewish life.

SPACES, PLACES, TIMES AND ARTEFACTS

Spaces

The Sabbath space can be anywhere, but usually it is celebrated around the space of the dinner table, where family and friends acknowledge God the Creator. The space of the holy ark within the synagogue contains the holy Torah scrolls that celebrate the Creator.

Places

The synagogue and the home are the key places where the community gather during the Sabbath to enact, recite, teach and to bring understanding and internalisation of the belief that God is the Creator.

Times

The weekly time of the Sabbath celebrates God's role in creation, separating the sacred from the mundane. This idea is reinforced in the Sabbath prayers said at particular times within the Sabbath rituals and in synagogue services on Friday evening and Saturday.

Artefacts

The artefacts used during Sabbath are special, decorated, even ornate, to separate them from similar items used in everyday life. The Sabbath candlesticks, wine goblet and decorated cover for the *challah* (braided bread) and the braided *havdalah* candle used in the end of Sabbath ritual, all serve to honour the belief in God's role in creation. The woven strands of dough in the *challah* symbolise that God separated the sacred from profane times at creation. These are physical reminders that bring connection to God the Creator and enhance the meaning of the Sabbath celebration. In the synagogue, the ornate curtains or doors of the ark, the ornamentation around and above the ark visually enhance their meaning as artefacts that honour The Holy One Blessed Be He as the Creator of all.

iStock.com/tomertu

FIGURE 8.17 A Sabbath table setting. Which symbols can you identify in this photograph? What do they symbolise?

SOCIAL STRUCTURES

In Orthodox Jewish homes, the woman of the household lights the Sabbath candles and blesses them. The male recites the other blessings over the wine, the bread, the children and the wife during the Friday night ritual welcoming in the Sabbath. In Progressive homes and synagogues, both men and women may perform these rituals. In synagogue, the rabbi and cantor lead the

Sabbath prayers and hymns, but other members of the congregation may do so. Jews may attend some or all synagogue services on Friday evening, Saturday morning or afternoon and Saturday evening. These services include many references to God's role in creation in the wording of the hymns and prayers. During Sabbath, the peaceful environment in homes and Jewish public areas nurtures a harmonious atmosphere, aided by closed shops and the absence of traffic on the roads.

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES

To fully observe the Sabbath is an opportunity to free oneself of everyday concerns and enjoy a special connection with God and the created world. For many, this day of peace allows them to recover from the stress of the working week and to re-establish a balance in their lives and connect with God the Creator.

Visiting friends in the neighbourhood, joining extended family and friends, attending the synagogue, joining in services, joyfully singing hymns and enjoying other get-togethers all promote friendship, community and joy in the Creator who made the world for us.

SYMBOLS

Two candles are lit at the family dinner table on Friday evening at sunset to welcome in the Sabbath. They represent the two mitzvot (commandments) to 'remember' (Exodus 20:8) and 'observe' (Deuteronomy 5:15) the Sabbath day. The light of the flames is symbolic of God's eternal presence. These candles illuminate the sacredness of the Sabbath day. The two braided *challot (bread)* reminds adherents of God's bounty in providing double portions of manna from heaven on the Sabbath during the Exodus experience. The wine goblet is present to celebrate the Creator of the vine.

TEXTS

During Sabbath numerous passages from the Bible, in particular the Genesis creation story and many of the Psalms, develop the meaning of this belief by emphasising that God is the Creator. Rabbinic interpretations and explanations of the Sabbath are studied and referred to in sermons on the Sabbath. They are also in newsletter articles available in the synagogue and indicate the particular texts to be read in the service for that *Shabbat*. Many prayers have an additional phrase that is said only on the Sabbath that refer to God the Creator.

EXPRESSING A BELIEF

Skills: identify, describe, explain, interpret, analyse

1. In the Sabbath rituals, which aspects express the belief that God is the Creator?
2. Explain how each of those aspects expresses the belief that God is the Creator.
3. What conclusions can be drawn about the relationship between the different aspects in the Sabbath rituals?
4. In what ways does the expression of the belief through the aspects contribute to the search for meaning for the individual member of the religious tradition?
5. In what ways does the expression of the belief through the aspects contribute to the search for meaning for the community of the religious tradition?

EXPLORING EXPRESSION OF A BELIEF THROUGH THE OTHER ASPECTS

Judaism: the belief that death is a natural part of life

There is no formal set of beliefs about death in Judaism but it is acknowledged in a variety of ways that death has meaning. That death is inevitable and a natural part of the human cycle of life is one of several beliefs about the meaning of death found in Judaism. This understanding acknowledges that the finite lifespan is the way humans were created by God and should be accepted. This belief is reflected in the other aspects of the religious tradition whose role is to make its meaning more comprehensible to adherents.

ETHICS

Judaism has many laws and customs about how to deal with death from the moment of passing, through preparation of the body for burial, the funeral and burial, the period of mourning and behaviour of the mourners. One may not hasten death or cremate the body. Since every human is of equal value (Mishnah *Sanhedrin* 4:5), the same rules apply to rich and poor alike. The body of the deceased is washed thoroughly for ritual purification and a plain white shroud and simple pine coffin are used. Burial is conducted as soon as possible in Jewish custom. After burial, *shiva*, seven days of mourning, is observed when mourners are visited at home by family and community, and participate in daily prayer services. It is customary for people to pay a '*shiva* call' on a bereaved individual or family to offer comfort. Mourners then return to their normal routine after *sh'loshim*, 30 days of mourning, during which they refrain from pleasurable activities such as music and parties. But 11 months of mourning are observed by those who have lost a parent. These laws, obligations and customs constitute a concrete way to find meaning in God's creation of the limited human lifespan.

RITUALS

There are many rituals to assist the mourners through their time of grief and accept the reality of the death of their loved one. Mourners tear a garment that they wear during the *shiva* period to publicly demonstrate their sorrow as this is seen as a natural part of the grieving process. The purification and dressing of the body of the deceased follows detailed preparation and prayers. The funeral rites include special prayers and a Mourner's *Kaddish* prayer, which does not mention death but praises God. Mourners and others participate in covering the casket with dirt. The mourning family leave the graveside first while people line up to say to them the traditional words, 'May God comfort you among all the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.'

SACRED STORIES

The story in Genesis 3 teaches that God deliberately limited human life by expelling them from the Garden of Eden for disobeying God. The death and burial of Abraham's wife Sarah in Genesis 23 refers to her dying of old age and her interment in the Cave of Machpelah which inspired Jewish burial ethics.

SPACES, PLACES, TIMES AND ARTEFACTS

Spaces

Although a Jewish burial can be anywhere, it is usually nowadays in a cemetery where there is a sanctified space set apart for Jewish burials. Usually there will be a nearby tap for hand washing. Often there is a space containing a small *tehara shtibl* (purification edifice) in which to conduct prayers. These physically remind Jews of the sanctity of the human body and the teaching to respect the life that has now departed. The tombstone is the recognition that this space is holy as a person is buried beneath it. People should not walk across the gravesite.

Places

The whole Jewish cemetery is a sanctified place to provide a final resting place according to Jewish laws. Historically the cemetery is one of the first places that is established by the Jewish community when it settles in an area. The burial rituals and the special cemetery place and spaces within it confirm that death is the end stage of life that has meaning as much as the life lived. The synagogue also enables the mourners to express the belief that death has meaning and is a natural part of the life cycle in prayers and the weekly recalling of the names of the deceased members on the anniversary of their death.

Times

Seven days of intense mourning, called *shiva*, are observed after a death then after *sh'loshim*, 30 days, mourners return to their normal routine except for the passing of a parent when 11 months of mourning are observed. The consecration of the tombstone is often done a year after the death. The anniversary of death, or *yahrzeit*, is observed each year, and the deceased is remembered four times annually during *Yizkor* (Memorial) services as part of major festival services. The names of the deceased members are recalled as part of the weekly memorial prayers announcing the anniversary of their passing. The meaning of death in the inevitable limited span of human life is thus reinforced in these special times.

Artefacts

Plain white shrouds wrap the deceased for burial with the men also being interred wearing their *tallit*, prayer shawl with cut fringes to display that their life has been cut short. Burial caskets are made of plain wood with no embellishments to emphasise that the body is returning to the Earth as simply as the dust from which it was created (Genesis 4:19). During the *shiva* week of mourning, the bereaved family sit on low stools as a sign of their grief. These physical reminders affirm the value of the life of the deceased, and their connection to the Jewish people. The artefacts are physical reminders for the mourners to accept the inevitability of death. The tombstone itself can be quite simple, just stating the name of the deceased in Hebrew and English without embellishments, or may be quite elaborate with engraved symbols.

Alamy Stock Photo/Gina Rodgers

FIGURE 8.18 Stones for remembrance on a Jewish grave. How many recent visits has this grave had?

SOCIAL STRUCTURES

The support network of the Jewish social structure of family, synagogue and community reinforces the understanding of Jews that death has meaning. The immediate family of the deceased are the main mourners with the support of their wider family, friends and colleagues. Most Jewish communities have a burial organisation called the *Chevra Kaddisha* (Holy Society) to care for the dead. They are usually volunteers, and their role is considered extremely praiseworthy. The bereaved is welcomed to recite the Mourner's *Kaddish* prayer in daily synagogue services for the period of their mourning. These features of the social structures of Judaism help with acceptance of the limited lifespan and of their special responsibilities and obligations outlined in their ethics, rituals, texts and sacred stories.

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES

For the mourners, wearing an article of clothing deliberately torn to express their grief, restrictions such as sitting on low chairs at home, not working, not engaging in acts of personal grooming such as washing or shaving or wearing make-up among other customs, heighten the emotions of bereavement which is seen as helping them to accept the reality of their loved one's limited life-span. *Shiva* visits in the first week of mourning support the grieving family and friends to assist the mourner in accepting that death. The experience of attending the synagogue to recite the Mourner's *Kaddish* at services for the duration of the mourning period, along with observing the obligations outlined in their ethics, ritual and texts also assists in reinforcing the acceptance that death is a natural part of life.

SYMBOLS

Several symbols may be found on Jewish tombstones such as open hands representing a *Cohen* of priestly heritage, a pitcher pouring water into a bowl for a Levite (of the tribe of Levi), candlesticks representing an ideal woman of valour (as described in Proverbs 31:10–31) or a tree that has been cut off symbolising a life that has been cut short. Many Jewish tombstones display a star of David or seven-branch candelabra remembering the deceased and accepting the reality of their death. A 24-hour memorial candle is customarily lit to remember the deceased on their *yahrzeit* (anniversary of the death), which together with the accompanying rituals, prayers, ethics and spiritual experiences create further understanding for adherents in accepting the inevitability of death.

TEXTS

Several biblical texts teach that the origins of many of the laws, rituals and times related to death and mourning are founded in Scripture. In Genesis 3:19, Adam is told that just as he was created from dust of the Earth, so he will die and be buried in the Earth. In Ecclesiastes 5:14, the reader is reminded that humans are born with nothing and die with nothing. The Mishnah, Talmud and other rabbinic codes of law set out the details of how to treat the deceased and mourning family appropriately while acknowledging the inevitability of death. *Midrash Ecclesiastes Rabba* 5:14 explains, 'When one comes into the world his hands are clenched as if to say: the whole world is mine and I will inherit it. And when one takes leave of the world his hands are open as if to say: I have not taken from this world a single thing.' The *Siddur* (prayer book) contains prayers, psalms and hymns that also acknowledge the inevitability of death while entreating God to embrace the deceased.

In the *Laws of Mourning* 13:11, Maimonides' states 'One should not grieve too much over his deceased relative, as it is written: "Weep not for him who is dead, wail not over him" (Jeremiah 22:10); that is, weep not for him too much, since this is the way of the world.'

Psalm 23, 'the LORD is my shepherd …', is customarily recited at Jewish funerals to provide comfort to the mourners while acknowledging the inevitability of death.

The Mourner's *Kaddish* prayer does not mention death at all but only praises God to show acceptance of death as part of the life cycle.

EXPRESSING A BELIEF

Skills: identify, describe, explain, interpret, analyse

1. In the funeral rituals, which aspects express the belief that death is a natural part of the life cycle?
2. Explain how each of those aspects expresses the belief that death is a natural part of the life cycle?
3. What conclusions can be drawn about the relationship between the different aspects in the mourning rituals?
4. In what ways does the expression of the belief through the aspects contribute to the search for meaning for the individual member of the religious tradition?
5. In what ways does the expression of the belief through the aspects contribute to the search for meaning for the community of the religious tradition?

A PERSONAL REFLECTION ON DEATH

Following is a story from a Jewish woman who recounts her feelings while preparing a body for burial. Note the various aspects mentioned as she tells of her experience.

> She was so beautiful as she lay there on her back, perfectly still. I cradled her head in my arms as we washed her face, and then the rest of her body. We cleaned her fingernails and made sure that we rinsed all the creases and crevices so that she be perfectly clean. Her skin was so smooth and her limbs remarkably flexible. Once she was dry we carefully began to get her dressed, in a simple, yet beautiful white outfit. With love and tears we swaddled her in a blanket and asked G-d to bless her.
>
> Then we closed her casket.
>
> Miriam Rivkah bas Yitzchak was born in 1915. She lived a full 90 years. I know nothing else about her other than that she never had children. I don't know how she lived and I don't know how she died. All I know is that I was blessed with the opportunity of preparing her body to leave this world, and that my hand on hers was the last human touch she would receive in this world.
>
> I had never before done a *Taharah* (Purification), the burial preparations done to every Jewish man, woman or child before the funeral. When we entered the room I was petrified. I came thinking that I would only read Psalms while my friend and another woman would prepare the body. But they needed a third person and I felt I couldn't, nor did I want to, refuse.
>
> When we first entered, the stinging smell of cleaning products and bodies hit our faces. The room was freezing cold and on each table, wrapped in plastic, was a body. I wanted to run but then I saw the small flame leaping about in the corner of the room. Next to Miriam's body was a *ner neshamah* (soul candle), lit from the moment of her passing and remaining by her side until burial, warming and illuminating her and her surroundings.
>
> In amazement I watched the woman who was in charge detail what needed to be done. With great love she described the tasks at hand, some simple, others both physically and emotionally difficult, all necessary.
>
> As we began the process, the room started to change. I no longer noticed the other bodies surrounding me, as my sole focus became Miriam. To my surprise, her body, at first cold and stiff to the touch, seemed to almost respond as we held her and cleaned her. For her respect and privacy, only the part of her that was being cleansed was visible and we made great effort to keep the rest of her properly covered. A white piece of cloth covered her face at all times, so that she not be looked at or objectified.
>
> We said certain prayers as we worked, asking for forgiveness on her behalf, and asking her as well to forgive us if we caused her any harm or discomfort. Every step of the process was filled with meaning and depth. And every motion was intended to respect her life while preparing her for death.
>
> After she was thoroughly washed, she then underwent a *mikvah* process, a spiritual and physical immersion in which the body transfers from a state of impurity to that of total purity. The Hebrew word for 'impure,' *tameh*, comes from the same root as *timtum*, a state of constriction, of being blocked. Now, as she is prepared for leaving this world, she leaves all constrictions, all boundaries behind. She is finally to be freed, to be open and to understand what has until now made no sense.

Her final clothing is symbolic of the priestly garments, with white pants, a long shirt, a top coat, belt, apron, head and face covering. The face is covered like that of a bride under the canopy, hidden from the outside world in order to connect with G-d Above and oneself below. And to symbolize the purity and innocence, the deceased, like the bride, is dressed completely in white.

Each tie that is made in her clothing, from the belt to the cloth around her feet and that around her neck, is knotted in the form of letters that it spells the name of G-d. These garments are hand-sewn and have no pockets, to remind us that the deceased has no need nor care for material goods for money and jewels carry no meaning in the World of Truth.

Sand from Israel is placed on her heart and below, to help her body and soul understand that its mission in this world is now over. Her heart will no longer beat and her womb will no longer be able to bear fruit. Upon her closed eyelids pieces of clay rest, a reminder that she no longer needs her physical eyes to see, and her head lays upon a pillow of straw, elevated from the rest of her body ...

As we walked through the burial parlour I thought about Miriam lying in a simple, wooden box. Though beautifully dressed, no one other than her Creator would be seeing her. Her face would remain covered, as it had been since her life ended, with no makeup or false adornments.

Leaving the building, I wished I had met Miriam the day before she had died. I wished I had given her such time, care and love while she was still suffering in the hospital. Yet I hadn't known her, or even about her, so I didn't. But through meeting her right before her ascent Above, I had been taught that the limited time we have in this world is really all we have to care and love and do what must be done. And I wondered: How often I take the time to bathe my own children and dress them so caringly? And how often I pray with such intensity and emotion when I ask G-d or others for forgiveness? And I questioned: why we are so quick to drop everything to attend a funeral, but so reluctant and busy when it comes to a wedding or other joyous occasion?

Through Miriam, I was reminded of what it means to be alive and of what really matters when we are no longer ... For this is our time to prepare for what really matters and what really counts, and we have no idea how much time we have to achieve that goal.

As Miriam is buried today, I pray that her soul be as relaxed and at peace as her body, and that she somehow knows that even in her death she brought meaning and purpose to people she never even met.

'From One World to the Next', by Sara Esther Crispe,
www.Chabad.org, reprinted with permission of the author and Chabad.org.

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FIGURE 8.19 A memorial candle is lit on the anniversary of the loved one's death and on *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar. The candle remains alight for 24 hours. What is symbolised by the candle's flame?

ANALYSIS OF THE ASPECTS OF RELIGION IN THE STORY

Skills: outline, describe, explain

1. What is the experience described in this story?
2. What does the story indicate are the religious beliefs of Sara Esther Crispe?
3. Briefly explain the beliefs about afterlife referred to in this story.
4. Explain the Jewish ethical obligations associated with death mentioned in the story.
5. Describe the particular rituals referenced by the author.
6. Outline the social structures of Judaism described in this story.
7. What are the spaces, places, times and artefacts mentioned?
8. How does this spiritual experience affect Sara Esther Crispe?

CHAPTER 8

REVISION

A Short-answer questions

These questions are not specific to a religious tradition or denomination.

1 Explain what role the aspects of religion play in helping people to find meaning and purpose in life.
2 What is the relationship between beliefs and rituals?
3 How do symbols relate to religious beliefs?
4 What role do artefacts play in expressing the meaning of beliefs?
5 Explain the difference between a religious space and a religious place.
6 What is the role of spiritual experiences in expressing the meaning of beliefs?

B Extended-response questions

Some of these questions relate to a specific religious tradition or denomination.

7 a Explain a particular belief of a religious tradition or denomination you are studying.
  b How is that particular religious belief expressed through the aspects of rituals, symbols and sacred stories of the religious tradition? Use supporting evidence and quotations.
  c How does this belief and its expressions support meaning for adherents?

8 a Explain a second particular belief of a religious tradition or denomination you are studying.
  b How is that particular religious belief expressed through the aspects of texts, spaces, places, times and artefacts of the religious tradition? Use supporting evidence and quotations.
  c How does this belief and its expression support meaning for adherents?

9 Construct a table with two columns. In one column list the various beliefs about death in the religious tradition you are studying and in the second column briefly describe how those beliefs are expressed using a range of other aspects of religion.
10 Create a table with four columns, with the following headings: 'Aspect'; 'Example of the aspect'; 'Belief/s expressed by the aspect'; 'Relationship between this aspect and other aspects'. Complete this table for all of the aspects.
11 Create a Venn diagram that shows the relationship between beliefs and the other aspects by focusing on one fundamental belief.
12 a Describe in detail a specific ritual you have attended or learned about and the role of the artefacts used in the ritual.
  b Describe the social structure of the tradition as demonstrated by the roles and participation of those involved in the ritual.
  c Describe the symbols that were present and explain their purpose in the ritual.

C Essay questions

13 *'Life doesn't give us meaning – we must give meaning to life.'* Discuss how the aspects of religion facilitate 'the giving of meaning' for people in a religious tradition you have been studying.

14 *'Human beings need to express their beliefs and in so doing create meaning for themselves and the people around them.'* For a religious tradition you have been studying, explain how a belief about suffering, expressed through a range of other aspects, creates meaning for adherents.

15 *'Beliefs achieve their full meaning through their expression in the other aspects.'* To what extent is this true in the expression of the belief that there is life after death as demonstrated in funeral rites of a religious tradition you have studied?

16 *'The connections between the expressions of the belief in life after death through a range of aspects in the practices surrounding death is intended to support the individual in their search for meaning.'* Discuss.

17 *'Festivals and rituals are means by which adherents engage with ultimate reality in a way that addresses the big questions of life'.*

Explore how this is shown in one festival or ritual of a religious tradition you have studied.

Worksheet
Aspects: Meaning and purpose

Weblinks
Various for chapter 8

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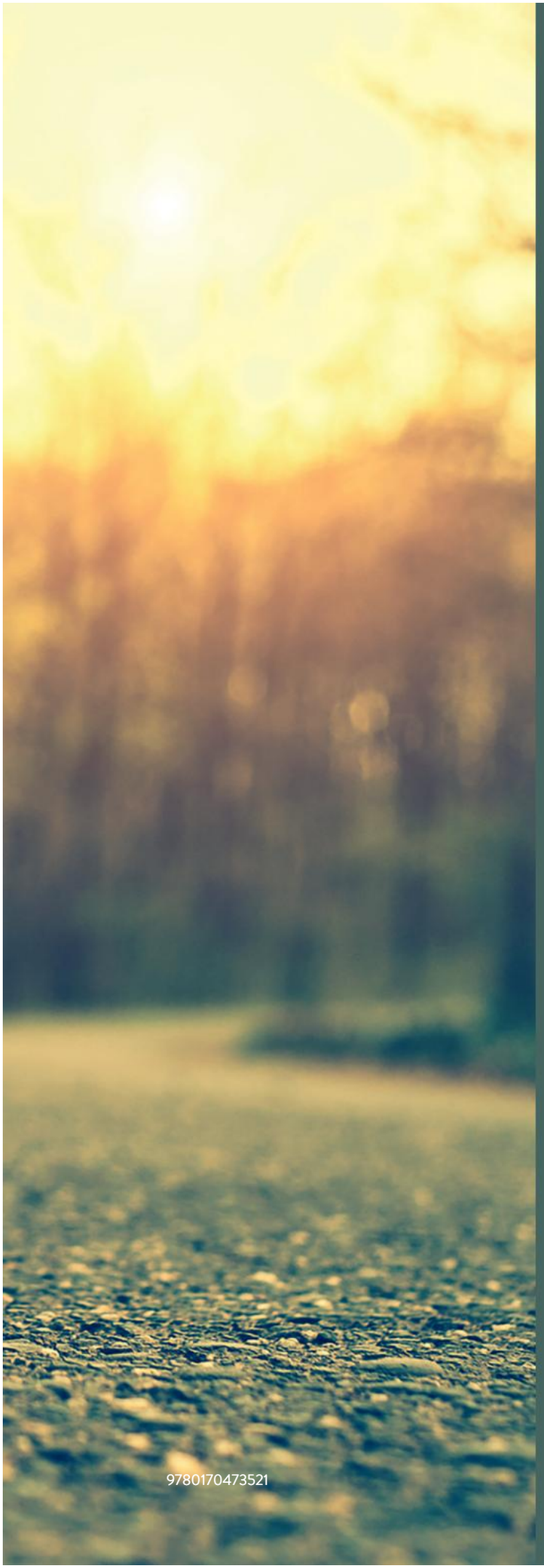
9780170473521



Chapter 9

REDISCOVERING MEANING

Outcome to be demonstrated

Analysis of the interplay between religious beliefs and their expression through related aspects of religion and significant life experiences

Focus questions

- For religion generally, what is the relationship between different types of significant life experiences and religious beliefs?
- For a particular religious tradition, what is a significant life experience of a selected member of that tradition?
- What is that member's level of adherence to relevant religious beliefs before, during and after the significant life experience?
- What is that member's level of understanding of relevant religious beliefs before, during and after the significant life experience?
- What is that member's level of faith in relevant religious beliefs before, during and after the significant life experience?
- What is the member's engagement with the expressions through the aspects of religion of the relevant religious beliefs before, during and after the significant life experience?
- How did the member's religious beliefs and their expressions influence the interpretation of their significant life experience?

9780170473521

Worksheet
Terminology

SIGNIFICANT LIFE EXPERIENCES

Part of the joy and pain of being human is that there are certain events and experiences that are significant because of what they come to mean to individuals. Their influence can vary greatly. They may touch emotions, stimulate imagination, initiate investigative journeys into the physical world or into the world of ideas, inspire new endeavours or lead to confusion or despair. These experiences are sometimes wonderful and uplifting, sometimes heartbreaking and difficult. The interpretation of these experiences can be very personal and relative to the individual; for example, for some, the loss of a pet can be life-changing, for others not so. Experiences that are common to all humanity, and which by their very nature are significant, include:

- the birth of a child
- finding a life partner
- the death of a loved one
- the loss of friendship
- the reassessing of an individual's direction in life
- the loss of employment
- loss of confidence in the leadership of a religious group
- the experience of disaster or tragedy
- experiences of wonder
- serious illness
- unexpected recovery from illness
- declining physical ability
- coming to terms with mortality.

An examination of the list above would suggest that significant experiences are often ones connected to the emotional life of the individual. These experiences affect the person deeply and often cause an emotional response such as great joy, wonder or awe; or, on the other hand, great sorrow, anger, anxiety or even depression. Such significant experiences challenge the individual's sense of identity, self-esteem or reason for being. These experiences force major life choices which impact on relationships and their direction in life. For some, this will lead to personal development, or a reinforcement and strengthening of their worldview; but, for others, it may lead to negativity, nihilism or despair.

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FIGURE 9.1 What two significant life experiences are hinted at in this image?

ADHERENCE TO RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Adherence to religious beliefs relates to the degree to which those beliefs are lived out in a person's life, for example, through a public display of acceptance of those beliefs – such as in the wearing of religious symbols, garments, head coverings and artefacts. Or the adherence to the beliefs may be demonstrated by participating in symbolic actions or being present at rituals significant to the tradition. People who adhere to religious beliefs in some or all of the above ways may vary greatly in the level of faith – that is, the extent to which they believe in and are committed to those beliefs and the extent to which those beliefs shape their identity.

To illustrate this, consider the increasingly common practice of parents participating in infant or child initiation rituals, even though the parents have been inactive personally in the practices of that religion and may not even believe in the tradition's ultimate reality. What does this say about the relationship between adherence and faith? Similarly, marriages performed in a religious ceremony or a holy place without any belief that the vows are linked to a belief in the ultimate reality is another example of adherence without real engagement with the tradition. These examples suggest that people through social pressure or cultural and family traditions will still adhere to religious practices even if faith in the tradition's beliefs has faded, resulting in the engagement with the expression of the beliefs being superficial.

The Australian census statistics show that there is a dissonance between the numbers who claim membership of religious traditions and those who are seen in surveys of attendance at institutional services. This suggests that there are those who are disengaged with their religious traditions but who still maintain some inner identification with the belief system in which they were raised. They may say their faith has lapsed, or that they adhere to the spirituality or values of a tradition, but can no longer adhere to or engage in the practices of the tradition.

For people who belong to a religious tradition, an experience – if significant – may cause some shift in the person's religious beliefs. This may be on their adherence to beliefs. So a shift in adherence to religious beliefs could be shown through:

- a new way of expressing beliefs through the rituals of the tradition
- participating in the activities of the tradition such as social outreach
- undertaking a new role in the community to which they belong
- impacting on their membership of a tradition, strengthening or weakening it
- withdrawing from certain rituals or increasing participation in them
- asking or re-asking the 'big' questions of life and researching and consulting to find new understandings or even different answers
- questioning or even rejecting prior understandings of religious beliefs
- seeking new insight through increased or different spiritual practices
- sharing the insights from experience through art, writing or public presentations.

These processes that show changing adherence may happen swiftly, or slowly unfold over a period of time. Alternatively, both beliefs and adherence to them may remain constant and firm, guiding an individual through life's unexpected changes of fortune. Their beliefs may help them to address those 'big' questions that have been raised. The individual may apply their religion's **truth narrative** to see how their experience fits into a larger plan for humanity. Religious traditions also provide adherents with many structured opportunities to come to terms with the events in their lives through rituals, prayers, worship, music, festivals, fasts and community. During this process, the beliefs and the experience interplay, that is, the experience impacts on the belief and then the beliefs help to interpret the experience. This interplay can be ongoing until some resolution is achieved.

UNDERSTANDING OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Understanding of religious beliefs may be very basic, even unquestioning with little or no basis in truth, or a highly academic analysis of the subtlety and nuance of beliefs and their connections. For some, the understanding of beliefs is intuitive, while for others it is the grounding for further exploration and growth/development in their relationship with an ultimate reality.

FAITH IN RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Faith, that is, the degree of trust and confidence in another person, institution, idea or value, is shown in many different circumstances throughout life. Faith in an idea may be confirmed by past experiences or the knowledge and advice of experts. The idea may have no factual proof, but has some inherent logic that may, through experience, experimentation or research, be supported or even proven. The personal intensity of faith may vary greatly, not only between members of a religious tradition but also within the life of an individual member as they face the vicissitudes of life. Faith is an acceptance of religious beliefs that is usually accompanied by commitment to and engagement with individual and communal expressions of the beliefs. The degree of faith often determines the degree of adherence and engagement with the expression of beliefs.

ENGAGEMENT WITH EXPRESSIONS OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Engagement represents the level of involvement, commitment or devotion to religious beliefs expressed through various aspects of religion. Such engagement can involve:

- participating in the regular rituals, private and communal
- having religious artefacts/shrines in homes
- wearing religious symbols
- reading, studying and meditating on religious texts
- applying the ethical principles and moral values of the tradition to human behaviour
- complying with the social structures and expectations of the tradition
- visiting and honouring the special places and spaces of the tradition
- acknowledging in behaviour the times special to the tradition.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND SIGNIFICANT LIFE EXPERIENCES – CASE STUDIES

In all religious traditions, there are examples of individuals whose significant life experiences have challenged their beliefs. Such experiences are times that reveal an individual's faith in, understanding of, adherence to and engagement in the expression of their beliefs through the aspects of religion. The following are some examples of people from Christianity, Islam and Judaism who have encountered a significant life experience and explores how those experiences interplayed with their religious beliefs.

Online content
Buddhist beliefs
Hindu beliefs
Sikhism beliefs

Case studies from Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism can be found on NelsonNet.

C.S. LEWIS: A GOOD AND LOVING GOD; ETERNAL LIFE

Lewis' religious beliefs before his significant life experience

For some people, their faith is their life. Clive Staples Lewis (1898–1963) in a sermon in 1942 put it this way: *'I believe in Christianity as I believe that the Sun has risen, not only because I see it but because by it, I see everything else.'* Lewis, who refused to identify with any one Christian

denomination, although generally worked and worshipped with the Anglican communion, is best remembered for writing *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* in which his lead protagonist, Aslan, allegorically depicts the story of Christ; however, his enduring legacy has been the many other works he produced as a Christian apologist, that is, as a leading voice explaining how Christianity's truth narrative was relevant to generations of British people who had gone through the devastation of World War I and World War II. In his book, *The Problem of Pain* (1940), he was able to explain how the God of Christianity could still be one of love in the face of so much pain as suffering is an act of love with which God seeks to perfect the subject of that love. It is *'God's megaphone to rouse a deaf world'*. It offers the opportunity for the *'rebel soul'* to return to God. Lewis concludes that *'God is Goodness. He can give good, but cannot need or get it. In that sense all His love is, as it were, bottomlessly selfless … it has everything to give and nothing to receive.'*

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FIGURE 9.2 C.S. Lewis with his wife, Joy. What does this image suggest the experience of marriage brought to Lewis?

The impact on Lewis' religious beliefs of his wife's illness and death

Lewis' faith sustained him when his wife, Joy Davidman Gresham, was diagnosed with terminal cancer. He was comforted during this time by the belief in an interventionist God who performs miracles. A belief reinforced by Gresham's temporary remission after a healing ritual carried out by Reverend Bide, an ex-student of Lewis. The couple's faith remained strong, with their belief in an afterlife giving them hope in the face of Gresham's inevitable death. Evidence of this is found in Lewis' letters to his friends during this time:

> You would not believe how many joys have been experienced amid these troubles, and what wonder? For, has He not promised to comfort those who mourn? … I am in much trouble … Nevertheless, let us lift up our hearts: for Christ is risen.

Yet, on her death, he found that the beliefs about God that had been his strength were, in fact, 'a house of cards' that came crashing down in the 'process' of his grief. His 'jottings' in *A Grief Observed* provide an account of the interplay between the experience of Gresham's death and his faith in God and the promise of an afterlife. He reveals his intense pain and provides an account of the struggle he had in maintaining his belief that the nature of God is good and loving. He initially accused God of being brutal and sadistic, an *'Eternal Vivisectionist'* but, ultimately, through a mystical experience in the night, his belief in a good and loving God was restored and strengthened. He found God had not abandoned him; peace was possible; and he was comforted that all would be resolved in the afterlife.

Lewis' beliefs had, therefore, not fundamentally changed; what had shifted was his understanding that reason could explain God. He wrote no more apologetics and humbly submitted himself to the Mystery of God and the hope of an afterlife as expressed in his epitaph for Joy Gresham.

Here the whole world (stars, water, air,
And field, and forest, as they were
Reflected in a single mind)
Like cast off clothes was left behind
In ashes, yet with hopes that she,
Re-born from holy poverty,
In lenten lands, hereafter may
Resume them on her Easter Day.

EXPLORING C.S. LEWIS' SIGNIFICANT LIFE EXPERIENCE
Skills: summarise, explain, analyse, research

1. Draw conclusions as to why Lewis remained faithful to God in the midst of Joy Gresham's suffering?
2. Identify which aspects you would use to discuss Lewis' adherence to, understanding of, faith in and engagement with his religious beliefs before, during and after his significant life experience?
3. Watch or read *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and identify evidence of the qualities of Aslan that reveal something of Lewis' beliefs about Christ, redemption and salvation before his significant life experience.
4. Conduct your own research into C.S. Lewis seeking quotations or incidents that provide evidence for your analysis of the interaction of Lewis' significant life experience with his religious beliefs.

OSCAR ROMERO: THE REIGN OF GOD AND THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST

Background

Oscar Romero (1917–80) was a bishop in El Salvador at a time when the small Central American country was experiencing civil conflict between the majority of the population who were poor farmers (campesinos) and the ruling oligarchy. In this nation in which 98 per cent of the population were Roman Catholic, the Church had traditionally tried to take a middle path which, by default, meant they supported the status quo of oppressive government policies. An escalation in the conflict during the 1970s, following the rise of Marxist movements in Latin America, resulted in atrocities being committed that challenged the Church to take a definite stance. Vatican II's document, *Gaudium et Spes,* had taught that the church should stand with the poor. Conservative bishops argued that that position would lead to bloodshed. Bishop Oscar Romero was caught up in the debates at the time and his role became pivotal when he was appointed Archbishop of San Salvador in 1977. Romero had been a man who sought peace through pastoral care and dialogue, a view shaped by his conservative theology. However, over time, the experience of the political violence led him to adopt a reinterpreted belief in what it meant to be a follower of Christ who works to establish God's Kingdom on Earth. His transformation led to his martyrdom and eventual canonisation as a saint.

Equipo Maiz/CAFOD

FIGURE 9.3 Oscar Romero. What does this image indicate about his relationship with the campesinos, the impoverished farmers of El Salvador?

Romero's religious beliefs before his significant life experience

Oscar Romero's understanding of God was consistent with the High Theology of the time that emphasised the omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience of a transcendent and distant God whose authority was exercised on Earth by a hierarchical, institutional Catholic Church in which the Pope ruled in the manner of a king, but with moral right as the Church was the mystical body of Christ. This understanding of God and God's relationship with God's people through the Church dominated Romero's thinking as secretary of the Bishop's conference (1967–1970) in El Salvador. He also became the director of *Orientación,* the official newspaper of the Archdiocese of San Salvador, which at that time was a conservative publication. His role in the directorship of the newspaper showed Romero was a faithful apologist for the traditional Magisterium of the Catholic Church. This caused friction between himself and the priests who were adopting a more radical and pastoral theology that demanded land rights for the campesinos (the poor, and often indigenous, farmers who were controlled by a wealthy aristocracy).

Romero was, nevertheless, also a pastoral priest who remembered his impoverished roots and expressed this in his sermons and visits to prisons and hospitals. But at this time he was influenced by the group, Opus Dei, who were defenders of the conservative Catholic view and the importance of a submissive relationship with the ruling government in El Salvador. However, Romero had also developed a very close friendship with Father Rutilio Grande who was professor of pastoral theology at the university and was lecturer in the history of colonialism in Latin America. Grande encouraged his students to turn their knowledge of past injustices into actions that would establish God's Reign on Earth – a reign of justice and liberation from the sin of attachment to material goods at the expense of the health and well-being of the poor. Romero, though impressed by Grande, was unable to adopt his theology.

The significant life experience that began Romero's reinterpretation of his religious beliefs

The process of change in Romero's understanding of Christ and of God's Reign on Earth began in 1970, when he was appointed Bishop of Santiago de Maria in the Archdiocese of San Salvador.

He now had the role of chief pastor for the people in the largest and poorest diocese in El Salvador – which also included the town in which he had grown up. This authority made him responsible for the welfare of the poorest of the poor. During his two years as Bishop of Santiago de Maria, Romero was appalled at the living conditions in which his people struggled to survive. He used the finances of the diocese and his own personal finances to help the poor. He wrote in his diary that people who are poor should not just receive handouts from the Church or the government but participate in changing their lives for a better future. It became clear that he was going through some sort of change of heart. He was recognising the Gospel in the arguments of those pushing for a Church which stood as Christ with the suffering people. It was the beginning of Romero applying the belief in the incarnation of Christ to the people of his diocese.

Romero's role as Bishop of Santiago de Maria proved to be the beginning of his significant life experience. The following is what Romero said to the Jesuit provincial, Fr Cesar Jerez some years later in Rome as he reflected on the shift in this understanding of the incarnation of Christ at Santiago de Maria that continued with the death of Fr Rutilio Grande:

> *Fr Jerez asked Romero,* 'Why did you change, Monsenor?'
>
> 'You know, Father Jerez, I ask myself that same question when I'm in prayer.'
>
> 'And do you find an answer, Monsenor?'
>
> 'Some answer, yes … When I went to seminary and started my studies and then they sent me to finish studying here in Rome, I spent years and years absorbing my books, and I started to forget about where I came from. I started creating another world. When I went back to El Salvador, they made me the bishop's secretary in San Miguel. I was a parish priest for 23 years there, but I was still buried under paperwork. And when they sent me to San Salvador to be auxiliary bishop, I fell into the hands of Opus Dei, and there I remained … Then they sent me to Santiago de Maria, and I ran into extreme poverty again. Those children that were dying just because of the water they were drinking, those campesinos killing themselves in the harvests … You know Father, when a piece of charcoal has already been lit once, you don't have to blow on it much to get it to flame up again. And everything that happened to us when I got to the archdiocese, what happened to Father Grande and all … it was a lot. You know how much I admired him. When I saw Rutilio dead, I thought, "If they killed him for what he was doing, it's my job to go down that same road …" So yes, I changed. But I also came back home again.'
>
> 'Archbishop Óscar Romero: setting the record straight' by Gene Palumbo, *National Catholic Reporter* (10 October, 2018)

Therefore, Romero, when asked directly about what had caused him to change his interpretation of his belief in the Reign of God into one that demanded justice in the here and now and his belief that Christ is incarnated in the poor, showed in his response that it was not a single moment of change, but an ongoing process due to his encounter with the poor in a tortured Church. It led to him reinterpreting his understanding of the Catholic Church's mission from a theoretical theological position to a *praxis* (faith in action). Romero describes the process as an evolution.

Appointment as Archbishop of San Salvador (1977) continues the significant life experience

The challenge to Romero's tendency towards conservative beliefs continued when he was installed as Archbishop of San Salvador on 22 February 1977. The Jesuit rule under which he trained in Rome demanded faithfulness and obedience to the Church. His predecessor had stood down as he no longer had the stamina to deal with the increasing violence that was being inflicted on the people

of El Salvador by government security forces and Marxist militants. The mass killing and arrests of protestors on 27 February by government forces led Romero to respond by ordering Church officials in San Salvador to return to their communities to offer solace and protection to the poor. This was just five days after he became archbishop. He had been appointed because it was assumed he would maintain the view that Church and State need to work together as God ruled both, but instead he was acting on a belief that Christ's teachings directed his obligation towards the poor not the State.

The Bishops Conference under his leadership issued a response to the deaths that criticised the violations of human rights, demanded land reform and proclaimed the mission of the Church to be the building of the Reign of God, a reign of peace and justice. It said the Church should stand with the campesinos. This was seen to be a public criticism of the government.

The murder of Grande and his companions shortly after tested Romero further. Romero was a biblical scholar who had listened to Grande's view that the Scriptures are the grounding for liberating the poor. Grande argued that Jesus Christ's teachings on the Kingdom of God offered a radical call to bring peace and justice: 'We come to put leaven in the dough, not to give them a plan!'

The 'them' were the campesinos who Grande said needed the Church to serve as the Gospels demanded. In the language of the theology of the conference at Medellin (1968), the answer was in giving a 'preferential option to the poor'. It was in the spirit of this Christology that Romero responded to Grande's murder. He used his position in the social structure of the Church to express his beliefs in the incarnation of Christ and the Reign of God. He met with the people of Grande's parish and other priests, and together they discussed what should be done. Romero issued a denunciation of the murder; a suspension of masses other than one mass in the cathedral the following Sunday; he demanded punishment of the perpetrators; suspended all school classes so that the community could reflect on the gravity of the moment; and he, the archbishop, would not attend government functions, including the inauguration of the president until Grande's death had been investigated fully. In his homily at the funeral, he affirmed support of Grande's work in the rural parish of Aguilares and spoke of the victims as 'co-workers in Christian liberation'. On 19 June, Archbishop Romero said to the people of Aguilares:

> You are the image of … Christ nailed to the cross and transfixed by a spear. We suffer with those who are lost, with those who are fleeing and do not know what is happening to their families … We are with those who suffer torture.
>
> Romero Trust

The role of religious beliefs in helping Romero to interpret his significant life experience

Romero's understanding of Christ was no longer that of a distant judge, but a Christ who is incarnated in the people – they are Christ, the suffering Christ. The Church encompasses all Salvadorans who were suffering under the government's repression – including those in the leadership of the Church. This is evidence of the interplay between Romero's belief in the incarnation of Christ and the significant life experience of empathising with the poor.

Romero's homilies, radio broadcasts and interviews showed the development of his adherence to this vision of the Church and its role in the world. It was a vision that was fed by the writings of Vatican II and the encyclicals of Pope Paul VI. His belief that the Church was the People of God building God's Kingdom on Earth was made real by his practice of having lay people assist him in the writing of homilies. He met daily with the people who flocked to the cathedral to tell him stories of the pain of their family members who had been taken by death squads, or who faced injustices at the hands of their land holders. The Kingdom of God was being created in the here and now – not a

future event to be found in heaven. For Romero, everyone had a role in this work. Everyone owned the Gospels and should speak of Christ's work for the oppressed and suffering. Romero came to see his function as being another Christ in the world for his people. He often acknowledged the likelihood of his violent death. He once said to theologian Leonardo Boff, 'We need to give our lives in order to protect the lives of others; this was the path of the Crucified One'.

Romero's motto, taken when he became bishop, was *Sentir con la Iglesia* – to think or feel with the Church. Over the course of his significant life experience, his understanding of what that phrase meant shifted. He redefined the Church. The mystical body of Christ was the people who were suffering and dying as Christ had, not an institution ruled by a distant God. He said, 'We have never preached violence, except the violence of love, which left Christ nailed to a cross, the violence that we must each do to ourselves to overcome our selfishness and such cruel inequalities among us. The violence we preach is not the violence of the sword, the violence of hatred. It is the violence of love, of brotherhood, the violence that wills to beat weapons into sickles for work' (*Homily,* Oscar Romero, 27 November 1977).

EXPLORING OSCAR ROMERO'S SIGNIFICANT LIFE EXPERIENCE

Skills: identify, describe, research, explain, interpret, draw conclusions

1. Locate El Salvador on a map.
2. Find images of Christ that show Romero's different understanding of Christ.
3. Explain what happened to Romero's religious beliefs during the period of being Bishop of Santiago de Maria to the death of Fr Rutilio Grande.
4. How was Romero's adherence to, understanding of and faith in the Kingdom/Reign of God expressed before, during and after his significant life experience?
5. How was Romero's adherence to, understanding of and faith in beliefs about Jesus Christ expressed before, during and after his significant life experience?

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER: HUMANITY OF CHRIST, CRUCIFIED CHRIST, CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP

Background

German Protestant Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906–1945) was a Nazi resister during World War II. In 1935, he – with other like-minded individuals – established the Confessing Church and seminary to train theologians to speak out against the Nazis. The Gestapo closed down the seminary in 1937 and banned him from preaching. After visits to America, witnessing the fight for civil rights, he returned to Germany in 1939 to work with the resistance to the Nazi regime. Bonhoeffer was eventually arrested in 1943 for helping to transport Jewish people to safety. After a failed attempt on Hitler's life by people in Bonhoeffer's circle, he was executed in April 1945.

Bonhoeffer's beliefs before his significant life experience

In terms of his beliefs, Bonhoeffer's writing consistently shows the centrality of Jesus Christ as he struggled to reconcile his opposition to Nazi oppression with his pacifist beliefs. In the

period of 1930–1938, he developed a theology in which the Church was the presence of Christ in the world *(Sactorum Communio)*. In 1933, he outlined three ways in which the Church must confront the injustice of the oppression of Jewish people. First, that Christ's teachings required the Church to challenge the regime that was oppressive; second, the Church must offer service to the oppressed and third, the Church must take direct political action ('The Church and the Jewish Question').

The failure of the German Protestant Churches to challenge the new regime led to Bonhoeffer and others beginning the Confessing Church, whose mission was to be Christ's presence demanding justice through preaching and peaceful action. At this point, Bonhoeffer was expressing his ethical position by exploring who Christ is. He concluded that Christ is the Word of God, truly divine and the source of salvation. Bonhoeffer argued that Christ's humiliation on the cross and exaltation as shown by the empty tomb were both evidence of Christ's divinity. He wrote, 'Both in being humiliated and in being exalted, Jesus remains wholly human and wholly God.' He argued that the Church needed to be willing to also be humiliated in order to be exalted. By 1937, he had developed a strong argument for pacifism that he spelt out in 'The Cost of Discipleship'. Bonhoeffer's pacifism was based on The Sermon on the Mount in which he saw Christ's instruction on non-violence to be self-evident.

Getty Images/ullstein bild

FIGURE 9.4 Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, photographed in 1939. What does this image suggest about Bonhoeffer? How is his life to change?

Bonhoeffer argued the importance of obedience to Christ: 'only he who believes is obedient, and only he who is obedient believes'. His central theme was that discipleship is costly. He wrote, 'Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.' Discipleship accepts the cross.

> Some, God deems worthy of great suffering and grants them the grace of martyrdom, while others are not tempted beyond their strength. But in every case it is one's cross. It is laid on every Christian. The first Christ-suffering that everyone has to experience is the call which summons us away from our attachments to this world. It is the death of the old self in the encounter with Jesus Christ. those who enter into discipleship enter into Jesus' death. The cross is not the terrible end of a pious happy life. Instead, it stands at the beginning of community with Jesus Christ. Every call of Christ leads into death … Suffering willingly endured is stronger than evil, it spells death to evil.
>
> Discipleship and the Cross, p 87. Collier Books: Macmillan NY, 1963 (Originally 1937 Germany)

Bonhoeffer's significant life experience

The evidence suggests that the initial significant life experience for Bonhoeffer was the internal conflict within the Protestant Tradition in Germany after the rise of Hitler. In 1933, legislation that came to be called 'The Aryan Paragraph' placed restrictions on Jewish involvement in society and led to a schism between the German Christian Movement, which supported the Nazis, and the new sect, 'The Confessing Church'. Bonhoeffer joined the Confessing Church in 1934 and became one of its most radical supporters. He wrote an essay clarifying his ideas, called 'The Church and the Jewish Question', which shows his passion for the principle of 'working for the good of all' as a duty for a follower of Christ.

By 1938, he was forbidden to live in Berlin and preach, a further stage in his significant life experience. This led to a speaking tour of the United States in 1939. He was encouraged to stay overseas for his own safety; however, Bonhoeffer decided to return to Germany knowing that the decision would lead to him having to contemplate violent action against the Nazis. This was a turning point as seen in his writings: 'I will have no right to participate in the reconstruction of Christian life in Germany after the war if I do not share the trials of this time with my people' (Letter to Reinhold Niebuhr). He applied to be a military chaplain to avoid armed service but was rejected. Instead he joined the Abwehr (the Nazi intelligence service) which allowed him to travel overseas on government business while secretly using this as an opportunity to work for the resistance. At the time he faced the significant life experience of addressing the question of whether following Christ could justify violence in his historic context.

There is debate about the degree to which Bonhoeffer moved away from his commitment to pacifism. Reinhold Niebuhr, Bonhoeffer's friend, said that this time marked an ethical and theological shift. He argued in his book, *Ecce Homo: Behold the Man* that Bonhoeffer rejected the position he had taken in 'The Cost of Discipleship', concluding that there are times when the Christian must choose the lesser evil, even if it be violence. Bonhoeffer's writings show he had reflected on the silence of the Church saying, 'Reconciliation with the world cost God so dearly. Only by executing God's judgement on God can peace grow between God and the world, between human and human … only as judged by God can human beings live before God; only the crucified human being is at peace with God.' … 'When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.'

Bonhoeffer consistently claimed that 'Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ' and for him Christ must be at the centre of all things. Injustice must be resisted and 'the church is the place where Jesus Christ's taking form is proclaimed and where it happens' (*Ethics: Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, Vol. 6). The fact that Bonhoeffer later explored guilt as a major theme led to the conclusion that his resistance became evident in that he was a participant in the plot to assassinate Hitler.

Bonhoeffer's expression of his religious beliefs after this significant life experience

In 1943, after helping a group of 14 Jews escape Germany, Bonhoeffer moved into the final phase of his life. He was arrested and imprisoned, where he ministered to other prisoners helping them to find Christ in a place that tortured and humiliated them. His writings speak of 'free responsibility'. He asks, 'Who stands fast? … Only the one for whom the final standard is not his reason, his principles, his conscience, his freedom, his virtue, but who is ready to sacrifice all these, when in faith and sole allegiance to God he is called to obedient and responsible action' (Letters and Papers from prison). Violence is evidence of human brokenness, but in this time, one must discern the will of God. Bonhoeffer did not offer a justification for his actions. He writes:

> On our blood lies the heavy guilt … I cannot escape guilt by evading my responsibility. The knowledge of Jesus Christ is a living reality. It is not something that is given once and for all, a static entity, something possessed. With every new day, therefore, the question arises, how, today, here, in this situation, can I remain and be preserved within this new life with God, with Jesus Christ? …. What is worse than doing evil, is being evil. The peace of Jesus is the cross. And this cross is the sword God wields on Earth … I thought I could acquire faith by trying to live a holy life, I discovered later, and I am still discovering right up to this moment, that it is only by living completely in this world that one learns to have faith. *(Letters and Papers from prison)*

On the day before his death, he led a Communion Liturgy with fellow prisoners. His words as he was led away were: *'This is the end, for me the beginning of life.'* A camp doctor who witnessed Bonhoeffer's hanging described how:

> The prisoners … were taken from their cells, and the verdicts of court martial read out to them. Through the half-open door in one room of the huts, I saw Pastor Bonhoeffer, before taking off his prison garb, kneeling on the floor praying fervently to his God. I was most deeply moved by the way this lovable man prayed, so devout and so certain that God heard his prayer. At the place of execution, he again said a prayer and then climbed the steps to the gallows, brave and composed. His death ensued in a few seconds. In the almost 50 years that I have worked as a doctor, I have hardly ever seen a man die so entirely submissive to the will of God.

EXPLORING DIETRICH BONHOEFFER'S SIGNIFICANT LIFE EXPERIENCE
Skills: identify, explain, draw conclusions, synthesise

1. What explanation does Bonhoeffer give for joining the conspiracy to assassinate Hitler?
2. How do the texts written by Bonhoeffer express his adherence to the Gospel teachings of Jesus Christ before, during and after his significant life experience?
3. How do the texts written by Bonhoeffer express his understanding of the teachings of Jesus Christ before, during and after his significant life experience?
4. In what ways did the actions taken by Bonhoeffer express his faith in Jesus Christ before, during and after his significant life experience?
5. As a class, discuss: 'Is it ever justifiable to violate the sanctity of human life in order to prevent a greater evil?' Give some examples to demonstrate your opinion.

FATHER ROB GALEA: IMMANENCE OF GOD, POWER OF GOD'S MERCY AND FORGIVENESS

Galea's religious beliefs before his significant life experience

Father Rob Galea (b. 1981) grew up in Malta, one of the world's most Catholic nations. His Catholicism was shaped by family and culture – not by personal commitment or understanding of his beliefs. His religious practices were not linked to a relationship with God, but to reinforcing the beliefs of his family and community. His notion of God was that God, though compassionate, was distant and not involved in the life of young men like himself. He had become a rebellious adolescent involved with violent gangs. When his life became threatened by a gang member, he realised that he had made many choices that went against the moral code of God and his family and he believed he was beyond forgiveness. He was despairing and contemplated suicide. However, all of that changed when he had an encounter with Jesus that he says, 'changed my life forever' (Compass ABC) and proved to him that God was merciful and loved him personally and unconditionally.

In his biography, *Breakthrough: A Journey from Desperation to Hope,* he describes an adolescent who struggled with bullying in school while grieving the loss of grandparents. He says, 'I did not know how to deal with my grandmother's death in particular, and the grieving of my whole family who I had always thought of as unshakable. I was so angry and confused and I didn't understand why things were changing.' He was asking the 'Big Questions'. Why do people suffer? Why did

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FIGURE 9.5 Father Rob Galea. What does this image of Fr Galea suggest about the impact of his significant life experience?

his grandmother have to die? By age sixteen he was 'an alienated, messed up teenager' and he saw no answers offered in his religious tradition. His concerned mother took him from priest to priest trying to find a solution to his rebelliousness, but none was able to touch his heart. He says, 'I hadn't thought God would be interested in what I had to say … or that he would be willing to talk to me. After all, God had bigger issues to deal with … poverty … refugees … wars. I also thought he had more important people to communicate with than me.'

Thanks to what he sees as a spirit-led intervention via a random invitation for his sister to attend a Catholic youth group, his life changed because of a shift in his relationship with God. He says, 'I wasn't particularly religious at that point, but I was insulted not to be included (in an invitation to a youth group meeting) and said so. … one thing led to another and I ended up at the meeting'. This was in spite of him not being touched by his regular attendance at Church with his mother. Galea says, 'While I was there [at the meeting] I heard someone talk about having a personal relationship with God. How wonderful it sounded! To have a direct connection … to a God, who could understand me and what I was going through! …. I was ready for change.' (*Breakthrough*, Introduction, pp. xiii–xiv, 18)

Galea's significant life experience

The impact of the words that he heard at the meeting made him feel 'surprisingly hopeful' He says, when in his room alone, 'I put an empty chair across from me … and talked to it. I said, "Jesus sit down I want to talk to you". Day after day I talked. Day after day nothing happened. Then one day, someone talked back. … to my surprise, I got out of my dark little room, and I did it with help from an unexpected source: God.' He came to realise that God did intervene in people's lives. 'There was a monumental shift within me that day … I was able to believe someone was listening to me, and it made all the difference. I felt a little bit of light come back into my heart.' He found God did love him enough to want to be a part of his life.

The impact of the experience on Galea's religious beliefs and their expression

Galea's initial response was to challenge Jesus for not intervening in his life earlier. He describes it this way: *'I suddenly had a sense that someone was in the room with me … I closed my eyes and after a while opened them … there was someone sitting in the chair in front of me … A gentle-looking person – a man … I recognised that it was Jesus … my heart started to fill with anger … I had years of rage to let out and my heart needed healing. It was like the Holy Spirit had chosen that moment to help me get rid of inner fury, loneliness and regret that was still left in my heart.'* His initial response lacked an understanding of the compassion of Christ. However, this changed. He says, *'I looked at Jesus … [and] saw tears stream down his face … my heart broke. They were the tears of my pain. I could see he knew my heart and he understood my pain. He was aware of my sin, my darkness, my mess and my shame and he loved me anyway. He loved me unconditionally … Through the [my] tears I asked Jesus for forgiveness … I asked Jesus to be the Lord and Saviour of my life, and I committed to a relationship with him. God surrounded me, and as I surrendered to him, my life changed' (Breakthrough, pp. 19–22).*

Fr Galea's understanding of God had shifted from the transcendent, distant God to the immanent Christ who suffers with humanity. He understood how God's unconditional love could be transformative. In the following weeks, he expressed his new-found beliefs by continuing to attend the youth group and developing the practice of keeping a daily time of meditation and writing in a prayer journal. He reflects that 'A *Christian doesn't follow a religion, but a person: Jesus Christ'* and that:

> The purpose of the practices of religion (prayer, sacraments and worship with the believing community) is to serve and deepen our relationship with God, personally and communally. With the grace and mercy found in the sacraments – particularly the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Eucharist – I walk confidently towards a life of holy freedom. I found hope in the glimmerings of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, the risen Son of God. Having a relationship with him was redemptive. (*Breakthrough, pp. 22–23, 32*)

From this point, he attended mass every day. He continued his involvement in Church through a Catholic Youth Movement called *Marana Tha* (Come Lord Jesus). He sought out a spiritual director who helped him to evolve through the Sacrament of Reconciliation where he found the *'disproportionate mercy of the Father … was a revelation to me'* (*Breakthrough,* p. 36).

The lasting impact of the experience on his beliefs

Fr Galea met an Italian priest and youth group leader, Fr Giovanni Sacca, who became a mentor and role model for him. This resulted in him having to wrestle with a calling to the priesthood. He realised, *'Walking with Jesus was countercultural. I wanted to be a man of faith in a world that claims there is and can be no God.'* He was ordained a Catholic priest in 2010. As a seminarian, he had spent a gap year in a parish in Bendigo, Australia. He found his vocation fulfilled there and decided to stay. He says, *'There is nothing more beautiful and fulfilling than responding to the call of God. I love being a priest … death to self is an ongoing act of surrender, to choose love of others over love of self. As a priest I choose to live for God and for my community … we're building an eternal, rather than a temporal, kingdom …. Jesus has come to show us this by the way he lived and died'* (*Breakthrough,* pp. 33, 66).

Now, through his gift as a musician he speaks annually to hundreds of thousands of people worldwide as an evangelist, proclaiming the Gospel, talking about Jesus and the Church to young people who rarely attend parish services. He says his vocation is to *'ruin the world for love in the name of God who is love. By helping young people find purpose and hope through Jesus'* (Ministry video). The words to one of his songs express the impact of his encounter with Christ on his life and that he sees the challenge posed by that experience as an ongoing challenge of dying to oneself for God.

> Lord you can heal the broken soul … Lord I bring myself to you. I surrender to You … Let me know you'll be there to get me through. Lord help me to lay down my pride and surrender to you. (Fr Rob Galea, *Breakthrough*, p. 18)

EXPLORING ROB GALEA'S SIGNIFICANT LIFE EXPERIENCE

Skills: identify, describe, explain, interpret, draw conclusions, research

1. In what ways has Fr Rob found meaning and purpose in his life through his encounter with Christ? Use supporting evidence and quotations in your answer.
2. Explain the importance of prayer in the transformation of Fr Rob's life. Use supporting evidence and quotations in your answer.
3. Find another song written by Fr Rob Galea and analyse the beliefs that are expressed in the lyrics of the song.
4. Construct a table with three columns headed 'before', 'during' and 'after'. In each column, identify his expression of his faith in Jesus, his understanding of Jesus and his adherence to the teachings of Jesus through the aspects of religion.

ELIE WIESEL: GOD'S JUSTICE, OMNIPOTENCE AND COMPASSION

Background

Noted writer and Holocaust survivor Elie (short for Eliezer) Wiesel (1928–2016) was a traumatised 15-year-old victim of the Nazi regime who fortunately survived when six million other European Jews did not. As a result of this experience, Wiesel made it his life's work to try to make some sense of the Holocaust, God's apparent disregard for the suffering of the Jewish people and the indifference of humanity. As he admitted many years later in a television interview with Oprah Winfrey in 1993, *'I left the camp, but the camp hasn't left me'*. In his many writings, he questions God's apparent absence or lack of intervention in that 'long night' of human history as Wiesel refers to the Holocaust (*Night*, Elie Wiesel, Penguin, 1981, p. 45). The very word 'Holocaust', meaning a sacrifice, literally a 'burnt offering' (*Shoah* in Hebrew), was coined by Wiesel himself, to describe the magnitude of the Nazi genocide (murder of a nation or a people) that attempted to wipe out an entire people. Although genocides had occurred in the past, invariably the bloodshed was confined to a small area, ended in a matter of months, and was always justified by military, political or religious authorities. Many scholars have argued that the Holocaust was unprecedented in scope and scale and its anti-Semitic intention to exterminate all Jews for no other reason than they were Jewish.

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FIGURE 9.6 Elie Wiesel can be seen here (circled) in a barracks at Buchenwald when the camp was liberated by the US Army on 11 April, 1945. He had been moved there from Auschwitz several months earlier. Wiesel dedicated much of his life to trying to understand what can be learned from the massive suffering of so many millions during the Nazi onslaught. He returned to the Auschwitz death camp with television personality Oprah Winfrey in 2006. How could the interview of this visit serve to remind the world of the Holocaust?

Influences of the experience upon Wiesel's religious beliefs

Prior to his Holocaust experiences, Elie Wiesel's religious beliefs reflected the fundamental precepts of Judaism. During his childhood, Elie gravitated towards the more observant and traditional ways of his mother, supporting the existence of a singular, just and covenantal God whose relationship with the Jewish people assured their protection. He was raised and encouraged by his mother to be deeply pious, studying Torah and Halakhah – as he states in his essay, 'The Death of my Father', 'My mother taught me love of God' – acknowledging the existence of a compassionate God who cared for His beings. Wiesel's complete and utter faith in his religious convictions at that time meant that he observed death to be merely the natural cessation of physical human life. These beliefs were severely tested by Wiesel's camp experiences under the Nazis in his teen years. Wiesel's anguish over his own Nazi concentration camp suffering and its huge impact on his life from then on is conveyed in much of his writing, as exemplified in his first book, *Night*, a fictional account based on the realities of Wiesel's experiences in the Holocaust. *Night* describes Wiesel's painful journey from his innocent belief in the loving God of the Jewish people to later disillusionment and rebellion against God as his experiences in Auschwitz and other concentration camps eroded his faith in God's justice and omnipotence. '*Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp, which has turned my life into one long night, seven times cursed and seven times sealed*' (*Night*, p. 45).

Prior to being sent to the concentration camp Elie regularly went to synagogue, and enjoyed studying the rabbinic passages of the Talmud and Jewish mystical literature found in the Kabbalah. Wiesel was influenced by the traditional spiritual beliefs of his grandfather and mother, as well as his father's more liberal, prominent involvement in their Jewish community. This youthful certainty in his beliefs radically changed due to the cruelty and horrors he himself, together with his father,

endured and witnessed in the camps of Auschwitz, Buna and Buchenwald, leaving an indelible impression on him. *'Never shall I forget those flames which consumed my faith forever'* (*Night,* p. 45).

During his experience of the concentration camp, Elie's understanding of the nature of God as he had learnt from his upbringing and Jewish studies was challenged. He no longer accepted that God was omniscient, omnipresent, just and compassionate. Nor could he adhere to saying the many Jewish prayers that praise such a God. His anger with God develops as he and his fellow prisoners endured further suffering and humiliations in the camps. Engagement in reciting the traditional prayers seemed irrelevant to Wiesel in the camps. *'Why should I bless His name? The Eternal, Lord of the Universe, the All-Powerful and terrible, was silent. What had I to thank Him for?'* (*Night,* p. 44).

Wiesel argues that if his father's death were to have occurred more naturally, rather than as a cause of cruelty, persecution and war, he may have accepted his childhood beliefs. Instead Wiesel could not comprehend how the God of his people could remain silent in their arguably direst hour. Through God neglecting the covenant's terms, Jewish mourning rituals and beliefs, which once influenced Wiesel so strongly, became a source of confusion. Consequently, Wiesel refused to recite the mourner's Kaddish, a prayer of praise to God, *'To say the Kaddish in that stifling barracks, in the very heart in the kingdom of death, would have been the worst of blasphemies'* ('Death of my Father'). Wiesel's understanding of a compassionate and merciful God was destroyed, and Wiesel struggled to find an appropriate means to mourn his beloved father. Instead of being strengthened by his convictions, Wiesel's justification of God's role in human life was destabilised. Watching his beloved father suffer and later die caused irreparable damage to Wiesel's relationship with God. His faith and adherence were severely damaged. *'... I had ceased to pray ... I did not deny God's existence but I doubted His absolute justice'* (*Night,* p. 57).

Wiesel could not find in his religious beliefs closure, guidance or stability, but rather questions about a death 'which took [his father] by mistake' ('Death of my Father'). Instead of finding strength to overcome this situation, his confusion created an additional layer of distress, weakening his religious beliefs as a result. He protests God's inexplicable inaction and apparent absence in the lives of all these innocent victims in his angry accusation, *'I was the accuser and God the accused'* (*Night,* p. 79). His father's death after months of ill treatment in the Nazi camps that left him so weak and ill, brought on Wiesel's own guilt at being so useless to prevent it. In the camps, rituals and prayers could not be observed as the Jewish tradition regulates. Adherence was almost impossible under their inhumane conditions. *'There were no prayers at his grave. No candles were lit to his memory. His last word was my name. A summons, to which I did not respond'* (*Night,* p. 123).

Ongoing influence

Years later, when interviewed by television presenter Oprah Winfrey, the profound effects of Wiesel's adolescent trauma were still affecting his views on life. His relationship with God fluctuated after leaving the camps, moving from anger and protest to eventually coming to some reluctant admission that he would never understand the God of Israel. *'I didn't lose faith in God, I rebelled against Him. I don't understand Him'* (1993 television interview on the Oprah Winfrey Show).

In the essay, 'Death of my Father', Wiesel concludes with an understanding of what he saw as inadequacies of Judaism's available means of commemoration in cases such as the Holocaust, where death was not a natural part of the life cycle nor reflects God's justice as the traditional prayers and rituals state. Wiesel remained a steadfast Jew in practice despite his Holocaust experiences although he continued to question God's apparent absence during the Holocaust which appears to contradict traditional beliefs of Judaism about an omnipotent, compassionate, benevolent and just

God. Later Wiesel admitted, *'but even in the camps, I never divorced God. After the war, I went on praying to God. I was angry. I protested. I'm still protesting'* (November 2000 issue of O, *The Oprah Magazine*).

Wiesel felt that his survival of the Nazi death camps carried with it a special obligation to testify to the truth of what happened. This can be seen in his liturgical addition to Holocaust Remembrance Day, found in many Progressive/Reform and Conservative prayer books. His 'Holocaust *Kaddish*' (sanctification prayer), juxtaposes the traditional Aramaic text of the Mourner's *Kaddish*, 'May God's great name be exalted …' with the names of 17 concentration camps and ghettos where massacres occurred. Its lines solemnly acknowledge the memory of the lost generation: *Yitgadal* – Auschwitz; *V'yitkadash* – Lodz; *Sh'mei raba – Ponar; B'alma divra chirutei* – Babi Yar. (*Mishkan T'filah, A Progressive Siddur,* Central Conference of American Rabbis, New York, 2010, p. 533). He also channelled his post-liberation anger with God into addressing the suffering of all peoples, by engaging in humanitarian causes around the world. *'I have six million reasons to give up on the world … and in spite of everything I must have faith in the possibility of every human being to remain human'* (1993 television interview with Oprah Winfrey).

Adherence to Jewish beliefs and ethics remained a deep-seated element of Wiesel's post-Holocaust life, encouraging him to engage in working for peace wherever it was needed. Wiesel devoted his later life to not only Holocaust remembrance and witness but also to doing his best to ensure heinous political and social crimes do not go unnoticed. Interviewed in *O, The Oprah Magazine,* in the November 2000 issue, he recalled, *'somebody had asked me, "What is the most important commandment in the Bible?" and I said, "Thou shalt not stand idly by"' when your neighbour's life is at stake.' (referring to Leviticus 19:16)*

Wiesel was very critical of those who were bystanders – countries, world leaders and local neighbours who knew of atrocities taking place but did not take sides or intervene to prevent the vast scale of the Nazi destruction. His firm stance was, '*the opposite of love is not hate, but indifference … Indifference is what allows evil to be strong, what gives it power*' (November 2000 issue of *O, The Oprah Magazine*). This attitude led him to become involved in causes for freedom and peace over the years, speaking out against injustices perpetrated in countries including South Africa, Bosnia, Cambodia and Rwanda. '*Because I survived, I must do everything possible to help others*' (Oprah Winfrey interview, November 2000 issue of *O, The Oprah Magazine*).

EXPLORING WIESEL'S SIGNIFICANT LIFE EXPERIENCE

Skills: identify, describe, explain, interpret, research, draw conclusions

1. In approximately 100 words describe Wiesel's significant life experience.
2. Identify which of Wiesel's religious beliefs were challenged by this experience.
3. Explain how his experience interacted with his beliefs. Support with examples and quotations.
4. To what extent did this experience impact on Wiesel's faith in, adherence to, expression and understanding of his beliefs?
5. In what ways did his beliefs help Wiesel to interpret his significant experience?

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FIGURE 9.7 Rabbi Harold Kushner. What prompted him to write his book *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*?

HAROLD KUSHNER: A JUST GOD; SUFFERING

Background

Rabbi Harold S. Kushner (b.1935) is a prominent American thinker in the Jewish Conservative movement, a congregational spiritual leader and a popular author on theological topics dealing with God's role in everyday life. His first and most famous work is 'When Bad Things Happen to Good People' (1981). It was written to help him cope with his intense grief after the death in 1977 of his fourteen-year-old son, Aaron, from the premature ageing disease Progeria. This disease, which is not hereditary, is caused by a single-gene mutation. In this book, Kushner grapples with **theodicy**, attempting to justify Jewish religious beliefs about God's justice and omnipotence in the face of human suffering, and in particular, trying to alleviate his own anguish.

Kushner's religious beliefs before the significant life experience

As a congregational rabbi, Kushner was experienced in counselling other people through pain and grief. His beliefs and his faith in them had been untested, and his adherence to Judaism and engagement in the expressions of religious life was sincere and constant. So, it was not until he learned that his then three-year-old son Aaron would die in his early teens of a rare disease that he personally confronted one of life's most difficult challenges – how does one find ways to cope and find solace when tragedy strikes? In trying to answer this question, Kushner undertook a critical investigation of the explanations for suffering traditionally offered by Judaism. Kushner's introductory chapter, 'Why I Wrote this Book', clearly states that when he was informed of his son's prognosis of an incurable illness and a shortened life that he felt *'an aching sense of unfairness … I had been a good person … I believed that I was following God's ways and doing His work. How could this be happening to my family?*'. Kushner explains that he had until that time understood God in a traditional sense as: '*…an all-wise all-powerful parent figure who would treat us as our earthly parents did, or even better. If we were obedient and deserving, He would reward us. If we got out of line, He would discipline us, reluctantly but firmly*'.

Understanding of beliefs

His first chapter explores 'Why do the righteous suffer', offering the range of traditional Jewish answers on why evil exists. Engaging with the texts, he commences by examining the biblical explanation that suffering is a punishment for sin from a just God, citing, for example, Proverbs 12:21 (on p. 17), 'No ills befall the righteous, but the wicked are filled with trouble'. Yet this is patently not true for every situation of adversity. Kushner questions 'the unfair distribution of suffering in the world' (p. 14), causing undeserved suffering in the lives of good people.

Kushner is 'scandalized' (p. 27) by a second explanation offered by tradition that an innocent person's pain is part of the Divine design beyond human comprehension.

He further finds another justification, that suffering is educational, quoting Proverbs 3:12 (p. 28): *'For whom the Lord loves, He chastises* [punishes]*, even as a father does to the son he loves'*. Kushner criticises this traditional explanation as self-righteously defending God but not assisting the blameless sufferer to deal with their pain. Nor does a loving father chastise a child undeservedly, which is what God seems to be doing.

Kushner dismisses other traditional explanations, such as that the anguish of extreme suffering may have the educational motive of making people better, more sensitive, by curing them of their faults. He argues *'the price is too high'* (p. 32) and it *'shows too little regard for the value of an individual life'* (p. 32). He laments the lack of a direct link between the suffering experienced by good people and the supposed lesson in this educative explanation. It would make more sense, *'if there were some clear connection between the fault and the punishment'* (p. 31).

He also rejects the explanation that God uses suffering to test one's faith, as told in the biblical story of Abraham's binding of Isaac in preparation to sacrifice his only son in Genesis 22. He dislikes *'the notion of a God who plays such sadistic games with his most faithful follower'* (ch. 1, p. 33). There is no comfort for Kushner in this justification for enduring so much distress.

Another explanation found in rabbinic texts is that one should rejoice when children and righteous people experience untimely deaths because it removes them from worldly pain as it *'comes to liberate us from a world of pain and lead us to a better place'* (p. 35). Kushner cannot justify such thinking when applied to others who have endured crushing bereavement such as his own devastating loss of his young son.

In his book, these and other traditional theories that attempt to explain suffering in the world created by a compassionate, just, omnipotent God are dismissed by Kushner. *All the responses to tragedy … have at least one thing in common. They all assume that God is the cause of our suffering, and they try and understand why God would want us to suffer. Is it for our own good, or is it a punishment we deserve, or could it be that God does not care what happens to us? Some lead us to blame ourselves in order to spare God's reputation* (p. 37). Kushner therefore delves further into the biblical and rabbinic texts and refers to human experiences to resolve for himself a more personally acceptable answer to his own pain.

Changing interpretation

The biblical book of Job is analysed by Kushner to search for further insights into how an innocent person suffers under God's stewardship. Job's friends wanted '*to believe that God is good and God is in control'* (p. 45). Therefore, they are convinced Job is to blame for his own sufferings. The book of Job concludes that although God is good and just, it does not prevent innocent people suffering. '*…it does not represent God punishing them for something they did wrong*' (p. 51). Instead, Kushner concludes that Job teaches that God is not so omnipotent. '*If God is a God of justice, and not of power, then He can still be on our side when bad things happen to us'* (p. 52). This understanding sees God not as a judge who rewards or punishes, but rather strengthens and comforts us. '*We are still on God's side, and he is still on ours'* (p. 53).

Throughout the book, Kushner reveals what his questioning and research have shown him. He emphasises the role of community in bringing people through their worst pain and grief. In Chapter 7, which he titled 'God Can't Do Everything…', he cites two examples of Jewish rituals that show the importance of community in dealing with suffering: the Jewish tradition of *se'udat havra'ah,* meal of replenishment, provided by extended family and friends after a funeral and the recitation of the Mourner's *Kaddish* prayer, which praises God with no reference to death (p. 133), *'May His holy name be magnified and sanctified…'*. Both help shift the mourner's focus away from grief and death and back again to life.

In his final chapter 'What Good, Then, Is Religion?', Kushner summarises where he has ended up in his exploration. He had *'gone beyond self pity to the point of accepting my son's death'* (p. 140). In the book's conclusion, Kushner does not abandon the many Jewish theodicies he has enumerated in this book, but rejects them. He does not see them as helpful in actively consoling people like himself. *'I no longer hold God responsible for illnesses, accidents, and natural disasters, because I realize that I gain little and I lose so much when I blame God for those things'* (p. 141). Instead he finds a new, more personal understanding of God that gives him some comfort. *'When people who were never particularly strong become strong in the face of adversity, when people who tended to think only of themselves become unselfish and heroic in an emergency, I have to ask myself where they got these qualities which they freely admit they did not have before. My answer is that this is one of the ways in which God helps us when we suffer beyond the limits of our strength'* (p. 149).

His faith and adherence to Judaism continue beyond this period of introspection as does his engagement in the expressions of Jewish beliefs, shown in his later books and communal activities. But in writing *When Bad Things Happen to Good People,* he found a path to justifying his insights within the Jewish texts. He formed a new understanding of how a compassionate God interacts with suffering humanity and came to an acceptance of his beloved son's early death and an acknowledgement of the effects of his own grief.

EXPLORING KUSHNER'S SIGNIFICANT LIFE EXPERIENCE

Skills: identify, describe, explain, interpret, draw conclusions

1. Describe Kushner's significant life experience.
2. Identify which beliefs were challenged by this significant life experience and explain why.
3. How did this experience affect Kushner's adherence to his religious beliefs?
4. How did this experience affect Kushner's understanding of his religious beliefs?
5. How did this experience affect Kushner's faith in his religious beliefs?
6. How did Kushner's religious beliefs influence his interpretation of this experience?

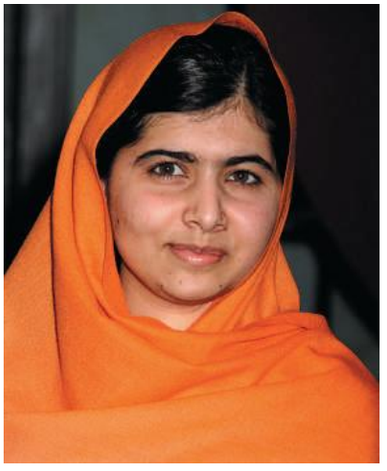

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FIGURE 9.8 Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani advocate for girls' education and the oppressed. What in the image shows that Malala is respectful of her Islamic heritage?

MALALA YOUSAFZAI: IMMANENCE OF GOD; AL-QADR, WILL OF ALLAH

Background

Malala Yousafzai (b. 1997) is a Pashtun Sunni Muslim who grew up in the Swat Valley of Pakistan in a time when a fundamentalist group, the Taliban, were on the rise. She witnessed extreme violence which threatened her religious beliefs, human rights and life. Throughout this time, her faith in her religious beliefs gave her purpose and strength and guided her response to a life-changing experience of being called on to advocate for those oppressed by the Taliban. In particular, her work for girls' education led

her to clarify and reinforce her Islamic beliefs as she applied them to the challenge that she and her family faced. Her tenacity, courage and dignity caught the attention of the world and earned her the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014. She aims to reform society within the context of her Islamic beliefs.

Beliefs before the significant life experience

In her biography, *I am Malala*, she describes a very contented childhood focused on receiving a broad education that fuelled her love of learning. She makes it plain that the final authority in all of her learning was God. For example, she says that at one point she wanted to understand death, '*so I turned towards Mecca and asked God, what happens when you die?*' Malala's upbringing was guided by her parents. Her father's faith was progressive. He wanted Malala to 'live as free as a bird'. He decided her life would be enriched through education provided in the school which he led as principal. This attitude was unusual in the Pashtun community, but was consistent with the teachings of the Quran and Sunna which say that knowledge is to be sought and treasured by all. The education of girls is a consistent theme in Islamic teaching, dating back to the Prophet's wife Aishah. Malala's father continued this tradition by naming his daughter after an intelligent and influential reformer, Malalai of Maiwand. On the other hand, Malala's mother was more conservative. She was devout and obeyed *purdah* (the distancing of men from women and the covering of a women's face and body with the burqa). She ensured the practice of all religious traditions in the family home, but also encouraged her daughter's education and leadership role in her community. Malala believed that God was actively involved in her life and in the world. One day when she witnessed children scavenging on a garbage dump she was challenged to make sense of this. She says, '*I believe there is something good for every evil, that every time there's a bad person, God sends a good one … I realised that it was His will that I had seen them. He was showing me what my life might be like if I couldn't go to school … I asked God for the strength and courage to make the world a better place.*'

In 2005, there was a severe earthquake in the Swat Valley. This provided an opportunity for Taliban mullahs to preach that this was a warning from God that there would be even more drastic punishment if Sharia law was not followed more strictly. A mufti visited Malala's school to say, *'I am representing good Muslims … and we think your girls' high school is a blasphemy. You should close it.'* Malala reflected, *'I knew this man was mistaken. I had studied the Quran … since I was five and my parents sent me to a madrassa for religious studies … I loved learning the Arabic alphabet, I loved the strange and mysterious shapes of the letters, the sound of the prayers as we all recited together and the stories of how to live life according to the teachings of Allah.'* In this, Malala was showing her respect for the sacredness of the Quran, one of the guiding principles of Islam. But it was announced on the radio by a Taliban leader, Fazlullah, that education for girls was *haram* (forbidden by the Holy Quran). Malala responded with prayer, 'When I went to bed each night I had a talk with God. *Please, God, tell me what I can do.*'

Significant life experience

Malala recounts that, '*In July [2007] everything changed. Fazlullah declared war on the government and called for the people to rise up in violence … and announced that women would be banned from public spaces … Girls who went to school would go to hell. Violators were dragged from their homes and killed.*' Malala's father decided to speak out publicly against the Taliban. In a letter published in the newspaper he wrote: '*Please don't harm my school children because the God you believe in is the same God they pray to every day.*' He went to the capital to protest and try to influence the government to take action because he felt the government was not doing enough to end the oppression.

Then Benazir Bhutto, a leading politician in Pakistan who came from a revered family, was assassinated. Malala concluded that if even she can die then nobody is safe. From this came a calling. She says, 'a tiny voice in my heart whispered to me, *Why don't you go there and fight for women's rights? Fight to make Pakistan a better place. I told myself, I will continue this journey of fighting for peace and democracy in my country.*' This was the turning point that shaped her life. She says that during this period fear for the safety of her family was a constant companion, especially at night. She dealt with this by reciting every night the *Ayat al-kursi*, the Verse of the Throne, a surah aimed at protecting people from the torment of the grave and the struggle that begins after death, with entry to paradise dependent on the life that has been lived on Earth.

In 2008, she made the decision to write a diary for the BBC's Urdu website. She says, *'I went to my mother … if I didn't have her support it would be like speaking with only half my heart. But my mother agreed. She gave her answer with a verse from the Holy Quran. "Falsehood has to die … and truth has to come forward." God would protect me, she said, because my mission was a good one.'* For her safety Malala took the pseudonym Gul Makai, the name of a Pashtun heroine, who used the Quran to teach her elders that war is wicked. Malala justified her work by saying, *'The Taliban think we are not Muslims, but we are … We believe in God more than they do, and we trust him to protect us.'* Malala expanded her activism even after her identity was revealed. In 2011, she was nominated for the International Children's Peace Prize; then invited to speak at a conference on education in Lahore and received an award for her work for children's rights. She was awarded Pakistan's first national Peace Prize, but in 2012 there was a serious death threat against Malala. In October that year, she was shot in the head by a gunman who boarded her school bus as she was making her way home.

Religious beliefs during her significant life experience

When she became conscious she was alone in a hospital in Birmingham, England. The Muslim chaplain who was with her began to pray in Urdu and she says she *felt calm, comforted and safe*. When asked about the attack she writes, *'I didn't need Science to understand why I don't remember the attack. I know why: God is kind to me … How great God is! … He has given us eyes to see the beauty of the world, hands to touch it, a nose to experience all its fragrances and a heart to appreciate it all. But we don't realise how miraculous our senses are until we lose one. The return of my hearing was just one miracle. A Talib … had tried to silence me. And millions spoke out. Those were miracles too.'*

Expression of her religious beliefs after the significant life experience

In the time since, her life has been full. She has consistently modelled Islam to the world and touched people from all continents. She has made documentaries, delivered speeches, run social media campaigns, engaged in humanitarian work, organised a foundation for girls' education, opened schools and lobbied heads of state. Malala has spoken out against issues that are important to the Muslim community such as United States drone strikes; she has challenged Israel's policies concerning Palestinians, donated money to rebuild schools in Gaza; spoken out against bombings in Afghanistan and atrocities in Kashmir; and advocated for better treatment of refugees. She was appointed a UN Messenger of Peace to promote girls' education – the highest honour they could award her. Her biography was published in 2014 and the day before it was released in Pakistan, the Taliban vowed to bomb every bookstore that carried it.

Influence of religious beliefs on her interpretation of the significant life experience

Malala declared in her book, *'I had asked God to make me taller. I have realised that God has answered my prayer. God has made me as tall as the sky … I know that with the immeasurable height, God has also given me a responsibility and a gift: the responsibility to make the world a more peaceful place, which I carry with me every moment of every day, and the gift to be able to do so. I am Malala. My world has changed, but I have not'.*

EXPLORING MALALA'S SIGNIFICANT LIFE EXPERIENCE
Skills: identify, describe, explain, interpret

1. What evidence is there of Malala's belief in God before her significant life experience?
2. In what ways has Malala's belief in God aided her interpretation of her significant life experience? Provide evidence to support your answer.
3. Which aspects expressed her beliefs before, during and after the significant life experience?
4. Was Malala's decision to write for the BBC foolishness, bravery or predestined by God? Explain your answer.

DAISY KHAN: INTERVENTIONIST GOD; GOD IS JUST

Background

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FIGURE 9.9 What does the mode of dress by Daisy Khan say about her religious beliefs?

Daisy Khan (b. 1958) was born into an influential, well-educated and progressive Muslim family in Kashmir, India. Khan's faith was shaped by her paternal grandfather, Ghulam Hassan Khan and her maternal grandmother whom Khan affectionately called Moji. Both grandparents, unusually for that time, recognised girls as a gift, *amanat*, from God. Moji's reasoning was that, '*our Prophet never had a son and his lineage was carried on by his daughters'* and so girls were to be respected and offered opportunities. Daisy thereby learnt that answers to difficult social questions could be found by referring to the life of the Prophet Muhammad or the great thinkers and saints of Islam. The family followed closely the ritual practices of their religion, they prayed five times a day, observed Ramadan and celebrated Eid. Khan's favourite festivity as a child was *Shab-e-Qadr*, the Night of Power when the angels would descend and listen to the prayers of the people. They were 'devout'. *Iman* (faith) and *Ihsan* (righteousness) were central to their lives, they lived and breathed the verse of the Quran that states that 'there is no compulsion in religion'. Daisy says that no one's religious adherence was policed; everyone's faith was mandated not by dogma but by his or her own devotion. Khan dreamt of becoming a religious devotee as was her grandmother. She wanted to be '*destined for a life of prayer, religious night vigils and Quran recitations … detached*

from the world'. In Kashmir, her faith in the beliefs and engagement with the practices of Islam seemed assured. Khan's religious education came from her family, mainly as no mullah would come to their house because of their liberal views. Instruction about God accompanied explanations of life experiences. Her grandfather's motto was from the Quran – 'Oh, Lord, increase me in knowledge' – and it was due to his insistence that Daisy Khan made her way to America for her education when she turned sixteen.

Significant life experience

However, being a Muslim in the heart of Western culture at the time of the rise of Al Qaeda and ISIS resulted in her faith being severely tested. From her arrival in the United States, Khan's religion became an issue of identity. She found that Islam's practices were no longer a central part of life. She integrated into American life, successfully completing school and qualifying in architectural design. She reflects that for *'years I rarely thought of myself as a Muslim woman. I was simply a Muslim born in Kashmir, who lived in the United States'*. The comfort of this was disrupted in 1979 with the Iranian Revolution and the impact of Ayatollah Khomeini as debates about the nature of Islam surrounded her in both her working and family life. She said, *'I felt distraught; my religion and even my memories … were now being distorted for political purposes'*. She wrote a letter to a newspaper saying, *'Islam never curbs freedom of thought or allows 'holding of hostages' … on the contrary Islam teaches us Muslims to propagate freedom of thought, justice, forgiveness, honour and sublimity … It is not obsolete or antiquated, but it is a living and flourishing system of life with a just economic system, a well-balanced social organisation, codes of civil, criminal and international law'*.

Knowing the discomfort this may cause in her family she backed away from activism. However, around this time she had a dream which her grandfather interpreted. In this dream, she was 'ascending to heaven on a white winged horse'. Her grandfather concluded, Farhat *(Daisy) 'will be a mystic, a seeker of God. She will call others to faith and meet a pious, noble man.* The dramatic shift in her life occurred in 1989 with the release of Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*. He was accused of blasphemy. Khan writes, *'because of his suggestion that the Prophet Muhammad had been unable to distinguish between revelations sent through the angel Gabriel and the Devil's inspiration. This cast doubt on the Quran's authenticity'*. Daisy found his book confusing, but on principle she defended his right to write the book, unable to condone book burning. But the experience brought about a questioning of her faith in her religious beliefs and the authority of the Quran. *'On many nights I would take out the Quran … and try to understand this ancient text's relevance in a modern world. These … concerns would ultimately precipitate my spiritual search … internally I walked away from Islam'*.

In 1990, she returned home to Kashmir in search of her identity. Her mother's response was to take her on a journey to the most sacred Islamic sites in Kashmir. Each site chipped away at her determination to abandon her religion. Khan was moved by the devotion of others she saw in prayer but writes, *I did not want to follow blindly.* Finally, her mother took her to her Moji's grave. Standing in front of her grandmother's grave and praying for her soul Khan acknowledges, *I forgot that I was faithless.* She returned to New York feeling unsettled. She turned to the writings of Lalla Ded, a poet and holy woman from Kashmir who was a religious 'bridge-builder'. She presented Daisy with 'the idea of a woman leading the way to a spiritual and cultural bridge', emphasising the fundamental unity of religions, the oneness of God and human equality. At this time, her family's religious community in New York called on her to assess the work of a non-Muslim architect on the design of a new mosque. She was angered to find that women would

worship in the basement. She used the Quran and the prophet's life to persuade the leaders that women must be able to worship in a dignified space. She also designed the carpet to ensure the aesthetics of the mosque honoured the Quran.

It seemed that her religion was constantly there calling on her to confront her beliefs. In 1992, she was confronted by the plight of women being abused in the Bosnian War. She was called on to raise funds to aid them. She ran a benefit in Carnegie Hall with Sufi Islamic devotional *qawwali* musicians. Even though she was articulating the tradition's beliefs she still felt lost. She shared her thoughts and emotions with a trusted friend who suggested that she would not find the answers to her questions until she addressed her doubt, that the problems with her life and personal relationships would not be resolved until she addressed her relationship with God.

Effects on her religious beliefs

After serendipitously visiting an Islamic bookshop she found her way to a Sufi prayer group whose practice, and the sermons of their **Imam**, gave meaning to her experience of doubt and restless searching. She came to understand the manifest love of God for his creation. She also turned to readings from Rumi, a Persian poet of the 1200s CE, that addressed her questions and helped her understand that God had always been with her – in her heart. In the Sufi lodge, she found a community, welcome, spiritual love and rituals based on *adab* (Islamic etiquette). She found in **Sufism** a spiritual connection with God through an exploration of the *shahada* (the Muslim profession of faith) and used it to address the existential questions that had been troubling her. She came to see her role as being the *Khalifa* of God (a vice regent or representative) in the world. This gave her life purpose. She actively welcomed God into her life and undertook practices to train herself in prayer, meditation, especially *dhikr* (remembrance meditations) and fasting so that she could come to accept that God is in control and submit to God's will. Also, she came to see that if she were to love God she must also love his Prophet. All this would aid her in perfecting her faith.

The result of this was that her life became fulfilled. She found her 'soulmate' and husband in the Imam of the mosque, Feisal Abdul Rauf. Together they worked to address the injustices that confronted the Islamic community in America and abroad. She began organisations that brought together young Muslim leaders, many of whom have gone on to create significant change in the world. She and her husband began a group (ASMA American Society for Muslim Advancement) that worked to build infrastructure for their community and fought for this against people who made death threats. Eventually she began her own organisation (WISE) for the promotion of Islamic women's rights which has produced feminist scholars of the Quran whose work has protected women from domestic violence, genital mutilation, honour killings and forced marriages. She initiated the Global Muslim Women's Shura Council that draws 'upon its members' expertise in both Islamic jurisprudence and fields like history, political science, theology, sociology and the arts' to assist 'Muslim women in their personal, familial and societal lives'.

Daisy Khan has led a remarkable life guided by the beliefs of Islam in a God who intervenes in peoples' lives through revelations in dreams. She has been aided by the Scriptures that show the Prophet's commitment to education of women and his respect for the women who were in his life. She has journeyed from being a person whose religious beliefs were imbibed through her family, to a woman who now takes a role in shaping the interpretation of Islamic beliefs to aid the life of Muslims in the modern world. She says, 'I've had a lifetime of consciously asking questions … The questions I grappled with first led me to doubt and later to faith … without my faith, I am not sure if my soul could have survived'.

EXPLORING KHAN'S SIGNIFICANT LIFE EXPERIENCE

Skills: identify, describe, explain, interpret

1 Identify the Islamic beliefs Khan's family nurtured in her upbringing.

2 Which of the Pillars of Islam are most important in Daisy Khan's expression of her beliefs before the significant life experience?

3 Khan's significant life experience is a process that takes place over time – what were the different stages in her significant life experience and what beliefs were involved in each of the stages?

4 Which of the aspects of religion were used to express her beliefs before, during and after the significant life experience. Provide evidence in your responses.

5 How was her adherence to her beliefs impacted over time? Provide evidence in your responses.

6 How was her understanding of Islam impacted by the significant life experience? Provide evidence in your responses

7 How has her faith in Islam been impacted by the significant life experience? Provide evidence in your responses.

8 Why was Sufism a successful way for Khan to reconcile her life in a Western nation with her Islamic beliefs from Kashmir?

Weblinks
Various for Chapter 9

CHAPTER 9

REVISION

A Short-answer questions

These questions are not specific to a religious tradition or denomination.

1 What makes a life experience significant?
2 What types of significant life experiences have an impact on religious beliefs?
3 What connections exist between significant life experiences and religious beliefs?
4 In what ways might a significant life experience influence a person's expression of their belief?
5 Why are significant life experiences important in the search for meaning?
6 How might religious beliefs influence the interpretation of significant life experiences?

B Extended-response questions

Some of these questions relate to a specific religious tradition or denomination.

7 Explain the difference between adherence to, understanding of and faith in religious beliefs. Support you explanation with examples from the significant life experience of a person you have studied.
8 What does it mean to engage with the expression of religious beliefs? Support you explanation with examples from the significant life experience of a person you have studied.
9 For a person from a religious tradition or denomination you have studied, explain how their religious beliefs were affected by a significant life experience.
10 Analyse the extent to which religious beliefs may influence the interpretation of significant life experiences. Support your analysis with examples from the significant life experience of a person you have studied.
11 Discuss why significant life experiences are important in the search for meaning. Support you discussion with examples from the significant life experience of a person you have studied.
12 Referring to a significant life experience of a person from a religious tradition you have studied, answer:
    a How and why was the faith of this person affected by their significant life experience?
    b How did the person interpret their significant life experience?
    c How was this interpretation influenced by the person's religious beliefs?

C Essay questions

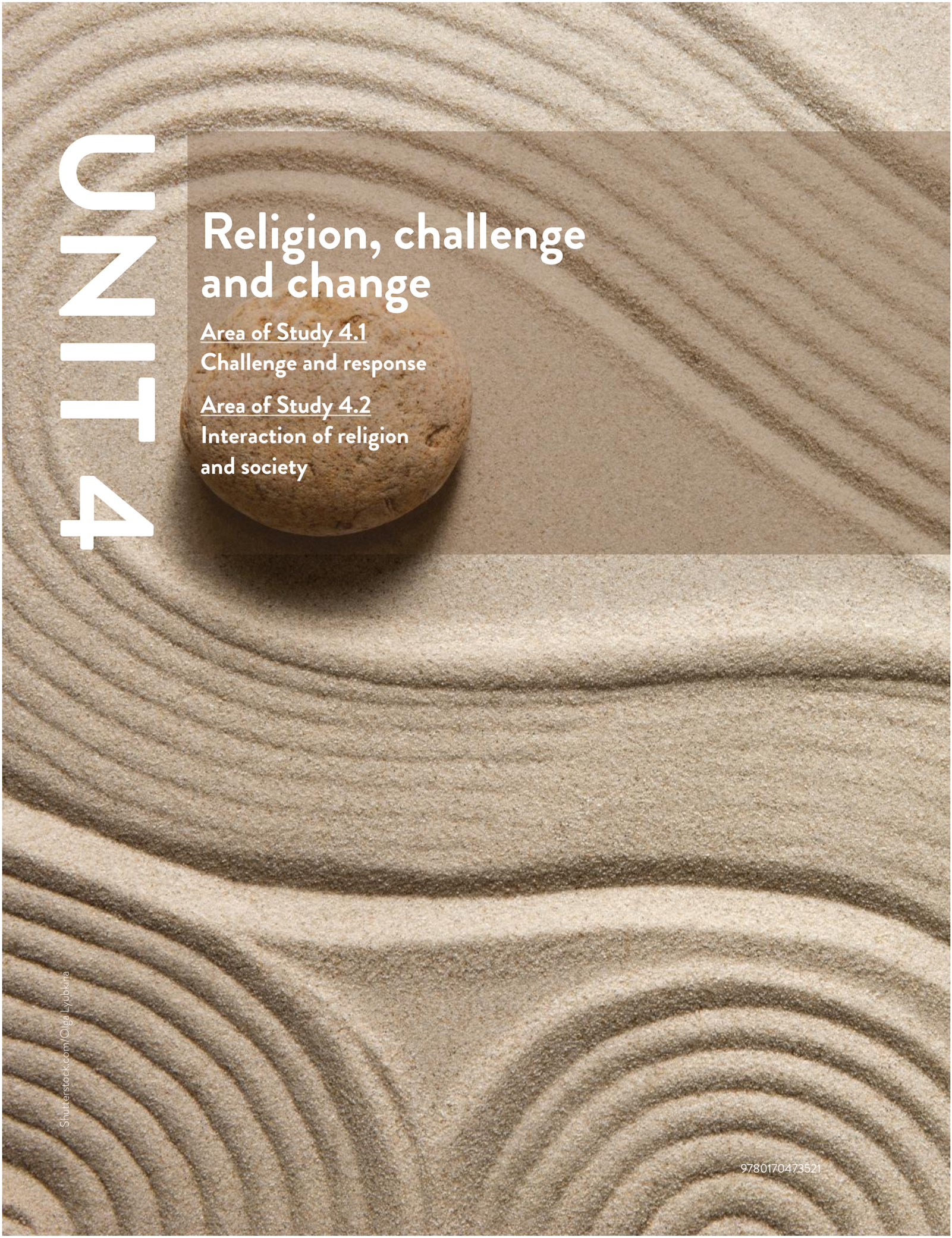
13 *Discuss the interplay between significant life experiences and religious beliefs and their expression through aspects of religion.*
Refer to a particular adherent of a religious tradition you have studied.
14 *When confronted with a difficult situation or major life choice, to what extent are a person's actions and attitude influenced by their religious beliefs?* Use quotations and sources to support your answer.
Refer to the particular experience of an adherent in a religious tradition you have studied.
15 *Referring to a particular adherent of a religious tradition or denomination you have studied, analyse the difference that religious beliefs can make when people confront a significant life experience.* Use quotations and sources to support your answer.

UNIT 4

Religion, challenge and change

Area of Study 4.1
Challenge and response

Area of Study 4.2
Interaction of religion and society



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Chapter 10

MEETING AND RESPONDING TO CHALLENGES

Outcome to be demonstrated

Analysis and comparison of stances and supporting responses taken by religions when challenged

Focus questions

- For religions generally, what is the nature of significant challenges over time and what are their sources?
- For religions generally, what types of stances have been taken to significant challenges and why?
- For a particular religious tradition or denomination, what have been significant challenges to the theology, ethics and continued existence over time?
- For a particular religious tradition or denomination, what have been specific challenges to the theology, ethics or continued existence and why were they significant?
- What were the periods of time and the sources of those significant challenges?
- Which aspects of religion were involved in those significant challenges?
- What stances and supporting responses did the religious tradition or denomination take towards those significant challenges?

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Worksheet
Terminology

THE NATURE OF CHALLENGES AND THEIR SOURCES

Each religion has a sacred story to tell about its formation and history in a grand scheme of all that exists and beyond. Each story speaks of a journey comprising moments of: wonder and awe; supreme glory; peace; war and conflict; of ceremonialising trade agreements; compromise and disagreements; successes and failures, crises and times of introspection and reflection. These events, some of which are significantly challenging, induce responses from religious traditions.

Religions do not arrive in human society as fully developed belief communities or institutions; they develop over time. Some religions experience a continuous, balanced, uneventful process of growth, while for others the process of development can be characterised by sporadic cycles of expansion, consolidation and refinement or stagnation and decline. This development can have positive or negative effects. Indeed, these opposing effects can often come from the same challenging event.

Challenges can offer an opportunity for positive change, by causing adherents and leaders of a religion to engage in self-reflection, self-criticism, self-evaluation and self-renewal. This capacity for healthy rejuvenation can be seen in the writings of scholars, inspired thinkers or aesthetes, council gatherings and the establishment of learning, pastoral and meditative centres. It can provide adherents of a tradition with an opportunity to make any necessary changes.

At any time, in any society, religious beliefs and ethical aspirations might be challenged by forces within or beyond the tradition; therefore, the way in which religions view society and its values may be tested or undermined. The responses to these challenges are linked to the religion's stage of development – the religion must choose a stance. Does it accept that growth will be a long process of absorbing, appropriating, adapting or rejecting some parts of the aspects of its tradition; or does it become impatient and cause conflict in order to expand, redefine, incorporate or discard existing beliefs, practices and structures? Challenges to a religion's continued existence may arise from natural disasters, invasion or colonisation, war, famine, discriminatory laws that lead to persecutions, forced exiles, massacres or the destruction of central religious institutions, sacred places or artefacts. These themes run throughout the history of religions and confront traditions in our world today.

Getty Images/NELSON ALMEIDA/AFP

FIGURE 10.1 Mural Brazil 'Coexistence'. What does this image suggest about the sources of challenges for religions in a global world?

The sources of challenges can come from outside the religious tradition or within it. Internally they may arise from differing theological thinking, leadership clashes, disillusion with the ethical behaviour of leaders, differing pastoral emphases, disagreement over changes to rituals and roles, or to the exegetical methods applied to scriptures. Externally the sources of challenges may be from developments in various fields of knowledge such as biology, medicine, archaeology, geology, physics, astronomy, politics and philosophy. Changing moral values, mores and normative standards in society may also be sources of challenge to religious traditions.

There are degrees of challenge. A quick comparison of challenges may make it immediately obvious that one is a major challenge, and others are minor. When dealing with challenges that are significant and linked to theological or ethical questions, or the ongoing survival of a religious tradition, the conversation about the nature of the challenge and its particular significance needs to be subtler. A broad conversation that shows the complexity of the challenge would include these questions:

- Is the challenge likely to be transient, manageable, resolvable or chronic?
- What is the balance between the positives and the negatives?
- How many people are affected?
- How many aspects are involved?
- How much pain and suffering is involved?
- Is the stance compatible with or counter to other structures in society?
- Does the challenge threaten the existence of the tradition?

TYPES OF STANCES AND REASONS FOR THEM

Through the experience of their interactions with evolving and developing societies, many religious traditions have established internal processes for developing a **stance** towards challenges. These official attitudes, opinions and principled positions to challenges may be standing against, fully embracing, negotiating a compromise or scrutinising specific parts of themselves in order to respond to challenges. Stances may vary according to the nature of the challenge and its context in time, place and culture. There may even be variation in stances taken to the same challenge, particularly if it continues for a long time or the initial stance failed to achieve its intended purpose.

Inspired by the challenge or dragged into dealing with it, religious traditions may appear to do nothing externally whilst internal processes forge ahead or go into meltdown. Some beliefs may come to the foreground and others be relegated to the background, they may be reasserted, translated and explained in different ways or recomposed entirely. Rituals may require new spaces, places, times and artefacts as existing sites are destroyed, or their use is restricted. Denominations may contest each other. Religious authorities may be unable to accommodate any change and have to persuade a laity to their way of thinking. Adherents may combine in spite of religious authorities to become alternate sources of authority.

If members do not like the official response, but seek to remain within the religious tradition, a denomination may form which retains and continues to engage them theologically and ethically but disrupts the unity of the religious tradition. A religious tradition may find itself pressured by these and other elements in trying to retain its traditional identity whilst admitting to a need to change something of itself.

All religious traditions struggle with the ongoing challenge of guiding their adherents in how to live according to the beliefs and ethical systems of the tradition. For some religions, this involves adherents giving public witness of their faith. This may include taking a public stand in support of, or in opposition to, particular views about a moral or social issue in their local, national or international community. Such a stance might be led by the official leadership of the religion, or by prominent groups or individuals within the religion, either alone or as informal groups united by their view on a particular issue.

The interconnectedness of the aspects of religion means that there are many ways in which a religious tradition might respond to challenges, and numerous ways that the tradition can experience the consequences of those responses. Religions operate on a number of levels: official, community, family and individual. At an official level, the beliefs, teachings, ethical standards, ritual practice and regulatory requirements of the tradition are developed, reconsidered, adapted or reinterpreted to address advances in human knowledge and newly arisen pastoral needs. These then need to be communicated to the wider membership of the tradition. This may be done by an overarching, worldwide official body, or it might be carried out by numerous affiliated or independent groups, depending on the structure of the religion and where the religion has communities of believers.

These are only a fraction of the ways in which religious traditions and denominations have responded to challenges over time. Archaeological records can testify to the ideas of spiritualities and religious traditions that society has rejected due to an inability to respond to challenges in a manner that retained veracity for their adherents. The religious traditions that society has retained are still with us and they have developed internal systems to deal with challenges. The robustness, subtlety or bluntness with which these internal systems of religious traditions and denominations negotiate challenges are the foci of this study.

Aspects of religion may even contain inherent challenges and responses: for example, texts. The challenge with understanding any text at a point in time is that often only traces of the original intent and culture are retained to enable interpreting it in context. This complexity is added to by the literal versus metaphorical and moral and legalistic manners in which religious texts can be read. That some texts contain sacred stories and the revealed truths of an ultimate reality adds further challenge if such texts are deemed to be unchangeable in any way.

REUTERS/Larry Downing

FIGURE 10.2 A protest for religious freedom. Why is religious freedom everyone's business?

When a challenge is subjected to debate within the community and by religious authorities, references to texts may be sought, sacred stories may be used as precedents, the examples of significant religious figures may be drawn on, spiritual experiences may provide insights, secular parliaments may be deferred to and even popular votes held. As internal positions on how to respond to a challenge come to agreement a decision may be made not to publicly say or do anything, or to make an official statement for the position to be adopted by the whole religious tradition. Disgruntled members may attempt to undermine this official position, or choose to follow another denomination or abandon or be forced out of a religious tradition altogether. The act of promulgating a stance may be seen as sufficient response without any supportive strategies being developed. But usually there are some supportive responses to ensure the implementation of the stance. If there is widespread or vocal disagreement with the stance, more involved and comprehensive supportive responses involving the aspects of religion may be developed.

ASPECTS INVOLVED IN CHALLENGES

All challenges to religion affect, engage and use in various ways, some of the aspects of a religious tradition. Religious beliefs in some traditions rely heavily on the oral transmission of sacred stories which helps the community to define values and behaviours. The tradition will appeal to those stories to address challenges because they provide a clarification of their ethics. For many traditions, the written texts and sacred scriptures of their traditions have aided them in the past and aid them today in addressing challenges. The social structures of a religious tradition provide a method of problem-solving by defining the authority of members of a group who may have inherited their role through their ancestry, been elected by an elite in the tradition, or be elected by the community. Therefore, there may be one aspect that is the main focus or target of a challenge but, because the aspects are interconnected, what affects one will inevitably bring questioning, tensions or enthusiastic support for and increased participation in others.

EXPLORING CHALLENGES

Skills: identify, list, interpret, explain, analyse, draw conclusions, synthesise

1. What makes a challenge significant for a religious tradition?
2. What aspects may be expected to be affected? Give reasons.
3. Which stances have been effective for religions when challenged?
4. Which stances were ineffective or counterproductive for religions facing a challenge?
5. Explain *at least three* different responses that religions use to support their various stances to challenges. Consider how the aspects are used in responses.
6. Which supporting responses are least effective? Why?
7. What are the sources of challenges to religious traditions?
8. Why may developments in society make challenges to religious traditions inevitable?
9. What are the constraints that religious traditions face when dealing with a significant challenge?
10. List each of the aspects of religion and offer two ways in which each could be used to respond to a challenge in a religious tradition.
11. Using the information in the list above, what conclusion can be drawn about which of the aspects would be most effective in responding to challenge. Explain your answer.
12. What are the strengths of resolving a problem internally through the aspects of religion rather than have the challenge resolved by an external authority?
13. As a class, explore the nature of religious authority in the religious tradition you have studied. Find examples of how it has been applied across the history of the tradition.

TIMELINE OF CHRISTIANITY

DATE	NATURE OF THE CHALLENGE	RELEVANT FACTS
49 CE	**Continued existence** Theological	Council of Jerusalem Circumcision and dietary laws Peter/Paul/James Gentile Christians accepted alongside those in the Jewish tradition
44–68 CE	Theological	Death of the apostles who were witnesses to the teachings of Jesus Christ (only John remained) Crisis of leadership
70 CE	**Continued existence** Theological	Destruction of the temple in Jerusalem
30s–400s CE	**Continued existence** Theological Ethical	The Great Heresies Gnosticism, Montanism, Arianism, Pelagianism, Nestorianism, Docetism
c. 36–313 CE	**Continued existence** Theological Ethical	Martyrdom of St Stephen and St James and persecution from sections of the Jewish leadership. After 64 CE, intermittent persecution by Roman authorities – St Peter and St Paul martyred
313–380s CE	**Continued existence** Theological Ethical	Christian decision making comes under the influence of the state through Constantine I, the Edict of Milan, and is played out in the Council of Nicaea. By 380 CE, Christianity is the official religion of the Roman Empire under a decree by Emperor Theodosius I.
400s CE	**Continued existence** Theological	Rome is sacked in 410CE and falls in 476CE. St Augustine of Hippo (354–430 CE) adapts theology of the City of God and changes the stance of Christianity from Pacifism to Christians may defend themselves, developing Just War Doctrine The last Roman Emperor Romulus Augustus is deposed 476 CE and the Church no longer has a privileged or secure place.
800s–1000 CE	**Continued existence** Theological	Charlemagne becomes Holy Roman Emperor – rise of Christendom. Beginning of a period of growth and power. Social structure is the feudal system. The Imperator Romanorum or Holy Roman Emperor position created who was a political and military rival to the Pope and whose actions sometimes contradicted the Pope.
1054 CE	**Continued existence** Theological Ethical	The Great Schism – the tradition formally divides into Eastern Orthodox denominations and Roman Catholicism.
1095–1291 CE	**Continued existence** Theological Ethical	The rise of Islam and the Crusades Christian Europe confronts the rising authority of Islam and the East, with the catalyst being control of sacred sites in the Holy Land.
1182 CE	**Continued existence** Theological Ethical	Massacre of Roman Catholic inhabitants by the Eastern Orthodox inhabitants of Constantinople
1204 CE	**Continued existence** Theological Ethical	Sacking of Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade

DATE	NATURE OF THE CHALLENGE	RELEVANT FACTS
1266–1273 CE	**Theological**	Thomas Aquinas writes his great work of systematic theology: *Summa Theologiae*.
1305–1417 CE	**Continued existence** Theological	A second papacy is established in France and later there were three claiming authorities
1347–1351 and recurrences to 1400	Continued existence Theological Ethical	The Black Death, a series of plagues which wiped out approximately 25 million people or one third of Europe. Theologically people were preoccupied with death, mysticism and concerns of God's abandonment. Pope Clement VI issued two Bulls prohibiting the blaming and killing of the Jews as poisoning the wells as the cause for the plague as they were dying from it as well.
1370s CE	**Theological** Ethical	John Wycliffe writes 'Civil Dominion', arguing for reform of the church. Translates the Bible into Middle English
1453 CE	**Continued existence**	Constantinople falls to the Ottoman Turks.
1517 CE	**Continued existence** Theological Ethical	Martin Luther makes his criticisms of practices in the Catholic Church leading to the Reformation and the subsequent wars.
1525 CE	**Theological**	William Tyndale completes his translation of the Bible into English.
1534 CE	**Theological**	Act of Supremacy passed – Henry VIII becomes supreme head of the English Church.
1536 CE	**Theological**	John Calvin publishes his *Institutes of the Christian Religion.*
1549 CE	**Theological**	Thomas Cranmer publishes the *Book of Common Prayer* in England.
1600s–1900s CE	**Theological** Continued existence	The rise of Modernist thought; democratic movements; capitalism; the discovery of the New World
1618–1648 CE	**Continued existence** Theological	Protestant–Catholic conflict in Germany (Thirty Years' War)
1633 CE	**Theological**	Galileo Galilei publishes *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*, which contradicts the church's teaching on geocentrism.
1907–1943 CE	**Theological**	Catholic Modernist Movement Scripture interpretation and biblical studies
1939–1945 CE	**Ethical** Theological	World War II and the Holocaust
1948 CE	**Theological**	Formation of the World Council of Churches
1976–2000s CE	**Theological** Ethical	Asylum seekers and refugees
1986–2000s CE	**Theological** Ethical	Global warming
1986–2000s CE	**Theological** Ethical	Endangered species
2018–present	**Ethical** Theological Continued existence	Human Rights abuse by China: Detention and torture of Uyghur Denial of human rights Hong Kong Rohingya crisis in Myanmar

DATE	NATURE OF THE CHALLENGE	RELEVANT FACTS
2000s CE–present	**Ethical** Theological	The trafficking of people into slavery, forced marriage
2000s CE–present	**Theological** **Ethical**	Conflict over freedom of religion with regard to LGBTIQA+ rights
2019 CE–present	**Ethical** Theological	COVID pandemic
2000s CE–present	**Ethical** Theological	War and its consequences: in Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen and Ukraine

CHALLENGES TO RELIGIONS

The following are some examples, drawn from the Christian, Jewish and Islamic experiences, that highlight the types of historical and contemporary challenges faced by religions, and their relationship to the aspects of religion.

Online content
Challenges to Buddhism
Challenges to Hinduism
Challenges to Sikhism

Examples of challenges to Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism can be found on NelsonNet.

Alamy Stock Photo/Science History Images

FIGURE 10.3 Galileo demonstrating his telescope in 1609. How did people understand the cosmos if they did not have a telescope?

CHRISTIANITY: CHALLENGE – HELIOCENTRISM AND GALILEO (THEOLOGICAL, CONTINUED EXISTENCE)

The time and place of this challenge was the 1600s CE Europe. It was a time of discovery, innovation and change. It was the period of the Renaissance, which was founded on the rebirth and appropriation of many ideas of the Ancient Greeks that had been abandoned or lost during the Middle Ages and rediscovered through the import of texts and scholarly knowledge from Arabic countries during and after the Crusades. The Renaissance was also a period that was noteworthy for the rise in scientific investigation, which found scholars returning to and investigating the teachings of people like Ptolemy (c. 100–170 CE).

It was also a period in which the Catholic Church had substantial temporal as well as spiritual authority. In a dominantly Catholic culture it was understood that God was revealed through the sacred text of the Bible, which was interpreted through the intellectuals in the social structure of the Church. The interpretations were conveyed through the papacy. It was believed that the Church was the holder of the Absolute Truth about the cosmos as it was revealed through Scripture. The strength of the institutional Church at the time had, however, been tested through the rise of Protestantism in Germany, which demonstrated that the Church's teachings and authority could be questioned. The Church's mood had become defensive; there was little tolerance for those who incited doubt.

The Church's position was that the Earth was at the centre of a finite universe and bounded by a sphere containing fixed stars. This was a position posed by Aristotle (384–322 BCE) and by Ptolemy (100–170 CE) and later affirmed by the medieval theologian St Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225–74 CE). Galileo's observations proved, even to laity, that Copernicus was correct.

The primary source of this challenge was Galileo Galilei (1564–1642), an Italian astronomer. His improvements to the telescope and subsequent astronomical observations supported radical claims about the nature of the universe that had been made, but not proven, by another source of the challenge, Nicolaus Copernicus, a mathematician (*De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* 1543). Copernicus had used his mathematics to theoretically establish that the Sun, not the Earth, was at the centre of the cosmos (heliocentrism). Copernicus had died as his book was published. The book was abstract in its content and only read in elite circles and so it did not cause major disruption in the Church. Galileo's telescope, on the other hand, provided the physical evidence that challenged the more theoretical understanding of the structure of the universe put forward by the Church. This set up a conflict that revolved around a challenge to the social structure of the Church and the authority of sacred texts and related theological teachings.

This heliocentric view was a severe challenge to the Catholic Church's theology because it undermined God's revelation through Scripture, which had produced a theology that taught the centrality of humans. It was also a threat to continued existence of the tradition as it undermined the authority of the Church and its ability to reveal the truths that would answer people's existential questions. It also planted the seed of doubt concerning all other teachings of the Church. It was a proposal that would lead people to atheism by having them turn to science for answers instead of turning to God through the Church.

The Church's stance was assertive. The response argued that the Church's teaching was based on the authority of Scripture. The texts used were: Psalms 93 ('Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved') and 104 ('He set the Earth on its foundations; it can never be moved'), 1 Chronicles 16:30 ('The world is firmly established it cannot be moved') and Ecclesiastes 1:5 ('A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the Earth remains forever. The sun rises, and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place where it rises'). These speak of the motion of the celestial

bodies with the Earth static and central in the cosmos. The Church believed they not only had God's revelation as evidence but also the works of the Ancient.Greeks.

Galileo had confidence that he would be successful in revolutionising the world's understanding of the cosmos without offending the Church due to his close relationship with the papacy. But the consequences of his findings were too damaging to the Church's authority and credibility. Galileo defended his claim by arguing that St Augustine's position had been that Scripture should not be read literally, as the Scriptures are not a history. Galileo also appealed to logic that as science and theology both are ways to the truth they cannot be in contradiction because 'two truths cannot contradict one another' ('Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina of Tuscany', 1615).

Galileo's position was strengthened by the publication of his ideas (*The Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems,* 1632). He had been given permission by the Inquisition to do this as a clarification of his views. The structure of the book was to be a debate between two great thinkers and for him to present both sides of the argument, the Copernican and the Ptolemaic views. However, Galileo offended powerful members of the Church hierarchy by naming the advocate for Ptolemy's views *Simplicio* (implying simple minded). It was believed he had made use of satire to ridicule the views opposed to his own. He had also shown foresight by having his book printed widely in the vernacular, which made his arguments available to many sympathetic to his views.

The Church's stance was belligerent and the response immediate. The Council of Trent (1543–1565) had defined the role of the Catholic Church in terms of Scripture as responsible for preserving the purity of the message of the Gospels with the prerogative of interpretation belonging solely to the Church which had the right to increase or restrict all freedom of expression or action. The protection of the sacred texts was, therefore, paramount. This gave the Church the authority to respond by banning his book (1633) and putting it on the Index of Forbidden Books. The stance was firmly against Galileo and the response was to silence and threaten him. He was required to recant (take back his views) or else be imprisoned and possibly tortured. Galileo recanted and spent his remaining life under house arrest.

CHANGING A WORLDVIEW

Skills: research, analyse, interpret, synthesise, evaluate

1. In your notes draw a sketch of the Church's understanding of the structure of the universe before Galileo and then another one for after Galileo. Label them appropriately geocentric and heliocentric. Which view of the cosmos is accurate? What authorities are you using in making this judgement?
2. Define and explain the stance taken by the Catholic Church during this challenge.
3. Outline the Catholic Church's supportive responses to their stance and evaluate how successful they were.
4. How was the aspect of social structure used in the Church's responses to Galileo?
5. Would these social structures be able to be used in this way in a challenge to the Church today? Why or why not?
6. Why was the aspect of texts central to this challenge?
7. Research why the Protestant Johannes Kepler's heliocentric model was preferred by the Church over Galileo's model. Did he receive any censure from the Catholic Church?
8. Research the relationship the Catholic Church has with science today and draw conclusions about what has happened to change this relationship.

CHRISTIANITY: CHALLENGE – THE HOLOCAUST: THEOLOGICAL, ETHICAL

A Protestant response

The genocide inflicted on the Jewish people and many others including political prisoners, intellectual and physically disabled people, Romani peoples and anyone deemed undesirable or unworthy of living, in Germany during the Nazi reign of terror of the 1930s and 1940s was an ethical challenge for Protestant Christianity in Germany. At the time it was largely made up of the German Evangelical Church and the Lutheran Church. Protestantism's founder, Martin Luther, towards the end of his life, had published views that were anti-Semitic and these were adopted by Adolf Hitler as a justification for his actions. Hitler hoped to fuse his political philosophy with the theology of the German Evangelical Church. This caused division in the Protestant churches at the time, with different groups adopting quite radically opposed stances. There were some who adopted an extremist anti-Jewish view – continuing the narrative that was prominent in German cities in the Middle Ages – that the Jewish people were responsible for the death of Christ. These views were denounced by the Lutheran Church in a synod in 1983 taking the stance of accepting that these attitudes were in opposition to their mission and beliefs and responding by making a formal apology for this past stance by some members including Luther. Their resolutions stated:

> That we condemn any and all discrimination against others on account of race or religion or any coercion on that account and pledge ourselves to work and witness against such sins;
>
> That we reaffirm that the bases of our doctrine and practice are the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions and not Luther, as such;
>
> That while, on the one hand, we are deeply indebted to Luther for his rediscovery and enunciation of the Gospel, on the other hand, we deplore and disassociate ourselves from Luther's negative statements about the Jewish people, and, by the same token, we deplore the use today of such sentiments by Luther to incite anti-Christian and/or anti-Lutheran sentiment...

At the other extreme of Protestantism in World War II, there were those who showed great courage in defending the rights of the Jewish people. From this group arose sects such as the Confessing Church, to which Dietrich Bonhoeffer belonged, that produced a theology exploring the ethical corruption of Nazism and produced committed Protestant Christians who took a courageous stance against Hitler and lost their lives for it. For more on Dietrich Bonhoeffer go to Chapter 9.

The Catholic response

As recognised by the current Pope, Francis I, the Holocaust was a challenge that demanded of the Roman Catholic Church a stance and a response. The ability of Pope Pius XII to provide these two things in the 1930s and 1940s is still being evaluated. On the one hand, he is accused of failing to speak out publicly against the mass murder of Jews. On the other, he sheltered Jews in the convents of Rome and other Italian cities, as well as in the Pope's summer residence in Castel Gandolfo, and he worked behind the scenes to depose Hitler.

American Jewish Committee Archives

FIGURE 10.4 *Nostra Aetate* (In Our Time), the Declaration by Vatican II on the Relationship between the Church and Non-Christian Religions, which established a new rapport between Jews and Catholics. In this photograph, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel and Cardinal Augustin Bea look at a Yiddish newspaper in the offices of the American Jewish Committee in 1963. The two leaders in the photo are wearing similar head covering – why might this be so?

Tension had existed between the Roman Catholic and Jewish traditions since Apostolic times. Pope John XXIII who became Pope in 1958 had saved thousands of Jewish lives during World War II. He courageously came to the view that the challenge of this tension in the Jewish–Christian dialogue needed to be addressed. The relationship between the two traditions was put on the agenda for the Second Vatican Council (known as **Council of Vatican II**, 1962–1965). It was time for the Church to take a firm stance on this.

The resulting stance of the Church reinterpreted historic interpretations of Scripture to recognise the shared spiritual 'blood line' of the Christian and Jewish traditions. This was revolutionary for the relationship. The Church's revised stance was detailed in the Vatican II document *Nostra Aetate*:

> Furthermore, in her rejection of every persecution against any man, the Church, mindful of the patrimony she shares with the Jews and moved not by political reasons but by the Gospel's spiritual love, decries hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone.
>
> Besides, as the Church has always held and holds now, Christ underwent His passion and death freely, because of the sins of men and out of infinite love, in order that all may reach salvation. It is, therefore, the burden of the Church's preaching to proclaim the cross of Christ as the sign of God's all-embracing love and as the fountain from which every grace flows.
>
> We cannot truly call on God, the Father of all, if we refuse to treat in a brotherly way any man, created as he is in the image of God. Man's relation to God the Father and his relation to men his brothers are so linked together that Scripture says: 'He who does not love does not know God' (1 John 4:8).
>
> No foundation therefore remains for any theory or practice that leads to discrimination between man and man or people and people, so far as their human dignity and the rights flowing from it are concerned.

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Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, who was Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth from 1991 until 2013, said this about the Church's stance and response in the Vatican document *Nostra Aetate*:

> It was, on the face of it, a minor theological gesture, yet it brought about one of the greatest revolutions in religious history … it declared that 'the Jews should not be spoken of as rejected or accursed as if this followed from Holy Scripture.' Today as a result, Jews and Catholics meet not as enemies but as cherished and respected friends.

Jonathan Sacks, 28 October 2015, 'Nostra Aetate Fifty Years On'

Before Vatican II, the stance had been to see Jews as guilty of **deicide** due to the literal reading of John's Gospel, in particular, which had led to this view. Rabbi Sacks has reminded Catholics that this:

> … led to a painful history during which Jews were at times massacred, expelled, publicly humiliated, forcibly converted, accused of poisoning wells, spreading the plague and killing Christian children for religious purposes, the so-called Blood Libel. Though such behaviour was often condemned by popes, and in some cases in violation of Christian doctrine, it left a legacy of suspicion, fear and hate.
>
> Source: Jonathan Sacks, 28 October 2015, 'Nostra Aetate Fifty Years On'

The revised theology and interpretation of history led to events such as Pope John Paul II's 1986 visit to the synagogue in Rome where he spoke of the Jewish people 'with profound fraternal respect and even love', and his prayer in 2000 at the Western Wall in Jerusalem.

Referring to Vatican II, Pope Francis I has written that:

> God has never neglected his faithfulness to the covenant with Israel, and that, through the awful trials of these last centuries, the Jews have preserved their faith in God. And for this, we, the Church and the whole human family, can never be sufficiently grateful to them.
>
> Source: The Holy See, 'Letter to a non-believer', Pope Francis responds to Dr Eugenio Scalfari, journalist of the Italian newspaper, *La Repubblica*, the Vatican, 4 September 2013, © Libreria Editrice Vaticana

RECOGNISING COMMON HUMANITY

Skills: research, analyse, interpret, synthesise, evaluate

1. Explain in your own words why the Holocaust was a challenge to Christianity.
2. What was the stance of the Roman Catholic Church towards Judaism before Vatican II?
3. What was the attitude of Martin Luther towards Judaism?
4. What was so significant about *Nostra Aetate* for Jewish people according to Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks?
5. What is the nature of the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and Judaism today?
6. How, over time, have aspects of religion been used by Christian churches to determine the relationship between Christians and Jews?

CHRISTIANITY: CHALLENGE – REFUGEES: ETHICAL

A significant challenge for the 21st century is the massive numbers of displaced people who are searching for asylum. The unprecedented numbers of asylum seekers and refugees pose an ethical challenge to Christians, whose beliefs are underpinned by Jesus Christ's teaching to 'love your neighbour' (Mark 12:31). The extent of the challenge is staggering. In 2022, there were 100 million displaced persons, the largest number since World War II, and about 27 million were refugees – and then conflict happened in the Ukraine. Those fleeing their nations today include Ukranians, Rohingyas, Syrians, Hazaras, Venezuelans, Somalis and Sudanese. They are people who are facing systematic oppression.

We live in a world at war – Pope Francis has called it a Third World War in pieces. At the moment one person is displaced every second from some sort of disaster and this figure is predicted to worsen as climate change impacts become more prevalent. In Australia, although the government has slowly been dismantling its offshore detention centres, in February 2022 the average time

spent in detention in Australia was still lengthy – 736 days – and the government was sending on detainees from mainland detention centres to Christmas Island. The nation's policy is still one that demonises refugees who are fleeing war and persecution.

Shutterstock.com/mady70

FIGURE 10.5 Ukrainian refugees waiting to cross the border into Romania. Name three emotions felt when viewing this image. How do these emotions shape a response to the plight of these people?

For the Roman Catholic Church, this is not a challenge that will threaten its existence as a religious institution globally, but it is an issue that encompasses a threat to the survival of Christianity in the Middle East. Many of those who are fleeing are Christians abandoning land their families have worked for thousands of years. In 2014, thousands of Christians in Mosul and the Ninevah Plain, in Iraq, including nearly 40 000 Syriac Catholics, were driven out by ISIS (now ISIL) militants. Their threat is also forcing the migration of Chaldeans, Assyrians, Maronites, Melkites and Armenians. The Pope has called on the world to address this problem as Christians are disappearing from the region that was the birthplace of Christianity.

The hierarchical structure of the Roman Catholic Church facilitates the official response, as does the Church's teaching on **subsidiarity**. At a global level Pope Francis I, as head of the Catholic Church, has made an impassioned plea to Catholics, and to all nations, to show compassion. He has called on nation-states to accept responsibility for people fleeing oppression. He has gone on to model his message by being present to offer compassion himself to those who are victims of violence, and he has taken up opportunities to meet with world leaders to discuss the humanitarian challenge.

In 2013, after 114 asylum seekers died off the coast of Italy when their boat sank, the Pope made a speech in Lampedusa, the place where most asylum seekers coming by boat first arrive in Italy. This is a tragedy that continues to occur in the Mediterranean as refugees try to flee from conflict in the Middle East and Northern Africa. In the speech, Pope Francis made plain his stance on the issues when he said:

> These brothers and sisters of ours were trying to escape difficult situations to find some serenity and peace; they were looking for a better place for themselves and their families, but instead they found death. How often do such people fail to find understanding, fail to find acceptance, fail to find solidarity? And their cry rises up to God! ... Has any one of us wept for these persons who were on the boat? For the young mothers carrying their babies? For these men who were looking for a means of supporting their families? We are a society which has forgotten how to weep, how to experience compassion – 'suffering with' others: the globalisation of indifference has taken from us the ability to weep!

As a response the Pope used his authority in the social structure to call on every parish, religious community, monastery and sanctuary to take in one refugee family, and he led by example, with the Vatican taking in a Syrian family. The stance taken has been one of compassion and welcome, which is consistent with the Gospel message of love of neighbour and hospitality.

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

FIGURE 10.6 Facebook post by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference expressing a stance on off-shore detention of refugees. How does this image show that religions can use social media effectively to communicate a message?

At a national level, the Australian bishops have dedicated Social Justice statements to addressing the government's treatment of asylum seekers and refugees. They argued that the community should not listen to the rhetoric depicting the boat arrivals as illegal and a burden on the taxpayer; instead, the bishops asked that people look at:

> ... the reasons behind people's flight from persecution, focusing on the dignity of every person, and asking that we return to our once proud tradition of protecting and supporting victims of war and violence.
>
> Australian Catholic Bishops Social Justice Statement 2015–2016

At a local level, the Church is responding through the work of religious orders and parishes who have social justice groups. The Brigidine Sisters' Asylum Seeker Project and the Edmund Rice Centre are two religious groups that have both taken a strong stance, demanding a closure of detention centres and more compassionate border protection policies.

Other than involving various levels of the social structure of the Catholic tradition, the primary aspect that has an important role in dealing with this challenge is the sacred texts. The Scriptures have provided the wisdom for the Roman Catholic Church's approach to this challenge. They have looked to both the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament. The Hebrew Scriptures remind the Jewish people that they should have empathy as they were once in the same position as these people. The Book of Leviticus 19:33–34 instructs that:

> ... when an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.

Jesus in the New Testament teaches that all human beings are precious and should not be used as commodities. People are sacred and deserve respect because they are loved by God; not because they are deserving of it or because they live righteous lives, but because they were created by God in God's 'image and likeness' (Genesis 1:26). In Matthew's Gospel Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs' (Matthew 9:13–14).

In the Catholic tradition, God's revelation is found in both Scripture and the tradition – and so there is God's wisdom in the teachings of the **Magisterium** of the Church. The sacred writings that give a framework for responding to ethical challenges are the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

Getty Images/Fine Art Images/Heritage Images

FIGURE 10.7 *Let the little children come to me*, by Werner Jacobsz van den Valckert (c. 1585–after 1635). What attitudes do the onlookers in this photo display towards Jesus' actions? What message is Jesus giving here?

The principle of the preferential option for the poor is important in this issue. It offers very practical teaching that Catholics should respond to all who are poor – that they should be given priority over other needs. The people who are arriving as asylum seekers and refugees have lost the most important possessions a person can have – their family, their friends, their land, their nationality – they come often with virtually nothing and must start again. They are the poor in 'our midst'.

This is linked to the principle of the common good. This emphasises the need for a communal attitude, to recognise that all people were created to live in community, in relationship with others, and that all are responsible for each other's well-being. In caring for each other, Catholics believe they are creating a society that reflects the qualities of heaven – they believe they are constructing God's reign on Earth and this will benefit all of society.

REACHING OUT TO OTHERS

Skills: research, analysis, synthesis

1 What is the difference between an asylum seeker and a refugee?
2 Who are the Ukranians, Rohingyas, Syrians, Hazaras, Somalis and Sudanese? Where do they come from? What is their religion?
3 What rights do people have to claim asylum under the United Nations Convention?
4 What is the nature of this challenge to the Roman Catholic tradition?
5 What is the broad context of this challenge and how does this affect the challenge?
6 Who are the key religious people presenting a stance and what is their stance?
7 Which aspects have informed their response?
8 What supporting responses have they made to resolve the challenge?

TIMELINE OF ISLAM

DATE	NATURE OF THE CHALLENGE	RELEVANT FACTS
622 CE	**Continued existence** Theological	After persecution in Mecca, Muhammad migrates to Medina. The migration – Hijrah – marks the beginning of the Islamic era.
629–631 CE	**Continued existence** Theological Ethical	The capture of Mecca. A constitution is established.
632 CE	**Theological**	Muhammad dies. Abu Bakr chosen as first caliph
c. 650 CE	**Theological**	Caliph Uthman, Muhammad's son-in-law, has a committee formalise the Quran and have it written in a single text.
656–750 CE	**Theological**	Uthman is murdered; Ali becomes fourth caliph. Ali is murdered; Muawiyah, Governor of Syria, declares himself the 'first king in Islam' in defiance of Caliph Ali. Death of Husayn, Caliph Ali's son, marks the beginning of the Shiat Ali Division between Sunni and Shi'a.
750 CE	**Theological** Ethical	The Abbasid Dynasty and the Golden Age of Islam Hadith published
765 CE	**Continued existence** Theological	Division within Shi'ites – majority are the modern Imamiyya (Twelvers) who co-exist with Abbasid caliphs; minority are more extreme Isma'ilis (Seveners)
1000s CE	**Theological**	Intellectual conflict between theologians, philosophers and Sufis Al-Ghazali attacks Greek philosophy whereas Ibn Rushd stages a defence of philosophy, *The Incoherence of the Incoherence.* Ibn Sina accommodates classical philosophy with the Quran.
900s–1250s CE	**Theological**	Decline of absolute monarchy in Islam and the rise of independent Islamic states
1095–1291 CE	**Continued existence** Theological	The Crusades

>

DATE	NATURE OF THE CHALLENGE	RELEVANT FACTS
1200–1250 CE	**Continued existence** Theological Ethical	Ibn Saad (Spain) publishes his ideas on the mixing of cultures in his book, *The Introduction to the Classes of Nations.* Moorish Spain operates as a multicultural society.
1200s CE	**Continued existence** Theological	Invasion by Genghis Khan End of the Golden Age The religious scholars close the 'gates of *ijtihad*' ('reasoned struggle'); and establish *taqlid* (blind imitation) as the dominant mode of thought, leading to decline in science, learning and innovation.
1300s–1500s	**Continued existence**	Muslim traders and scholars spread Islam in Indonesia. The first Islamic Sultanate emerges in 1211 in Sumatra and by the 1500s Islamic kingdoms proliferate across Indonesia
1453 CE	**Continued existence** Theological Ethical	Ottoman Empire under Mehmed II – Constantinople under Islam
1526 CE	**Theological**	Mughal Empire established in India
1700–1800 CE	**Continued existence** Theological	European powers begin to colonise the Muslim world. Restrictions are imposed on education for Muslims.
1703–1792 CE	**Continued existence** **Theological**	Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab establishes a perspective that becomes known as Wahhabism, the adoption of a literalist interpretation of the Quran aimed at unifying Muslims.
1916–1918 CE	**Continued existence**	For promises of support from Arabs, Jews and Christians to rid the Middle East of the Ottoman Empire, Britain and France construct the Sykes-Picot Agreement. After World War I, the creation of nations in the Middle East begins enabled by the agreement.
1923 CE	**Continued existence**	Kemal Ataturk leads the establishment of the Republic of Turkey.
1945 CE–present	**Continued existence**	Islam spreads to the West with mass migrations from Asia, Africa and India.
1947 CE	**Continued existence** Ethical Theological	Pakistan founded as an Islamic nation. Islam becomes a minority religion in India.
1957 CE	**Continued existence** Theological Ethics	Independent Malayan state established with Islam as the official religion but guaranteed tolerance
1979 CE	**Continued existence** Theological Ethical	Iranian Revolution Russia invades Afghanistan.
1990s CE–present	**Ethical** Continued existence Theological	Taliban come to power in Afghanistan. Political tensions in the Middle East Invasion of Afghanistan by coalition forces Overthrow of Saddam Hussein and the Ba'athist Party in Iraq War in Syria, Yemen
2011 CE	**Continued existence** Theological Ethical	In Tunisia, Egypt, the Arab Spring – protests brought moves towards democracy, only to be later suppressed

DATE	NATURE OF THE CHALLENGE	RELEVANT FACTS
2020s CE	Theological **Ethical**	Calls for greater rights for women in Saudi Arabia
1980s CE–present	**Continued existence** Theological Ethical	Climate change and threats to water supply Loss of oil as revenue in the future
2019 CE–present	Theological **Ethical**	COVID pandemic
2020s CE–present	**Ethical** Theological	The rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan after the withdrawal of Western troops

ISLAM: CHALLENGE – THE CRUSADES: THEOLOGICAL, ETHICAL

By the early 1000s CE, the religion of Islam was vibrant with growth in art, philosophy, Sufi mysticism, madrasahs (educational colleges) and universities providing religious unity in diversity. It was religious beliefs and texts that ensured the unity of a decentralised *ummah*. The Abbasid caliph was recognised head of the *ummah* but his role was religious and symbolic rather than political. The governance of Islam was being conducted by different regional groups such as the Ismaili Fatimids in Egypt, Seljuk Turks in Baghdad and Turkish *amirs* (military commanders) ruling various independent states.

When the Western Christian Crusaders first arrived in Jerusalem (in 1099 CE), the Muslim forces lacked political unity as *amirs* were fighting each other and this was exacerbated by a revolt in 1092 in which leading Seljuk *amirs* were killed by assassins from the Fatimid Empire. This division became a source of the challenge brought by the crusades, as it did not allow those in Jerusalem to provide an effective defence against the Crusader armies from Europe.

The major source of the challenge was, however, the taking of Syria by the Seljuks in 1070 CE. Their intent had been to defeat the Fatimids but in the process they had come into conflict with the Christian Byzantine Empire and took territory from them. The Byzantine, Emperor Komnenus I, did not have the armies to defeat the invaders and so called on Pope Urban II for assistance and it was this that led to the calling of the Crusades in 1095 CE.

A motivating factor for the papacy to assist the Byzantine Emperor was the desire to recover control of the sacred place of the Holy City of Jerusalem and sacred spaces such as Holy Sepulchre which was believed to be the site of Christ's death and resurrection. These, however, are also sacred places and sites for Islam as Jerusalem is the third holiest place in Islam where Islamic prophets such as Ibrahim, Dawud, Sulaiman, Ilyas and Isa all came to worship. Importantly, it is the site of the sacred story of the Prophet Muhammad travelling in a single night from Mecca to Jerusalem, from where he ascended to Heaven to meet the earlier prophets and God. The tension over these sacred sites was a source of the conflict.

In the First Crusade's battle for Jerusalem, history suggests the Egyptians and Turks fought very hard to keep their holy sites; however, they fell and came under the rule of the Crusaders. The devastation and sorrow at the fall of Jerusalem was reflected in the reports of refugees who fled to cities such as Damascus and Aleppo.

A charismatic local Islamic ruler, Nureddin (or Nur al-Din; 1118–74 CE) respected the local people's traditions and social organisation and took a stance of encouraging cooperation. He brought about a significant change of perception by reinterpreting the concept of war. War in their territories had been seen as wars of expansion – gaining, defending or reclaiming territories. Nureddin

responded by adding a theological dimension to war against the Crusaders. He emphasised that the belief systems of the Franks (Christians) and Muslims were radically separated – he believed that this conflict was religious. The Crusaders were hostile to Islam and threatened its existence. Thus, Nureddin called Muslims to undertake a war in defence of Islam, a lesser *jihad*, which Westerners have identified as a form of **holy war**.

The social structures of Islam underpinned their stances and supporting responses. The initial stance was military resistance of the invaders and fight to retain control of the territory. This was a response that was successful in 1144 CE when the *amir* of Aleppo was able to achieve victories in Armentia that were capitalised on by Sultan Saladin (or Salah al-Din; 1137/38–1193 CE) who re-took Jerusalem in 1187 CE. Saladin's response ensured the dominance of Sunni Islam in the region.

Some Islamic scholars adopted the stance of interpreting the First Crusade as a divine punishment for neglecting religious duties, and for failing to defend the territories God had entrusted to them. Hence, when their counter crusade was begun as a response, it was a defensive war as Jerusalem was as sacred to Muslims as to Christians and Jews. Therefore, as Saladin is reported to have said, they could not waver. He did not waver and the land was reconquered.

The significance of the Crusades in Islamic history is debated. Some argue that they were of marginal significance and others argue that they left a deep scar that is yet to be healed. The records show that the Crusades ultimately led to the aspect of social structures being used to debate the ethics of war and the nature of *jihad* due to Saladin's willingness to continue fighting over a prolonged period which caused significant loss of life.

The leadership at the time was torn between two religious imperatives: one stance of continuing to fight to protect the important religious sites; the other stance was to stop fighting as it was seen to be unethical in Islam to continue war indefinitely. Ibn Qudama, one of Saladin's advisers, argued that a leader should make a truce if he considered that it was of general benefit to Islam. However, to Saladin this was impossible politically.

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FIGURE 10.8 Conquest of Jerusalem by Saladin 1187 CE. The Christians are allowed to leave Jerusalem. What reasons might have persuaded Saladin to refrain from a retaliatory massacre of the Christians in Jerusalem?

In his continued stance of resistance to the Crusaders, Saladin initiated a supportive response in his tactical decisions such as the execution of prisoners of the Holy Orders of the Knights Templar and the Hospitallers. This decision was vindicated as it meant the military orders would be unable to regroup to mount further battles against him. It led to the surrender of the rest of the crusader held positions and ultimate victory by 1187 CE. Here he made another tactical decision influenced by the negotiations of the Christian authorities in Jerusalem to permit the Christian defenders and citizens to leave, rather than retaliating for the Crusader massacre of Jerusalem Muslims and Jews in 1099 CE. A further tactical and political response to curtail any future crusader invasion was taken by Saladin at the end of the Third Crusade with the signing of a treaty that allowed Christian pilgrims to travel to the Holy Land unmolested and control land around Acre.

It was the theological and ethical debates that arose due to the Crusades among influential leaders in Islam such as Nureddin and Saladin that led to Islam becoming a more unified religious and cultural movement through the use of the aspects of religion. Subsequently they built madrasas for learning and Sufi shrines for worship, which promoted a strengthening of the Sunni movement.

There were eight major official crusades between 1095 and 1270 in which horrific violence was inflicted and wilful destruction of land and sacred sites. Acre, the major foothold of the Crusaders, was eventually lost to the Mamluks in 1291 CE. This, for most scholars, marks the end of the Crusades. By this time the Islamic forces had overcome the Byzantine Empire and were becoming a major religious force in Asia Minor and Europe.

ISLAM IN CHANGE

Skills: define, research, analyse, interpret, synthesise

1. Write a definition of the crusades.
2. What were the sources of the Crusades?
3. Which aspects were involved in the challenge as sources of the challenge and which as responses to the challenge?
4. Explain the different meanings of the concept of ***jihad*** as a result of the Crusades.
5. Overall, what conflicting stances and supporting responses existed in the Islamic community during the Crusades?
6. Write an extended paragraph exploring the Crusades as a theological challenge for Islam.
7. After further research into the damage done to human life, the environment and sacred places by the Crusades, write an extended paragraph on why the Crusades were an ethical challenge for Islam.

ISLAM: CHALLENGE – EQUALITY OF WOMEN IN MARRIAGE: ETHICAL, THEOLOGICAL

Feminist thought in Islam has been developing since the 1800s CE, but over recent decades, particularly with the silencing of women by the Taliban in Afghanistan, there has been much growth in this field. In the more conservative streams of Islamic feminism the issue of women's rights in the home has become the central focus. This is a contemporary challenge that is impacting Islam in countries from Indonesia to Saudi Arabia, from Somalia to Australia, from Malaysia to Iran. In other Muslim communities, life in the modern world is placing pressures on all households as women choose to work because they want equality, status and social recognition; or because they

have to due to economic pressures brought about by the cost of housing, school fees and general cost of living. Some of the questions that feminists from the various Islamic communities are attempting to address are: Who in a marriage has the right or responsibility to support the family financially? Who in the family has the right or responsibility to be the giver of child care? Who should take care of general household duties? Who can decide who marries whom? Who controls divorce? Who has custody of children in the case of divorce?

These questions highlight an ethical challenge because it concerns issues linked to human rights and equality. It questions the traditional, often patriarchal, role of men in the Islamic legal system. The stakeholders are the women who are seeking equality and justice in the structure and roles in the family. In general, they believe that this is possible while remaining true to the precepts of the Quran and Sharia Law and so there are important consequences for the theology in Islam.

In terms of the sources of this challenge there has, over recent decades, been increasing academic feminist scholarship within Islam and a considerable increase in feminist activism. Women such as Leila Ahmed, Amina Wadud, Massouda Jalal, Homa Arjomand and groups such as the Progressive Muslim Union, Al-Fatiha, Sisters in Islam and *Musawah* are having impacts in mosques leading local movements for equality. There are some who want to change Islam completely by providing a women's reading of the Quran, while others want to rediscover the egalitarian history of Islam by applying ijithad (independent or original reasoning by expert in Islamic Law) to interpret Sharia Law.

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FIGURE 10.9 A woman at work. How easy is it for a woman to juggle work and home responsibilities?

A major source of the challenge is the changing socio-economic conditions in which families now live. There are homes in which women's earnings are the main source of income. Although Islam does not dictate that women should do all household duties without a full voice and equal rights, some communities do practice such inequality. It is argued that this inequality sits in opposition to the egalitarian nature of Islam.

Also there have been major shifts in demographics and societal values. In most Islamic communities, the age for the marriage of a girl is older, she is more likely to be educated, she is less likely to accept a polygamous marriage, she is more likely to have expectations of a career and be more likely to have expectations of equality in the marriage.

A range of stances and responses have been made to address this modernist challenge to Islam. In Malaysia a group based on Arabic feminist principles called *Musawah* (meaning equality) has been a strong voice in the debate. Their stance has been that what is needed is equality and justice between men and women in the family. Their response has been to demand reform of Islamic family law while remaining faithful to the spirit of the Quran. They use secular human rights principles outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Form of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). However, it is their use of the sacred text that adds a theological dimension to the challenge. The group argues that what is needed is a distinction between *Sharia* (God's will) and *Fiqh* (jurisprudence, or the way the legal system discerns God's will through Sharia). *Fiqh*, they contest, is open to reinterpretation and change.

Within the classical tradition of *fiqh* there are the principles of *qiwamah* and *wilayah*, which define men's authority over women in marriage. *Qiwamah* outlines the rights of both parties in marriage. For example, husbands protect their wives and wives, in turn, obey. *Wilayah* gives guardianship of children to their father as it is his duty to care for them. Women have particular rights to make decisions about young infants in the case of divorce. These principles are used in practice to decide issues pertaining to divorce, custody and polygamy. Such principles entrench unequal rights between the partners in a marriage. This is why *Musawah*, in addressing the challenge of inequality, proposes the response of changing the jurisprudence codes of Sharia Law.

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FIGURE 10.10 A man with his four wives. What does this image say about the relationship between husband and wife?

While taking the same stance against the inequality of women in the Islamic home a differing supportive response is being taken by activists in Somalia. They want the *ummah* to be more educated in the Quran, so they use posters that offer quotations from the Quran with interpretations that show that women have rights. Activists go to villages and speak about Muhammad educating both men and women. Like *Musawah*, their strategy is to use Sharia to gain rights for women and girls. In doing this, they argue, they are following the example of the Prophet Muhammad's wife Aisha (c. 613–678 CE) who was considered an authority and had the authority to interpret the Quran for men.

In Egypt, feminists standing in opposition to the inequality of women have also used the supporting response that Muslim's women's rights can only be addressed through using the legal system to advance their aims. So, using both Egyptian law and Sharia they have been able to achieve reform in divorce laws.

The aspects of religion are powerful at a practical and symbolic level in addressing this challenge. The use of social structures through Sharia law plays an important role in the challenge as it impacts the day-to-day living of Muslims. Sharia is a broad statement of ethics found in the Quranic texts. It is not a code of law. Sharia, it is argued, can then be open to interpretation. Sacred texts are

therefore also a central aspect used in the discussion of this challenge. The texts provided below show that Sharia law can and is being used to support calls for reform by women in Islam, as well as illustrating how traditionalists could have formed the interpretations that they hold.

A central text in the discussion is *Surah an-Nisa'* 4:34. The first interpretation provides the classical ruling on *qiwamah*.

> Men are the caretakers of women, as men have been provisioned by Allah over women and tasked with supporting them financially. And righteous women are devoutly obedient and, when alone, protective of what Allah has entrusted them with. And if you sense ill-conduct from your women, advise them 'first', 'if they persist', 'do not share their beds,' 'but if they still persist', then discipline them 'gently'. But if they change their ways, do not be unjust to them. Surely Allah is Most High, All-Great. (*Surah an-Nisa'* 4:34)

The *Musawah* movement argue that this interpretation is not consistent with the call to justice found in other Surah, for example:

> O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what you do. (Surah 5:8)

Feminists argue that there should be more emphasis on the Quranic texts that teach of ethical relationships in marriage and which outline the values that are essential in a marriage such as serenity (30:21), love and compassion (30:21), goodness (2:228; 2:229–230;), justice (4:3), kindness (2:229–230), and consultation and mutual consent (2:233).

There are critics of those who have taken these feminist stances against the inequality of women. The critics argue that the error in the approach of the feminists is in their criticism of the texts, as Islam and the aims of feminist can sit side by side. The Quran and Hadiths complement any discussion of rights for women. Evidence for this can be found in the research done by Susan Carland (Monash University academic, writer and social commentator):

> … our very identities are constantly being shaped by dual, competing discourses … There's the fundamentalist, patriarchal narrative, persistently trying to confine the social and public lives of Muslim women … But there are also some Western feminist discourses that seek to define our identities in ways that are … backward, oppressed, with no hope of liberation other than to emulate whatever Western notions of womanhood are on offer.
>
> Introduction chapter 'Dangerous Waters', in Susan Carland's book of her research, *Fighting Hislam*, Melbourne University Publishing, 2017

Some argue that the discrimination that women have imposed on them is cultural rather than theological. Other stances present the fight for liberation in Islam as an imposition of colonial values. All the positions taken are again firmly ensconced in an understanding of revelation in the Quran and the role of textual interpretation.

CONSIDERING EQUALITY FOR WOMEN IN MARRIAGE

Skills: identify, list, explain, research, analyse

1 Explain why this is an ethical challenge.

2 Is it justifiable to use United Nations Human Rights documents in a debate about ethics in Islam?

>

> 3 Offer evidence that this is a theological challenge

4 Identify and list the stances and their supporting responses taken by women in Islam to this challenge.

5 Research how this challenge is being addressed in Australia and Malaysia.

6 Analyse the similarities and differences in the stances and supporting responses taken in Australia and Malaysia.

TIMELINE OF JUDAISM

DATE	NATURE OF CHALLENGE	RELEVANT FACTS
1020–920 BCE	**Continued existence**	The Kingdom of Israel established, then divides into Northern Kingdom of Israel with Samaria as the capital and the Southern Kingdom of Judah with Jerusalem as the capital, which contains the First Temple built by Solomon
722–586 BCE	**Continued existence** Theological	Assyrian and Babylonian conquests Exile and beginning of diaspora. Destruction of the First Temple saw the beginnings of the structures which would later develop into the first synagogues. 538–515 BCE Second Temple built by returned exiles and renovated by King Herod 20 BCE.
165–63 BCE	**Theological** Continued existence	Hasmonean Jewish kingdom Unstable leadership by kings and high priests Assimilation into popular Hellenistic culture
110 BCE–70 CE	**Theological**	Sadducees (elite priestly ruling class based around the Temple cult) versus the Pharisees (emphasis on study and interpretation of Torah) and the Essenes (a monastic sect, opposed to mainstream practices, who abandoned the turmoil of Jerusalem for the desert) and developed an alternate theology seen in the Dead Sea Scrolls
66–135 CE	**Continued existence**	Revolt of the Zealots Unsuccessful Jewish uprisings against the Romans
400–1816 CE	**Theological**	False messiahs: in times of persecution and uncertainty, Jews turned to false prophets who offered them hope of imminent messianic salvation.
750–1900 CE	**Theological**	Jews living under Muslim rule; restrictions and persecution at times
800–1200 CE	**Theological**	The Karaite revolt against Rabbinic Judaism
800–1700 CE	**Theological** **Continued existence**	Forced disputations (debates) between Christians and Jews in the Middle Ages, often with dire results for the Jews; persecutions; blood libels and expulsion, that is, from England in 1290 until 1640 CE
1000–1500 CE	**Continued existence**	Expulsions of Jews from Spain and Portugal; Marranos – secret Jews
1095–1291 CE	**Continued existence**	Crusades led to persecution of Jews throughout Christendom
1215–1870 CE	**Continued existence**	Jewish ghettos; persecutions Poll taxes and restrictions on trades and locations

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DATE	NATURE OF CHALLENGE	RELEVANT FACTS
1648–1656 CE	**Continued existence**	The Chmielnicki Massacres in Ukraine Pogroms against Polish Jews More than 100 000 Jews killed, many tortured, forced to flee
1772–1906 CE	**Continued existence**	Russian Jews in the Pale of Settlement were restricted in where they could live and professions they could practise, with much poverty and anti-Jewish laws, restrictions and persecution; pogroms encouraged by the government
1789–1918 CE	**Theological** **Continued existence**	New ideas of the European Enlightenment and the emancipation of Jewry from the ghettos led to mass assimilation and the formation of new divisions in Judaism Issue – how to be a Jew in the new society?
1845–1914 CE	**Continued existence**	European anti-Semitism The defamatory 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion' widely distributed; the Dreyfus Affair in France
1882–1945 CE	**Continued existence**	Early Jewish settlements add to the remnant of ancient Jewish community left in Palestine battling nature and failed agricultural initiatives Arab–Jewish conflicts under Turkish then British rule; immigration restrictions by foreign rulers
1876–1970s CE	**Theological**	Literary criticism by German scholars to reconcile anomalies in the biblical texts by attributing them to four authors/editors, not God, overriding centuries of rabbinic scholarship
1933–1945 CE	**Continued existence** **Theological** Ethical	The Nazi Holocaust and the attempted extermination of the Jews of Europe. Questioning God's presence or absence in such suffering.
1948 CE–present	**Theological**	The return of Jews to Zion What sort of state – a **theocracy** or democracy? Who is a Jew? Which rabbinic authority do Jews follow?
1960s–present	**Continued existence** **Theological**	Assimilation and intermarriage causing diminishing Jewish numbers Continued Antisemitism Secularisation Jewish unity threatened by new diversity and individualism
	Ethical	Gender issues: feminism, gay rights Ecological issues Asylum seekers Medical technologies: end of life, abortion, surrogacy

JUDAISM: CHALLENGE – BLACK DEATH: THEOLOGY, CONTINUED EXISTENCE

The experience of the **Black Death** not only had an impact on Christianity, but also on the way in which Christianity related to another religious tradition, Judaism. The Black Death, a bubonic plague spread by fleas on rats, caused at least 25 million deaths across Europe over five years during the mid-14th century. It was a challenge to Jewish survival, not only from the physical illness and

death but also because of anti-Jewish discrimination in laws and the many restrictions placed on adherents' lives, professions and movements by Christian rulers.

In the late Middle Ages, damaging lies arose about the Jews, who were already despised for their lack of acceptance of the legitimacy of Jesus as the Christ. From the 12th century on, the false accusation that Jews desecrated the **host** and killed Christian children to use their blood to make **unleavened** bread for Passover aroused riots and persecutions every Easter against European Jews. Jews were also accused of poisoning wells. Medieval Europeans believed that whenever bad things happened to Christians, the Jews were to blame, and these suspicions increased with the Black Death. The first **pogrom** of the Black Death, on 13 April 1348, was a traditional act of Holy Week violence aggravated by the pestilence.

Many Jews died from the plague, but their survival rate was better than that of their Christian neighbours. Perhaps it was Halakhah, Jewish law, that preserved them through this harrowing period as it imposed a sanitary standard on Jews that was far above the typical hygienic standards of medieval Europe. For instance, in the general medieval world a person could spend most of their life without ever washing their hands. In contrast, according to Jewish law, a person could not eat food without washing their hands and must wash them after leaving the bathroom and any sort of intimate human contact. At least once a week, a Jew bathed for the Sabbath. Furthermore, Jewish law prevented Jews from reciting blessings and saying prayers by an open pit at latrines and at places with a foul odour. The sanitary conditions in the Jewish neighbourhood, primitive though they may have been by today's standards, were always far superior to those found elsewhere.

Getty Images/ Art Images

FIGURE 10.11 *The Triumph of Death*, painted by Flemish artist Pieter Bruegel in the mid-16th century, presents a nightmarish hell on Earth. It reflects the social upheaval and terror that followed the plague, which had devastated medieval Europe. Thought by most to be a scourge of the past, the bacterium of the plague still appears from time to time and has even been researched as a biological weapon by some countries. What is the message of this painting about humanity's attempts to fight the plague?

Jewish law also prescribed certain sanitary conditions related to burial of the dead. Leaving corpses unburied not only promoted the spread of the bubonic plague, but typhus and other diseases as well. The Jews, on the other hand, valued their responsibility to attend to the sick and dying. A formal burial society (*chevrah kadisha*) was maintained in every community to ensure that any Jew who died was treated according to Jewish law, including washing the body before it was buried. Nevertheless, even if the death rate from the plague among Jews was significantly less, it was still terrible.

The main reaction of the Jewish community was bewilderment and their stance was to with draw into their own community to look after themselves and protect themselves from plague and scapegoating attacks by terrified yet often hostile Christians. Within their close-knit communities, through the traditional practice of *tzedakah*, charity and community tithing, they cared for their ill and dead and those left alone due to plague deaths in their family. As they extended their withdrawal from interaction with the wider society, there was a need for rabbinic interpretations to address the crises.

One of the responses of the Jewish communities to their persecution during the Black death was to withdraw from interaction with wider society. Study of Torah in all its detail became a way to shield themselves from the spiritual decay around them. Many European Jewish communities added their own customs and observances to the traditional practices as a form of protection against the outside world. This, in turn, exacerbated suspicions against the motives and practices of the Jewish tradition, leading to later **inquisitions**, **blood libels**, 'Jew badges' and expulsions from many countries. The final stage of withdrawal was the movement of Jews from Western Europe to the East, especially Poland, which was free from the plague and welcomed Jews. Western Europe would never again be the centre of Jewish life that it had been for almost four centuries.

JEWS AND THE BLACK DEATH

Skills: describe, explain, analyse

1. In what ways was the Black Death a significant challenge to Jews and Judaism?
2. What beliefs caused Jews to be despised and scapegoated by their medieval Christian neighbours?
3. What Jewish practices were seen as alien by medieval Christians?
4. What stances and supporting responses did the Jewish communities of Western Europe take to these attacks?
5. How successful were their stances and supporting responses?
6. What traditional ritual practices may have aided some Jews to survive the plague?

JUDAISM: CHALLENGE – THE THEOLOGY OF BARUCH SPINOZA: THEOLOGICAL

Baruch (Benedict) Spinoza (1632–77 CE), was a Dutch Jewish scholar and philosopher, who scandalised the Jewish establishment of Amsterdam (mainly Sephardic, formerly Portuguese, Jews). He presented radical views of God which attacked Jewish theology to its core in his letters, writings and his major books *Theological Political Treatise* and *Ethics*. Spinoza had studied Hebrew, Bible, talmudic literature and medieval Jewish scholars but also Latin, natural sciences and contemporary

European philosophers. An early proponent of the developing intellectual movement known as the Enlightenment which was beginning to gain momentum in Western European scholarship, he was not against religions but what he saw as repressive organised religious authorities that encouraged ignorance and superstitious ceremonies.

In his book *Theological Political Treatise*, he rejected all beliefs relating to the supernatural such as revelation, God's authorship of the Bible and Judaism's personal covenant with God as taught in the sacred story of the revelation at Mount Sinai. He denied the historical relationship of God and humanity as taught in the religious traditions of Judaism and Christianity. According to Spinoza the biblical stories are not literally true but are intended to teach abstract concepts. He proposed that every person has the right to interpret the Bible; it does not require divine insight nor is it the sole right of the religious authorities.

In *Ethics*, Spinoza – while confirming the traditional idea of God as the omnipresent ultimate cause of all things – proposed that although God is totally immanent in the created cosmos, God is not involved in the human world. Contrary to Jewish teaching, he argued that there is no personal relationship between God and humans. Thus, Spinoza's radical idea of God was that of an impersonal force with no moral will working within the physical universe according to a set of mathematical laws which are a part of nature. Like other early thinkers of the Enlightenment, such as French philosopher René Descartes, he believed that mathematics was the means to discover the truth about the universe.

Spinoza's denial of the belief in divine revelation challenged the theological basis of Judaism which was fundamental to Jewish identity. The identification of God as Nature shocked Spinoza's contemporaries. He rejected Jewish notions of God as the omnipotent lawgiver and that the Torah conveys God's will. Spinoza argued ethics should be based on reason not revelation. For Spinoza, the text of the Torah was not divinely revealed but a man-made political constitution for Israel. As Israel no longer existed it was therefore invalid.

Spinoza further argued that biblical theology contains no truth at all and that God's revelation must be understood metaphorically, not literally. Spinoza rejected prophecy, miracles and supernatural occurrences as irrational beliefs unsustainable under philosophical scrutiny. The prophets may have possessed moral insights but, he argued, not theoretical truth. He also upheld that religious ceremonies and rituals were not based on divine law and since they were only relevant to ancient Jewish life no longer contributed to divine favour in the contemporary period. Moreover, Spinoza declared that organised religion was marked by superstition and it was unwilling to accept the insights provided by the rational sciences.

The rabbinic authorities in Amsterdam were shocked on learning of Spinoza's blasphemous statements that attacked the core of Jewish theology. They feared his possible influence on young scholars in their community, which would lead them astray from traditional Jewish teachings. The stance of the Amsterdam *Beth Din* (rabbinic court) was to prevent such a radical attack on centuries of Jewish thought and practice. They fought to preserve the status quo. Spinoza's ideas were seen as a dangerous incursion that needed to be removed from the Jewish community before it spread, causing long-term harm to their theology and practice. But the Jewish leaders felt the need to cultivate political caution in their dealings with Spinoza as his ideas also alarmed the Christian authorities. Therefore, Spinoza constituted a threat to the precarious safety of the protected status of the Amsterdam Jewish community, which wished to maintain a low-key presence in Protestant Holland.

The *parnassim* (community lay leaders) sitting on the board of the Portuguese synagogue of Amsterdam were vitriolic in their accusations of 23-year-old Spinoza. In response, the Amsterdam *Beth Din* convened on numerous occasions and finally excommunicated Spinoza, formally ostracising him and eventually expelling him from the Jewish community for his alleged 'evil

opinions and acts', 'abominable heresies' and the 'monstrous deeds' he was alleged to have practised and taught. There were specific rituals to accompany this excommunication. The ban would be first announced by the blowing of the *shofar* (ceremonial ram's horn trumpet) in front of an open ark in the synagogue. The community holding black candles as if in mourning would lament. The congregational leader would then shout biblical curses at the person being sentenced to the *herem* (censure and expulsion). Finally, a public warning was decreed forbidding all to associate with the accused as the community symbolically smothered the candles.

Karmakolle/Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain

FIGURE 10.12 Excommunicated Spinoza, 1907 painting by Samuel Hirszenberg. Why are the men in this Amsterdam street avoiding Spinoza?

In Jewish law, *herem* (ban) is justified in cases where a person publicly acts in a way that undermines Jewish values. The rabbinic institution of heresy was historically established to preserve the solidarity of the Jewish people and strengthen the authority of the rabbis by enforcing obedience to their interpretation of the Torah's mandates. The *herem* is a form of shunning and is the highest rabbinic censure in the Jewish community. If the rebel thinker showed no sign of penitence or remorse, the *herem* – the most rigorous form of excommunication – could be pronounced. This extended for an indefinite period, and no one was permitted to teach the offender or work for him or help him in any way. The *herem* meant everyone in the Jewish community was forbidden to have any contact with Spinoza or read his treatises. This ban against Spinoza was never rescinded. The Amsterdam Sephardic synagogue officially excommunicated him on 27 July 1656, driving him to leave the city. Although Spinoza was subject to the most severe form of *herem*, he was still considered a Jew since he never voluntarily professed a desire to leave Judaism. Nevertheless, because of his excommunicate status, Baruch Spinoza could not be buried in a Jewish cemetery but instead was interred in the Catholic Nieuwe Kerk graveyard in The Hague with no Jewish markings on his tombstone.

Considered a heretic, Spinoza was vilified and abused by both Christians and Jews and even by the Amsterdam government, which banned his works. The actions of the Amsterdam *Beth Din* effectively prevented Spinoza's divergent theology from infiltrating the Jewish community. Spinoza was forced to publish his ideas anonymously at first but later in the Christian society, which itself was not ready to accept his radical philosophy. Today, Benedict Spinoza is considered one of the greatest philosophers in the Western philosophic tradition, whose influence was felt as part of the greater European enlightenment and the secular world rather than in the Judaism that rejected him. Ironically, Spinoza's philosophical ideas have recaptured Jewish admirers centuries later in the modern era.

SPINOZA'S THEOLOGY

Skills: discuss, examine, analyse, interpret

1 Why were Spinoza's philosophical ideas a significant challenge to the Amsterdam Jews?
2 Identify which aspects of Judaism were challenged by Spinoza's ideas.
3 Which Jewish beliefs did Spinoza specifically attack?
4 What arguments did he present to justify his views?
5 What were Spinoza's reasons for rejecting Jewish rituals?
6 What was the stance taken by the rabbinic authorities to Spinoza's ideas?
7 Why did the Amsterdam *Beth Din* take the stances that they did?
8 What supporting responses did the rabbinic authorities make based on their stance?

CHAPTER 10

REVISION

A Short-answer questions

These questions are not specific to a religious tradition or denomination.

1 What is it that makes a challenge theological?
2 What is it that makes a challenge ethical?
3 What is it that makes a challenge a threat to the continued existence of a tradition?
4 In general, what are the sources of challenges for religious traditions?
5 In general, what makes a challenge significant for religious traditions?
6 How might the stances and supporting responses taken by religions to challenges influence wider society?
7 Identify one aspect of religion that is generally most likely to be challenged. Give a reason.
8 What effects may challenges have on the aspects generally?
9 In general, what is the difference between stances and supporting responses?
10 Explain at least three different stances religious traditions may take in responding to challenges.

B Extended-response questions

Some of these questions relate to a specific religious tradition or denomination.

11 What trends or patterns are apparent in the type of challenges experienced by the religious tradition you have been studying?
12 Identify the various ways in which the religious tradition you have studied has responded to the challenges faced during its historical development.
13 Which type of challenge has been the most useful to the religious tradition you have selected? Support your contention with reasons and evidence.
14 Which type of challenge has been the most harmful to the religious tradition you have selected? Support your contention with reasons and evidence.
15 Explore a moment in the timeline provided in the chapter when a religious tradition you have been studying has made a positive contribution to society. Your response must include the who, what, when, where, why and how of the event.
16 Explore a moment in the timeline provided in the chapter when a religious tradition you have been studying has made a negative contribution to society. Your response must include the who, what, when, where, why and how of the event.
17 Which of the above responses have had the most impact upon the tradition you have been studying? Why?
18 Identify a challenge for a religious tradition or denomination you have been studying and explain how each stance and supporting response taken involved an aspect of religion.
19 Compare the three challenges you have studied in terms of the sources of the challenges, the stances taken to the challenges and the responses supporting the stances.

20 Create a diagram of the social structures of a religious tradition you are studying to show the way it organises itself. When developing the diagram, consider the following questions.

- **a** What are the requirements to be considered a member of the religious tradition's community? Does this vary across the denominations of the religious tradition?
- **b** Is there a person or group that has overall authority in the religious tradition? What are the benefits and deficits of having such an authority? Why may some religious traditions prefer not to have this structure?
- **c** Which individuals or groups are consulted over important decisions in the religion?
- **d** What systems, processes or structures are in place to convey important decisions to the various communities of believers?
- **e** What individuals or groups are responsible for working with the communities of believers, taking care of their pastoral needs, rituals, festivals, the development of their religious knowledge and understanding, and the formation of their morality?
- **f** Who has power in the religious tradition? Why? How is this power exercised?
- **g** Discuss to what extent your responses to the above questions a-f, are demonstrated in the detailed study of a challenge to a religious tradition you gave studied.

C Essay questions

In your responses use a religious tradition or denomination you have been studying.

21 *Challenges to religious traditions may be theological, ethical or a threat to their continued existence. In times of substantial pressure, all three of these are evident.*

To what extent is this statement valid throughout the existence of at least one religious tradition or denomination that you have been studying?

22 *New ideas and influences may not always be welcome and may be strongly resisted.*

Discuss the extent to which this statement describes the stances and supporting responses of one religious tradition or denomination that you are studying, when it has been confronted by challenges to its existence.

Worksheet
The death of the Prophet Muhammad
Christianity and the Crusades
Research: The Crusades
Example essay planning

Weblinks
Various for Chapter 10

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Chapter 11

RELIGION AND SOCIETY INTERACT

Outcome to be demonstrated

Discussion of the interactions within a religious tradition or denomination and between that tradition and society in relation to a significant challenge. Evaluation of the influence of the stances and supporting responses taken by the tradition upon the interactions.

Focus questions

- What is the focus of the challenge?
- What is the historic, political, social and geographic context of the selected challenge?
- What were or are the sources of this challenge?
- Which aspects have been involved in the challenge and how?
- What stances and supporting responses were adopted by the religious tradition in the face of the challenge and for what reasons and intentions?
- What has been the influence of the religious tradition's stances and supporting responses on the challenge?
- What has been the influence of the stances and supporting responses on the religious tradition?
- What has been the influence of the stances and supporting responses on wider society?

EXPLORING CHALLENGES

In Chapter 10, it became apparent that dealing with challenges is an inevitable part of the history of religious traditions. These challenges each emerge in specific social, political, economic and religious contexts. The discussion of these challenges and the responses to them often led to a recognition that there was a tension between the view that history is composed of patterns that have few new or remarkable developments and the view that history is in fact complex and that each challenge is unique as the players have different motives, skills and technology to empower them. An ability to identify both the patterns and the distinctiveness of the challenge helps to establish a comprehensive and analytical exploration of a challenge and response. An awareness of the context, the sources, the stances, the responses and the role of the aspects in a discussion of a challenge will give it depth. The conclusions that are drawn will inform the discussion of the effects of the stances and responses on the challenge, on the religious tradition and on the wider society. In this chapter, we explore model challenges in some depth to illustrate the need for comprehensive research, and offer sample pieces of writing to give you some idea of how to apply the key terms in the Study Design in a manner that analyses and synthesises material.

Challenges in Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism can be found on NelsonNet.

Online Content
Challenges in Buddhism
Challenges in Hinduism
Challenges in Sikhism

THE CHALLENGE: CLIMATE CHANGE – CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS

CONTEXT OF THE CHALLENGE

Humanity is faced with a crisis – the gradual, but seemingly unstoppable human-caused destruction of the Earth on which human life has flourished. At the centre of this environmental crisis is global warming or climate change. As expressed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in their 2022 report the threat was made plain:

> Climate change is affecting nature, people's lives and infrastructure everywhere. Its dangerous and pervasive impacts are increasingly evident in every region of our world. These impacts are hindering efforts to meet basic human needs and they threaten sustainable development across the globe. All life on Earth – from ecosystems to human civilization – is vulnerable to a changing climate.
>
> IPCC Sixth Assessment Report

Evidence of this threat is seen in the dramatic loss of species and biodiversity, the diseases that are threatening ecosystems like the Great Barrier Reef, the increase in the number and severity of natural disasters such as droughts, fires, floods and cyclones that are destroying the habitat of God's creatures and the beauty that has been gifted humanity through God's work. The impacts of these forces are reducing the Earth's capacity to feed and give water to people, especially the poorest of the poor. It is causing malnutrition, illness and death. For those who live in low-lying environments their land and homes are being lost and they are being displaced, with some becoming refugees seeking asylum in other nations due to the changes in climatic conditions. The current warming trend is of particular significance because most of it is extremely likely (greater than 95 per cent probability) to be the result of human activity since the pre-industrial era (1850–1900). The global sea level has risen about 20.5 cm in the last century; the rate in the last two decades, however, is nearly double that of the previous century. Also the planet's average surface temperature has risen about 1.1–1.7 degrees centigrade since the late 19th century. The oceans have absorbed much of this increased heat, with the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets decreasing in mass; both the extent and thickness of Arctic sea ice has declined rapidly; glaciers are retreating almost everywhere around the world (IPCC). The shift in climate is causing people

to be displaced at present at a rate of about 22 million people each year (UNHCR) – and this number is expected to grow to an expected 1.2 billion people by 2050. There has already been significant decline in ecosystems and biodiversity and the first climate change refugees have been accepted by New Zealand. The solution is a drastic decrease in the use of greenhouse gases and the need for human adaptation. In order to do this, there needs to be a global consensus by all groups and institutions in society, including religious traditions, that this is an existential threat. At present, over 2 billion people are Christian, that is more than one in every four people, and so they have a significant role to play in resolving this challenge and ensuring it is done in a way that is equitable and just.

Alamy Stock Photo/Rob Walls

FIGURE 11.1 School students gathered in front of Parliament House in Hobart, Tasmania to demand government action on global warming and climate change. What is the major concern highlighted in the poster at this protest? Why are students the ones who were protesting?

This is an ethical challenge as it impacts negatively on the most vulnerable individuals and on the natural world, which is also God's creation. The fundamental ethical principle is the dignity and well-being of the human person. This extends to the responsibility of the preservation of the natural world. Exploitation of the natural environment by excesses in technology and industrial production causes global warming and is responsible for the sources that produce it. In the Catholic tradition, these sources of pollution and degradation are in conflict with the Principles of Catholic Social Teaching: the Principle of the Dignity of the Human Person; the Principle of the Common Good; the Principle of Care for the Environment; and the Principle of the Preferential Option for the Poor. These principles teach that humanity ought to act in a manner that respects all life. Pope Francis calls on humanity to hear *'both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor'*. In the Anglican tradition the teaching of Christ to love your neighbour is a central focus for seeing an ethical issue due to the impact climate change is having on the people of their tradition in some of the poorest nations on Earth. A range of other Protestant traditions are active in voicing their concerns about the welfare of the vulnerable and the need to care for the planet. This is a challenge for all Christian denominations.

This challenge impels Christians to grapple with the interpretation of Scripture, their understanding of a Creator God and also their theology of humankind's relationship with creation. It is, therefore, also a challenge to theology. The Creed used by a broad range of Christian denominations begins, 'We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and Earth, and of all things visible and invisible.' This foundational text of Christian faith formulated in the 4th century at the first and second ecumenical councils establishes a fundamental relationship between God and Creation, namely that God is the Maker or Creator of all and therefore all creation must be respected as they are God's creatures. The challenge of climate change and global warming is a theological challenge as humans have responsibilities that accompany the belief in a Creator God. In Christian traditions, this has led to the response of developing an eco-theology – an understanding of God from an ecological position. A close examination of Scripture has been the starting point, exploring an understanding of humanity as having been created for the purpose of tending and caring for Creation as a whole. It is a theology of stewardship in which the human person cares for creation as God cares for creation, by being creative not destructive. Scripture scholar Archbishop Mark Coleridge says that Genesis shows that the relationship between humanity and creation must be one of love – that God brought 'order out of chaos and fullness out of emptiness' through love, and this must be the human response to the rest of creation as the relationship between God, Creation and humanity is one of mutually creative love. Bishop Gervais, a Canadian Scripture scholar, says that Genesis 1 shows that there is in God's plan a desire for 'a Great Harmony' that requires humankind, who are made in God's image and likeness, to be stewards protecting God's creation so that the harmony of the six days of creation in which the emptiness was filled can be re-created. This, therefore, is a theological challenge as it directly challenges the belief in a Creator God and the theology of the care of creation that follows from this belief.

The Christian tradition's responses to this challenge have not claimed that it is a threat to their continued existence; however, they do recognise that this challenge is a threat to the lives of communities of believers in the most vulnerable of world communities, that is, island communities in the Pacific and communities in sub-Saharan Africa; and communities in Latin America such as in Lima and Peru, which are being severely affected by climate change and may disappear due to inundation or drought. Bishop Browning of the Anglican tradition has spelt this out in his address to the Anglican Communion Environmental Network (ACEN) at their global conference.

> Our members from Polynesia and Melanesia described how low-lying atolls in Tuvalu and Kiribati were experiencing coastal flooding and contamination of fresh water; our delegates from Kenya and the Philippines reported that due (in part) to rising temperatures, there was an increase in the range of mosquitoes, resulting in more widespread malaria; we heard that further melting of the tundra in Canada's frozen north could release catastrophic amounts of methane – an even more potent greenhouse gas than CO_2 ... So when we exploit God's creation to breaking point, we break the most fundamental commandment known to us: out of our greed and selfishness, we knowingly cause the degradation of the world's ecosystems instead of protecting the design that issues from the Creator's generosity. Wilfully causing environmental degradation is a sin.

SOURCES OF THE CHALLENGE

From a scientific perspective, the source of climate change is the use of fossil fuels at ever-increasing rates since the peak of the Industrial Revolution in the 19th and 20th centuries. Since this period, greenhouse gases have been collecting in the atmosphere. There has developed a blanket of heat from

the sun that is trapped, which has, and continues to, warm the planet, especially its oceans. The use of these fossil fuels has been for the generation of power for humans whose numbers have been growing exponentially and for use in manufacturing for the production of goods for human consumption. The impact of these actions is exacerbated by the removal of the Earth's lungs, the trees which would help clear these gases.

The encyclical written by Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, says that the source of the challenge is more profound than this explanation and there needs to be an evaluation beyond the science of global warming because, he argues, environment, society, economics and ethics are all interwoven and have together been the source of the challenge and need to be dealt with together through an 'integral ecology' that address all of the sources. He highlights the economic and social sources. He argues that humans have treated the Earth as a resource to be mastered and exploited in order to feed humanity's appetite for consumption. An erroneous interpretation of Genesis 1:26–27 has caused world leaders and industrialists in the West to see it as humanity's duty to 'subdue' and 'have dominion' over the Earth. Pope Francis argues 'the post-industrial world may well be remembered as the most irresponsible in human history'.

Alamy Stock Photo/Pacific Press Media Production Corp

FIGURE 11.2 Pope Francis addresses the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 on the findings in *Laudato Si'* on the Care of Our Common Home. What does this image suggest about the relationship between religious leaders and global political leaders in the 21st century?

Another document, *Oeconomicae et pecuniariae questiones*, looks in greater detail at the economic sources of climate change and argues that a free market economy with little regulation has been a naive policy that has encouraged greedy, unscrupulous and unethical practices that have mere profit as their goal. These have underpinned the damage done to the planet as in this worldview nature becomes 'collateral damage'. The document says 'money must serve, not rule'. Industrialisation has resulted in consumption of resources that is unsustainable. Humans have come to behave as 'masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters, unable to set limits to our immediate needs'. 'Never have we so hurt and mistreated our common home as we have in the past two hundred years'. It has resulted in a 'throwaway culture' that is leaving only 'filth' (*Laudato Si'*).

Pope Francis also argues that another source of the challenge is humanity's loss of spirituality. The development of technology has not been linked to 'human responsibility, values and conscience'. 'As often occurs in periods of deep crisis which require bold decisions, we are tempted to think that what is happening is not entirely clear … Such evasiveness serves as a licence to carrying on with our present life-styles and models of production and consumption. This is the way human beings contrive to feed their self-destructive vices: trying not to see them, trying not to acknowledge them, delaying the important decisions and pretending that nothing will happen' (*Laudato Si'*). So another source is the spiritual apathy that has developed and the moral laxity that has prevented timely action being taken. This source Pope Francis calls 'the globalisation of indifference'.

ASPECTS INVOLVED IN THE CHALLENGE

Underpinning this challenge is the interpretation of both Creation myths in Genesis and so the belief that God is the Creator. The interpretation of the sacred text, Genesis 1:26, has been problematic in the debate concerning climate change. The use of the words 'dominion' and 'subdue' in God's instruction to humanity has been crucial to the West's exploitation of the Earth's resources. Scripture scholarship has now offered a historic context for the use of those words as God appointing humanity as God's stewards with the expectation that they would rule in a way that creates rather than destroys; cares for creation rather than exploits creation.

There is in the Catholic Church an eco-theology that argues that the emphasis on the belief that the Creator was appointing humanity steward has not been effective in changing the hearts of people. Instead, it is argued, there should be a more eucharistic approach to the treatment of the environment. Creation is in this theology a revelation of God (St Bonaventure) that should be seen as God's gift, which should inspire humans to be thankful. Just as in the Eucharistic meal the fruits of the Earth and the work of human hands (the bread and the wine) are brought to the altar as an offering of thanks, so humans should look at all the fruits of the Earth with gratitude as God's revelation. The beliefs that are expressed through the interpretation of Scripture in this challenge shape the stances and responses that are taken. In most traditions, it is the theology of humans as God's stewards. This shows the importance of Scripture scholars in the social structures of Christianity.

The ethic of 'how ought we behave' is the imperative explored by the link between Christ's instruction to 'love one another as I have loved you' (John's Gospel) and the principle of 'Love your neighbour as you love yourself' (Luke's Gospel). The instruction to love is put to the test primarily in the impact that climate change is having on the most vulnerable people on the planet. To have your crops fail due to drought, your children suffer from malnutrition, your home washed away by floods, your water supply contaminated by salt water due to rising sea levels, to have your family die due to natural disasters – none of these respect the dignity that should be given to the human person who is made in the image and likeness of God. For this reason, this challenge is a fundamental challenge to the ethical behaviour of those in wealthy nations. It is a challenge that calls for a change of heart and a response at all levels of society from global leaders to the person on the street. It is an ethical challenge to all people.

As a response in the Christian tradition, a Medieval ritual is being given new life. In the Middle Ages, the blessing of crops and animals was a ritual linked with the fertility of the land. Today, this blessing of animals, usually pets, on the annual feast of St Francis of Assisi, is being used to arouse in people an awareness of the beauty of God's creation and a sensitivity to animals as sentient creatures that have an intimate relationship with humans.

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FIGURE 11.3 Dogs being blessed by a priest. What artefacts can you see in the image that show this is a ritual?

In the Catholic tradition, the symbolism of St Francis of Assisi as Patron Saint of Ecology is very important. This is illustrated in Pope Francis I, whose secular name is Jorge Mario Bergoglio, taking the name Francis to link his pontificate to the person of Francis of Assisi as a way of showing his commitment to work for the protection of the Earth. The symbolism of St Francis is linked to stories or texts that have become sacred to some communities in Italy, and are well known throughout the Catholic world, of St Francis having a loving and caring relationship with animals, from talking to birds to saving villagers from a wolf through teaching them to treat the wolf with compassion.

Throughout this discussion of the challenge of climate change, the importance of the teaching provided by Christian leaders has been essential because of the importance of this challenge to adherents and humanity as a whole. It can be seen in this challenge that hierarchical structures give traditions a way of offering the world a unified, speedy and authoritative statement of the tradition's stance and their response. This leadership has generally provided a voice that gives direction to the implementation of actions. These practical steps are very important at a grassroots level in terms of inspiring adherents to take environmental action by being a model for communities. Nevertheless, it has also been shown that this is a challenge that cannot be resolved only by leadership, that all members of the traditions have a role in ending the challenge – especially the younger generation of the traditions because they will inherit the Earth.

STANCES AND SUPPORTING RESPONSES TAKEN: REASONS AND INTENTIONS – CATHOLIC TRADITION

This challenge had been highlighted by environmentalists in the 1970s; however, it was largely ignored by governments and big business. The Catholic Church under the leadership of Pope John Paul II, in the 1970s and 1980s, took a firm stance as defender of creation and responded by proclaiming St Francis of Assisi patron of those who promote ecology. It was a powerful use of symbols that showed his concern for the state of God's creation. He consistently addressed this issue throughout his pontificate. John Paul II grounded his principle of stewardship in the dignity of humanity created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1). He embraced a sacramental view of creation as a visible sign or manifestation of God's presence. Stewardship, as articulated by the pope, was presented as a practice that should be embraced by the whole world. John Paul II's teaching on stewardship for Catholics, remains a guide for thinking about human responsibility for caring for the Earth. He raised the environment in his very first encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis* (The Redeemer of Man) in 1979. His stance developed over his papacy and on 1 January 1990, in the presence of other global leaders of faith traditions, he delivered his World Day of Peace message – in which he noted the lack of due respect for nature but also a new ecological awareness – arguing that: 'When man turns his back on the Creator's plan, he provokes a disorder which has inevitable repercussions on the rest of the created order'. He stated firmly that 'the ecological crisis is a moral issue', and affirmed the ethical obligation of all men and women to contribute to the restoration of a healthy environment. He described this 'senseless destruction of the natural environment' as being grounded in an 'anthropological error' and is not reflective of the true nature of human beings. Man's dominion over other living things that was given to humans by God in Genesis 1 is not absolute; it is limited by the Christian mandate to love your neighbour, which includes future generations. In the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994), which was a revision by Pope John Paul II, he teaches 'Respect for the integrity of creation' under the Seventh Commandment ('You shall not steal'). This is based on the view that the goods of creation are destined for the whole human race and the treatment of the environment is the wealthy of the first world stealing from the impoverished. In 2002, Pope John Paul II issued a joint declaration with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the spiritual leader of Orthodox Christians, which stated that Christians and all other believers have a specific role

to play in proclaiming moral values and educating people in ecological awareness which is none other than responsibility towards self, towards others, towards creation.

The current pope, Pope Francis I, accepted the conclusions of the IPCC that, through the burning of fossil fuels, human action is causing the Earth to warm dangerously; that this warming has already inflicted great harm and that it is certain to inflict catastrophe in the future, especially for poorer peoples and on future generations. Evidence of this stance of accepting the reality of climate change as the severest of challenges has Pope Francis and the Catholic Church standing with scientists, environmentalists and human rights groups; and against major polluters and governments who refuse to address the problem. His response has been to write a major text, an encyclical, *Laudato Si'*. He has addressed this letter to the world and it has been lauded by the United Nations, the IPCC and other religious leaders as a visionary statement on the problem and what needs to be done. The five principles found in Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'* are as follows:

- People and nature are not mere tools of production.
- Economic growth alone cannot ensure inclusive and sustainable development.
- Social equity must be built into the heart of the economy.
- Business must benefit all society, not just shareholders.
- The excluded and vulnerable must be included in decision making.

Laudato Si' argues that humans have become slaves both to what is called the 'technological paradigm' and market fundamentalism. Technology has become disconnected from 'human responsibility, values and conscience'. But 'nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live'. The person cannot be discarded or regarded as a mere factor of production in the economic process or progress of technology. Nor can the environment be regarded as simply a raw material to be exploited or commodified for consumption. In those instances where person and place are reduced to a mere thing or object to be consumed and discarded, people suffer, the bonds of community unravel, inequity and conflict reign, and our common home becomes characterised by filth – now and for future generations.

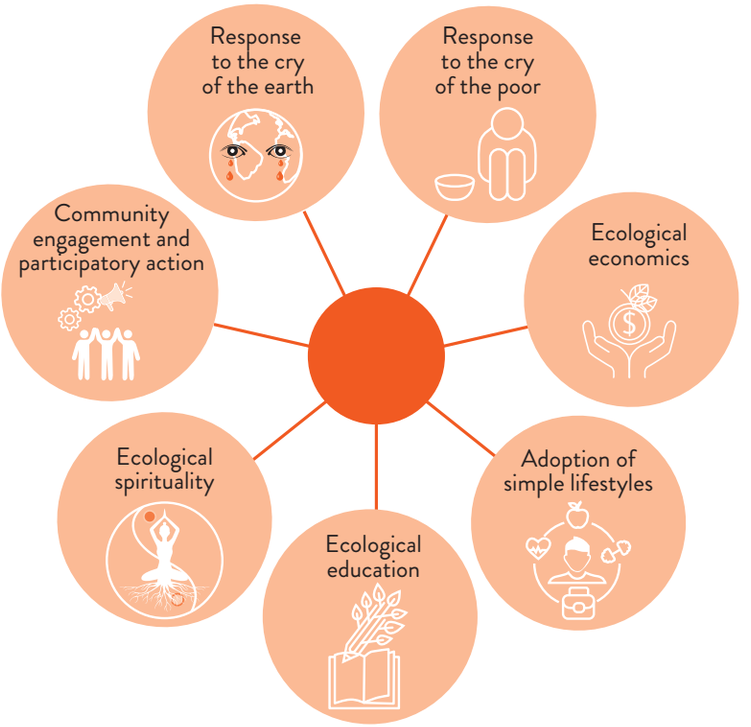
Everything is related to everything else. 'Each creature has its own purpose... Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God'. Yet 'we can feel the desertification of the soil almost as a physical ailment, and the extinction of a species as a painful disfigurement.' The encyclical challenges humanity to 'dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and thus to discover what each of us can do about it'.

Pope Francis makes special mention of the integrity and spirituality of indigenous cultures and the importance of their identity and values in caring for the land: 'For them, land is not a commodity but rather a gift from God and from their ancestors who rest there, a sacred space ... they themselves care best for it'. These views were accentuated in the dialogue at the Synod on the Amazon (2019). The world does not face 'two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but … one complex crisis which is both social and environmental'. The most important connection between them is expressed in these words. 'A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings.' The human family is damaged by severe inequality and those in the wealthy nations are subject to 'the globalisation of indifference'.

The crises of environment and of society are directly interconnected. It is the poor and vulnerable nations who are paying the main price for the environmental damage that has been

done. One of the reasons for the environmental crisis is the obscene level of consumption concentrated in the wealthy nations and also among the wealthy classes in both the developed and the developing worlds. Some of the wealthy 'have not the slightest idea of what to do with their possessions, vainly showing off their supposed superiority and leaving behind them so much waste which, if it were the case everywhere, would destroy the planet'. Corporations pursuing profit do not take the well-being of the Earth into account. The encyclical calls on the wealthy to put aside the goal of economic growth and, instead, work for the development of poorer nations. *Laudato Si'* acknowledges that none of this will happen without what the Pope calls a challenging 'cultural revolution'. The encyclical calls on individuals to remember that what you have, how many possessions you own, does not make you happy. Even though the encyclical recognises how difficult it is for the younger generation who 'have grown up in a milieu of extreme consumerism and affluence', it knows that many are aware of what is happening to the common home of the human family and of the terrible betrayal by their parents' generation. It argues that they possess 'a new ecological sensitivity and generous spirit'.

Human history reveals both 'decadence and mutual destruction' but also 'freedom, growth, salvation and love'. It hopefully argues that humans can overcome 'their mental and social conditioning'. They are 'born for love'. 'No system can completely suppress our openness to what is good, true and beautiful.' 'All is not lost.' 'An authentic humanity … seems to dwell in the midst of the technological culture, almost unnoticed, like a mist seeping gently beneath a closed door.' In the story of Noah, who lived at a time when 'the wickedness of man was great in the Earth', through him, however, God 'gave humanity the chance of a new beginning. All it takes is one good person to restore hope!'



Francis of Assisi Academy for Planetary Health

FIGURE 11.4 *Laudato Si'* Action plan. Put the petals in this plan in order of importance using your own point of view to make the evaluation. Compare your order with others in your class and discuss what shaped your choices.

Within the Catholic Church, *Laudato Si'* has led to responses being made to this issue at the global, diocesan and local church levels. The Vatican has put in place a plan with goals for all levels of the social structure of the church. This eco-praxis (putting eco-theology into practice) has been shaped by guidance from Pope Francis and offices in the Vatican who have worked with secular experts in all fields linked to climate change. On a practical level, the Vatican has taken symbolic actions in order to inspire adherents. Vatican City was the first nation to make a commitment to being carbon neutral (2007). The religious orders in the Catholic church have made record divestment from fossil fuels. On the Feast of St Francis of Assisi in 2017, 40 religious orders joined a global movement that has led to investors withdrawing US $5.5 trillion out of fossil fuels. A total of 2400 solar panels now provide the power for the Vatican. Local parishes and schools have also been called on to make changes.

The *Laudato Si* 'plan is being adopted and implemented through organisations set up around the world. In Australia, for example, there is Catholic Earthcare Australia, which is using the Principles of Catholic Social Teaching to explore the teachings to broaden the response. These principles are using the aspect of ethics to respond to the problem and to educate the community about the path to take to solving the problem. The Australian Catholic Church has also taken a stance for the protection of the environment and responded by involving itself in the political sphere through bishops issuing public statements calling for change such as supporting the passage of the Climate Change Bill that was put before the Australian Parliament in 2020.

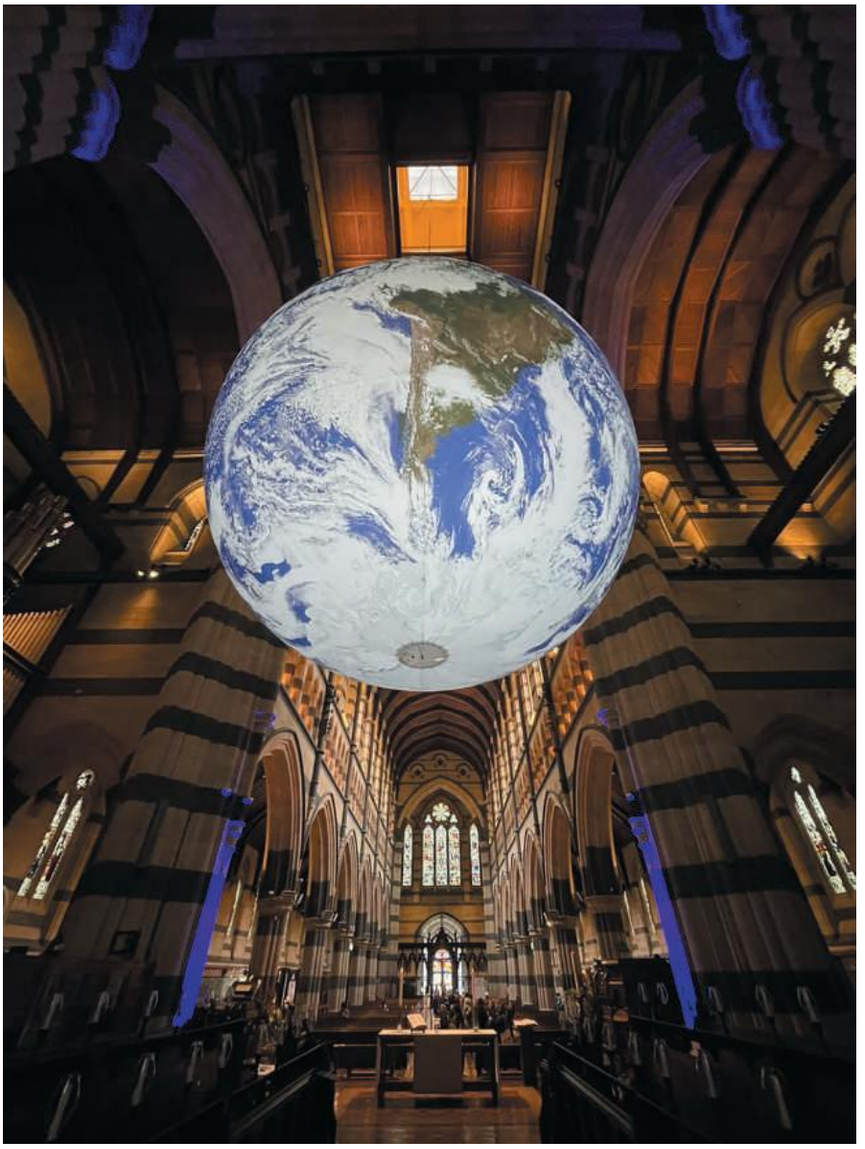
STANCES AND SUPPORTING RESPONSES TAKEN: REASONS AND INTENTIONS – PROTESTANT TRADITIONS

The Anglican tradition has consistently taken a stance that is supportive of the victims of disasters caused by climate change and environmental damage. In 2017, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, released an opinion piece in which he spoke of the Christian responsibility to work to care for the environment.

> As people of faith, we don't just state our beliefs — we live them out. One belief is that we find purpose and joy in loving our neighbours. Another is that we are charged by our creator with taking good care of his creation. The moral crisis of climate change is an opportunity to find purpose and joy, and to respond to our creator's charge. Reducing the causes of climate change is essential to the life of faith. It is a way to love our neighbour and to steward the gift of creation.

In America, the Protestant Churches have been actively involved in taking a stance for action against climate change and responding through political action. The 2006 General Assembly of Presbyterians called for adherents to adopt a carbon-neutral stance and have since worked to lobby governments to adopt a clean energy policy. In Australia, the Presbyterian churches have supported the work of Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'* and are part of a Protestant Network for promoting care for creation called 'The Australian Religious Response to Climate Change'. This interfaith group works collaboratively to educate and bring about practical change. Other members are from the Anglican, Uniting Church, Catholic and Quaker Christian traditions as well as members of the Buddhist, Jewish and Islamic communities. They describe themselves this way:

> ARRCC is a grassroots organisation that mobilises people of all faiths to take effective action for climate justice. Being independent of government grants and large institutions, we can fearlessly speak truth to power.



Anne Maree Wise

FIGURE 11.5 St Paul's Anglican Cathedral Melbourne showing the community's commitment to the environment by hosting the art installation 'Gaia' (Earth). How do the aspects of religion in the church enhance the message of this art installation?

INFLUENCES OF THE STANCES AND SUPPORTING RESPONSES ON THE CHALLENGE

Significantly *Laudato Si'* has been supported by leaders of all of the major religious traditions – Jews, Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists – who have made statements of support for the call to care for our common home. The Christian Churches have aligned themselves with the stance and response taken by Pope Francis I in *Laudato Si'*. There has been considerable ecumenical cooperation on addressing the challenge of climate change, so in discussing the influence of the Christian stances and response on the challenge it largely becomes an assessment of the success of *Laudato Si'* in addressing the challenge.

The response has not been able to end the challenge of global warming – significantly more work needs to be done by all people globally, especially by politicians and industry; however, change has been occurring and *Laudato Si'* has contributed to this shift. Evidence of this is that the encyclical

has been acknowledged as the most cited Catholic text in the scientific community's most influential and prestigious journals worldwide. The document's major impact is because it was delivered by a person on the world stage who has significant moral stature and so receives serious attention. The Pope's affirmation that climate change was unequivocally due to human actions was a turning point in this debate and helped scientists to overcome what had become a stumbling block. The link the document made between environmental, social, economic and ethical concerns has been influential both in giving a voice to impoverished nations who are subject to the impacts of climate change and in facilitating academic research and collaboration as is seen, for example, at Oxford University's Laudato Si Research Institute. The mission of this department is to produce multidisciplinary research by creating research materials for other departments in the university, such as business, medicine and politics, for the purposes of producing policy transformation at governmental levels.

Yale University in the United States has noted the document's authority in the educational setting, in both schools and universities, especially in the Catholic sector globally that has 324 Jesuit secondary schools and the 150 other Jesuit universities using the document. Yale University also noted the impact of Pope Francis' speech at the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 in which he spoke of the urgent need for action. The next item presented to the assembly was the Sustainable Development Goals, which were affirmed by all of the 195 nations. Yale also notes the influence of the statement at the COP21 negotiations in Paris. Yale University acknowledges that secular humanists and environmentalists have responded positively to the encyclical, for example, the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies and the Ecological Society of America organised events to highlight the concerns in the encyclical as, they said, environmental issues are no longer only about science, they are also about morality.

In Australia, the Christian traditions have mobilised and formed active organisations that are involved in education, lobbying government and industry, protesting and using social media in order to work together to repair the Earth and end the challenge of climate change. The online journal *Eureka Street* has argued that *Laudato Si',* and a Catholic awareness of refugee issues, helped to elect Dr Monique Ryan in the Kooyong electorate.

INFLUENCES OF THE STANCES AND SUPPORTING RESPONSES ON THE RELIGIOUS TRADITION

For most Christian traditions, the stance of caring for creation and the ending of climate change has become an important focus for their justice outreach groups. All of the Christian denominations mentioned in this chapter are involved in groups established to end this challenge. That means that structurally there have been responses that have brought a change to the way churches operate and evolve. Evidence of this can be seen in the protest marches mentioned, in the political lobbying that has been shown and the introduction of education programmes in parishes and schools. An important way to see that the depth of this challenge has really infiltrated denominations in the Christian tradition is to look at how resources are being spent to address this issue. Parishes and schools are now served by water tanks, worm farms, solar panels and, in some cases, ministers with electric cars. In the Catholic tradition, the hierarchy of the church have encouraged all parishes and schools to formally establish groups whose work is to promote actions according to the *Laudato Si'* 7 year–7 goals action plan. Education on this topic has been built into the curriculum of schools so that students are aware of their ethical obligations to those vulnerable to climate change and also to the natural world. This is leading to school gardens being redesigned, recycling bins appearing, canteen menus being reshaped. One of the most stunning developments has been in the area of architectural design of new buildings. The theology of caring for creation is producing buildings that not only have practical environmental measures but are also built with an aesthetic that shows an awareness of nature and its revelation of awe and wonder when meditating on God the creator.

INFLUENCES OF THE STANCES AND SUPPORTING RESPONSES ON WIDER SOCIETY

The impact of Christianity's work in unifying the global response on this issue has been substantial and recognised by secular institutions such as Yale University in the United States. *Laudato Si'*, in particular, has made an outstanding contribution to formulating a just, visionary and passionate response to the problem of climate change that has inspired not only members of the Catholic Church but other denominations, other faiths and the secular community.

Jonathan Hadiprawira of Harmer Architecture P/L

FIGURE 11.6 Holy Angels Mausoleum Fawkner, Melbourne built to link the interior to the natural world and invite light into the space. In what ways is this building recognising God's creation?

Some evidence of this influence was seen at the talks for the Paris summit on Climate Change in 2015. The Global Catholic Movement linked to the release of *Laudato Si'* collected nearly one million signatures and mobilised 40 000 people to march in Paris demanding the Paris Agreement be signed by all participating nations. The encyclical has been referred to and discussed in scientific, humanitarian, and governmental forums to help in debates that shape policies as the 'integral ecology' explored in the document highlighted the need to discuss both environmental and social consequences of climate change as bound together and needing to be addressed in a holistic way. Also, it has been praised for being a voice of hope in a time when people were moving away from change because the predictions were too bleak. Moreover, Pope Francis has worked to bring together all religious traditions to issue a unified call for change that cannot be ignored. His moral authority has allowed him to present his argument to the world and be heard in forums such as the United Nations. His argument that we must care for our common home is now ubiquitous in informed debate about climate change.

EXPLORING CLIMATE CHANGE

Skills: research, analysis, synthesis

1. Write a paragraph explaining why climate change is an ethical challenge.
2. Write a paragraph explaining why climate change is a theological challenge.
3. Write a paragraph explaining why climate change challenges continued existence.
4. What were and are the sources of this challenge?
5. Which stances and supporting responses have been made in this challenge globally, nationally and locally in the Christian tradition?
6. Discuss the similarities and differences between the roles of different groups in the social structure in resolving this challenge.
7. What stance and supporting responses have you seen in your State, your diocese, your parish, your school?

THE CHALLENGE: RELIGIOUS FREEDOM – ISLAM

CONTEXT OF THE CHALLENGE

As Western nations such as Europe, Canada, the United States and Australia have experienced increased migration from Islamic countries, some have imposed restrictions on Islamic religious and cultural practices because of conflicting values and laws and as a response to a perceived threat of terrorism. This is challenging Muslims who live in these communities. Throughout history, in countries in which Islam thrived, the societies were often noteworthy for the religious tolerance that was shown by the Muslim leaders to other religions. As the Quran recognises that Jews and Christians are also People of the Book, Jews and Christians often held important administrative positions as in the Ottoman Empire. They were the *dhimmi*, the protected people. There were restrictions on behaviours, taxation requirements and a need to respect the rulers of the State; however, in most instances they were given the right to practise their religion freely and respected. This degree of religious tolerance has not always been the hallmark of the West to their Muslim migrants who have arrived in recent decades. This has created a challenge to the Islamic communities in these countries. The expectation was that because they were often escaping religious oppression, and as the countries they were escaping to are signatories to Human Rights conventions, they would be able to put their beliefs into practice as, for example, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states:

> Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.

The stances and supporting responses of the Islamic community to these restrictions have varied. They include complying with the status quo with the intent of assimilating; taking political action by starting Muslim political parties; becoming actively involved in mainstream politics; putting in place programmes aimed at educating the community about their religion; involvement in interfaith dialogue; hospitality initiatives to develop cross cultural friendships; or responding with defiance at a perceived injustice and, in few cases, responding with violence. In summary, there is an external challenge being imposed on Muslims in Western nations which is the imposition of restrictions on the right to religious freedom, a right recognised in Article 18 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

Evidence of this challenge was outlined in *Religious Freedom in the World Report 2014*, https://aidchurch.wordpress.com/2014/11/04/press-release-launch-of-religious-freedom-in-the-world-2014-report/ by a Catholic charity, Aid to the Church in Need, which identified the persecution of Muslims in countries where they were the minority. In Australia in 2017, analysis was done by the Australian Human Rights Commission in a report *Islamophobia in Australia 2014–2016* and found that in the year 2014–2015, there were 243 incidences of direct harm caused by breaches of freedom of religion against members of the Muslim community. The incidents included verbal assaults, threats, damage to property, graffiti, offensive media content, hate mail and discrimination. In 2017, the Scanlon Foundation found in its annual report on social cohesion that one in four of their respondents held negative attitudes towards Islam and, in their anonymous online survey, this rose to 41 per cent. These statistics appear damning, but the commission did not find any evidence of serious harm perpetrated on individuals due to their religious affiliation. Some commentary led to the proposition that there was a link between discriminatory public opinion and terrorist attacks overseas. In 2017, there was a terrorist incident on London Bridge in which people were killed.

Getty Images/Mark Kolbe

FIGURE 11.7 This photograph shows people staging a counter-demonstration to the call by the 'Party for Freedom' for the destruction of the Parramatta mosque in October 2015. At first glance, the poster held by a number of the protesters seems to be demanding more mosques, Sharia law, halal certification and Muslim refugees. However, the poster is a parody of a Pauline Hanson political poster. Who is Pauline Hanson? Why might her image have been included on the poster?

For the Islamic community in Australia, this highlights the challenge that is faced in practising a religious commitment in a community in which many link the Islamic tradition with the violence that occurs overseas and the policies of Islamic regimes overseas that restrict religious freedom for both members of the Islamic community, such as women or other Islamic denominations, and members of other religious traditions. This can be seen in areas controlled by the Taliban.

SOURCES OF THE CHALLENGE

One source of the challenge has been the population increase in a visible minority religion into a nation that is predominantly secular in its approach to public life. In Australia, religion is rarely discussed outside of the home. The ex-prime minister, Scott Morrison's public displays of evangelism, for example, were not perceived to be an asset for the Liberal Party. This growing presence of a minority group whose religious affiliation is prominently expressed through dress codes has led to intolerance towards Islam in Australia. A similar response has been seen in other Western nations since 11 September 2001. The issues causing this are different in each nation but the threat of terrorism has been a dominant theme. The degree of discrimination and restriction on religious rights has depended on the nation's response to the tension between those who have a commitment to human rights and those who apply political pressure on leaders to produce stringent national security legislation; for example, France's restrictive legislation has been different from Sweden's more accepting approach. In Australia, this division between conservative and liberal forces was witnessed in Bendigo, in 2015, with demonstrations that divided the community over the building of a mosque. Groups that supported the building of a mosque in the area were pitched against those who were vehemently opposed to its construction.

Getty Images/Anadolu Agency

FIGURE 11.8 Protestors on the streets of Bendigo. What stances are these two groups of protestors taking to the building of a mosque in the community?

Some examples of restrictions on religious freedom that demonstrate discrimination are:

- the ban on minarets in Switzerland
- the ban on headscarves in France
- bans on circumcision and Islamic methods of slaughter in Denmark
- persecution of Muslims in Myanmar
- protests over the building of a mosque in New York and in Australia
- debates about the acceptance of Sharia law by Australian authorities
- verbal vilification by media personalities and politicians
- anti-Islamic protest marches organised by groups such as Reclaim Australia.

The Human Rights Law Resource Centre, in conjunction with the Islamic Council of Victoria, has noted that these restrictions are having an effect on the quality of life of Muslims in Australia.

> The discriminatory impact of laws aimed at counter-terrorism measures in fact limits the ability of Muslim people to enjoy their rights to freedom of religion, opinion and association. Australia's Muslim and Arab populations have reported an increase in anti-Muslim and anti-Arab prejudice since September 2001. The negative public attitudes towards these communities, raises concern about the ability of Muslim Australians to publicly manifest their religion.

ASPECTS INVOLVED IN THE CHALLENGE

Underpinning any discussion of religious freedom is a theology of the human person that provides the ethical principles and moral values of the community. The Quran is the central source for this in the Islamic tradition and the theological perspective is the view that every human being is a creation of God, blessed with intellect and free will. Allah gave humanity a special and privileged place that makes people inherently precious and deserving to be treated in a way that respects their dignity. This belief provides the basis for the argument for the right to live without discrimination and the right to practise Islam; such as to perform their prayer rituals and to display their symbols such as wearing a hijab.

The aspect of texts is involved both as a source of challenge and as a way to respond in order to resolve the way forward for adherents. However, the texts, the sacred text of the Quran and also the texts of the Hadiths need interpretation. The different interpretations of sacred texts support both religious tolerance and intolerance. The question of how to respond to the challenge of limits on the religious freedom of Muslims in Western nations has become an internal challenge for Islamic scholars and leaders to clarify authentic interpretations of the texts. The use of texts that promote violence, contrasts with the views of moderate Muslims who emphasise that there are more than 200 verses that affirm an individual's freedom to reject faith in Quranic texts. They argue that the texts preaching violence, against apostasy for example, need to be understood in their historic context. The world of Muhammad in the 7th century was quite different from the contemporary world, and when adherents turned their backs on Islam in that period in Arabia they would mostly likely have been joining the enemy. This was a serious problem during the establishment period of Islam. The infant religion would have had its survival threatened and this was an understandable justification at the time for the teachings on restrictions to religious freedom. Overall, they argue that beliefs of others must be respected as this is the teaching of the Quran and the way the Prophet Muhammad lived.

One way that the Australian Islamic community is responding to the challenge is in their construction of spaces and places that show the theology of Islam integrating into the landscape and spirituality of Australia. The mosque in Newport in Victoria shows the linking of theology and land. Such buildings are facilitating growing respect for, and understanding of, Islam in the broader community as witnessed in the numbers of visitors on open days. A mosque built in Sydney was designed by a Greek Orthodox architect who brought to it the importance of domed roofs in expressing a belief in the transcendent, showing the ability of Islam to work constructively in Australia's multifaith society. The aesthetics of these buildings makes concrete the belief in Islam that they are to be productive members of both their faith community and the society into which they assimilate.

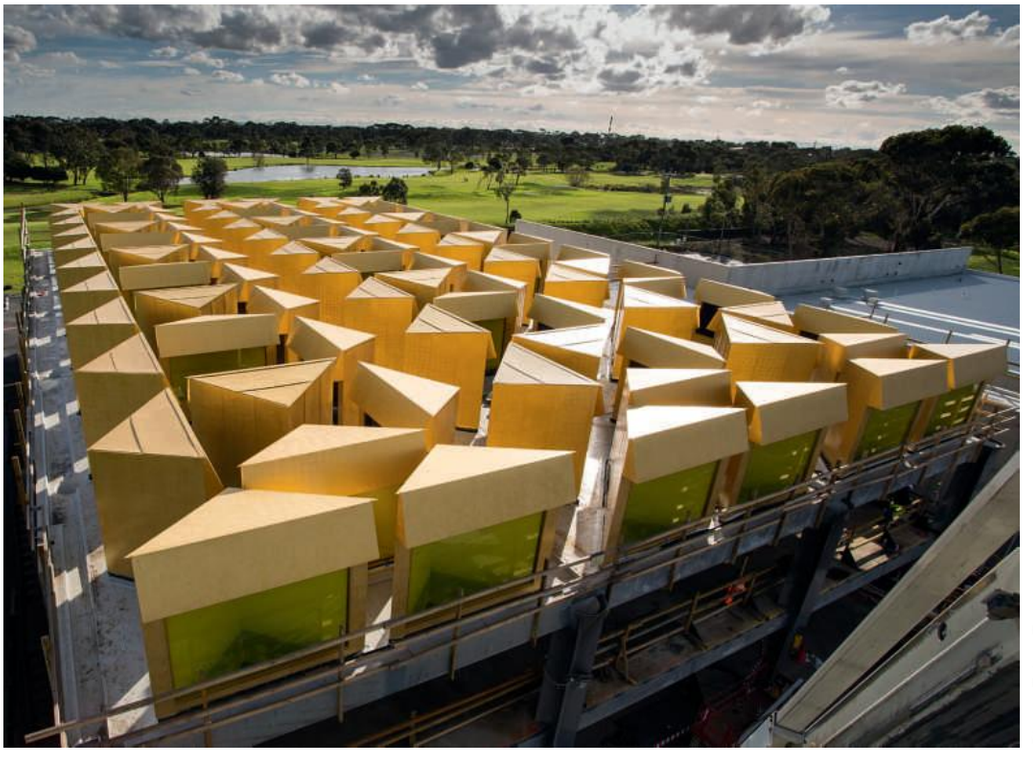


Photo: Tobias Titz

FIGURE 11.9 The Australian Islamic Centre Newport which uses a myriad of lanterns instead of the traditional minarets. What is it in this design that makes it symbolic of an Australian approach to Islam?

The progress made through the hard work of members of the *ummah* to overcome discrimination and express their religious freedom can be seen in the election of two Muslims into the Australian Parliament in the 2022 elections – Mr Ed Husic, Minister for Industry, and Dr Anne Aly.

Dr Anne Aly, the first Muslim woman elected to the Federal Parliament, was given a ministerial portfolio in the government as Minister for Early Childhood Education and Minister for Youth. Ed Husic had run for office in 2004 and lost because people had used his Muslim identity and practice against him, but he persisted in order to become a symbol of hope to others that Australia can accept people of Islamic faith. His election shows the progress being made in resolving the challenge that is posed by those who oppose religious freedom for Islam. The work these two members are doing for their communities is helping to dispel discrimination and shows a growing acceptance of the Islamic religion in Australia. Minister Husic said after taking the oath of office, 'I wanted to put a spotlight that Muslim Australians all over the country are doing their bit to help communities be better places to live.'

STANCES AND SUPPORTING RESPONSES TAKEN: REASONS AND INTENTIONS

The international Islamic community recognised the need for clarification in texts and have taken the stance of there being a need for reform. They have responded by producing an authoritative text, the Charter of Makkah. This response supporting the stance that reform is needed is a document that calls on the global community to work for peaceful coexistence. It offers Muslims a document that can be referred to as they address challenges in the pluralist societies in which they find themselves. It is a document that has been produced by 5000 significant Islamic scholars from 139 countries with representatives of major Islamic denominations. The Makkah Charter came at an appropriate historical moment characterised by the growing need for renewal in formulating legal rules, human principles and moral values. It was introduced by Islam according to the most up-to-date legal treatment methods provided by international conventions, establishing legal systems with international dimensions. The Makkah Charter provides the international community with the course forward to build world peace and protect human rights on the bases of values of justice, equity and equality. Following is the text of the English translation of the Charter of Makkah outlining the principles on which it is based:

- All people, regardless of their different ethnicities, races and nationalities, are equal under God.
- We reject religious and ethnic claims of "preference."
- Differences among people in their beliefs, cultures and natures are part of God's will and wisdom.
- Religious and cultural diversity never justifies conflict. Humanity needs positive, civilized partnerships and effective interaction. Diversity must be a bridge to dialogue, understanding and cooperation for the benefit of all humanity.
- God revealed Himself to all mankind and is the origin of all religious belief, and its various messages and methods, when practiced in their true form. We shall not define any religion by the false political practices of those claiming to be adherents.
- Civilized cultural dialogue is the most effective way to achieve tolerance and understanding, deepen community ties, and overcome obstacles to coexistence. We recognize and respect the other's legitimate rights and right to existence. We set aside preconceived prejudices, historical animosities, conspiracy theories and erroneous generalizations. Those who were alive when the mistakes of history

occurred are the ones responsible for them. No one should be held accountable for the mistakes committed by the other; no one should be held accountable for a sin committed by another, irrespective of when in history it occurred.

- Religions and philosophies are exonerated from the sins committed by their adherents and claimants. These sins reflect the adherents' opinions, not the religions. The role of religious leaders is to call people to worship their Creator and seek His satisfaction by caring for his creations, protecting their dignity, and making positive societal and family contributions.
- All Muslims should work together to prevent destruction and benefit humanity. We should establish a noble and effective alliance that goes beyond theory and empty slogans, and tackles the root causes of terrorism.
- We should advance laws to deter the promotion of hatred, the instigation of violence and terrorism, or a clash of civilizations, which foster religious and ethnic disputes.
- Muslims have enriched human civilization and can further enrich it today through their many contributions to addressing ethical, social and environmental challenges.
- All individuals must combat terrorism and injustice, and reject exploitation and the violation of human rights. This duty is neither discriminatory nor partial.
- The planet we enjoy is a gift given to us by God. The pollution and destruction of our natural resources are both a violation of our own rights as well as the rights of generations to come. To protect the right to live in a clean environment, all countries should sign climate treaties, cease polluting the environment, and manage industrial progress in a manner that safeguards mankind now and in future.
- The clash of civilizations that calls for conflict and the spread of fear between one another are symptoms of isolation and hegemony, caused by racism, cultural dominance and seclusion.
- These symptoms work together to deepen animosity among nations and peoples, and prevent peaceful coexistence and positive national integration, especially in multi-religious and multi-ethnic countries. Hatred is the raw material of nourishment for the industry of violence and terrorism.
- The phenomenon of Islamophobia results from an inability to truly understand Islam. True understanding of Islam requires an objective view that is devoid of stereotypical and prejudicial notions, which are often projected by those falsely claiming to be true Muslims.
- All individuals must promote noble moral values and encourage responsible social practices. They should cooperate in fighting moral, environmental and familial challenges according to concepts shared by Islam and humanity.
- Personal freedom cannot justify violating human values or destroying social mores. Freedom does not equate with chaos. Every freedom must stop before it limits the values and freedoms of others, and should respect the boundaries of constitutional and legal frameworks, while taking into account the public conscience and societal tranquillity.
- Intervention in the internal affairs of countries is a flagrant violation of sovereignty. This includes the practice of political dominance through economic or non-economic means, the promotion of sectarian beliefs and attempts to impose religious edicts (Fatwas) without respect for local circumstances, conditions and social conventions. Regardless of the pretext, intervention can never be justified, except in rendering relief aid, humanitarian support or social development programs, or in answering a legitimate and official request from a prominent public interest to confront aggression or corruption.

- We should follow the examples of accountable global development efforts that deter all types of corruption, apply the principle of accountability, and change consumption patterns that interfere with development goals, deplete economic capabilities or waste resources.
- Responsible educational institutions form the social safeguard of Muslim communities. They require effective curricula and teaching tools. The responsibility includes promoting centrism and moderation, especially among youth.
- All world leaders and international organizations should cooperate effectively to achieve safe coexistence among the religious, ethnic and cultural communities of humanity. No individual should be discriminated against based on his or her religion, ethnicity or otherwise when it comes to political, economic or humanitarian assistance.
- Global citizenship is a requirement. The principles of Islamic justice dictate respect for all nations, and their constitutions and laws. While citizens must faithfully pledge allegiance to their state, the state has requirements, too. It must ensure security and social peace, protect sanctuaries from desecration, and shield religious symbols from ridicule. These reflect the principle of mutual requirement, with rights for all elements of society, including religious and ethnic minorities.
- An attack on a site of worship is a criminal act. The world must respond to such attacks with firmness of law, strong political will, and a unified stance against the mindset of terrorism that supports such acts.
- Programs to combat hunger, poverty, disease, ignorance, racial discrimination and environmental destruction require the solidarity of all responsible institutions. These include governmental, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, and those active in humanitarian service. Each should strive to preserve the dignity of mankind and the human rights of men and women.
- The empowerment of women should not be undermined by marginalizing their role, disrespecting their dignity, reducing their status, or impeding their opportunities, whether in religious, academic, political or social affairs. Their rights include equality of wages and opportunity.
- The highest responsibility of states and international organizations is the welfare of children and their health, education and upbringing. The family also is responsible for development a child's critical thinking to broaden his or her horizons, nurture abilities and creativity, and develop communicative skills, while safeguarding against deviation.
- We must enhance the identity of Muslim youth, with its five pillars – religion, country, culture, history, and language – and protect it against exclusion. We must protect youth from the ideas of a clash of civilization, and block efforts to mobilize against those with whom we intellectually disagree. We must combat intellectual extremism along with militancy, violence or terrorism, by helping raise awareness among youth and guiding them according to the Islamic values of tolerance, peace and harmonious coexistence. These values teach comprehension of the other, preservation of the other's dignity and rights, and observation of the national laws in which one resides.
- We should establish an International Forum to promote constructive dialogue among youth inside and outside Muslim communities.
- We should strive beyond resolutions, rhetorical initiatives and programs, and theoretical proclamations to achieve effective and authentic results that advance world peace and security, and fight techniques of annihilation, ethnic cleansing, forced migration, human trafficking and illegitimate abortion.

- Only learned scholars such as those gathered at this Conference and agreeing to this Charter can speak in the name of the Muslim Ummah, or any matter pertaining to its affairs. We share common religious and human objectives to advance the interests of all. We recognize that this necessitates the participation of all, without exclusion, racism or discrimination against anyone, irrespective of religion, ethnicity or colour. Blessing and peace be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and all companions.

At the national level in Australia, the Islamic community has taken a stance that is consistent with the principles expounded in the Charter of Makkah. The Islamic Councils have been involved in educating the community to understand and accept Islamic religious principles so that day-to-day life can be consistent with the precepts in Islam. One example of this is the debate about the role of Sharia law in the Australian legal system. This has led to dialogue between levels of government and Islamic leaders. The doctrine of Islam calls on Muslims to work within the constraints of the society in which they find themselves. At present this has led to the inclusion of Sharia law in, for example, decisions about family law.

The Australian Federation of Islamic Councils has been an official organisation that has taken a stance and responded to this challenge by aiming 'to serve and inspire the Muslim community to build a society that is free of discrimination where all people are empowered to fulfil their potential and Islam reaches the community'. They have supported their stance by working with local communities to help migrants to find a place in the community and a voice to express their needs and have them addressed. They have promoted the development of role models in the community.

Chris Lane © ACM

FIGURE 11.10 Members of an Islamic Council meeting in Australia. There are several Sharia councils in Australia, at State and Federal level, giving Islamic divorce certificates, halal accreditation and advice on all aspects of religious law. What other aspects of life in Australia might need the guidance of the Islamic Council?

INFLUENCES OF THE STANCES AND SUPPORTING RESPONSES ON THE CHALLENGE

At an international level, the most significant stances were those taken against the isolation of the Islamic community globally, due to misperceptions about the nature and beliefs of Islam and against Islamic fundamentalists who were exacerbating the challenge of limitations on religious freedom of Muslims in Western nations. However, the Charter has not totally resolved the issues surrounding the challenge as globally there have been significant events such as the Christchurch mosque shootings and the return of the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Nevertheless, there have been put in place programmes of joint action from the signatory countries to the charter producing a 10-year Programme of Action aimed at eradication of illiteracy, diseases and epidemics, and poverty in Islamic nations. All of these problems fuel the acceptance of groups like ISIS (now ISIL). This has been complemented by the holding of a counter-terrorism conference in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, to reinforce Islam's condemnation of terrorism in all its forms.

In Australia, there has been an increasing amount of work done by groups such as Religions for Peace (Australia). This is the largest community-based organisation working for inter-religious harmony and social cohesion across all religions and using interfaith social action to bring tolerance and understanding of each other's faith traditions, to all religious communities.

The most significant development in the last decade to move towards resolving this challenge has been the development of the Islamophobia Register Australia (IRA) through the Centre for Islamic Studies and Civilisation (CISAC) of Charles Sturt University (CSU). This register has given those who are the victims of Islamophobia a way of reporting their experience in order for their suffering to be acknowledged but, also, for the statistics to be used to bring about social change by providing data for those working with institutions like the government. The last report for the year 2018–2019 showed that, overall, the incidence of discrimination had not decreased in recent years, regardless of the community's stances and supporting responses. The report reveals a concerning profile of the people who were vilifying Muslims for their religious practice, in particular the rise of far-right beliefs. The statistics suggest the focus of the Charter of Makkah is correct in its assumptions, but the Charter has not yet had an impact on the challenge itself.

INFLUENCES OF THE STANCES AND SUPPORTING RESPONSES ON THE RELIGIOUS TRADITION

There has been an increase in academic discussion on the historical context of the Quran and Hadith. This has allowed scholars to argue that Islam, democracy and modernity are able to work together to enrich both society and the religious tradition. This has led to dialogue within the tradition, as evidenced in the Charter of Makkah, so that Islam can engage more effectively with the Western world. The history of the tradition has been used as a resource, to explore periods of peace and harmony between the religions of the Book and so set the relationship between the differing cultures on a more constructive path than the clash of civilisations concept had instigated.

The Islamic community in Australia has taken a stance that suggests a significant way of addressing the challenge is to educate their children in their religious beliefs. Australia had very few Islamic schools until the 2000s, now there are about 46 Islamic schools teaching nearly 40 000 students. This growth in an Islamic education sector is enriching the *umma* through the children's education in the Quran and their religious beliefs, providing opportunities to participate in the ritual life of the tradition such as daily prayers, contact with the associated mosque, encouraging the use of Islamic artefacts to enhance identity and commitment and culturally appropriate practices of moral codes. This is making the Islamic community more resilient and giving members the confidence to express their identity through public expressions of ritual practice and the symbolism of dress codes when in the broader community. The increasing presence of the Islamic community in the public square is normalising Islam's relationship with the pluralist society that is Australia. This has aided the development of a more cohesive relationship that is generating tolerance and peace. Evidence of this is the increasing hospitality events between Muslims and the broader community at a cultural level; the increase in the presence of members of Islam on local councils, in business groups, community groups such as Rotary and in interfaith groups with Christians and Jews.

INFLUENCES OF THE STANCES AND SUPPORTING RESPONSES ON WIDER SOCIETY

In the global community, there is evidence that the diaspora of Islamic migrants is bringing a greater level of understanding and dialogue in Western nations. This has been seen in the way empathy was shown to the Islamic community after the deaths at the Christchurch mosques. This was an incident that showed how violent and insidious discrimination can be. The New Zealand Prime

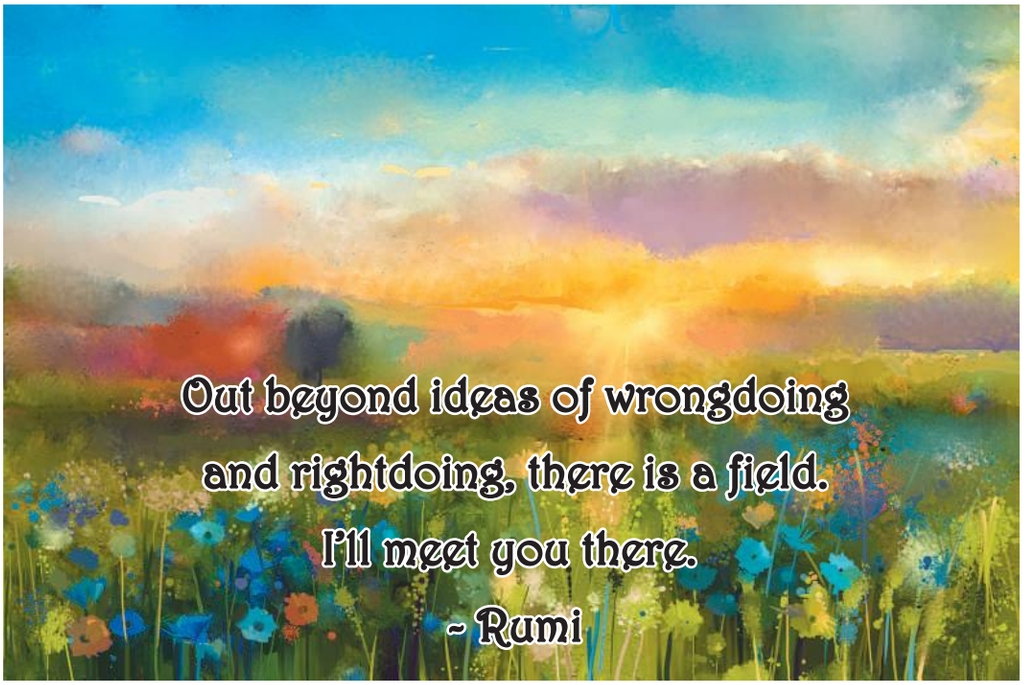
Minister, Jacinda Ardern made deliberate and effective use of Islam's practices in her response and firmly addressed the reality that discrimination is not only a challenge to the Islamic community but to all people, especially New Zealand and Australia, the homeland of the gunman.

Getty Images/ Lynn Grieveson - Newsroom

FIGURE 11.11 Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, wearing a hijab embraces a Muslim woman, offering sympathy in 2019 after there had been a terrorist attack on mosques in Christchurch. What would have been symbolised to the Islamic community by Ardern's actions and attire?

In Australia, the stance and supporting responses to the challenge made by groups and individuals in the social structure of Islam working with government and communities has led to a more accepting and supportive environment for Muslim migrants to Australia. Evidence of this can be seen in government funding to set up Islamic cultural centres such as the Islamic Museum of Australia. This organisation actively runs education programmes for both Muslims and the general Australian public. In its first five years of operation, over 50 000 visitors had come to explore the beliefs, history and culture of Islam.

The stance against discrimination and the supporting responses of promoting excellence in education and participation of Muslims in the broader community has resulted in high profile Muslims appearing in all walks of Australian life: in sport, media, Parliament, academia, medical care, journalists, novelists, musicians and slam poets. The success and witness of these members of the Islamic community is helping others to be respected and accepted. Overall, the challenge for Muslims to their religious freedom through discrimination is ongoing and achievements fragile, but there are hopeful signs that change is occurring.



Shutterstock.com/Knumina Studios

FIGURE 11.12 Words of wisdom by the Muslim poet Rumi (1207–73 CE). Express this saying in your own words.

FREEDOM AND RELIGION

Skills: define, research, analyse, interpret, synthesise

1. Define religious freedom.
2. What misunderstandings about Islam may lead to intolerance in the community?
3. Is the challenge of limits on religious freedom due to discrimination, a theological or ethical challenge, or a challenge to the continued existence of the tradition? Explain your answer.
4. Explain at least three different ways in which religious traditions generally respond to the challenge of religious discrimination in Australia today. Discuss the extent of their effectiveness.
5. Working in groups analyse the Charter of Makkah discussing five points you think are most important in dealing with the challenge of limits to religious freedom for Muslims in Western nations.
6. Which aspects of religion will be needed to implement the Charter of Makkah?
7. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the document?
8. What is the relevance of this Charter in Australia for addressing the challenge to religious freedom faced by Muslims?
9. If you are studying another religious tradition or denomination, research whether its religious freedom has been challenged and how the tradition has responded.

THE CHALLENGE: STATUS OF WOMEN IN JUDAISM

CONTEXT OF THE CHALLENGE

The role of women in Judaism has always been central, and it is important to note that women have largely been treated with respect and dignity, both in Jewish religious law and in Jewish communal life. Yet while women's roles were valued, and even at times exalted, they were limited, and the traditional roles of wife and mother were the dominant frameworks within which female Jewish identity was expressed. Yet the last century has witnessed profound change in the traditional roles of women throughout the Western world.

Judaism has been a patriarchal religion, with clearly defined roles for men and women, since its earliest days. Men were the heads of the family, community counsellors, rabbinic advisors, prayer leaders and held roles in the public domain. Women were seen as important in the domestic realm, caring for and teaching children, ensuring a well-run kosher household and even conducting the family business while their husbands studied the Torah and *Halakhah* (Jewish law). This ideal is seen in the words of Proverbs (31:10–31) that praise the wife as 'a woman of valour whose price is beyond rubies'. With their emphasis on child rearing and ensuring domestic bliss, women were exempt from some time-bound commandments, and therefore were not expected to take an active part in worship. Further observances in the tradition were to ensure women and men were kept separated. Orthodoxy to this day places restrictions on women: for example, they cannot touch the Torah while menstruating (and as a precaution are not invited to read from the holy Torah scroll) nor lead the congregation in singing.

Decline in observance of tradition in the second half of the 20th century, combined with changing attitudes about women's position in society, has profoundly affected the Jewish community. As women became more highly educated in both secular and Jewish areas, they began to challenge traditional roles and the source of women's apparent inequality within Judaism. It is argued by feminists that societal, organisational and communal frameworks prevent women from achieving full equality within the Jewish world. As a result, Jewish belief itself – its theological foundations, textual canons, religious law and rituals – are being scrutinised to support or deny whether change can be justified within Halakhic bounds.

SOURCES OF THE CHALLENGE

Suffrage in the first half of the 20th century, followed by the wave of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s, ushered in far-reaching changes in women's roles and identities in the personal and public spheres. The feminist revolution advocated that social, political and other rights for women be equal to those of men. Since then, enormous economic and legal advances have ensured women better conditions in the workforce, in marriage and in divorce. Thanks to modern technology, women no longer have to toil at home cooking and cleaning all day, and now have more leisure time. So more than ever before, women are participating in business, professions and communal activities. While change comes slowly to established religions, the influence of the feminist movement has made inroads into most world religions. This influence is apparent in the practice of Judaism in all its diversity throughout the last century and into the present. This challenge to traditional Jewish social structure and practice is seen by some as threatening the ethics of the Jewish tradition, while to other adherents it is a change to be welcomed.

ASPECTS INVOLVED IN THE CHALLENGE

Even though social justice is an important value in the Bible and rabbinic texts, somehow that has not been applied specifically to the role of women in Jewish society until recently. Traditional roles and practices that were available only to men in the past, such as leading prayer services, wearing

a *kippah* and *tallit*, reciting prayers such as the Mourner's *Kaddish*, are now frequently challenged to end their exclusion of women, especially if these roles do not interfere with women's family life. In contrast to civil law, Halakhah allows only males to be legal witnesses – one reason given by traditionalists for prohibiting women from becoming rabbis.

These male-only rituals associated with prayer services and festival activities appear hard to justify in this day and age when women are equally educated and are in occupations formerly deemed only suitable for men. The Progressive and Conservative movements readily involve and encourage both men and women in all ritual activities, from lighting the Sabbath candles to reciting the Mourner's *Kaddish* and be counted in the numbers necessary for a quorum of ten worshippers, a *minyan*, for conducting communal prayer services.

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FIGURE 11.13 Members of feminist group, Women of the Wall, meet regularly for prayer at the Western Wall in Jerusalem, despite much opposition from Orthodox rabbinic authorities. Note they are wearing *tallit* (prayer shawls) and *tefillin* (phylacteries) traditionally worn only by men. Why do you think there is so much joy on the faces of these women?

STANCES AND SUPPORTING RESPONSES TAKEN TO THE CHALLENGE: REASONS AND INTENTIONS

How Jewish feminists have responded to these issues has rested largely upon their view of Judaism itself, based on their interpretation of the binding (or not) nature of Halakhah. The changes that have taken place regarding the role and participation of Jewish women in Jewish life over the past century have been primarily within the boundaries of the various streams of Judaism.

Within the Orthodox movement, changes in women's roles have been slower, largely due to the Orthodox understanding of Halakhah as divinely revealed, and therefore immutable. Orthodox authorities adamantly declare the binding nature of Halakhah. Little distinction is made between biblical prohibitions and later rabbinic interpretations, which are seen as equally the word of God. This is not to suggest that changes in Halakhah are not evident in Orthodox practice; however, the process of change is much slower and is subject to traditional rules of interpretation and

implementation. In this regard, the ModernOrthodox movement has produced many outstanding female scholars and activists. These include Nehama Leibowitz and Blu Greenberg, whose commitment both to contemporary interpretation and practice of Halakhah and to full equality for Jewish women has led to innovations with regard to women's participation in ritual practice and communal leadership within the Orthodox world.

Orthodox feminists acknowledge the primacy of Halakhah therefore only promote changes of interpretation within Jewish law without destroying its basic divine foundation. They argue that historically rabbis have found ways to deal with and adapt to many issues so why not today? The increased Jewish knowledge of females in contemporary society means they are better able to debate and support their views for increased female participation and leadership in the wider Jewish community by citing rabbinic sources to justify their modern outlook.

Sociological changes came first to the Progressive (also known as Reform or Liberal) movement. Social justice and Jewish moral values are of the highest priority for Progressive Judaism, but in its understanding of Halakhah as a historically developed source to guide modern living, the Progressive movement rejected those aspects of Jewish law that, for example, precluded women from undertaking leadership roles such as those of the rabbinate. This was the first movement to ordain women as rabbis and now has many females in leadership, educational and social justice roles worldwide. In Australia, most Progressive communities have a female rabbi in a leadership position, and women regularly serve as congregation presidents and communal leaders.

INFLUENCES OF THE STANCES AND SUPPORTING RESPONSES ON THE CHALLENGE

Within the Jewish academic world, interest in feminism has flourished. Scholars have researched the roles of women throughout Jewish history, uncovering little-known episodes of Jewish history and practice such as the creation of 'women's prayers' in the Yiddish-speaking communities of Eastern Europe; and the remarkable lives of Jewish women such as Bruriah, a 2nd-century Talmudic scholar, and Gluckel of Hameln, a 17th-century German Jewish wife, mother of 12, business woman and diarist. There are now many books and scholarly articles published widely, contributing to the discussion of the role and status of women in Judaism allowing the debate to reach a wide public.

INFLUENCES OF THE STANCES AND SUPPORTING RESPONSES ON THE RELIGIOUS TRADITION

Despite the amount of change that feminism has wrought in the Jewish world, its effects are really only beginning to be felt. The Ultra-Orthodox have met this challenge by ignoring it. Reform is concerned more with moral issues than religious issues, though they strongly support complete religious equality of the sexes. Among highly educated women, late marriage and no more than two children are now the norm. Some even choose never to marry and find no appeal in such a family-orientated system as Judaism.

There are now more Orthodox women undertaking traditional forms of Jewish study. This has led to the creation of women-only *tefilla* (prayer) groups, in which women are encouraged to lead and read from the Torah, and modified **Bat *Mitzvah*** services that allow girls to read Torah in all-female services. These developments have occurred despite little rabbinic encouragement, indicating that the push for women's rights in Orthodox Judaism, while remaining within the boundaries of Halakhah, is coming from the women themselves.

While once 'radical' changes such as the implementation of Bat *Mitzvah* ceremonies (the equivalent of the male ritual of Bar *Mitzvah*) are now commonplace, other issues such as the inequalities in Jewish divorce law remain unresolved to the detriment of women. Yet even with regard to this vexed

issue some positive change is apparent, with women learned in Jewish law now acting as advisors to rabbinical judges in Israel. More recently, a handful of Orthodox female scholars have been ordained but the Orthodox establishment will not appoint them to congregations or allow them to be called 'rabbi'. Some have taken the title 'rabbah' or 'maharat' instead. The Orthodox Rabbinical Council of America, in November 2015, reacted to this development by acknowledging that although women can be leaders, teachers and Torah scholars, they may not be called 'rabbi' or lead congregations.

Ellyse Borghi

FIGURE 11.14 Rabbanit Ellyse Borghi is the first woman in Australia to receive Orthodox ordination. The second woman in Australia to receive ordination is Rabbanit Yehudit Levitan in Sydney. In respect for the traditional work done by female teachers and wives of Rabbis, they have taken the title Rabbanit rather than Rabba. How has feminism contributed to the development of female ordination in Judaism? What other factors may have led to this development?

Within Progressive and Conservative communities, feminist concerns have contributed to the development of more gender-inclusive language in prayer, the revival of ancient women's celebrations such as *Rosh Chodesh* (New Moon) ceremonies, adaptation of traditional ceremonies that celebrate the birth of a boy, to now bless the birth of girls in the community, and the creation of new female rituals around birth, fertility, menstruation, menopause and ageing.

Feminism has exacerbated the schism between Orthodox and non-Orthodox streams of Judaism. At the root of their differences is the attitude to the Divinity, Halakhah and 2000 years of rabbinic interpretation. Judaism has always adapted itself to changing times and circumstances – maintaining key beliefs and practices through the mechanism of debate and scholarship. The Progressive and Conservative acceptance of the need to maintain continuity, while ensuring survival in changing circumstances, has led to their willingness to modernise. Feminism is just one source of the widening gap between Jews of different streams today.

Theological issues pertaining to the characterisation and roles of women in traditional texts continue to be the subject of feminist scholarship. Yet, while the issues are many and the process of change is slow, one may posit that in the 21st century, the role of women in the Jewish world is perhaps at its most vibrant and diverse. Women are assuming leadership roles, in both religious and communal structures, at unprecedented levels in all streams of Judaism.

Even in Modern Orthodox congregations, women can be observed as presidents of synagogues and in recent times some congregations are willing to employ a Rabba – a female-trained rabbi. In the strictly observant Ultra-Orthodox community, none of these changes can be seen, although Ultra-Orthodox women now have a far higher level of Jewish learning than at any time in Jewish history. Traditionalist Ultra-Orthodox authorities and congregations, moved by their antipathy to the adaptation to modernity of Conservative and Progressive Judaism and even Modern Orthodox innovations, are unwilling to accept the halakhic legitimacy of female rabbis and cantors (congregation officials who lead chanting the prayers and singing the hymns) and will not work together with them or acknowledge their standing in religious or community events. Feminism and modern egalitarian values have encouraged evolution in the religious roles of contemporary Jewish women but they have also caused reactionary stances and responses from traditionalists trying to prevent contemporary secular forces from influencing the Jewish tradition. Thus, this challenge over the status of women is continuing to be a source of disagreement in Jewish communities widening the gap between the streams of Judaism in their ethics, practice of rituals and social structures.

INFLUENCES OF THE STANCES AND SUPPORTING RESPONSES ON WIDER SOCIETY

These developments within Judaism have not made much impact on wider society but rather wider society has impacted upon Judaism. Internal Jewish social structure tends to reflect wider society's values rather than influence other groups. Yet the American Reform movement's early ordination of females as rabbis was newsworthy in the 1970s, when most Christian denominations were yet to place women in leading religious roles. In Australia, the first female Progressive rabbi, American-born Karen Soria, was appointed assistant minister at Temple Beth Israel in Melbourne in 1981. This innovative appointment led to headlines around Australia. Since then, a number of female rabbis have been active in Progressive Jewish communal life in Australia. Rabbi Soria later became the first female rabbi ever to serve in the United States Marines.

CHANGING STATUS OF WOMEN IN JUDAISM

Skills: research, describe, explain, evaluate

1. What type of challenge does feminism present to Judaism? Explain your answer.
2. To what extent have Jewish women's lives changed in the modern era?
3. What Jewish laws and values are challenged by feminism?
4. What stances and supporting responses has Orthodox Judaism taken on this issue?
5. What stances and supporting responses have Progressive and Conservative Jews taken on this issue?
6. What innovations have been developed for the participation of Jewish females in their religious tradition?
7. Which aspects have been the biggest source of debate between the Jewish streams on this challenge and why?
8. If you are studying another religious tradition or denomination, discuss whether it has been challenged by feminism and, if so, what stances and supporting responses has it taken?

CHAPTER 11

REVISION

A Short-answer questions

These questions are not specific to a religious tradition or denomination.

1 Describe the various ways in which religion and society interrelate.
2 What may be the sources of challenges to religious traditions?
3 Which aspects are most likely to be affected by a challenge? Why?
4 Why would a religious tradition take a stance on a challenge?
5 What types of supporting responses do religions use to deal with challenges?
6 Outline a range of possible effects that a challenge may have on a religious tradition's relationship with society.
7 How might the stances and supporting responses of religious traditions impact on wider society?

B Extended-response questions

Some of these questions relate to a specific religious tradition or denomination.

8 a Explain in detail one challenge to a religious tradition where the relationship between the religious tradition and society was challenged.
  b What stances did the religious tradition take to the challenge and were they effective?
  c Which aspect was most affected by the challenge? Why?
  d What responses were taken to support one particular stance to the challenge?
  e Explore the impact of the response/s on the religious tradition.

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FIGURE 11.15

9 a To what extent does the image of a tug of war reflect the relationship between religion and society in general?
  b To what extent does the image of a tug of war reflect the relationship between society and a religious tradition you have studied over a particular challenge or issue? (Name the challenge and explain the stances and supporting responses of the tradition.)
  c What are/were the effects of these stances and supporting responses on the challenge, on the tradition and on the wider society?

C Essay questions

10 *Challenge is an inevitable part of growth and development in religious traditions.*
To what extent is this statement true with regard to how a religious tradition or denomination you have studied deals with challenges? Give a particular example to support your discussion, explaining the tradition's stances and supporting responses and their effectiveness.

11 *Challenges always have a historical context and so do the religious institution's stances and supporting responses.*
Discuss this statement in the light of a major challenge to a religious tradition or denomination you have been studying. Utilise the focus questions listed at the opening of this chapter to guide your discussion.

12 *Some things change; some things stay the same.*
Discuss this statement in relation to a challenge faced by the religious tradition you have been studying.

13 *The aspects of religion are the way religions respond to challenges.*
To what extent is this statement true of a theological challenge to the religious tradition you have been studying?

14 Explore a challenge to the continued existence of the religious tradition you have been studying clearly outlining the source of the challenge and the tradition's stances and supporting responses.

Worksheet
Extended case study 1: The impact of colonialism
Example essay planning

Online content
Challenge of biblical criticism
Kosher and Halal slaughter

Weblinks
Various for Chapter 11