

CHAPTER 4

AN EVALUATION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULA DEVELOPMENTS SINCE INDEPENDENCE

1. INTRODUCTION

An evaluation of Religious Education curricula developments in Zimbabwe secondary schools since independence forms an important part of the strategy of this study, particularly the changes that have taken place and the reasons that have necessitated these changes. Soon after independence the word “change” became a buzzword in educational circles. Independence to most Zimbabweans meant total control of everything that affected the way of life of the Zimbabweans. Education was one of the issues that were closely monitored. The government also wanted to fulfil its election promises on education, which mainly centred on “education for all philosophies”, and the need for a relevant and viable education curriculum, also with regard to Religious Education. Change was inevitable, as everyone wanted to enjoy the fruits of independence.

In order to evaluate these changes in Religious Education as school subject, the essential aim of this study is to obtain representation on diverse views of members of society, including heads of Religious Education departments, teachers, learners, lecturers, curriculum developers, etc.

The impact of the life experience approach and the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching in Zimbabwe secondary schools will also be evaluated. These methodologies, of course, were and are part of government response to the problems of the old dispensation. Views of the stakeholders will thus be sampled to evaluate whether these methodologies came and will come up with desirable outcomes. This chapter thus forms an important part of the research strategy of the study.

2. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULA DEVELOPMENTS IN ZIMBABWE SINCE INDEPENDENCE

Upon attainment of independence focus was also inevitably on educational transformation (see Chapter 2, pp. 83-84). Proposals were put forward on curricula changes, seen by the ZANU (PF) government as important and needing urgent redress. School subjects which were a priority included History and Religious Education. According to the government Zimbabwean learners especially needed to explore local history and religious aspects.

In Religious Education, these changes were primarily a response to excessive missionary and colonial propaganda transmitted through the content of the Religious Education teaching of the day. Ubah (1988:81) comments as follows about the use of the school system by the missionaries and colonialists “as a bait to trap” Africans: “The use of the school system as bait, as a means to an end rather than as an end itself, has been adequately appreciated”.

Religious Education was thus used by the missionaries and colonialists to indoctrinate and change the mindset of the Africans. The ZANU (PF) government was aware of the implications of maintaining the colonial Religious Education curricula in terms of perpetrating the missionary agenda. It was clear from the beginning that a new Religious Education curriculum was required and the Curriculum Development Unit was tasked with implementing changes in the syllabus (Ndlovu 1993b:2). According to Ubah (1988:82) these changes were necessary because:

The school curriculum was deliberately worked out in a way, which ensured that Religious Instruction occupied a prominent place. From the point of view of the missionaries, Religious Knowledge was the major aspect of training. Religious instruction exposed the children to elements of the Christian doctrine, daily prayers, bible stories and so on.

The quest for relevant educational curricula was increasingly becoming a major concern even before independence as Ndlovu (1979:61) clearly points out:

In our own society there exists a need to explore more into the African cultural heritage. We need to study and evaluate African customs, value systems, music and dance, art, social wisdom, proverbs, riddles, folk tales, and other wise sayings, social and political philosophy, religion and language.

According to scholars such as Ndlovu (1999:1) after independence in 1980, Religious Education educators wanted a change from a pastoral approach to Religious Education teaching which aimed at propagating the so-called missionary propaganda to an open and academic exploration of religion. At independence the government also stressed the need for a Religious Education curriculum that would focus on the values and beliefs of the African learner as a way of enhancing the personal development of the learner.

Thompson (1977:45) supports the view in this way:

The school plays its modernization role essentially by equipping people with the skills and understanding needed so that they may be able to adapt to the changing circumstances in which they will live, and by preparing some of them to occupy positions of influence and leadership in their society.

After independence (see Chapter 3, pp. 112-113), there were two major changes, notably the introduction of the life experience approach to Religious Education teaching and the quest for the multi-faith approach. These methodologies are sufficiently dealt with in Chapter 3 (see pp. 115-176) of this dissertation.

As noted by Freire (1979:52):

The truly committed must reflect the banking concept in its entirety, adapting instead the concept of men as conscious beings, and consciousness directed towards the world. They must abandon the educational goal of deposit making and replace it with the posing of the problems of men in their relations with the problem.

The above tenet of the ideology of Freire influenced post-independence educational transformation in Zimbabwe. There was an attempt soon after independence by the government to change Religious Education teaching from the lecture method (banking concept) to methodologies that elicited responses from learners or posed problems to learners. The so-called problem solving methodologies thus proved popular, relevant and critical in Zimbabwe's education transformation. The emphasis in Zimbabwe secondary schools on the life experience approach and the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching was therefore driven by this need (Ndlovu 1993b:3).

3. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULA DEVELOPMENTS IN ZIMBABWE SINCE INDEPENDENCE

3.1 INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The qualitative evidence in this subsection is based on the data collected by means of questionnaires (see Appendices A to E). Where sampling was done, stratified randomisation was applied. As a result, all units had an equal chance of being selected for this exercise. In the subsequent paragraphs, vital background information on the five categories of respondents involved in this study is provided.

Questionnaires were sent to heads of Religious Education departments with the aim of gathering their views on both the previous and current Religious Education specification. Views on the negative outcomes of the colonial Religious Education curricula are also gathered. The impact of the post-independence Religious Education teaching methodologies is also evaluated.

The heads of Religious Education departments are very experienced Religious Education teachers with an average length of service of ten years. Forty heads of Departments completed this questionnaire from forty secondary schools scattered across Zimbabwe inclusive of all types of schools. Their area of specialisation is Religious Education (see Appendix A). The minimum qualification is a Bachelor of Arts (General) degree plus a Post-graduate Certificate in Education or a Certificate in Education plus a Bachelor of Education degree.

Questionnaires were also sent to Religious Education teachers. The aim, once again, is to gather their views on both the previous and current Religious Education specification. The impact of the methodologies adopted by government after independence is evaluated. Fifty Religious Education teachers completed the questionnaire. There were thirty males and twenty females. Their average length of service at their respective institutions is approximately five years. Their area of specialisation is Religious Education and the minimum qualification is a Certificate of Education from a teachers' training college (see Appendix B).

Questionnaires were also sent to Religious Education learners. The aim of the questionnaire is to gather the views of the learners about the current Religious Education specification compared to the previous. All respondents in this category were given an opportunity to look at the old Religious Education specification and compare it with the current. Their views about the relevance and usefulness of the current approach are gathered. A total of 385 learners completed the questionnaire. There were 200 girls and 185 boys (see Appendix C). The sample comprised learners from Ordinary Level (300) and Advanced Level (85).

Questionnaires were also sent to Religious Education university and college lecturers. The aim, once again, was to gather their views on the old and current Religious Education specification. Information was also gathered on the post-independence Religious Education teaching methodologies adopted by government. Twenty-five

lecturers completed the questionnaires comprising twenty males and five females. The minimum qualification in this category is a Master of Arts Degree in Religious Studies or a Master of Education degree specializing in Religious Education. Their average length of service is five years (see Appendix D).

Questionnaires were also sent to curriculum developers. The aim, once again, was to gather their views on both the previous and the current Religious Education specification. Information was also gathered on the Religious Education teaching methodologies adopted by government after independence. Respondents were also asked to motivate and explain why they recommended the life experience approach and the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching after independence. Fifteen respondents completed the questionnaire in this category. There were ten males and five females. Their average length of service is twenty years. The respondents were drawn from various subjects in the Curriculum Development Unit. The minimum qualification in this category is a Bachelor of Arts (General) Degree plus a Post-graduate Certificate in Education or a Certificate in Education plus a Bachelor of Education Degree (see Appendix E).

3.2 RESPONSES BY HEADS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS

Responses on the question of alienation (Question 2)

Heads of Religious Education Departments were asked to state whether they felt the Religious Education syllabus alienated learners from their culture, values and beliefs in terms of the nature and content of the subject, particularly during the colonial period.

The criteria applied in evaluating the replies to the above question are as follows:

- *Favourable to the inquiry* means that the respondent indicated one or more of the following:
 - The Religious Education curriculum alienated learners, as the content was foreign.
 - Religious Education teaching perpetuated Christian values and beliefs only.
 - The Religious Education syllabus demonised traditional believers, etc.
 - *Doubtful of the inquiry* means that the respondent indicated one or more of the following:
 - Omission of comment about the question of alienation.
 - The response to the question is equivocal.
 - *Unfavourable to the inquiry* means that the respondent indicated one or more of the following:
 - The respondent feels that the colonial ministry of education was justified in perpetuating a christocentric curriculum.
 - The respondent feels that the christocentric syllabus was more relevant in developing the morals including among others the personal development of the learners.

- Response to the question is generally or specifically negative.

Table 1 (below) indicates the replies of heads of departments to Question 2 classified as Favourable to the Inquiry (F), Doubtful of the Inquiry (D) and Unfavourable to the Inquiry (U).

Table 1

Number of Questionnaires			Number of replies			Percentage of replies		
<i>Sent</i>	<i>Returned</i>	<i>Percentage Returned</i>	F	D	U	F	D	U
55	40	72	33	5	2	83	12	5

Observations:

83% of the heads of Religious Education departments agreed that the colonial Religious Education curricula alienated learners from their culture. Various reasons were cited including the following:

- Subject was christocentric or biblical.
- Subject perpetuated Christian values.
- Subject demonised African traditional religion.
- Subject glorified the missionaries.

Table 2 (below) gives the responses of heads of Religious Education departments to Questions 2, 9, 15 and 17.

Table 2

Question	Affirmative		Negative	
	Yes	%	No	%
2. Do you feel that learners were alienated from their culture, and values and beliefs during the colonial period considering the nature and content of the subject during this period?	33	82.5	7	17.5
9. Do you think the role of Religious Education should still more than anything else be to promote and foster Christian values and beliefs only?	4	10	36	90
15. Do you agree that the introduction of the life experience approach to Religious Education teaching in Zimbabwe soon after independence was an attempt to bridge the gap between Christians on the one hand, and members of other value and belief systems on the other?	23	57.5	17	42.5
17. Do you still think the life experience approach to Religious Education teaching was ideal for the Zimbabwe situation?	32	80	8	20

Observations:

Question 2: As noted in table 2, 82.5% of heads of Religious Education departments agreed that learners were alienated from their own culture, values and beliefs.

Question 9: 90% of heads of Religious Education departments disagreed that the role of Religious Education should be to promote and foster Christian values and beliefs only.

They noted that Religious Education is meant to provide learners with opportunities for exploring their own and other people's religions and moral experiences to enable them to discover what religion or morals are about. The heads of Religious Education departments argued that this would equip them with sufficient knowledge, which they need to either reject or accept, intelligibly, any particular religious or moral stance.

Question 15: 57.5% of the heads of Religious Education departments agreed that the introduction of the life experience approach to Religious Education teaching in Zimbabwe soon after independence was an attempt to bridge the gap between Christians on the one hand, and members of other religions on the other. They pointed out that this blending produced what they called a “balanced diet” to the learners. The previous curricula was criticised as too abstract, bookish and foreign.

Question 17: 80% of the heads of Religious Education departments agreed that the life experience approach to Religious Education was ideal and viable for the Zimbabwean situation. They pointed out that its main advantage is that it poses problems to learners in relation to their own environment.

Responses to Question 4

Heads of Religious Education departments were asked to state the harmful effects of cultural alienation. Their responses included the following:

- The adoption of foreign values, beliefs, and culture by Zimbabweans.
- The glorification and admiration of foreign culture by Zimbabweans.

- The demonisation of African traditional religion, culture and values by Zimbabweans now acting as agents of the missionaries or the so-called converts to Christianity.

Heads of Religious Education departments stated that Religious Education was a tool used by Christian apologists or Christian converts to indoctrinate African learners. Indoctrination was thus cited as one of the problems in the teaching of Religious Education.

Responses to Question 5

Heads of Religious Education departments were also asked what the ZANU (PF) government should have done to reverse the harmful effects of cultural alienation. The following are some of their views:

- Government should prioritise teaching of African traditional religion.
- Government should scrap teaching of Bible-centred syllabuses and introduce multi-faith syllabuses.

Table 3 (below) indicates the responses to Question 10 on what constitutes an ideal Religious Education curriculum.

Table 3

Type of curriculum	Christocentric/bibliocentric	Multi-faith
Responses by heads of Department	6	33
%	15	82.5

Observations:

82.5% favoured a multi-faith Religious Education curriculum as opposed to 15% who favoured a christocentric or bibliocentric curriculum. The latter, most likely, are proponents of the Christian faith who believe that the purpose of Religious Education is to foster Christian values and beliefs only. These respondents further believe that Religious Education is a firm foundation to good morals and behaviour in society. The proponents of a multi-faith curriculum on the other hand, believe that good morals can be derived from any religion, be it African traditional religion or Islam. They further note that the purpose of Religious Education is not to indoctrinate the learners, but to leave it to the learners to either reject or accept, intelligibly, any particular religion, moral stance, philosophy or theology. Most of those who supported a multi-faith curriculum pointed out that a comparative study of religions is an open and academic approach that gives the learners an opportunity to make their own decisions.

Responses to Questions 11, 12, 13, 14 and 16

The life experience approach to Religious Education teaching was defined by heads of Religious Education departments as a method of teaching Religious Education that poses problems to learners in relation to their environment. For this reason, they pointed out that in teaching Religious Education using the life experience approach, the focus is on the learners' interaction with the environment. The following are some of the advantages of the life experience approach cited by heads of Religious Education departments:

- It poses problems relevant to the situation of the learner.
- It focuses on the morals or values of the local community.

- It encourages learners to develop interest in solving their own problems.

However, heads of Religious Education departments noted the following reasons as critical in the introduction of the life experience approach to Religious Education teaching:

- The need to test the skills of problem solving, analysis, and evaluation in Religious Education. Learners should analyse their environment and come up with useful ideas about their own problems.
- The need for a relevant curriculum that addresses the immediate environment of the learner.

The life experience approach was according to the heads of Religious Education departments seen by the stakeholders as vital in developing learners into useful members of the society; because it assists learners to become socialized members of the community.

3.3 RESPONSES BY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHERS

Responses on the question of alienation (Question 1)

Religious Education teachers were also asked to state whether they felt the Religious Education syllabus alienated learners from their culture, values and beliefs in terms of the nature and content of the subject, particularly during the colonial period.

The criteria applied in evaluating the replies to the above question are the same as those used in evaluating the responses of the heads of Religious Education departments (see pp. 185-186 of this chapter).

Table 4 (below) indicates the replies of the Religious Education teachers to Question 1 classified as Favourable to the Inquiry (F), Doubtful of the Inquiry (D) and Unfavourable to the Inquiry (U).

Table 4

Number of questionnaires			Number of replies			Percentage of replies		
Sent	Returned	Percentage returned	F	D	U	F	D	U
68	50	73.5	40	2	8	80	4	16

Observations:

80% of the Religious Education teachers agreed that the Religious Education curriculum before independence alienated learners from their culture and religion. Various reasons were cited including the following:

- Subject was christocentric.
- Subject did not expose learners to their own religion.
- Subject glorified foreign religious values.
- Subject demonised or degraded African values.
- Subject was a hate campaign against the Africans, their culture and religion.
- Subject did not encourage learners to see the “good” and the “beauty” of their own religion, culture and values.

- Subject made Africans to lose their own “African identity”.

Table 5 (below) gives the responses of the Religious Education teachers to Questions 1, 10, 17 and 20.

Table 5

Question	Affirmative		Negative	
	Yes	%	No	%
1. Do you feel that learners were alienated from their culture, and values and beliefs during the colonial period considering the nature and content of the subject during this period?	40	80	10	20
10. Do you think the role of Religious Education should still more than anything else be to promote and foster Christian values and beliefs only?	5	10	45	90
17. Is the life experience approach to Religious Education appropriate in the Zimbabwean context?	37	74	13	26
20. In view of the lack of instructional materials, was the introduction of the life experience approach therefore effective and successful?	16	32	44	88

Observations:

Question 1: As noted in table 5, 80% of the Religious Education teachers agreed that learners were alienated from their own culture, values and beliefs.

Question 10: 90% of Religious Education teachers disagreed that the role of Religious Education should be to promote and foster Christian values and beliefs only. They noted

that emphasis should also be on the teaching of the *ubuntu* philosophy. This is how the African learner should behave; in line with African traditional values and beliefs.

Question 17: 74% of the Religious Education teachers agreed that the life experience approach is appropriate for the Zimbabwean context. The respondents noted that the method is learner-centred, and hence, relevant to the Zimbabwean situation.

Question 20: 88% of the Religious Education teachers disagreed with the statement that the introduction of the life experience approach was effective and successful. They noted the following reasons:

- Lack of instructional materials.
- There was no in-service training.
- Teacher training colleges or universities did not introduce the life experience approach in their curricula as a major topic of study.

Responses to Question 4

Religious Education teachers were asked to state the harmful effects of cultural alienation. Their responses included the following points:

- Learners were not exposed to their own local African traditional religion.
- The content of the subject was a hate campaign against Africans, particularly the way Africans were portrayed.
- Learners failed to see the “good” in their own culture.

Responses to Question 5

Religious Education teachers were also asked what the ZANU (PF) government should have done to reverse the harmful effects of cultural alienation. The following are some of their views:

- Development of instructional materials with a multi-faith bias.
- Implementation of strategies for the effective teaching of Zimbabwean culture.
- Introduction of African traditional religion as a major component of Religious Education.

Table 6 (below) indicates the responses by Religious Education teachers on what constitutes an ideal Religious Education curriculum (Question 11).

Table 6

Type of curriculum	Christocentric/bibliocentric	Multi-faith
Responses by Religious Education teachers	4	46
%	8	92

Observations:

92% of the Religious Education teachers favoured a multi-faith Religious Education curriculum as opposed to 8% who favoured a christocentric or bibliocentric curriculum.

Religious Education teachers proposed a Religious Education curriculum that aimed to help learners progress towards the highest cognitive level. They also argued that

education should help learners develop to become truly or genuinely socialized. According to the views of Religious Education teachers, Religious Education as a school subject should provide learners with opportunities for exploring their own and other people's religious and moral experiences to enable them to discover what religion is about. This, they pointed out, would equip them with sufficient knowledge, which they need, for either rejecting or accepting any particular religious or moral position. In teaching Religious Education, the concern is not to prove or disprove the existence of God or the validity of any morals. Rather, the concern is involving the learners in the continued search for truth and providing them with tools for their life long "search".

Responses to Questions 12, 13, and 15

On the definition of the life experience approach, the Religious Education teachers pointed out that this approach deals with what happens in the everyday life of the learner.

The teachers cited the following advantages of the approach:

- It simplifies the biblical content by making it more relevant to the situation of the learners.
- It allows learners to participate more actively in their learning process by "bringing" their own examples.
- It poses problems to learners which are related to their own environment.
- It develops within the learners a critical appreciation of their own culture, beliefs and values.

Religious Education teachers noted the following points which are critical in introducing the approach:

- The need to train teachers on the life experience approach and its application (in-service training).
- The need to develop relevant and appropriate instructional materials.

The life experience approach was seen by many teachers (70%) as ideal as it allows the learner to focus on the real issues affecting him/her in society. It enables learners to solve current problems affecting them in society, and therefore contributes to the personal development of the learners.

3.4 RESPONSES BY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION LEARNERS

Responses on the question of alienation (Question 1.1)

Learners were asked to state whether they felt their relatives were alienated from their culture, and values and beliefs during the colonial period considering the nature and content of Religious Education as school subject.

The criteria applied in evaluating the replies to the above question are identical to those used in the previous two sections (see pp. 185 –186 of this chapter).

Table 7 (below) indicates the replies of the learners to Question 1.1 classified as Favourable to the Inquiry (F), Doubtful to the Inquiry (D) and Unfavourable to the Inquiry (U).

Table 7

Number of questionnaires			Number of replies			Percentage of replies		
<i>Sent</i>	<i>Returned</i>	<i>Percentage returned</i>	F	D	U	F	D	U
450	385	85	165	57	163	42.8	14.8	42.3

Observations:

42.8% of the learners agreed that their relatives were alienated from their culture, and values and beliefs during the colonial period. Most learners in this category understood culture as a way of life and listed a number of bad things that came with the advent of Christianity. Learners in this category could not distinguish between civilization and Christianity. They thought Christianity brought civilization or modernity with all bad things associated with civilization or modernity. Interestingly, learners pointed out that Christianity brought about a breakdown in their morals and way of life. They argued that Christianity also brought about decay in their cultural values and beliefs.

42.3% of the learners disagreed with the notion that their relatives were alienated from their culture, values and beliefs during the colonial period. This group of learners also view Christianity as an agent of civilization. They glorify Christianity and link it closely with the positive fruits of modernization. They also glorify and admire the modern

cultural trends. For these reasons, they do not condemn the Religious Education syllabus of the colonial period.

Table 8 (below) gives the responses of the learners to Questions 1.1 and 3.

Table 8

Question	Affirmative		Negative	
	Yes	%	No	%
1.1 Do you feel that your relatives were alienated from your culture, and values and beliefs during the colonial period considering the nature and content of Religious Education as a school subject during these years?	165	42.8	163	42.3
3. Do you think the role of Religious Education should be to promote and foster Christian values and beliefs only?	83	21.5	236	61.2

Observations:

Question 1.1: As noted above, 42.8% of the learners agreed that their relatives were alienated. Also see pp. 198-199 of this chapter.

Question 3: 61.2% of the learners felt that the role of Religious Education should not be to promote and foster Christian values and beliefs only. Most of the learners in this category made reference to freedom of religion and thought. Freedom of religion is a theme in the Zimbabwe Junior Certificate of Education Level (Forms 1 and 2). Probably at this stage learners were aware that this is one of the fundamental rights enshrined in the

Zimbabwean Constitution. For these reasons, learners indicated that people should be free to believe or worship what they want to believe and worship.

Responses to Questions 1.2, 1.4 and 2

On the question (1.2) regarding the nature of the colonial Religious Education teaching, the learners noted that it was largely christocentric. They argued that the Religious Education teaching was centred on how Christians should live (The life and teachings of Jesus Christ (see Chapter 2, p. 100) as the teachings of Jesus Christ is largely centred on Christian conduct and ethics.

On the question (1.4) regarding the harmful effects of cultural alienation, learners pointed out that there is diversity in cultural practices. This diversity is seen in the African traditionalists on the one hand, and the Christian believers on the other. Learners saw the above as confusing. Because some people are totally obsessed with modernity, others still stick to the traditional way of life. It seems some learners saw this state of affairs as a conflict in society; and this state of affairs was attributed to cultural alienation. The word “alienation” seemed to confuse some learners and they were not totally aware of what it meant.

On the question (2) what should be included in the Religious Education syllabus to make it more acceptable to all Zimbabwe learners, learners favoured a curriculum that includes a variety of beliefs, among others topics such as ancestor worship were mentioned.

Responses to Question 4

Learners were asked to give their opinions about what constitutes an ideal Religious Education curriculum. Their views are summarised below:

Table 9

Type of Curriculum	Christocentric/bibliocentric	Multi-faith
Responses by learners	156	229
%	40.5	59.4

Observations:

40.5% of the learners preferred a christocentric or bibliocentric curriculum. Topics such as The life of Jesus Christ; The Creator; and, The people of Israel were cited. One would assume that this group of learners are the product of many years of “indoctrination”; and for this reason, they support the prevailing situation. It is also interesting to note that to most candidates Christianity is the only religion that they know, at the present moment.

59.4% preferred a multi-faith curriculum. These learners also pointed out the need to learn about other peoples’ beliefs. There was also mentioning of how people worship in other countries.

The situation at the present moment is that learners are taught that Christianity is the only religion that offers salvation. Christian dominance tended to influence the views of the learners to a certain extent. 40.5% of the learners are thus very sympathetic to Christianity.

Responses to Questions 5 to 9

In their answers to Questions 5 to 9 dealing with various aspects of the life experience approach learners cited various positive aspects of the current approach to the teaching of Religious Education. The following were some of the views:

- Moral lessons are derived from Bible stories.
- The relevance of Bible stories to everyday life situations.

Learners made reference to “The Ten Commandments” for example, such as “Thou shall not steal”.

On the negative aspects of the current approach, learners noted that it totally ignores African culture, and beliefs and values. They argued that religion is closely linked to culture; and there is hence need for the current approach to look to the African culture as well.

In response to the question on personal development (Question 7), learners noted that while the life experience approach does focus on morals, it fails however to look at personal development. It does not prepare them (the learners) to be fully socialized; instead it creates conflict as the learner fails to relate what is in the Bible to the socio-cultural context he/she grows in. Learners also noted that Religious Education teaching does not refer to African traditional culture, beliefs and values; and as a result learners are confused when they try to address issues regarding African traditional cultural practices, beliefs and values. In instances where Christianity is taught and where it refers to

African traditional culture, beliefs and values, it will be demonising African traditional culture, beliefs and values.

Learners proposed that Religious Education should be all encompassing, inclusive of all the different types of beliefs. Learners should also be given a choice to select what they want to study. One interesting idea that came from the survey was that the Religious Education curriculum should have the following options – the Bahai Faith, Christianity, and Africa traditional religion. The learners will then select what they find interesting. Learners further proposed that in the case of the Christian syllabus, for example, the syllabus should cover the whole Bible, not to restrict learners to the gospels only. They argued that they want a holistic or a thematic approach to the Bible; that covers the whole Bible.

3.5 RESPONSES BY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE LECTURERS

Responses on the question of alienation (Question 2)

Lecturers were asked to state whether they felt that the Religious Education curriculum alienated learners from their culture, values and beliefs in terms of nature and content, particularly during the colonial period.

The criteria applied in evaluating the replies to the above question are the same as those used on pp. 185-186 of this chapter.

Table 10 (below) indicates the replies of the university and college lecturers to Question 2 classified as Favourable to the Inquiry (F), Doubtful of the Inquiry (D) and Unfavourable to the Inquiry (U).

Table 10

Number of questionnaires			Number of replies			Percentage of replies		
<i>Sent</i>	<i>Returned</i>	<i>Percentage returned</i>	F	D	U	F	D	U
32	25	78	24	1	-	96	4	-

Observations:

96% of the lecturers agreed that the colonial Religious Education curricula alienated learners from their culture, values and beliefs. Various reasons were cited including among others the following:

- Subject was christocentric or biblical.
- Only one religion was taught.
- Too much emphasis on biblical scripture.
- Subject did not accommodate values and beliefs found in African traditional religion or any other religion.

Table 11 (below) shows the responses of the lecturers to Questions 2, 12, 13 and 17.

Table 11

Question	Affirmative		Negative	
	Yes	%	No	%
2. Do you feel that students were alienated from their culture, and values and beliefs during the colonial period considering the nature and content as well as the subject didactics of the subject during this period?	24	96	1	4
12. Did your teaching approach to Religious Education change since independence?	20	80	4	16
13. Do you think the role of Religious Education should still be more than anything else to promote and foster Christian values and beliefs?	0	0	25	100
17. In your opinion, was enough research done on the advantages, disadvantages, relevance and viability of the life experience approach to Religious Education teaching before its implementation soon after independence?	2	8	23	92

Observations:

Question 2: As noted on the previous page, 96% of the lecturers argued that learners were alienated from their own culture, values and beliefs during the colonial period.

Question 12: 80% of the lecturers argued that their teaching approach to Religious Education changed since independence. It is important to note that universities and some colleges, except church-owned colleges, at independence were already teaching all

religions as topics in their curriculum. What is important is that upon attainment of independence, universities and colleges started preparing their students to teach all the religions. However, lecturers are concerned that a lot was done in the universities and colleges, but nothing was done in the school system. They criticized the content of Religious Education as a school subject as being heavily biased towards the Bible. They appreciate the fact that the introduction of the life experience approach to Religious Education teaching was a positive move, but that the spirit is destroyed by the content and examination which still carry bias towards the Bible.

Question 13: All the lecturers who completed this questionnaire disagreed with the notion that the role of Religious Education should be to promote and foster Christian values and beliefs only. Obviously this was from an academic point of view. Lecturers believe that learners should form their own opinions, either to accept or to reject, basing on the evidence available to them.

Therefore, the role of the teacher is to present facts in an objective manner without bias. Religious Education should be an open and academic exploration of religion. The promotion and fostering of Christian values and beliefs should be the task of the individual churches.

Question 17: 92% of the lecturers felt that not enough research was done by the government prior to introducing the life experience approach to Religious Education teaching. The following reasons were cited:

- It was a political decision.
- Government rushed to make a decision to avoid criticism.
- Government was lobbied by members of other religions.

Responses to Questions 4 to 6

The lecturers defined cultural alienation (Questions 4 and 5) as the practice of making one glorify another peoples' culture but at the same time looking down upon his/her own culture. The following were cited as the harmful effects of cultural alienation:

- Loss of identity.
- The victim becomes enslaved in someone else's beliefs.
- Distortion of one's own societal values, norms and aspirations.

Lecturers felt (Question 6) that the government should take steps to reverse the harmful effects of cultural alienation; and the following steps should be taken:

- The teaching of African traditional Religion.
- The teaching of other religions (world religions).
- The teaching of some aspects of African culture in the schools.

Responses to Questions 7 and 8

In response to Questions 7 and 8, the lecturers noted that the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching is a possible answer to all the problems. It can change the perception that the role of Religious Education is to establish and foster Christian beliefs and values only.

Responses to Question 9

Responses by lecturers on what constitutes an ideal Religious Education curriculum are summarised below:

Table 12

Type of Curriculum	Christocentric/bibliocentric	Multi-faith
Responses by lecturers	0	25
%	0	100

Observations:

All the lecturers who completed the questionnaire favoured a multi-faith Religious Education curriculum. They were against the teaching of one religion only.

Responses to Questions 10, 11, 15 and 16

The life experience approach was defined (Question 10) as an approach that relates subject content to the learners' life experiences. All the lecturers (Question 11) propagated a multi-faith approach in teaching Religious Education. The life experience approach currently used (Question 15) was commended for being relevant and addressing the socio-cultural situation of the learner. However, the lecturers argued that most of the examples are taken from Christianity, as the content is still primarily Christian-oriented.

Lecturers noted (Question 16) that the reason the government might have opted for the life experience approach to Religious Education teaching was because it was compatible with the biblical content; and such a compromise was the best the government could do given the prevailing situation (see Chapter 1, pp. 4-5).

Responses to Questions 18 to 20

Lecturers noted (Question 18) that lack of appropriate instructional materials was a handicap in adopting the life experience approach. According to them (Question 19) the government should have developed these instructional materials first; and, thereafter carry out in-service training workshops. Lecturers pointed out that up until 2003 there exists no appropriate literature on African traditional religion, and this is a serious handicap. It was proposed (Question 20) that the government should carry out research through the Curriculum Development Unit and consult with all stakeholders on the appropriate Religious Education curriculum for Zimbabwe.

3.6 RESPONSES BY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM DEVELOPERS

Responses on the Question of alienation (Question 2)

Curriculum developers were asked to state whether they felt that the colonial Religious Education syllabus alienated learners from their culture, values and beliefs in terms of nature and content.

The criteria applied in evaluating the replies to the above question are the same as those used on pp. 185-186 of this chapter.

Table 13 (below) indicates the replies of the curriculum developers to Question 2 classified as Favourable to the Inquiry (F), Doubtful of the Inquiry (D) and Unfavourable to the Inquiry (U).

Table 13

Number of questionnaires			Number of replies			Percentage of replies		
<i>Sent</i>	<i>Returned</i>	<i>Percentage returned</i>	F	D	U	F	D	U
18	15	83.3	13	2	-	86.6	13.3	-

Observations:

86.6% of the curriculum developers argued that the colonial Religious Education curricula alienated learners from their own culture, values and beliefs. Various reasons were cited including among others the following:

- Subject was bibliocentric.
- Subject totally ignored African traditional religion.
- Subject did not incorporate other cultures and religions.

Table 11 (below) shows the responses to Questions 2, 9, 15 and 17.

Table 14

Question	Affirmative		Negative	
	Yes	%	No	%
2. Do you feel that learners were alienated from their culture, and values and beliefs during the colonial period considering the nature and content of the subject during this period?	15	100	-	-
9. Do you think the role of Religious Education should still more than anything else be to promote and foster Christian values and beliefs?	-	-	15	100
15. Do you agree that the introduction of the life experience approach to Religious Education teaching in Zimbabwe soon after independence was an attempt to bridge the gap between Christians on the one hand, and members of the other value and belief systems on the other?	13	86.6	2	13.3
17. Do you still think the life experience approach to Religious Education teaching was ideal for the Zimbabwe situation?	2	8	23	92

Observations:

Question 2: As noted on the previous page, all the curriculum developers agreed that learners were alienated from their own culture, values and beliefs. Curriculum developers noted among others that the Bible-based Religious Education syllabus did not accommodate other cultures and religions; and for this reason alienated Africans.

Question 9: All curriculum developers rejected the notion that Religious Education should promote and foster Christian values and beliefs only. They noted that the purpose

of religion is to address the spiritual needs of all the believers. In a multi-faith community such as Zimbabwe, all believers should be catered for in the educational system.

Question 15: 86.6% of the curriculum developers agreed that the introduction of the life experience approach to Religious Education teaching in Zimbabwe soon after independence was an attempt to bridge the gap between Christians on the one hand, and members of other religions on the other. They noted that this move was also meant to address the problems of the bibliocentric syllabus; and that Religious Education as school subject was supposed to address the life experiences of the Zimbabwean learners.

Question 17: 93.3% of the curriculum developers agreed that the life experience approach was ideal for the Zimbabwe situation. According to the curriculum developers this brought a new awareness to the learners; as Africans began to study about their own religious and cultural heritage. For decades Africans had studied only other people's religions and cultures. The life experience approach subsequently brought pride, and a sense of identity to the learners as they began to realise their own rich cultural heritage.

Responses to Question 5

Curriculum developers were asked to state the harmful effects of cultural alienation. Their responses included the following:

- The problems associated with acculturation.
- The loss of identity as Africans.

- The glorification and admiration of foreign religions and cultural values.

Responses to Question 6

Curriculum developers were also asked what the ZANU (PF) government should have done reverse the harmful effects of cultural alienation. The following are some of their views:

- Development of relevant literature on the local or traditional religions.
- Equip the Curriculum Development Unit with sufficient resources in order to develop learning materials with a multi-faith bias for the schools.
- Give the Curriculum Development Unit financial resources to enable the unit to develop in-service training courses.
- Introduce a Religious Education curriculum that accommodates all world religions, and terminate all christocentric or bibliocentric syllabuses.

Responses to Question 10

Responses of the curriculum developers on what constitutes an ideal Religious Education curriculum are summarized below:

Table 15

Type of Curriculum	Christocentric/bibliocentric	Multi-faith
Responses by Curriculum developers	-	15
%	-	100

Observations:

All the curriculum developers favoured a multi-faith curriculum. They noted that the ideal Religious Education curriculum is one which takes into account the beliefs and experiences of Zimbabweans first, i.e. the local context.

The syllabus should also take into account what happens in the international community.

The curriculum developers argued that the traditional teaching principle, “always start with the known and move to the unknown”, is critical. Learners should start with African traditional religion, and then move to the other world religions. In other words, it is vital that learners understand what is happening in their own society before they move to understand what is happening outside their society.

Responses to Questions 11 to 20

The life experience approach to Religious Education teaching was defined as the approach that addresses the day-to-day experiences of the learner. The curriculum developers noted that this approach was introduced by the government to make the subject relevant to the new socio-cultural context brought by independence. The British crafted Religious Education syllabus was no longer relevant and government felt obliged to introduce a new teaching approach that would be relevant; and more important, address the socio-cultural context of the Zimbabwean learner. Curriculum developers described the life experience approach and curriculum as “people oriented” as it was driven by the wishes of the people.

The following are some of the advantages of the life experience approach cited by curriculum developers:

- It is relevant to the day-to-day experiences of the learners.
- It creates a link between the school and the family.
- It brings harmony between the school and the parents.

The curriculum developers noted that the life experience approach teaches the very beliefs, virtues or morals that are taught by parents at home. It teaches learners about appeasing ancestral spirits which is common in many African families in Zimbabwe. The learners begin to understand some of the practices that take place at home and appreciate the significance of these practices. The life experience approach thus brings about a link between the school and the home, and hence also harmony. If a learner comes to school with traditional ornaments tied around his/her neck, the teacher understands why he/she is wearing the traditional ornaments. Probably it was on the advice of a traditional doctor, as being treatment for a persistent chest infection.

The curriculum developers noted that the life experience approach encourages harmony, whilst the christocentric or bibliocentric approach brings conflict and disharmony. One example cited is that the gospels teach that all spirits are evil, yet, African traditional religion teaches that there are good spirits and evil spirits. The life experience approach enables learners to understand both dimensions, and thus leads to harmony.

The following problems were cited as caused by the introduction of the life experience approach:

- Failure by teachers to handle the new material (lack of preparedness) successfully.
- Lack of instructional materials.
- No in-service training for teachers.

Curriculum developers argued that they could adapt the Curriculum Development Unit to meet the challenges that came up with the introduction of the life experience approach. The major challenge is curriculum innovation to meet the ever-changing environment at a time when government funding has dwindled.

4. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF THE OPINIONS AND VIEWS OF STAKEHOLDERS ON THE INTRODUCTION OF THE MULTI-FAITH APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHING

4.1 INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The evidence in this subsection is based on the data collected by means of questionnaires (see Appendices F to J). Where sampling was done, stratified randomisation was applied. As a result, all units had an equal chance of being selected for this exercise. In the subsequent paragraphs, vital background information on the five categories of respondents involved in this study is provided.

Questionnaires were sent to heads of Religious Education departments with the aim of gathering their views on the relevance of the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching in Zimbabwe. It is also aimed at determining the opinion of heads of Religious Education departments on the impact of this change on Religious Education teaching.

Heads of Religious Education departments are very experienced Religious Education teachers with an average length of service of ten years in the teaching profession. Forty heads of Religious Education departments completed the questionnaire. There were 32 male and 8 female teachers. Their area of specialization is Religious Education (see Appendix F). The minimum qualification is a Bachelor of Arts (General) degree plus a Post-graduate Certificate in Education or a Certificate in Education plus a Bachelor of Education degree for substantive heads of Religious Education departments.

Questionnaires were also sent to Religious Education teachers. The aim, once again, is to gather information on the relevance of the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching in Zimbabwe. Information gathering is also aimed at determining the opinion of Religious Education teachers on the impact of this change on Religious Education teaching. Fifty Religious Education teachers completed the questionnaire, thirty males and twenty females. Their average length of service is approximately five years. Their area of specialization is Religious Education or Religious Studies. The minimum qualification is a Certificate of Education from a teachers' teaching college (see Appendix G).

Questionnaires were also sent to Religious Education learners. The aim of the questionnaires is to gather the views of the learners about the relevance of the multi-faith approach to Religious Education in Zimbabwe. The questionnaire is aimed at determining the opinion of learners on the impact of this change on Religious Education

teaching. A total of 385 learners completed the questionnaire. There were 200 girls and 185 boys (see Appendix H). The sample comprised learners from Ordinary level (300) and Advanced level (85).

Questionnaires were also sent to Religious Education university and college lecturers. The aim, once again, is to gather information from lecturers on the relevance of the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching in Zimbabwe. Information gathering is also aimed at determining the opinion of lecturers on the impact of this change on Religious Education teaching. Twenty-five lecturers completed the questionnaire comprising twenty males and five females. The minimum qualification in this category is a Master of Arts Degree in Religious Education or Master of Education Degree with specialization in Religious Education. Their average length of service is five years (see Appendix I).

Questionnaires were also sent to curriculum developers. The aim, once again, is to gather information on the relevance of the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching in Zimbabwe. Information gathering is also aimed at determining the opinion of curriculum developers on the impact of this change on Religious Education teaching. Fifteen respondents completed the questionnaire in this category comprising five females and ten males. Their average length of service is twenty-five years. The respondents were drawn from various subjects in the Curriculum Development Unit. The minimum qualification is a Bachelor of Arts (General) degree or Bachelor of Education degree (see Appendix J).

4.2 RESPONSES BY HEADS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS

Responses to Question 1

Heads of Religious Education departments were asked to state whether the introduction of the multi-faith approach would be able to reverse all remaining effects of cultural alienation.

The criteria applied in evaluating the replies to the above question are as follows:

- *Favourable to the inquiry* means that the respondent indicated one or more of the following:
 - The introduction of the multi-faith approach reverses the remaining effects of cultural alienation, as learners will be exposed to various cultural practices.
 - The multi-faith approach will rid the curriculum of the excessive Christian bias and lead to an objective study of religion.
 - The multi-faith approach will introduce African traditional religion as a major component of the study and this will reverse all remaining negative effects.
- *Doubtful of the inquiry* means that the respondent indicated one or more of the following:
 - Omission of comment about the question.
 - The response to the question is to some extent equivocal.
- *Unfavourable to the inquiry* means that the respondent indicated one or more of the following:

- The respondent feels that the multi-faith approach will not reverse all remaining effects of cultural alienation as Christianity or christocentric courses will still be taught.
- The respondent feels that the many years of Christian indoctrination in Zimbabwe resulted in many Christian converts who are teaching Religious Education and these teachers will continue demonising African traditional religion.
- Responses to the question are generally or specifically negative.

Table 16 (below) indicates the replies of heads of Religious Education departments to Question 1 classified as favourable to the Inquiry (F), Doubtful of the inquiry (D) and Unfavourable to the inquiry (U).

Table 16

Number of questionnaires			Number of Replies			Percentage of replies		
Sent	Returned	Percentage <i>returned</i>	F	D	U	F	D	U
55	40	72	22	8	10	55	20	25

Observations:

55% of the respondents noted that the introduction of the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching will reverse the remaining effects of many years of cultural alienation in Zimbabwe. The exposure to other belief systems, it is felt, would reverse the remaining effects of cultural alienation as learners would explore all the belief systems in an objective manner.

20% of the respondents were doubtful of the inquiry. This category of respondents simply did not give a comment, or the response to the question was equivocal.

25% of the respondents noted that the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching will not reverse all remaining effects of cultural alienation. Respondents pointed out that Christianity will still be taught in the schools; and emphasis will still be put on the tenets of Christianity. Furthermore, the many years of cultural alienation produced many Christian apologists among the present-day teacher corps. The Christian apologists will thus perpetuate Christian propaganda: Christianity will be glorified and presented as the only path to salvation.

Table 17 (below) gives the responses of the heads of Religious Education departments to Questions 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 13, 14 and 15.

Table 17

Question	Affirmative		Negative	
	Yes	%	No	%
4. Will the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching be acceptable to all stakeholders? Motivate and explain.	25	62.5	15	37.5
5. Is a Christian convert likely to distort multi-faith Religious Education teaching?	29	72.5	11	27.5
6. Do you think the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching can strengthen the position of all value and belief systems in Zimbabwe?	36	90	4	10
7. Is commitment likely to be a problem in introducing multi-faith Religious Education teaching in Zimbabwe secondary schools?	33	82.5	7	17.5
9. Do you think the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching can lead to a critical appreciation of other religions?	88	95	2	5
13. Would the introduction of the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching address some of the weaknesses of the life experience approach?	36	90	4	10
14. Will the multi-faith approach be acceptable to Christians in Zimbabwe?	28	70	12	30
15. Will the multi-faith approach weaken or strengthen the Christian value and belief system in Zimbabwe?	34	85	6	15

Observations:

Question 4: 62.5% of the respondents agreed that the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching would be acceptable to all stakeholders. The respondents in this category noted that the multi-faith approach would address the expectations of the multi-ethnic community found in Zimbabwe. 37.5% of the respondents felt that the multi-faith approach would not be acceptable. Respondents in this category argued that Zimbabwe is a Christian state (though this has not been acknowledged and declared by the state), and the clergy largely determines its affairs. The Roman Catholic Church is very influential in the country's affairs. Respondents noted that the bibliocentric approach is heavily supported by Christians, and for this reason the multi-faith approach will not be acceptable to most stakeholders.

Question 5: 72.5% of the respondents felt that a Christian convert or apologist is likely to present a favourable picture of Christianity, i.e. glorifying it as the only path to salvation. Such a presentation is likely to hinder multi-faith Religious Education teaching. 27.5% of the respondents noted that it is possible for a Christian convert to teach multi-faith Religious Education successfully.

Question 6: 90% of the respondents noted that the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching will strengthen the position of all value and belief systems in Zimbabwe. They argued that the multi-faith approach embraces all major value and belief systems in Zimbabwe.

10% of the respondents felt that it is possible that the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching can weaken the position of some value and belief systems in Zimbabwe. Respondents in this category felt that the position of Christianity as the major value and belief system in Zimbabwe will be weaker. This category of respondents sees Christianity as the only religion that offers salvation.

Question 7: 82.5% of the respondents noted that commitment to one religion or value and belief system can be a problem in introducing multi-faith Religious Education in Zimbabwe secondary schools. The perpetuation of Christian values and beliefs by Christian apologists was cited as an impediment to an “open” approach to Religious Education. 17.5% of the respondents did not see commitment as a problem. They noted that the role of the teacher is to present facts as they are.

Question 9: 95% of the respondents argued that the multi-faith approach to Religious Education can lead to a critical appreciation of other religions as learners would approach other religions with sensitivity, respect and tolerance. However, 5% of the respondents disagreed with the above notion.

Question 13: 90% of the respondents argued that the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching can address some of the weaknesses of the life experience approach. Respondents noted that the multi-faith approach is all embracing and enables the learner to choose what is right and what is wrong. The life experience approach as used in

Religious Education teaching in Zimbabwe looks at one religion or value system (Christianity). 10% of the respondents disagreed with this notion.

Question 14: 70% of the respondents agreed that the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching will be acceptable to Christians. Some heads of Religious Education departments noted that Christianity shares a lot of similarities with other religions in terms of beliefs (such as the belief in life after death) and moral teachings (such as thou shall not kill). For this reason, Christians will readily accept the multi-faith approach. 30% of the respondents felt that Christians would not accept a multi-faith approach. Some Christians would resist the teaching of other religions which they among others believe do not offer salvation.

Question 15: 85% of the respondents believe that Christianity will benefit from the teaching of other religions. Respondents noted that since Christianity shares a lot of similarities with the other religions, multi-faith Religious Education would strengthen the Christian value and belief system in approaching other religions and defining its relationship with these religions. 15% of the respondents felt that the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching would weaken the Christian value and belief system. Respondents in this category were mainly Christian apologists.

Replies of the heads of Religious Education departments to Question 2 on the definition of a multi-faith approach

All respondents defined a multi-faith approach as an approach to Religious Education teaching that deals with the study of many religions or belief systems. Respondents had no problems in dealing with this question.

Responses of the heads of Religious Education departments to Questions 3, 8, 10, 11, 12 and 16

Question 3: Respondents noted the following advantages of a multi-faith approach:

- The world is presently a global village and as such the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching enables learners to learn about other people's beliefs and value systems. Hence, the multi-faith approach relates to the world community in which we all live.
- The multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching enables learners to make informed choices about what they should believe, or what they should not believe.
- The multi-faith approach develops within the learners a critical appreciation of other religions.
- The multi-faith approach enables learners also to understand and appreciate their own culture and religion.

Respondents noted the following disadvantages of a multi-faith approach:

- Learners will be compelled to study other value and belief systems.

- Different value and belief systems may bring conflicting views, for example, Islam does not believe in the virgin conception of Jesus and the resurrection. On the other hand, Christianity is firmly grounded on the above stated (the virgin conception of Jesus and the resurrection) beliefs.

Question 8: Respondents noted that a multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching could minimize the problem of commitment if the following strategies are adopted:

- Religious Education teachers should adopt an open and academic approach in dealing with each and every religious belief or value system.
- Religious Education teachers should among others employ the use of the phenomenological approach in teaching the different religions or belief systems to their learners in the classroom.

40% of the respondents did not answer this question; while 10% of the respondents noted that the word “commitment” was difficult to understand. More than 60% of the respondents did not understand the concept commitment.

Question 10: Heads of Religious Education departments noted that curriculum developers can address the complexity of including all the major value and belief systems in the secondary school Religious Education curriculum by doing the following:

- Using the thematic approach in teaching Religious Education.

- Teaching concepts, such as the concept of salvation, across the different religions. Teachers may examine the concept salvation in all religions; as well as how believers attain salvation in each different religion.
- Teaching of the following topics was also suggested:
 - Founder of the Religion: History and teachings.
 - Main beliefs or Pillars of each Religion.
 - Miracles.
 - Salvation, etc.

Question 11: The following strategies were suggested in developing relevant and appropriate instructional materials for multi-faith Religious Education teaching:

- The Curriculum Development Unit should appoint writers in the Unit to deal specifically with developing learning materials.
- The Curriculum Development Unit should be well funded by the government so that effective research projects are established, including workshops that should result in teacher support materials being produced.
- The Curriculum Development Unit should seek funding from organizations such as UNESCO or DANIDA to support projects meant to develop instructional materials for multi-faith Religious Education teaching.
- There should be greater liaison with publishers and all stakeholders in the publishing industry to influence the type of materials being produced. Publishers should among others be encouraged to produce relevant materials for successful multi-faith Religious Education teaching.

Question 12: The following strategies were suggested as a way of improving the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes of Religious Education teachers to teach all value and belief systems, apart from their own:

- In-service teacher training courses.
- Workshops by the Curriculum Development Unit.
- Relevant and viable teacher support materials.

Question 16: Respondents noted that the multi-faith Religious Education syllabus should be all embracing, and include all value and belief systems. All major religions of the world should be taught using the thematic approach. In the Advanced Level, learners should be given a wide variety of options to choose from such as Religion and Ethics, World Religions, Philosophy of Religion, etc.

4.3 RESPONSES BY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHERS

Responses to Question 1

Religious Education teachers were asked to state whether the introduction of the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching would be able to reverse all remaining effects of cultural alienation.

The criteria applied in evaluating the replies to the above question are the same as those used on pp. 219-220 of this chapter.

Table 18 (below) indicates the replies of Religious Education teachers to Question 1 classified as Favourable to the Inquiry (F), Doubtful of the Inquiry (D) and Unfavourable to the Inquiry (U).

Table 18

Number of questionnaires			Number of replies			Percentage of replies		
Sent	Returned	Percentage returned	F	D	U	F	D	U
68	50	73.5	23	7	20	46	14	40

Observations:

46% of the respondents noted that the introduction of a multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching would reverse the remaining effects of cultural alienation in Zimbabwe. The incorporation of other religions will give learners a “world view” of religion, and remove the current parochial bibliocentric view of religion. Hence, learners will develop a sense of identity as Zimbabweans; and glorify their own culture and religion in as much as other races or people do.

40% of the respondents noted that the introduction of a multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching would not reverse the remaining effects of cultural alienation in Zimbabwe. The respondents argued that the many years of indoctrination and cultural alienation, produced many Christian apologists in Zimbabwe who are now champions in demonising their own African traditional religion and African culture. The respondents argue that despite the introduction of a multi-faith approach, many Christian apologists will continue spreading Christian propaganda.

Table 19 (see p. 232) indicates the replies of the Religious Education teachers to Questions 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10 and 14.

Table 19

Question	Affirmative		Negative	
	Yes	%	No	%
4. Would the introduction of the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching address some of the weaknesses of the life experience approach as experienced in the Religious Education classroom?	42	86	8	16
5. Will the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching be acceptable to all stakeholders? Motivate and explain.	18	36	32	64
6. Is a teacher belonging to the Christian value and belief system likely to distort multi-faith Religious Education teaching? Substantiate.	37	74	13	26
7. Do you think the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching can strengthen the position of all value and belief systems in Zimbabwe?	41	82	9	18
8. Is commitment likely to be a problem in introducing multi-faith Religious Education teaching in Zimbabwe secondary schools?	39	78	11	22
10. Do you think the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching can lead to a critical appreciation of other religions by the learners?	43	86	7	14
14. Will the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching be acceptable to your Christian colleagues?	23	46	27	54

Observations:

Question 4: 86% of the respondents felt that the introduction of a multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching will address some of the weaknesses of the life experience approach. Respondents pointed out that learners will not only appreciate the importance or value of their own cultural practices, but also the importance or value of the cultural practices of the other peoples of the world. Learners will also develop a “world view” of religion; and, hence understand how different people believe in their own worlds. This “world view” would change the learners’ view of religion - from a parochial view to a global view or perspective.

16% of the respondents felt that the introduction of a multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching might not address all the weaknesses of the life experience approach. Some respondents pointed out that there should be a paradigm shift - from a scripture-based Religious Education curriculum to a curriculum that looks at “Religion and Ethics” or “Moral Education” across the wide spectrum of belief systems.

Question 5: 64% of the respondents noted that the introduction of a multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching would not be acceptable to all stakeholders. Respondents agreed that initially there would be resistance from Christian conservatives who believe that Zimbabwe is a Christian state. Some of these believers in Zimbabwe are moving a motion that Zimbabwe should be declared a Christian state. Problems are likely to be encountered in dealing with these Christian conservatives. Respondents also pointed out that mission or church-owned schools may oppose the introduction of a

multi-faith approach. These are schools which were set up with the sole objective of spreading the Christian gospel.

36% of the respondents felt that a multi-faith approach would generally be accepted by all stakeholders as it is all-embracing. All value and belief systems are incorporated, and no major religion would be left out.

Question 6: 74% of the respondents felt that a teacher belonging to the Christian value and belief system is likely to distort multi-faith Religious Education. Respondents noted that it would be difficult for such teachers not to be biased. It was agreed that such a teacher will tend to glorify Christianity and at the same time demonise African traditional religion.

26% of the respondents felt that a teacher who belongs to the Christian value and belief system is not likely to distort multi-faith Religious Education. This category of respondents argued that teachers are guided by the syllabus or specification, and for this reason they cannot teach what is in their hearts and minds.

Question 7: 82% of the respondents agreed that a multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching can strengthen the position of all value and belief systems in Zimbabwe. Respondents emphasized the idea of “tolerance”, and argued that Zimbabweans will co-exist and tolerate each other despite diverse religious beliefs and value systems.

18% of the respondents felt that a multi-faith approach would weaken the position of Christianity, particularly in mission or church-owned schools where there is zero tolerance of other value and belief systems. The sole objective of mission or church-owned schools is to spread Christian values and beliefs only.

Question 8: 78% of the respondents thought that religious commitment is likely to be a problem in introducing multi-faith Religious Education. The respondents in this category attacked the issue of commitment; as this may be a serious problem in the introduction of multi-faith Religious Education. Respondents noted that these committed teachers will “preach” instead of “teach”.

22% of the respondents did not see religious commitment as a problem. They noted that the syllabus or specification is an effective guide to teachers. Committed teachers will be forced to teach what is in the syllabus.

Question 10: 86% of the respondents agreed that multi-faith Religious Education teaching may lead to a critical appreciation of the other religions by the learners. The respondents noted that the teaching of Religious Education using the multi-faith approach is meant to provide learners with opportunities for exploring their own and other people’s value and belief systems in an objective manner. Learners will thus develop a critical appreciation of religion.

14% of the respondents disagreed with the above stated notion. They argued that this could not be possible, particularly when the teacher is a Christian apologist. This may be found mainly in mission or church-owned schools.

Question 14: 54% of the respondents felt that a multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching would not be acceptable to their Christian colleagues. Christian fundamentalism, though not a problem in Zimbabwe, may be an issue, particularly in some mission or church-owned schools. In these institutions there is zero tolerance of other value and belief systems.

46% of the respondents felt that a multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching would be acceptable to their Christian colleagues. Examples cited included the view of the Roman Catholic Church towards other religions. The Roman Catholic Church is generally tolerant of other value and belief systems. Christians in Zimbabwe are also divided into two main groups – the Christian conservatives and the Christian liberals. By virtue of their beliefs the liberals are generally tolerant, and support the multi-faith Religious Education initiative.

Table 20 (see p. 237) provides the responses of the Religious Education teachers to Question 15.

The response of the Religious Education teachers to Question 15 is summarized in the following table:

Table 20

Question	Responses				Doubtful	%
	Strengthen	%	Weaken	%		
15. Will the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching weaken or strengthen the Christian value and belief system? Motivate your answer.	35	70	9	18	6	12

Observations:

70% of the respondents felt that the introduction of the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching would strengthen the Christian value and belief system. Respondents in this category noted that Christians do not live in isolation; for this reason, they need to co-exist and interact with members of other religions. Multi-faith Religious Education will among others enhance this co-existence and mutual understanding among believers of different religious persuasions. This will subsequently strengthen the Christian agenda in terms of developing a relationship with other believers. It is no longer possible for Christians to isolate themselves from other faiths. Respondents noted that it is better for Christians to face pluralism and benefit from its riches, rather than to retreat into their own closed world view. Respondents also noted that Christianity shares a lot of similarities with other value and belief systems. For this reason, it will benefit from multi-faith Religious Education teaching.

18% of the respondents thought that multi-faith Religious Education would weaken the Christian value and belief system. The respondents noted that learners will have more

options and will choose a religion which is more relevant and makes sense to their lives. Respondents in this category thought that the Christian value and belief system may be challenged and weakened. 6% of the respondents were doubtful. They either wrote “not sure” or simply left blank spaces.

Replies of the Religious Education teachers to Questions 2, 3, 9, 11, 12, 13 and 16

Question 2: Respondents defined the concept multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching as the study of many religions or the study of the different religions of the world.

Question 3: The following advantages of the multi-faith approach were cited:

- The approach enables people of different persuasions and customs to live together; peacefully in their immediate environment and in the world at large.
- The approach enables an academic and non-dogmatic study of religion.
- The approach brings about tolerance and understanding among people of different religions.

No disadvantages were cited by the respondents.

Question 9: The respondents noted that the multi-faith approach could minimize the problem of commitment in the following ways:

- Using a thematic approach when studying different value and belief systems.

- Encouraging Religious Education teachers to adopt a phenomenological approach when studying world religions. The phenomenological approach in studying world religions, endeavours to encourage researchers to “bracket” their preconceived ideas.

60% of the respondents were not sure of what the word “commitment” meant. For this reason, respondents either left the spaces blank or simply wrote “not sure”. 40% of the respondents wrote something on the question. The majority of those who responded to the question presented responses which were completely irrelevant. A few noted the importance of the phenomenological approach in minimising the problem of commitment as indicated above.

Question 11: In response to this question, the respondents cited the thematic approach. The syllabus will, for example, be divided into themes, such as the “healing theme”. Learners will then examine the theme across various religions; and compare and contrast the characteristics. Learners may also look at “prophecy” as a theme. They will then examine the function of prophets and similar features across the various religions. Respondents also noted that among world religions there are universal characteristics: in every religion there is belief in life after death, salvation, belief in God, etc. Respondents therefore pointed out that religion is a universal phenomenon and should be studied as such.

Question 12: The following strategies were suggested as a way of developing relevant and appropriate instructional materials for multi-faith Religious Education teaching:

- The Curriculum Development Unit subject panels should be given the responsibility to develop relevant instructional materials.
- The Curriculum Development Unit should employ teams of writers among specialist teachers in schools with the sole task of developing instructional materials for schools.

Question 13: On what can be done to retrain and equip all Religious Education teachers with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes, the following points with regard to the role of government were suggested:

- Introduce staff development programmes or in-service training courses.
- Empower each district in the country to formulate and carryout its staff development programmes.
- Assist teachers going for further studies at universities to develop their skills in Religious Education teaching. The government can, for example, give such teachers study leave; full salary while studying; and education loans, etc.
- Fund and promote research in teachers' training colleges and universities.

Question 16: Respondents noted that the multi-faith Religious Education syllabus should be all embracing and cover the different value and belief systems. There was consensus in this regard.

4.4 RESPONSES BY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION LEARNERS

Table 21 (below) indicates the replies of Religious Education learners to Questions 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10.

Table 21

Question	Affirmative		Negative	
	Yes	%	No	%
5. Will the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching be acceptable to all learners in your class?	256	66.4	129	33.5
6. Do you think a teacher belonging to the Christian value and belief system will be able to teach multi-faith Religious Education objectively and successfully?	199	51.6	186	48.3
7. Do you think the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching will strengthen the position of all value and belief systems in Zimbabwe?	235	61.0	150	38.9
8. Do you think that a multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching will enable you to have critical appreciation of other religions and contribute to your personal development?	217	56.3	168	43.6
10. Will your teachers be equipped to present multi-faith Religious Education lessons?	138	35.8	247	64.1

Observations:

Question 5: 66.4% of the respondents agreed that multi-faith Religious Education would be acceptable to all learners in their class. Respondents noted that multi-faith Religious Education teaching will be both interesting and exciting as they will be studying other people's ways of life and beliefs.

33.5% noted that it would not be acceptable. This category of respondents thought the Christian religion is the only religion that should be studied.

Question 6: 51.6% of the respondents noted that a teacher belonging to the Christian value and belief system would distort multi-faith Religious Education teaching. The respondents argued that a teacher from the Christian value and belief system will distort the subject content as it will be difficult for them to teach what they do not know and believe in. The respondents noted that teachers who are from the Christian value and belief system will generally be biased towards Christianity because this is all that they know.

48.3% of the respondents were of the view that a teacher belonging to the Christian value and belief system will not distort multi-faith Religious Education teaching. Respondents noted that Christianity shares a lot of similarities with the other religions. Respondents further noted that all religions believe in God, and this should be a good starting point. A Christian teacher will thus not distort the content of multi-faith Religious Education.

Question 7: 61% of the respondents argued that the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching could strengthen the position of all value and belief systems in Zimbabwe. Respondents noted that they need to learn how other people live and behave according to their value and belief system; and that each value and belief system could

benefit from other religions because all religions have the same objective; that is to better the lives of the believers.

38.9% of the respondents felt that the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching would weaken Christianity. Christianity was given as an example of a value and belief system that would be challenged and diluted by African traditional religion. African traditional religion, of course, does offer explanations to some questions which are not explained by the Christian value and belief system. Diseases, for example, are explained comprehensively in African traditional religion. The cause of the disease is firstly explained to the patient; and then a cure is finally prescribed. Hence, the learners were aware of the influence of African traditional religion in the day-to-day life of the African.

Respondents in this category argued that Christian believers would be confused at the end of the day and that they will not know what to do. A good example is a father whose child is terminally ill and cannot go to school. All medical doctors have failed to find the cause of the illness after conducting many tests. A local traditional healer is later consulted as the last option (this is a very common practice in African society) and tells the father that the ancestral spirits are angry because this year the family failed to appease the ancestral spirits. The solution then is to simply go and appease the ancestral spirits. The father goes and conducts this ceremony and the child is well. In African society, failure to appease the ancestral spirits causes a crisis, yet, in Christianity this belief in

ancestral spirits is absent. Such beliefs, respondents thought, could cause confusion among Christian believers.

Question 8: 56.3% of the respondents argued that the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching will enable them to develop a critical appreciation of other religions. Respondents pointed out that they would be able to compare beliefs; analyse similarities and differences; and at the end develop a critical appreciation. A critical appreciation as noted by the respondents is the ability to view a religious phenomenon using the eyes of the believer and then realize that each value and belief system is unique.

43.6% felt that they would not develop a critical appreciation of other religions. Respondents in this category favoured a Christian approach to the study of other religions, where they would evaluate other religions using Christianity as the standard. They believed that Christianity is at the centre of all religions.

Question 10: 64.1% of the respondents felt that their teachers will not be equipped to present multi-faith Religious Education lessons. Whilst 35.8% felt that their teachers will be equipped to present multi-faith Religious Education lessons. 64.1% of the respondents based their judgment probably on the fact that government has done very little in terms of teacher preparation, such as workshops, in-service training courses, development of instructional materials and piloting the projects. At school level nothing has taken place as well.

Responses of Religious Education learners to Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 11, 12, 13 and 14

Question 1: Respondents correctly pointed out that multi-faith Religious Education refers to the teaching of all religions, including Christianity and African traditional religion.

Question 2: Some of the respondents noted that multi-faith Religious Education will encourage and/or force learners to study how peoples of the world believe in their own different ways. Other respondents argued that learners would be taught various beliefs across the religious divide.

Questions 3 and 4: Positive changes cited by the respondents included the fact that learners will study how other peoples of the world believe. Some respondents argued that there would not be any positive changes because some people may not be interested in studying African traditional religion or any other religions of the world. For this reason, believers will not benefit from the cross fertilisation of religious beliefs across the religious divide. Respondents also noted that because of the great diversity of religious beliefs, some believers would be confused. In other words, they will not know what to believe and what not to believe.

Question 9: Learners foresaw a situation whereby teachers will continue with the so-called pastoral approach (glorifying Christianity and demonising African traditional religion). They argued that the pastoral approach would prevail. Though reference will be made to other religions, this will be superficial or in negative light.

Question 11: Some respondents were not sure whether the introduction of multi-faith Religious Education would weaken or strengthen the Christian value and belief system. Some, however, noted that there would be confusion, as some Christians may not know what to believe and what not to believe.

Question 12: Respondents argued that all value and belief systems should be taught in Religious Education for the betterment of all Zimbabweans. They emphasized the positive influence of a study of how other peoples of the world believe. This, they pointed out, would lead to peace and tolerance among the peoples of the world. Respondents also noted that sometimes religion may be a major factor in conflicts.

Question 13: Respondents noted that all religions of the world should be included in Religious Education as a school subject. Others argued that Rastafarianism (a religion from Jamaica which teaches that black West Indians currently in Black diaspora, will return to Africa and that Haile Selassie (1892-1975), the former Emperor of Ethiopia is to be worshipped) is not a religion, or does not promote any religious theme (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English 1987:860). Some respondents noted that some religious topics or concepts might not belong to, or apply to all religions. However, all these topics or concepts should be taught.

Question 14: Respondents noted that all the religions of the world should be possible options in the Religious Education syllabus. Religious Education learners should have a prerogative of choosing what they want to study, and what they want to omit. Emphasis

was put on the fact that learners should be able to choose the religion or religions they prefer to study.

4.5 RESPONSES BY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE LECTURERS

Responses by the lecturers to Question 1

Religious Education university and college lecturers were asked to state whether the introduction of the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching would be able to reverse all remaining effects of cultural alienation.

The criteria applied in evaluating the replies to the above question are the same as those used on pp. 219-220 of this chapter.

Table 22 (below) indicates the replies of the Religious Education university and college lecturers to Question 1 classified as Favourable to the Inquiry (F), Doubtful of the Inquiry (D) and Unfavourable to the Inquiry (U).

Table 22

Number of Questionnaires			Number of replies			Percentage of replies		
Sent	Returned	Percentage <i>Returned</i>	F	D	U	F	D	U
22	25	78.1	15	10	10	20	40	40

Observations:

20% of the respondents were favourable; 40% were unfavourable; and 40% were doubtful to the inquiry. Most respondents (40%) agreed that the multi-faith approach to Religious Education may be able to reverse some of the effects of cultural alienation. However, respondents disagreed with the word “all”. They also noted that the introduction of the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching would go a long way towards reversing the harmful effects of cultural alienation. They also noted that because of the many years of cultural alienation it might not be possible to reverse all the remaining effects. 20% of the respondents noted that it would be possible to reverse all remaining effects of cultural alienation if this approach to Religious Education is adopted successfully.

The remaining 40% of the respondents were doubtful whether the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching could reverse or perpetuate cultural alienation. Some of the respondents in this category, however, argued that teaching practitioners would still continue glorifying Christianity and demonising African traditional religion. Given this likely situation, multi-faith Religious Education teaching may not bring about the desired results.

Table 22 (below) shows the replies of the Religious Education university and college lecturers to Questions 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9.

Table 23

Question	Affirmative		Negative	
	Yes	%	No	%
4. Would the introduction of the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching address some of the weaknesses of the life experience approach?	19	76	6	24
5. Will the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching be acceptable to all stakeholders? Motivate your answer.	17	68	8	32
6. Will the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching strengthen the position of all value and belief systems in Zimbabwe?	21	84	4	16
7. Is commitment likely to be a problem in introducing multi-faith Religious Education teaching in Zimbabwe?	23	92	2	8
9. Do you think the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching can lead to a critical appreciation of other religions?	24	96	1	4

Observations:

Question 4: 76% of the respondents agreed that the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching would address some of the weaknesses of the life experience approach. The following points were cited:

- The multi-faith approach will address the pluralistic nature of the Zimbabwean society.

- The multi-faith approach is relevant in developing the personal views and feelings of learners in relation to other religions.
- The multi-faith approach will develop within the learners a critical appreciation of other religions, as well as tolerance and respect of people of other persuasions.
- The multi-faith approach will enable learners to explore their own rich religions and cultural heritage.

24% of the respondents noted that the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching would not address the weaknesses of the life experience approach. Some of the problems cited were general problems in the teaching of Religious Education in Zimbabwe; while some respondents referred to the problems of personal commitment of teachers and learners in relation to multi-faith Religious Education.

Question 5: 68% of the respondents agreed that the multi-faith approach to Religious Education would be acceptable to all stakeholders given the fact that it incorporates all the religions in Zimbabwe. 32% of the respondents, however, noted that some charismatic and conservative traditions might offer resistance to the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching.

Question 6: 84% of the respondents agreed that the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching would strengthen the position of all value and belief systems in Zimbabwe. Because the respondents believed that religions show a common agenda as well as many similarities, each and every religion will benefit from the cross fertilization

of ideas, and this in turn will lead to tolerance and respect for each other. However, 16% of the respondents thought otherwise. The majority respondents cited that religious fundamentalism was a result of the failure of the life experience approach to benefit from the tenets of each of the religious systems.

Question 7: 92% of the respondents agreed that commitment is likely to be a problem in introducing multi-faith Religious Education. It was felt that commitment would disturb the free academic exploration of religion. Many respondents noted that some committed teachers would be engaged in glorifying Christianity and demonising African traditional religion. Such a pastoral approach was described by many respondents as retrogressive in a civilized world. However, 8% of the respondents thought commitment would not be a problem. This category of respondents thought committed teachers will be able to “bracket” their preconceived ideas and values, and then present the subject in an objective manner.

Question 9: 96% of the respondents agreed that the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching can lead to a critical appreciation of other religions. Learners will approach each religion with an independent and objective mind which is free of bias and any preconceived ideas and values. The learner will then be guided by his/her quest for truth; and, at the end, get a proper insight into the specific religious system.

However, 4% of the respondents disagreed with the notion. This category of the respondents noted that it is possible that a learner can fail to develop a critical

appreciation of other religions, particularly in an environment where both the teachers and the learners are committed to their own value and belief system.

Replies of the Religious Education university and college lecturers to Questions 2, 3, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14

Question 2: The multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching was defined as the independent and objective study of all world religions.

Question 3: The advantages of the multi-faith approach were given as follows:

- Learners are encouraged to develop an open approach to all religions; all religions are therefore seen in the same light.
- Learners are encouraged to develop tolerance and respect of other religions.
- Learners are encouraged to study all religions, including African traditional religion.

Some of the disadvantages cited by respondents are as follows:

- The multi-faith approach is a threat to established religions such as Christianity.
- Christianity, even in a so-called Christian state such as Zimbabwe, will be treated in the same manner as for example African traditional religion.
- The multi-faith approach may destroy the spirit of “evangelism” which began with the advent of Religious Education as school subject in Zimbabwe secondary schools.

Question 8: Respondents noted that the multi-faith approach to Religious Education could minimize the problem of commitment. This can be achieved by the following means:

- A comparative study of all world religions – for example looking at similar concepts, such as the concept of healing. Learners will then appreciate that all religions have a common goal and share a lot of similarities.
- The introduction of the phenomenological approach – for example encouraging learners to look at religious beliefs using the “eyes” of the specific believer. The phenomenological approach is a key aspect in the successful implementation of the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching.

Question 10: Respondents noted that a comparative study of world religions is the only way to address the complexity and problem of including all value and belief systems in the Religious Education curriculum. The comparative study of religions also entails a thematic approach to Religious Education teaching where learners may look at a common theme or concept across the religious divide.

Question 11: The following strategies were noted as appropriate in developing relevant and appropriate instructional materials for multi-faith Religious Education:

- Use expertise from colleges and universities to develop instructional materials.
- Avail research facilities from colleges or universities to Curriculum Development Unit personnel.

- Government to fund the Curriculum Development Unit to produce pedagogically and didactically sound instructional materials.

Question 12: University and college lecturers noted the following roles for their specific institutions in this regard:

- Doing Research.
- Facilitating workshops.
- Writing modules or booklets.

Question 13: The following strategies were suggested as a way of retraining and re-equipping Religious Education teachers with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to teach all value and belief systems objectively and successfully:

- In-service teacher training.
- Introduction of short courses at colleges and universities.
- Facilitation of workshops and/or seminars.
- Compilation of pamphlets and/or booklets, etc.

Question 14: The university and college lecturers noted the following roles for their institutions in the above endeavours:

- Training of teachers.
- Presentation of papers to workshops and/or seminars organised by the Ministry of Education.

4.6 RESPONSES BY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM DEVELOPERS

Responses by curriculum developers to Question 1

Religious Education curriculum developers were asked to state whether the introduction of the multi-faith approach would be able to reverse all remaining effects of cultural alienation.

The criteria applied in evaluating the replies to the above question are the same as those used on pp. 219-220 of this chapter.

Table 24 (below) shows the responses by Religious Education Curriculum Developers to Question 1 classified as Favourable to the Inquiry (F), Doubtful of the Inquiry (D) and Unfavourable to the Inquiry (U).

Table 24

Number of questionnaires			Number of replies			Percentage of replies		
<i>Sent</i>	<i>Returned</i>	<i>Percentage Returned</i>	F	D	U	F	D	U
18	15	83.3	6	7	2	40	46.6	13.3

Observations:

40% of the respondents agreed that the introduction of multi-faith Religious Education in Zimbabwe secondary schools would be able to reverse all the remaining harmful effects of cultural alienation. The respondents noted that this would also change the mindset of the learners in believing that Christianity is the only religion that leads to salvation.

46.6% of the respondents were doubtful; and noted that the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching will reduce the remaining effects of cultural alienation but will not totally eliminate the latter. 13.3% of the respondents gave unfavourable responses.

Table 25 (below) indicates the replies of the curriculum developers to Questions 6, 7, 8, 10, 14 and 15.

Table 25

Question	Affirmative		Negative	
	Yes	%	No	%
6. Will the Religious Education teachers belonging to the Christian value and belief system distort multi-faith Religious Education teaching?	5	33.3	10	66.6
7. Do you think the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching will strengthen the position of the other value and belief systems in Zimbabwe?	12	80	3	20
8. Is commitment likely to be a problem in introducing multi-faith Religious Education teaching in Zimbabwe secondary schools?	6	40	9	60
10. Does the developers of your Unit think that the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching will eventually lead to a critical appreciation of other religions?	13	86.6	2	13.3
14. Are you of the opinion that the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching will be acceptable to Christians in Zimbabwe?	12	80	3	20
15. Will the implementation of the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching weaken or strengthen Christianity as a value and belief system?	13	86.6	2	13.3

Observations:

Question 6: 33.3% of the respondents agreed that Religious Education teachers belonging to the Christian value and belief system will distort multi-faith Religious Education. They argued that it is difficult to bracket or suspend one's preconceived values and beliefs. For this reason, these teachers will tend to glorify Christianity and demonise African traditional religion. 66.6% of the respondents noted that Religious Education teachers are professionals and are therefore objective players in discharging their duties. They argued that it is hence possible for Christian teachers to present multi-faith Religious Education in an objective manner.

Question 7: 80% of the respondents felt that multi-faith Religious Education would strengthen the position of all value and belief systems in Zimbabwe. They argued that the world religions share many similarities, and that the religions will therefore benefit from the cross fertilization of ideas. 20% of the respondents felt that multi-faith Religious Education will weaken the position of some religions, particularly Christianity. Christianity will then not be viewed as the only religion that offers salvation.

Question 8: 40% of the respondents noted that commitment is likely to be a problem in introducing multi-faith Religious Education in Zimbabwe secondary schools. Committed Christian teachers will tend to present Christianity as the only religion that offers salvation, at the expense of all the other religions. 60% of the respondents felt that it is possible for Christian teachers to present multi-faith Religious Education in an objective and professional way.

Question 10: 86.6% of the respondents agreed that multi-faith Religious Education will eventually lead to a critical appreciation of the other world religions. They argued that when learners study the tenets of the other world value and belief systems they will begin to understand and appreciate that there are many paths to salvation and that Christianity is only one of them. This will bring about tolerance, and learners will then celebrate religious diversity. 13.3% of the respondents felt that multi-faith Religious Education will not lead to a critical appreciation of other world religions.

Question 14: 80% of the respondents thought multi-faith Religious Education will be acceptable to all the stakeholders. 20% felt that there would be resistance, particularly, from the conservatives who are not willing and prepared to change.

Question 15: 86.6% noted that Christianity would benefit from the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching. Christians must according to them face the reality of mixing with believers from the other world value and belief systems. For example, Muslims and Christians now live together in the same communities and thus need to respect and tolerate each other. The multi-faith approach, the respondents noted, will improve inter-religious interaction and dialogue. 13.3% of the respondents thought multi-faith Religious Education will challenge or threaten Christian values and beliefs.

Replies of the curriculum developers to Questions 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 11, 12, 13, 16 and 17

Question 2: The multi-faith approach was defined by the curriculum developers as a method of teaching Religious Education that accommodates or incorporates the tenets of the various world value and belief systems.

Question 3: The advantages of the multi-faith approach were cited as follows:

- It accommodates the teaching of the different world value and belief systems.
- It recognizes that Zimbabwe is a multi-faith community, and addresses the various value and belief systems practiced in Zimbabwe.
- It develops within the learners a sense of respect and tolerance towards all value and belief systems.

The disadvantages of the multi-faith approach were presented as follows:

- The teaching of many different religions may pose problems to curriculum designers and developers alike.
- The lack of proper instructional materials may render the approach not viable; and, consequently difficult to adopt.
- The inclusion of other world value and belief systems may threaten the position of the Christian value and belief system.

Question 4: The curriculum developers cited the following weaknesses of the life experience approach that could be addressed by the implementation of the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching:

- The issue of excluding other world value and belief systems.

- The failure to recognize and address Zimbabwe's multi-faith community's expectations.
- The problem of religious commitment.

Question 5: 80% of the curriculum developers thought that the multi-faith approach would be acceptable to all stakeholders. Christians, being the key stakeholders, are now according to them receptive of the idea of including other world religions as it is no longer possible for a Christian learner to ignore the presence of members of other world value and belief systems in the Zimbabwe secondary schools.

Question 9: The following strategies were presented as a way of minimizing the problem of commitment in multi-faith Religious Education teaching:

- In-service teacher training courses.
- Clear syllabus aims and assessment objectives.
- Workshops and/or seminars on the problem of commitment.

Question 11: The following suggestions were presented as solutions to the problem of addressing the complexity of including different world religions in the Religious Education curriculum:

- A thematic approach to the study of world religions.
- Different world religions may be presented as options available for selection to study.
- Learners in the different grades may study different world religions.

Question 12: The following strategies were suggested in developing relevant and appropriate instructional materials:

- Book publishers should be involved in syllabus development meetings.
- Government should fund the Curriculum Development Unit and increase its capacity to design and develop instructional materials.
- The Curriculum Development Unit should appoint writers to the Unit to deal with the writing and production of instructional materials.

Question 13: The following strategies were suggested as a way of retraining and equipping Religious Education teachers to be able to use this new approach objectively and successfully:

- In-service teacher training courses.
- Workshops and/or seminars on multi-faith Religious Education teaching.
- Design of teacher support materials by the Curriculum Development Unit.
- Compiling and distribution of handouts and circulars.

Question 16: The curriculum developers noted that all world value and belief systems should be included in the Religious Education syllabus.

Question 17: Curriculum developers noted that the real challenge on the future implementation of the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching is in the following areas:

- Development of instructional materials, and the
- retraining of teachers.

5. CONCLUSION

An evaluation of Religious Education curricula developments in Zimbabwe since independence has been presented in this chapter. This empirical analysis was based on the information obtained through questionnaires completed by heads of Religious Education departments, Religious Education teachers, Religious Education learners, Religious Education university and college lecturers, and curriculum developers.

There appears to be consensus among all the stakeholders mentioned above that the introduction of the life experience approach changed the manner in which Religious Education was taught in Zimbabwe secondary schools. The stakeholders saw this as a positive move because learners were now able to explore the concept of religion in their own local environment. Religious Education thus provided learners with an opportunity to explore their own religious and moral experiences.

Stakeholders saw the move to introduce the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching as a desired move in Religious Education as a school subject. Stakeholders agreed that learners should be exposed to what other peoples of the world believe in. Learners should explore a wide range of world value and belief systems, and at the end either reject or accept intelligibly any particular religious or moral stance. Learners should thus develop their own philosophy or theology of life.

The stakeholders further agreed that Religious Education should be an open and objective exploration of religion. It should neither aim to foster, nor to undermine the values and

beliefs held by the learners. It should develop knowledge, understanding and the skills to evaluate ideas.

From the information presented in this chapter, it can be concluded that Religious Education teaching in Zimbabwe is taking the right direction, and that the Ministry of Education should move swiftly in introducing the multi-faith approach to Religious Education teaching in Zimbabwe secondary schools.

The empirical analysis in this chapter leads to the final chapter of this dissertation. In the next and final chapter, the findings, conclusions and recommendations are presented. Firstly, a summary of the character of Religious Education teaching during the colonial era and after independence will be presented, including all curricula developments. Secondly, conclusions will be put forward. Finally, recommendations will thus be presented.