SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
MARKING SCHEME

THE 223: MAJOR RELIGIONS AND CULTS IN AFRICA
AUGUST TRIMESTER 2021
Lecturer: Dr. A. Makau

FINAL EXAM 60%
2 HOURS

Instructions
Incomplete answers will not attract any credit.
This is an open book exam

SECTION A: COMPULSORY

1. Provide a Christian/biblical response to the following:
    a. In relation to the Quran, it is "Believed to have been revealed directly, word for word in Arabic, to Muhammad through the angel Gabriel. Its contents originate entirely from God, having no human component." ***Why would this not be a believable statement ?*** **(5 Marks)**
        i. It's the work of one man and that is a challenge to the inspiration claim
        ii. The story of angel Gabriel is part of the stories borrowed from the bible, and God cannot contradict himself – the role of Gabriel in the Quran contradicts the role of angel Gabriel in the bible in connection to the central theme of the bible which is redemption.
        iii. This statement says "there is no human component " but when God

iv. After Muhammad's death, it was difficult for his successor to articulately record these revelations.
v. There was no centralized collection – this lacks a central theme for a holy book.

b. In Hinduism , it is taught that " The reincarnation cycle ends when a person has achieved Moksha (**release of the soul from the cycle of reincarnation)** when a person's soul becomes one with Brahman." ***Why would this belief not be transferable to Christianity upon the convert of a Hindu to Christianity***? **(5 Marks)**

i. In Christianity the spirit finds rest when an individual is in Christ. the struggle to attain moksha is not part of a Christian's journey.
ii. Christians have assurance of salvation based on the fact that being in a relationship with Christ gives them eternal life
iii. Moksha is based on Karma (doing good deeds to secure one's future) biblical salvation is based on grace not good works. Once one is saved then they can bear the good fruit .
iv. The sinful nature of man makes it impossible to do good deeds, have good thoughts and good words towards others all the time – depending on one's goodness to create a great future might e the proverbial one step forward, two steps backwards; difficult to achieve.
v. There is no other way to the father except that which he has prescribed – Jesus; He is the way, the truth, and the life .

c. A religious ritual "is a series of actions performed according to a prescribed ceremonial order " ***Why do African traditional religion rituals pose a challenge to Christians in Africa?*** **(5 Marks)**

i. Individual's identity in the community is based on participation in some of these rituals, it is difficult for the individuals to abandon them once they become Christians because their sense of belonging feels is incomplete to them.
ii. Some of the rituals connect people to the dead (living dead and part of family in the African context) and that is not acceptable in Christianity
iii. There is a risk of syncretism – converts to Christianity mixing beliefs and practices from ATR and Christianity
iv. Many churches have not found Christians substitutes for African rituals – there is an attempt to incorporate some in Christian liturgy – sometimes unsuccessfully.

v. Some of the rituals are a form of a abuse to the marginalized especially women and since they are related to death and afterlife , some Christians women are still forced by the community to perform them – in some instances the church has been silent – as if in defeat or in agreement.

d. Studying other religions is beneficial. Explain **(5 Marks)**

i. **The adherents are significant and live amongst us, they cannot be ignored.**
ii. **As Christian ministers we will evangelize some of these adherents.**
iii. **As Christian leaders we will work with some of these adherents and need to demonstrate cultural/religious sensitivity. To develop a functional degree of tolerance**
iv. **Knowing their beliefs makes our ministry of compassion more meaningful. (COMPASSION - Coming alongside someone in the most venerable condition/situation and leaving them feeling dignified.)**
v. **To comprehend humanity – people are spiritual in nature – their sense of belonging seeks for acceptance of a higher being**
vi. **Religious studies are academically enriching because it is a transdisciplinary mode of inquiry that engenders deep intercultural literacy**
vii. **After conversion to Christianity, we need to know what they believe for:**
    1. **Effective contextualization**
    2. **Effective discipleship**

SECTION B: CHOOSE & ANSWER TWO QUESTIONS

2. What is your Christian response to the following?

a. Islamic belief that Muhammad is the last (and by implication greatest prophet) and Christ is just one of the other prophets. **(10 Marks)**

Though the Quran speaks of Jesus with reverence as Messiah, Son of Mary, Messenger, Prophet, Servant, Word, and Spirit of God, Muhammad is

accorded a more esteemed position than Jesus. But Muhammad cannot be greater than Christ because:

i. His death was beneficial - The death of Jesus on the cross paid a ransom for all humankind Muhammad's death is not significant.
ii. Resurrection – Jesus' glorious resurrection, is at the heart of the Christian message, and assures believers of hope beyond the grave.
iii. Jesus is deity - Muhammad is a prophet (human)
iv. The biblical eschatology includes Jesus coming back to receive his church into eternal glory- Muhammad is one of those who will face judgement .
v. Jesus did not write the story about himself – witnesses that were convinced of his work and greatness recorded it. Muhammad is the sole recipient of the Quran revelation.

b. The Buddhist teaching that every follower should be "A lamp unto themselves" (**5 Marks)**

i. Self-empowered without Christ is futile- it has no eternal value
ii. Self-reflection should inquire into origin of self – the answer should point to a supreme being which Buddhism lacks.
iii. Pursuit of good deeds without a divine standard is self-defeating
iv. Those words from Buddha are a sign of defeat – in his pursuit of searching for a solution to suffering, upon his death, *he told his disciples: "Be ye lamps unto yourselves"* – he had lost his pursuit of looking for the perfect solution to suffering. He told human beings that they are the solution. But biblically speaking human beings in their best attempts still need divine intervention.
v. There is no harmony or cooperate worship in being a lamp unto self. Everyone does what they see as right unto themselves, however in Christianity the biblical teaching is at the basis of beliefs and practices for self and the church.

b. The criticism against the Christian teaching on the Trinity by adherents of other religions. **(5 Marks)**

i. Trinity is not a word found in the bible. Trinity is used to describe the relationship of the Godhead. The doctrine of the Trinity poses a deep and difficult problem. On the one hand, it says that there are three distinct persons— Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—and that each of these persons "is God." On the other hand, it says that there is one and only one God.

Christianity is monotheistic so the Trinity does not suggest three Gods.

ii. As a result, People are likely to criticizes what they do not comprehend – the concept of the trinity is a mystery to many people.

iii. learning requires a process from known to the unknown – Christianity should be accorded the same right or opportunity. There are concepts that will be familiar, and others need to be learned and or experienced – the doctrine of Trinity is of the latter category

iv. The doctrine of Trinity experiences the functioning of the Godhead- the father, the son, and the Holy spirit. Though existing form, the beginning of creation " Let **US** create man in **OUR** own image …" their functioning is in dispensations that are easy to follow and understand as laid out in the Bible. This functioning is done in completion, in unity, and same power. None contradict each other . Each functioning supports that which follows in complete measure.

v. The Trinity fits the human experience with God is history and in the present.

3. Explain the **four** fundamental beliefs in each of the following religions and demonstrate how ***each*** would support an easier transition of its convert to Christianity. **(20 Marks)**

a. Buddhism

i. Desire to end suffering or find solutions to those who are suffering

ii. Pursuit for enlightenment/illumination

iii. Discipline in religious disciplines especially meditation

iv. Regular prayer Chants of religious teachings

v. Value of metta meditation: loving-kindness meditation, in which loving thoughts are directed first to oneself, then to a benefactor, then to a friend, a neutral person, and finally to an "enemy" (someone we have difficulty with) and then to all living beings.

vi. More than three quarters of their **The Ten Cardinal Precepts** have to do with morality which is similar to Christianity e.g. **"Not to kill, but to cherish all life"**

vii. The truth behind two of their 4 noble truths
    1. This pain and suffering are caused by our ego-based desires and attachments.
    2. Desires can be overcome, and we can lead lives of wisdom, compassion, joy and equanimity

b. Hinduism

viii. Piety in matters religious
ix. Importance of being benevolent.
x. Golden Rule – "One should never do that to another which one regards as injurious to one's own self."
xi. Discipline in life

c. Islam

xii. Importance of prayer
xiii. Helping those in need
xiv. Reverence for Allah (God)
xv. Belief in One God
xvi. Belief in punishment for sins
xvii. Belief in the reality of eschatology
xviii. Discipline in religious and social life

d. African Traditional Religion

i. Communal support for the individual
ii. Sense of belonging strengthened by rites of passage and mentorship for age mates
iii. Facilitation of effective process of forgiveness and reconciliation
iv. Belief in one god
v. Intentional hospitality to friends , family and visitors adding to the value of relationship
vi. Respect for the elderly

4. Write a brief gospel presentation that you would use to evangelize a follower in <u>each</u> of these faiths. **(20 Marks)**

a. Islam

The Quran acknowledges that Jesus Christ a prophet , the son of God, born of Mary and a performer of miracles. The Quran speaks of the death and resurrection of Jesus. But there is more about Jesus Christ that is not written in the Quran.

Jesus was prophesied by other prophets as the messiah appointed by God to same mankind .
The SINFUL NATURE of mankind required savior who can satisfy divine standards and represent humankind .
The resurrection of Jesus Christ means that there is eternal hope.
Quran teaches about resurrection , final judgement and heaven and hell. However, Quran also teaches that Allah will decide at the final judgement who goes to heaven or hell.
However , in Christianity you can know now and choose where you will go after judgement.
Believing in Christ gives you the assurance of knowing you have eternal life and you do not have to live in uncertainty.
Will you receive this Christ? He was sent to save everyone including you. John 3:16

b. Hinduism

Hinduism teaches about the cycle of reincarnation. It teaches about the pursuit of MOKSHA – the release of the soul from the cycle of life and being one with Brahma. This release of the sound depends on KARMA – good deeds until you the cycle of reincarnation stops for an individual. This process must tedious and full of anxiety. The bible presents us with the best solution- Jesus. The SINFUL NATURE of mankind required savior who can satisfy divine standards and represent humankind . Jeus died on behalf of all to save all. Salvation is therefore by Grace and not works. After death Christ resurrected on the third day. The resurrection of Jesus Christ means that there is eternal hope. In Christianity you can know now and choose where you will go after judgement. NO reincarnation. No struggle of the soul.
Believing in Christ gives you the assurance of knowing you have eternal life and you do not have to live in uncertainty.
Will you receive this Christ? He was sent to save everyone including you. John 3:16

c. Buddhism

Buddha's last words were "Be ye lamps unto yourselves." This means it is your responsibility to seek enlightenment, and satisfaction of your soul, most importantly you must live to find a solution for suffering. The philosophy behind "intelligent design" means behind the creation there is a creator. Human beings must have a higher being who is the creator. Christianity teaches that creator is God. He

sent his son Jesus to pay for the sinful nature of Man. Human beings are inadequate and cannot find enlightenment or solutions to soul suffering just by themselves. The SINFUL NATURE of mankind required savior who can satisfy divine standards and represent humankind . Jeus died on behalf of all to save all. Salvation is therefore by Grace and not works. After death Christ resurrected on the third day. The resurrection of Jesus Christ means that there is eternal hope. In Christianity you can know now and choose where you will go after judgement. NO reincarnation. No struggle of the soul. Believing in Christ gives you the assurance of knowing you have eternal life and you do not have to live in uncertainty.
Will you receive this Christ? He was sent to save everyone including you. John 3:16

d. African traditional religions (ATR)

Africans believe in a supreme being who I not approached with frivolous requests. They had intermediates to speak to God on their behalf. The sinful deeds were paid for through sacrifices and or rituals. BUT the bible provides the perfect mediator between God and Mankind – Jesus Christ.
The SINFUL NATURE of mankind required savior who can satisfy divine standards and represent humankind . Jeus died on behalf of all to save all. The death of Christ means N more rituals or sacrifices are needed. Salvation is therefore by Grace and not works. After death Christ resurrected on the third day. The resurrection of Jesus Christ means that there is eternal hope. In Christianity you can know now and choose where you will go after judgement. NO reincarnation. No struggle of the soul.
Believing in Christ gives you the assurance of knowing you have eternal life and you do not have to live in uncertainty.
Will you receive this Christ? He was sent to save everyone including you. John 3:16

5. “Mindfulness is a type of meditation in which you focus on being intensely aware of what you're sensing and feeling in the moment, without interpretation or judgment. Practicing mindfulness involves breathing methods, guided imagery, and other practices to relax the body and mind and help reduce stress.”

This type of meditation has been used by followers of Buddhism and adapted by some new agers. What is your Christian response to a proposal requesting the adaptation of this practice into Christian disciplines? **(20 Marks)**

- **Mindfulness has been practiced by eastern religions and New agers for spiritual centering and to purify self from negativity , to increase self-awareness, spiritual awareness, and divine connection.**
- The Buddhists have a special meditation as part of their mindfulness called Metta mediation. Value of metta meditation: loving-kindness meditation, in which loving thoughts are directed first to oneself, then to a benefactor, then to a friend, a neutral person, and finally to an "enemy" (someone we have difficulty with) and then to all living beings. therefore mindfulness is an old practiced though many Christians may not know of it or might be cautious about its practice.
- Traditional mindfulness encourages awareness of our experiences in the present moment.
- as practiced by eastern religions , the posture is prescribed, for the highest concentration
- The duration of 25-0 minutes is recommended for Buddhist, but personal freedom is allowed
- The place of meditation should be quiet and devoid of distraction
- modern mindfulness research comes from a secular point of view.
- The basis for Christian mindfulness is the fact that God is present.
- If God is always with us, then Christian mindfulness is the simple awareness of God's active presence and involvement in our everyday, present-moment experiences
- Faith in Christ can both enrich and deepen our use of mindfulness.
- Mindfulness supports our learning to live mindfully giving people more peace, joy, and gratitude in our walk with God.
- Mindfulness is helpful for reducing stress, calming anxiety, and improving overall mental and physical wellness.
- Mindfulness enhances gratitude - When we mindfully pay attention to our present experiences, we start to see God's hand in everything. We discover that He is at work in the small details of our lives. A natural response to this is to give Him thanks and praise!
- For starters , there are recommended mindfulness techniques:
    - Ground yourself in the present moment.
    - Breathe deeply with a two-word anchor prayer- Breathe one word in, and one word out.

- Take a Bible meditation break- For a quick, 5-minute Bible meditation break, simply read a short Bible verse or passage and reflect on it.
- Listen mindfully to people you talk with- Mindful listening means paying close attention to what people are saying to you.
- Pause to appreciate God's creation is all around you, see His handiwork and praise Him for it.
- Notice how your body feels value your body
- Say a prayer of blessing for others.

Christian Mindfulness is acknowledging God's Presence in Every Moment. It can be practiced with the appropriate instructions. Therefore, if mindfulness is to be practiced among Christians , the content must be taught and people need mentorship as regards the process of mindfulness.

6. a. One of the Jehovah witnesses' beliefs is that "Jesus Christ is his [God's] firstborn son, is inferior to God, and was created by God" How is this teaching a contradiction to scripture? **(10 Marks)**

This teaching is a contradiction of scripture because the Bible teaches the following about Christ:

i. **The anointed one**- The word Christ is from Greek word "Christos," which describes the divine Son of God, the Anointed King, and the "Messiah" who is positioned and purposed by God to be the Deliverer of all people in a way that no regular person, prophet, judge, or ruler. The **Messiah** – *"We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ)."*

ii. **King of Kings** – "These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful." Rev. 17:14

iii. **Lamb of God** – "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" John 1:29

iv. **Light of the World** – "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." John 8:12

v. **Lion of the Tribe of Judah** – "Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals." Rev. 5:5

vi. **Head of the Church** – *"And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church."* *Eph. 1:22*

vii. **Almighty One** – *"…who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."* *Rev. 1:8*

viii. **Alpha and Omega** – *"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."* *Rev. 22:13*

ix. **Author and Perfecter of Our Faith** – *"Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."* *Heb. 12:2*

x. **Authority** – *"Jesus said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."* *Matt. 28:18*

xi. **Bread of Life** – *"Then Jesus declared, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'"* *John 6:35*

xii. **Beloved Son of God** – *"And behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."* *Matt. 3:17*

xiii. **Lord of All** – *"For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."* *Phil. 2:9-11*

xiv. **Mediator** – *"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."* *1 Tim. 2:5*

xv. **Mighty One** – *"Then you will know that I, the Lord, am your Savior, your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."* *Is. 60:16*

xvi. **Saviour/ One Who Sets Free** – *"So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."* John 8:36

b. Describe five cultic **doctrines** and demonstrate how these differ from biblical teaching . **(10 Marks)**

- SOME LEADERS SEE THEMSELVES AS gods - There is only one God, and no human being can be equal to God.

- LEADERS ARE WORSHIPPED - No human being should worship another human being. The bible forbids worship of idols and man cannot be God only an idol.
- IDOL WORSHIP - Loyalty is to God alone – spiritual leaders serve as God's servants directing people towards God.
- NO FREE WILL : LAITY DO NOT MAKE THEIR OWN CHOICES- Christian leaders should not employ unethical manipulative or coercive techniques of persuasion and control . People are created with a right to choose God's offer of salvation and the blessings that come along with it. Therefore, if God created man in his image and bestowed him with some privileges yet He does not manipulate the people, why should human leaders manipulate followers – this beats the purpose of church .
- SPIRITUAL TRANCES PURSUED AND ENCOURAGED - All religious rites of passage should not be undertaken like meaningless rituals or ceremonies. They should have a spiritual purpose for the believer' identity and the church as a whole.
- SECLUSION, LACK OF CONNECTION TO THE WORLD - Believers should have a sense of responsibility towards the society – in the fulfillment of great commission and developing the community they live in for the greater good.