

CHAPTER 1

DEFINITION OF RESEARCH TOPIC AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

1.1 The Problem

In liberal, democratic and multi-faith societies, RE is a controversial school curriculum subject which often creates tension between church (religion) and state (education). Since Zambia's political independence in 1964, the state through the Ministry of Education has virtually been the sole decider of what kind of Religious Education (RE) is to be taught in public schools. Thus, the state has been responsible for the progressive development of Zambian RE from denominationalism through ecumenism to pluralism. Realising that the country was increasingly multi-faith, the post-independence state concerned itself with the challenge of creating a nation where religion would unite rather than divide. So for almost two decades Zambia had a semi-democratic socio-political system called 'One Party Participatory Democracy' under which the educational aspect of RE was emphasised. With the advent, in 1991, of a more democratic government with strong moorings in forms of Christian evangelism, and the declaration of Zambia as a Christian Nation, the ecumenical, pluralistic and educational emphasis in RE have been questioned in favour of a more catechetical, denominational approach. Despite this a very liberal national education policy (document) called *Educating Our Future* which favours continued pluralistic approaches to RE was adopted in 1996. Increased democracy and pluralism and stronger Christian evangelism have led to a situation where the state's control of the school RE programme and the programme itself are being questioned and criticised by some Christian churches as well as other religious traditions.

At present it appears that there is confusion and misinterpretation of the present policy at grassroots level among RE teachers as well as among religious leaders. These leaders are criticising the RE policy of the Ministry of Education for its lack of religious commitment and many teachers still assume that it is their duty to instill religious commitment in learners. Given the present state of affairs, how adequate do Zambians consider the school RE programme and what would be the best form of RE for the public schools in Zambia?

1.2 The Aims of the Thesis

The role of religion in public affairs (such as education) in modern/post-modern society differs from country to country. As such, the appropriate (education) policy for one country would not necessarily be appropriate for another. The evaluation of policies and models (of education) should therefore be contextualised and the history of a country considered before a recommendation can be made.

The aims of this thesis are therefore, firstly, to study the different models of RE as we find them in different countries, secondly, to study the history of RE in the Zambian context, and thirdly, to test the opinions of a number of selected individuals or leaders and spokespersons of various sectors of Zambian society, before making a recommendation on what form of RE is appropriate for Zambia.

1.3 Theoretical Framework and Methodology

The first part of the study will review literature from different parts of the world, including Zambia and describe and evaluate different models of RE in modern/post-modern society. The second part will critically examine the history of RE in Zambia, focusing on the role of the church and state in the development of the subject. This will involve careful study and analysis of relevant literature and documents in libraries at the Ministry of Education and elsewhere. Data will be analysed according to a framework that includes the following polarities: the church versus state, catechesis versus ecumenism, and Christian education versus multi-religious education. Thus, the tension between religion and the State over RE will be highlighted and explained. The last part of the study will be primarily qualitative in focus, employing semi-structured interviews of selected religious leaders, educationalists and officers from non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This will be aimed at gathering and analysing the views, opinions and general understanding of the current liberal educational system and pluralistic RE by these individuals as representatives of their respective constituencies. This part of the thesis will also indicate ways in which school RE in an emerging liberal but predominantly Christian Zambian society can be educationally adequate.

1.3.1 Sampling and data analysis

Since not all individual members of the participating organizations can be involved, only two top leaders from each and three top educationalists will be interviewed, representing a total of 19 'key informant participants' (Borg & Gall 1989:398). This will include representatives from the Christian Council of Zambia (now the Council of Churches in Zambia) (CCZ), Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ), Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC), Islamic Council of Zambia (ICOZ), Hindu Association of Zambia (HAZ), Baha'i Faith in Zambia and prominent Traditionalists. To be similarly interviewed will be a few top educationalists at the Ministry of Education's Curriculum Development Centre, Inspectorate (now Education Standards Office), the University of Zambia as well as leaders of relevant non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which include the Zambia Civic Education Association (ZCEA), Forum For Democratic Process (FODEP), and the Inter-African Network for Human Rights and Development (AFRONET).

Data from interviews will be analyzed and categorised according to the following classification: the school RE programme is educationally adequate, the programme is educationally inadequate, the RE programme (and syllabuses) should continue developing along the current pluralistic path, the programme (and syllabuses should become more denominational (or Christian, Moslem, Hindu or Traditionalist), religious traditions should be less involved in school RE, and the religious traditions should be more involved.

1.3.2 Criteria for evaluation

The data from the interviews will be further analysed according to constitutional and educational policy requirements before recommending or indicating the way forward for Zambian RE.

Constitution

In order to be educationally adequate, RE in Zambia has to conform to the values of the Constitution and to the Ministry of Education's national policy guidelines on education.

Thus Article 19 (1 & 2) of the current 1996 Constitution guarantees freedom of conscience, religious worship and propagation in the following words:

Except with his own consent a person shall not be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of conscience, freedom of thought and religion, freedom to change his religion or belief, and... freedom, either alone or in community with others, and both in public and private, to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.... Except with his own consent, or, if he is a minor, the consent of his guardian, a person attending any place of education shall not be required to receive religious instruction or to take part in or attend any religious ceremony or observance if that instruction, ceremony or observance relates to a religion other than his own.

The guarantee of religious freedom is maintained in the formal declaration of the country as a Christian nation, stated in the preamble of the Constitution as follows:

We the people of Zambia by our representatives assembled in parliament... declare the Republic a Christian nation while upholding the right of every person to enjoy... freedom of conscience or religion.

This means that the spirit of religious pluralism underlies the Constitution and the constitutional values of religious and cultural pluralism, equality and fairness should be upheld in public education. This further means that despite the official status of Zambia as a 'Christian nation', all religions have the legal right to exist and to be considered in all public affairs, including RE in government and grant-aided schools.

So the first criterion of educational adequacy for the Zambian school RE programme is that the syllabuses and approaches should conform to the Constitution and be pluralistic, multi-faith, fair and inclusive rather than exclusive (Read *et al* 1992; Henze 1994: 40; Mujdrlica 1995: 19; Simuchimba 1997: 34). In other words, despite the fact that Zambia is predominantly¹ a Christian country, school RE should not teach or promote only the Christian religious tradition. Since 'the pluralist approach [to RE] sees the various faith or religious traditions as equal but with distinct features' (Simuchimba 1997: 33), open

¹According to Gifford (1998: 183), Zambia is about 75% Christian, 24% Traditionalist, 1% Muslim and Hindu. However, smaller religions which are slowly establishing themselves are Baha'i, Buddhism and Sikhism.

knowledge and understanding of all the religious traditions existing in Zambian society should be promoted through the subject.

National Education Policy

The current national education policy document entitled *Educating Our Future* (MOE 1996: 29), gives the aim of education in Zambia in the following statement:

The overarching aim of school education is to promote the full and well-rounded development of the physical, intellectual, social, affective, moral and spiritual qualities of all pupils so that each can develop into a complete person, for his or her own personal fulfilment and the good of society.

It also sets out a number of new goals of education of which the most pertinent to RE are:

Producing a learner capable of:

- (i) being animated by a personally held set of civic, moral and spiritual values;
- (ii) demonstrating free expression of one's own ideas [or beliefs] and exercising tolerance for other people's views;
- (iii) appreciating Zambia's ethnic cultures, customs and traditions, and upholding national pride ... peace, freedom and independence;
- (iv) developing an analytical, innovative, creative and constructive mind (MOE 1996: 5).

The document further advises that:

Zambia is a liberal democratic society. Hence, it is the values of liberal democracy that must guide the formulation of educational policies and their implementation. The core values are rational and moral autonomy, equality, fairness and liberty (Ibid: 1).

As may be seen, all school curriculum subjects should contribute to the realisation of the stated (new) goals of education and the achievement of the main aim(s) of the education system. Therefore, the other criteria of educational adequacy for Zambian RE are that it should be contextual rather than general, broadly based as opposed to narrowly based, democratic and open as opposed to authoritarian, and critical rather than just appreciative (Hull 1984; Grimmitt 1987: 39; Mujdrice 1995: 18-19; Simuchimba 1997: 16).

At the moment the official aim of RE is stated in the following rather unclear and less educational terms:

The main aim of Spiritual and Moral Education is to enable pupils to appreciate spiritual, moral and religious values and behaviour based on them. This appreciation is drawn from the four main religious traditions in Zambia (namely: Christianity, Hinduism, Indigenous Zambian Beliefs and Islam) (MOE 1983:3).

1.4 Clarification of Key Concepts

Some concepts used in this thesis are problematic as they can be used differently and interchangeably by different people. These include *religious education* (RE), *religious instruction* (RI), *moral education* (ME), *catechesis* and *church*. I will therefore briefly discuss how they have been used and then explain how they will be used in this study.

In the past when the church controlled education, RE referred to a programme of instruction aimed at providing information about Christianity with a view to promoting adherence to its beliefs and values. Catechesis, referred to the denominational education in the Christian faith with a view to achieving conversion and commitment to it.

However, as society developed and became more pluralistic, the State took control of public education and this meant that RE no longer involved instruction in Christian beliefs only (RI) or education in the beliefs and traditions of a specific Christian denomination (catechesis). It now also provided information regarding different religious traditions in society. This has over the years led to two main ways in which the concept of RE is understood: as essentially a religious activity with religious aims in line with the traditional approach to education, and secondly, as essentially an educational activity with educational aims (in line with a liberal approach).

As such, the concepts RE, RI and catechesis have been and are often used interchangeably. To some people, especially the religiously committed, RE and RI are one and the same subject dealing with teaching and learning of the beliefs and values of their religion. In some church schools, both catechesis and RE are seen as serving the

religious purposes of Christian denominational education, conversion and promotion of religious commitment. In some countries, such as the USA and France, where RE is excluded from public schools, catechetical or denominational education is often referred to as RE. RE is also widely seen as church education or education in Christianity as a world religion, and includes its history, key beliefs, values and practices.

Furthermore, in the past it was believed that religion entailed morality and teaching people Christianity included giving them the appropriate moral training or education. However, as society became religiously and culturally plural, ME based on the moral values of one particular religion, in this case Christianity, became unacceptable. This has led to attempts in some countries to design ME programmes based purely on natural reason and human experience. As a result of this polarisation, the concepts of RE and ME continue to be used interchangeably. It is still assumed by many religiously committed people and those deeply concerned with moral value, that ME is a product of RE and that pupils become morally upright by obeying the moral laws or commands of religion. Due to this close connection between RE and ME, many people see no difference between the two concepts and use them interchangeably.

Moreover, if the interchangeable way in which RE, RI and catechesis are used is understood, it becomes clear how ME and RI or catechesis are also similarly used. Instruction in the beliefs of a particular religion (Christianity) and denominational education are seen as resulting not only in conversion and commitment to the beliefs of the religion concerned, but also to its moral teachings.

Besides being used interchangeably with RI, ME and catechesis, educational RE is variously interpreted as being mainly a vehicle for the transmission of culture, an experiential, child-centred activity, the imparting of knowledge of religion as a form of human understanding, or the imparting of certain skills, techniques and attitudes (Hull 1984: 285). As such it is possible for RE in a pluralistic society to include secular life stances or naturalistic faiths such as Humanism and Atheistic Existentialism in order to compare them with religious traditions, show that there are alternatives to religious life

and that people are free to live by the beliefs and values they want (Greer 1982: 8; Grimmitt 1987: 131, 396).

In this study these key concepts will be used in the following way:

1.4.1 Religious Education

This is a school curriculum subject with the educational aims of promoting religious literacy or a critical understanding of different religious traditions in Zambia (and the world), and helping to impart important life skills such as critical and analytical thinking, logical argumentation, innovativeness and positive attitudes such as respect and tolerance for other people's views, beliefs and values.

However, this conception of RE does not include the study of secular life stances because although they are 'essential in any open discussion of ultimate meaning' (Greer 1982: 8), it seems that exploration of their content will not contribute directly to the promotion of religious literacy, which is a key aspect of the model of RE proposed here for Zambia. The predominance of (Christian) religion and virtual absence of secular life stances and naturalistic faiths in Zambian society also seems to render the study of such secular alternatives non- contextual.

1.4.2 Religious Instruction

This is a school subject with the religious aims of providing information regarding a particular set of beliefs and values and promoting commitment to them. Under the missionary and colonial system of education in Zambia, RI meant the teaching of Christian beliefs and values and adherence to them. The beliefs were at first taught at denominational level in schools run by individual mission churches, but later they were taught at ecumenical level after 'agreed syllabuses' were introduced in schools. At present RI exists only in private religious (Christian and other) schools and colleges.

1.4.3 Moral Education

This is the inculcation of desirable or positive attitudes, values and forms of behaviour in learners through the teaching of different religious and cultural beliefs. As in many other countries, ME in Zambia has not existed as a distinct curriculum subject but as part of RI and RE. Moral values and behaviour are expected to result naturally from the learning of religious and cultural beliefs, as morality seems to be an integral part of these beliefs. During the pre-Educational phase of Zambian RE, it was expected that moral values and attitudes would be learned from Christian beliefs only, but since the mid-1980s it is recognised that these values come from the teaching of Christian, Muslim, Hindu and Zambian Traditional beliefs. Under the current national policy on education, civic, moral and spiritual values are combined and seen as resulting partly from the RE programme.

1.4.4 Catechesis

This is denominational education or instruction of member pupils in the beliefs and traditions of a religious group (or church) that is part of a larger religious organisation (or Christianity). Under the missionary and colonial education system in Zambia, catechesis involved pupils being instructed in the beliefs and traditions of the various Christian denominations or churches running the different schools they attended. It involved faith nurture, conversion and church expansion. Catechesis is therefore no longer appropriate for public schools and now exists only in private Christian and other religious schools and colleges.

1.4.5 Church

This refers to the community of believers in Jesus Christ (Christians) or the institution of the Christian religion. The church was introduced in Zambia by Christian missionaries belonging to different missionary societies and church denominations in Europe and America. At first the newly founded mission churches existed and operated independently, but later they organised themselves under three umbrella organisations: the Christian Council of Zambia (now Council of Churches in Zambia), for mainline Protestant churches, the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia, for Evangelical and

Pentecostal churches and the Zambia Episcopal Conference, for Roman Catholics. To date, these umbrella organisations represent and speak for the Christian community in Zambia on all public matters, including education.

1.5 Layout of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into a total of eight chapters. Apart from the foregoing chapter (one), chapter two surveys Zambian and other literature relevant to this study. Chapter three examines various models of RE in terms of their aims, conceptual framework, educational process strengths and weaknesses in modern/post-modern society; it also analyses three different countries' national policies on religion and education as a way of laying the theoretical foundation for the discussion of Zambian RE. Chapters four, five and six discuss RE during the colonial, post-colonial and current Third Republic periods of the country's history, respectively. The roles of church and state in the development of the subject are highlighted and critically examined in the three chapters. Chapter seven critically discusses Zambians' views and opinions on the current school RE programme in general and the adequacy of the subject syllabuses in particular, while the last chapter (eight) concludes the thesis and gives some recommendations on the way forward for school RE in Zambia.

In this opening chapter, I have defined the research topic and explained the methodological approaches to be used to study it. I have stated the specific problem, the aims of the study or thesis, the methodology to be used to gather data, the criteria for data analysis and evaluation, and the key terms used in the study as well as what they mean. In the next chapter, I survey relevant Zambian and foreign literature.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE SURVEY

In order to situate this study more broadly and make the survey meaningful and systematic, I will not only examine literature on Zambia, but other African countries, Britain and non-African Commonwealth countries, and finally the United States of America. Zambian studies are important because they provide the specific background on which this study will be based. Similarly, African studies are important because apart from providing additional general background to this study, they will be a good source of comparative material on the development of RE within the African continent. British and other Commonwealth studies are relevant to my study because, like many former British colonies (i.e., Commonwealth countries), Zambia adopted the British system of managing public affairs, including education at Independence. Thus the development of her education system, including RE have been greatly influenced by British educational philosophies and ideas. As for American studies, their relevance to this study lies in the fact that the USA is a pluralistic and multi-faith society like Zambia. So some of the issues concerning RE in that country are relevant to the Zambian situation.

In order to begin laying the necessary theoretical foundation for the thesis, the literature survey will not only be critical, but also fairly descriptive. I will also take the studies chronologically so that the chapter can reflect the general historical and progressive development of ideas on the relationship between religion and education (through RE) both in Zambia and outside.

2.1 Zambian Studies

Most of the existing Zambian studies are historical surveys of the development of RE in the country. They describe how the subject has evolved from being catechetical, denominational and confessional during the colonial era to being educational and pluralistic during the post-independence period. A few others discuss the state of RE since Independence and highlight the need for further educational development of the subject in line with the changes taking place in Zambian society. As such they serve as an

important background to this current study, which, among other things, aims at taking scholarship in Zambian RE a step further.

The first relevant study for our purpose is that of Adrian B. Smith (1982), who describes the changes in organisation, content and teachers' attitudes that took place in Zambian primary school RE as a result of the change from a denominational approach to an ecumenical, life-themes approach in 1972. Educational and ecumenical effects of these changes are also discussed. The most important of these changes and effects were that RE became integrated into the total curriculum at both primary school and primary teacher education levels. Secondly, since the subject was now ecumenically aimed at instilling an attitude to life based on Gospel values, the new (common) RE syllabus was based on the life experience of the child. Thirdly, (RE) teachers in both Church and State schools were challenged to realise that they were now supposed to stand in class as professional school teachers rather than representatives of their churches/denominations. Fourthly, and lastly, the approval of a common syllabus by the churches/denominations indicated that RE as a school subject could promote the cause of ecumenism.

This small study is important because it describes the first changes or attempts to move Zambian RE from the confessional, denominational stage towards the educational stage. It therefore provides part of the background on which my study will build.

In 1985, Rachael M. Masterton reviewed the preparation and production of one of the two senior secondary or high school RE syllabuses in Zambia (i.e. syllabus 2046). The successful production of the primary school syllabus (above) led to the preparation and acceptance of a joint junior secondary school RE syllabus in 1973 and later to the preparation of two alternative syllabuses (2044 and 2046) for senior secondary school. Syllabus 2046's content and approach which is largely biblical is discussed in detail. Evangelical Christian reasons/arguments for retaining the old Cambridge Bible Knowledge syllabuses after the 1977 Educational Reforms are given. However, the Ministry of Education's policy of 'Zambianising' or contextualising education meant that

only a modified (Zambian) Bible Knowledge syllabus called 2046 could be accepted for production and use in schools from 1986.

This study by Masterton was largely a report on what happened and why. While it provides some historical data on RE in Zambia, it does not enrich or open up new horizons in the scholarship of the subject (in Zambia). This is where the current study will do better.

Rachael M. Masterton followed up her 1985 publication in 1987 with a M Ed dissertation entitled '*The Growth and Development of Religious Education in Zambia*', which dealt with the general growth and development of RE in Zambia. Historical and cultural aspects, the African religious heritage and the Christian response to it, including their implications for RE, are discussed. Educational planning and curriculum development in the country, the aims of education and Zambian RE and the influence of the former national philosophy of Zambian Humanism (dropped since 1991) are presented and discussed. Ecclesiastical or church influence on the approach and content of the RE syllabuses is also discussed, before a brief analysis of the three syllabuses (primary to junior secondary, 2044, and 2046 at senior secondary level) is given.

In conclusion, it is re-emphasised that unlike during the missionary education period when RE was used to emphasise the doctrines and beliefs of particular denominations, the three syllabuses are intended to help pupils understand their religious commitment and express it intelligently. The study recommends that RE must be above being merely informative but should initiate understanding of the meaning of religion and question its truth and worth.

This second study by Masterton was more challenging with valid conclusions and recommendations. However, the current study goes beyond analysis of existing policies and syllabuses by gathering field data (from Zambian society) before making recommendations.

In 1993, a National Symposium on Curriculum Review was held (in Lusaka) at which Edwin Flynn presented a paper on RE in Zambia. He identified three stages in the development of RE in the country: the Denominational, up to the sixties; the Ecumenical, up to the seventies; and the Educational, from the eighties. These stages are briefly discussed before concluding that the Spiritual and Moral Education (RE) subject panel had performed well as the subject was the first to produce a syllabus written in performance objectives and to produce teachers and pupils textbooks in line with the 1977 Educational Reforms.

Flynn's paper provides a brief but good historical background on which this study will build and expand.

As a contribution towards the twentieth-anniversary celebration of Zambia Association of Religious Education Teachers (ZARET) in 1994, Joe Henze published a booklet entitled '*Creative Tension*', in which he gave a brief outline of the history of RE in Zambia before stating its status as a curriculum subject. During the colonial and missionary period, school and RE were the evangelising instrument of the church. After Independence the churches recognised the responsibility of the government for education and in 1971 most of them handed over all their schools to the State. The churches no longer set the standards and syllabus(es) for RE in the new secular educational system and emerging plural society. After 1971, a National Inspector for RE was appointed, a specialist desk at Curriculum Development Centre created and textbooks for all grades at both primary and secondary school levels produced.

Since the 1980s, the main aim of the subject is to enable pupils to appreciate spiritual, moral and religious values and behaviour based on them. This appreciation is drawn from the four main religious traditions in Zambia (namely, Christianity, Hinduism, Indigenous Zambian Beliefs and Islam). The subject is compulsory at both primary/junior Secondary (or Basic) school and teacher training levels. It is an important optional subject at senior secondary school and secondary teacher education levels. There are national examinations at both Basic School and School Certificate levels.

This study by Henze provides part of the historical background on which the current study will build.

In 1995, John J. Mujdrlica conducted an evaluation of the three Zambian secondary school RE syllabuses (the junior secondary, 2044 and 2046), for his M Ed dissertation at Birmingham University. In order to successfully evaluate the syllabuses, he dealt with some theoretical aspects of religion, education and evaluation. He also compiled a list of the characteristics of modern RE, which were used as criteria for the evaluation.

The main findings of the study were that the quality of RE in the syllabuses was mediocre. The syllabuses presented religion in very idealistic terms, encouraging an appreciation and respect for religion rather than being critical. They were also one sided with the junior and 2044 using the life themes approach exclusively and 2046 using the systems (or biblical) approach only. However, the strength of the syllabuses was in their coverage of the Zambian society in general. In order to overcome the weaknesses above, the evaluator recommended that since the junior secondary syllabus was not as confessional and denominational as 2044 and 2046, it should be built upon and extended to the senior secondary school level. The new senior secondary syllabus should be more developmental, balanced and critical. It should use both the systems and life themes approaches, be 33% biblical, 33% traditional, 16.5% Muslim and 16.5 Hindu. The syllabus should also be both action-oriented like 2044 and 'Jesus oriented' like 2046.

Although Mujdrlica's evaluation study was professionally done, it lacked the consultative aspect which could bring out the actual views and opinions of Zambians on the syllabuses. This is exactly what this study intends to achieve before making conclusions and recommendations on the way forward.

Mujdrlica's evaluation study was followed, in 1997, by Melvin Simuchimba's largely theoretical study on the need for openness, commitment, and truth-claims in the theory and practice of RE in modern society. He argued that despite some theoretical and

practical problems or controversies surrounding the concepts of critical openness, commitment (religious or secular) and truth-claims (by the religions) in the practice of RE today, they remain extremely important. Thus, the rational skills of thinking, judging, evaluating and choosing which are part of openness help to produce a learner/person who is open-minded and responsibly autonomous. Similarly, the religious (or even secular) commitment of a professional RE teacher is likely to help create a more practical and open or honest atmosphere for RE teaching and learning. Furthermore, although the absolutist or exclusivist approach to religious truth-claims is unacceptable in modern pluralistic RE, the truth-claims of the various religions can still be taken seriously by treating the materials with integrity and sensitivity.

In short, the author showed that the aims of modern secular education have implications for the aims of RE.

This work is generally in line with what the current study is likely to establish. It is likely to show clearly that the secular constitutional values and educational policy guidelines will determine what kind of RE Zambia should have.

In an article entitled '*Religious Education in Zambia: syllabuses, approaches and contentious issues*', Melvin Simuchimba (2000), further dealt with theoretical, but more direct issues affecting Zambian RE. He first discussed the differences between religion and education with reference to their interrelationship in RE. He then described and analysed Zambian RE syllabuses and their official Ministry of Education approved approaches before highlighting some contentious issues in the practice of the subject (RE) in present-day democratic and multi-faith Zambia.

In line with the aim statement of Spiritual and Moral Education (RE), the three syllabuses (Basic Education, Syllabus 2044 and Syllabus 2046) are pluralistic in approach, though not satisfactorily so. Similarly, since 1991 three interlinked issues have become contentious and have negatively affected the practice of Zambian RE. They include the declaration of the country as a Christian nation by government, the growing practice of

starting RE lessons with a Christian prayer or Bible reading followed by a short sermon by teachers, and resistance to the inclusion and neglect of Zambian Traditional Religion(s) in the RE syllabuses by some Christian teachers.

The author's conclusion was that in modern Zambia, religion and education need each other, but their relationship (through RE) needs to be governed by the provisions of the country's democratic constitution and the national education policy document, if religious harmony and national unity are to be maintained.

As Zambia bade farewell to the 1990s and entered the new millennium, John Mudalitsa (2000), argued that RE in Zambia was both in a state of crisis and had a momentous opportunity for further development. Some Christian churches and individual RE teachers wanted to use RE to impose their own understanding of Christianity on all pupils and thus win more converts. Others, however, wanted the subject to be professionally taught and to continue developing along pluralistic lines. The former were encouraged by the 1991 declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation, while the latter were encouraged by the liberal and democratic provisions of the national educational policy document, *Educating Our Future*, published and adopted in 1996.

The author's conclusion and recommendation were that for RE (in Zambia) to bring about individual and social transformation, the best of religion and the best of education should be fused together into a dynamic whole.

This brief work raises very important issues affecting RE in Zambia, but does not discuss them in good detail. So this study will compliment it by critically discussing the issues in detail. The current study will also go beyond Mudalitsa's conclusion by gathering Zambians' views towards current syllabuses and assessing them against the constitutional and policy requirements for the subject.

In 2001, Brendan P. Carmody retraced the history of the development of RE in Zambia from when it was entirely confessional to the present time when it is largely educational.

Some of the difficulties encountered and some of those that lie ahead in the subject's development were identified. In the 1960s, RE was badly organised and taught while in the 1970s lack of common agreement and proper dialogue resulted in achieving only 'agreed' syllabuses for primary and junior secondary schools instead of ecumenical ones. At senior secondary level, Protestant churches and teachers developed their own syllabus, 2046, perceiving 2044 to be too Catholic. RE teachers and churches continue to be divided over the nature/form of RE in the country. Tension exists between those who still view the subject in confessional terms and those who view it in educational terms. Like any other subject, RE has also become part of the scramble for academic qualifications or credit, meaning that it is not taught for life skills but for examinations.

The author concludes that despite these problems (above) the syllabuses are a major achievement and have enhanced the growth of ecumenism and religious pluralism. However, today, they need updating or revision and religious educators and other stakeholders are faced with the challenge of maintaining or creating syllabuses that are even more educational and inclusive in a country that is becoming more socially pluralistic.

This study by Carmody provides a good brief survey of the historical and current situation of RE in Zambia. The current study intends to go beyond his conclusion and recommendation by strongly recommending that Zambian RE syllabuses should become more educational and pluralistic in approach.

In the same year (2001), Melvin Simuchimba came up with an examination of the problems of multi-faith RE in a predominantly Christian Zambian society, which had also been officially declared a 'Christian Nation' in 1991. He first explained the pluralistic nature of both Zambian society and Zambian RE before discussing the problems that had arisen in the subject area since 1991. According to the author, Zambians can be divided into the indigenous African majority and smaller groups of Zambians of European, Indian and Asian origins found mostly in urban areas and the line of rail. With regard to religion, despite being declared a Christian Nation, the country's Constitution guarantees

all citizens religious freedoms. There are four main religions namely; Christianity, Zambian Traditional Beliefs, Islam and Hinduism. Smaller religious traditions include Baha'i Faith, Buddhism and Sikhism. The country has also been under a liberal and democratic socio-political system since 1991. He explains that Zambian RE became multi-faith when, as part of the 1977 - 84 educational reforms, Zambian Traditional Religion, Islam and Hinduism were included in the syllabuses. He analyses the junior secondary school syllabus and the two high school syllabuses (2044 and 2046) in terms of their content and teaching approaches. He then explains that some of the problems facing RE in the country today include calls for reintroduction of Bible Knowledge in schools, promotion of a Christian ethos in state-run and grant-aided schools, and starting RE lessons with either a Christian prayer or a reading from the Bible. He points out that there is need to overcome these problems so that Zambian RE can continue developing along the existing pluralistic approach. He stresses that the subject cannot revert to the promotion of Christian beliefs and values at the expense of other religious beliefs and values.

The author concludes his study by emphasising that Zambia is a liberal, multi-faith society where RE should be open, critical and educationally meaningful to the learner. However, this kind of RE should not be developed by the Ministry of Education alone, but in consultation with the different religious traditions represented in the country.

This is an important study as it touches on some of the Zambians' views and opinions on current Zambian RE, which will be dealt with or examined in greater detail in this particular study.

In a study entitled '*Religious Education with a Difference*', John Mudalitsa (2002), came up with what he referred to as his 'personal view' of RE. From a survey of his college students, he concluded that young Zambians delighted in personal growth and loving relationships; they were troubled by inner problems; and they aspired to become persons who are loving, upright, wise, strong and successful. He evaluated the Zambian education system in general and RE in particular, with a view to establishing whether they were

relevant to the 'dreams' and 'realities' of the young Zambians. His conclusion was that the kind of education that takes place in our schools/classrooms is generally not thought-provoking, liberating, and development-oriented. In his evaluation, the author referred to *Educating Our Future*, the national education policy, which criticises over-emphasis on factual information in the education system and recommends positive qualities and critical life skills, which can enhance individual and community development.

According to Mudalitsa, the Zambian RE syllabuses were outdated because they were products of the 1977 Educational Reforms. On the positive side, these reforms helped to make RE Zambian, while on the negative side, they left the country with an un-educational aim of RE, i.e. promoting uncritical appreciation of religious and Humanist-Socialist beliefs and values. He concluded that Zambian RE syllabuses had the following strengths and weaknesses:

- (a) They promote the pupil's knowledge of religion and morality (based on the Bible), but not his/her rational autonomy and integral development.
- (b) They foster the pupil's concern for traditional culture and the common good but not his/her ability to criticise and change the ills of society.
- (c) They enhance the pupil's naïve appreciation of anything religious but not his/her ability to discern between liberating and enslaving aspects of religion.

He argues that Zambian RE should aim at enabling pupils to discern religious beliefs and practices so that they may use religion constructively for their own growth and development of society. Thus instead of being appreciative of the status quo and regurgitative, the subject should be in line with education for transformation, which is critical.

The author concludes his study by proposing and discussing formulae for improvement which emphasise the teacher's role as a model and the need for or importance of student-teachers' (and pupils') reflection on experience and action to bring about change.

This study is important and relevant to my study for the following three reasons. Firstly, the critical (life) skills and positive qualities or attitudes which the national education

policy recommends for Zambia and which the author alludes to, are cross-curricular and affect RE like all school subject areas. As such this study will seek to propose a model of Zambian RE that does not only satisfy the policy guidelines, but also meets the educational needs of young Zambians. Secondly, I agree with the author on the need to restate the aim of Zambian RE so that it can reflect the new educational goals and aspirations explained in *Educating Our Future*. So my study will also strongly recommend such change and give one or two examples of proposed aims. Thirdly, the author's analysis and criticism of the current Zambian RE syllabuses is in line with the criticism that this study will offer in its analysis and recommendations for improvement.

However, the author's strong emphasis on the transformative aspect of 'RE with a Difference' seems to be outside the impartial, secular and neutralistic aims, principles and approaches of educational RE which a pluralistic and democratic country like Zambia should have. His proposed formula for the improvement of Zambian education, including RE also seems to be a combination of Christian (or Catholic) social teaching and liberal educational philosophy and is not based on the philosophy of RE *per se*. Additionally, if the author's suggestion that the (RE) teacher should be a model of what he or she teaches means that they should be religiously committed, then that is unacceptable because this study will argue that the only qualification for teaching RE in a pluralistic country like Zambia is professional training and one's willingness, respect and ability to see religion as important in people's lives.

In an attempt to interpret the provisions of the national education policy provisions on RE, Joe Henze (2003) published a booklet entitled, '*Interfacing: Religious Education in dialogue with Educating Our Future*', in which he explains how some of the major policy changes in the education system affect RE. These changes include an emphasis on skills rather than rote memorization of texts or facts, using knowledge rather than just acquiring it, critical and creative thinking rather than passive acceptance of knowledge on the part of the learner. The educational policy document also calls for change from knowledge to self-knowledge, discipline to self-discipline and ideals to self-ideals. These changes mean that RE has to undergo radical changes in its content, approaches and methodology.

Thus the subject needs to become more pluralistic and inclusive in content, more process-based, explorative, experiential and open-ended in approach, and learner-centred, participatory and activity-based in methodology. In short, *Educating Our Future* challenges RE in Zambia to mature and become fully educational.

This small study is relevant and important because it tries to explain the provisions of *Educating Our Future*, the national education policy document, on RE. Naturally, these provisions and some of the author's interpretations will form an important basis of my study's recommendations on the way forward for Zambian RE.

In 2004, Brendan P. Carmody briefly discussed the Ministry of Education's introduction of new Basic Education syllabuses in which RE has been integrated into a learning area called 'Social and Development Studies.' He first points out that from the perspective of the church, one of the great hallmarks in the history of education in Zambia has been the inclusion of RE into the school curriculum. He then explains two challenges facing the subject today. Due to division among religious educators over the high school syllabuses (2044 and 2046) and the country becoming more pluralistic, there are moves to develop a single high school syllabus that is more pluralistic or less Christian in content. At Basic Education level, RE has, to some extent, been absorbed into the new Social and Development Studies syllabus. The author then criticises the mainline churches for not speaking out on these 'negative happenings' in the area of RE. He argues that the integration of RE with other subjects into the curriculum should not lead to the subject becoming part of Social Studies. Instead, RE should remain distinct (as in the past) so that it helps learners to have a coherent, structured understanding of religion and religious matters.

The author concludes his study by reiterating the need for the church or Christian bodies such as the Catholic Bishops Conference to critically and constructively participate in the Ministry of Education curriculum reform discussions, especially in as far as they concern RE.

This short article rightly points out the need for Zambian RE to remain a distinct subject, able to contribute to a coherent, structured understanding of religion. However, understanding of religion in the manner suggested here is more appropriate to high school than basic school level. As I will explain in my study, current thinking in curriculum planning seems to favour integration at lower levels of education and the Zambian national education policy recommends it. So from the educational point of view, the curriculum changes taking place at basic school level are positive rather than negative. Additionally, from the church's perspective, the author's fears that the two high school RE syllabuses are likely to be replaced by a more pluralistic and less Christian oriented syllabus are genuine. However, my study will argue (from the educational perspective) that a more pluralistic syllabus is actually what Zambia needs.

2.2 African Studies

The African studies reviewed here either describe the changes that have and are still taking place in the area of RE in different countries or discuss and recommend the kind of changes that should take place in order for RE in particular (African) countries to develop educationally. Generally, the studies point out that school RE in sub-Saharan Africa is no longer the teaching of one religious tradition, especially Christianity, but different religious traditions, including indigenous African religious beliefs. For this new approach to the subject to succeed, there is need for churches, religious groups, teachers and policy makers to appreciate and understand the difference between RE in public schools and religious nurture in religious communities. As such, these studies provide an important background to this study on Zambia as they cover both the historical and forward-looking aspects of RE which it deals with.

The first of these studies is that of Gerrie ter Haar (1988) which, though old, still provides an insight into current ideas, issues and trends in the development and practice of RE in Africa. The author first gave a brief account of African and Islamic education and showed how at different stages of Africa's history RE had been part of an overall educational policy. She then discussed the principal issues in the debate on RE in sub-Saharan Africa. Thus African traditional religious and cultural values are dominant in the

debate and any form of RE on the continent should take them into serious consideration. Africa's religious pluralism which in most countries includes African Traditional Religion, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, etc., has been recognised and should be reflected in the RE syllabuses.

According to ter Haar, the emphasis in the subject has also shifted, at least at policy level, from the specific content of religious beliefs to the universal human aims it may serve. Additionally, there is a development towards shifting the emphasis from the religious to the educational side of the subject. So like any other curriculum subject, RE must integrate the different faculties of the human person.

This study is important because it provides a good overview of the development of RE in sub-Saharan Africa, including Zambia. It highlights all the crucial issues involved in the history of the subject as well as the current trends. It therefore serves as a good general background on which my study on Zambia will build.

In a study called, *'Religious Education in the Twenty-first Century Pluralistic African Society: With Particular Attention to Uganda'*, Samuel Tumwesigire (1991), defines a pluralistic society as a country or state whose citizens subscribe to many different beliefs, different political ideologies and philosophies, and as well, belong to different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. He then describes the pluralistic religious situation in Uganda as an example of how pluralistic most sub-Saharan countries are. In most of these countries, there is Christianity which is divided into many different denominations, Islam which is also divided into Sunnism, Shiitism and one or two other sects, Hinduism, African Traditional Religion which is divided into tribal sects, fringe faiths such as the Baha'i Faith, and Independent African Churches. Additionally, there is a steady growth of secularism among the educated elites. He points out that in a pluralistic society of such diversity, it is difficult to decide the kind of RE you should teach in public schools to which children from all the diverse backgrounds go, adding that it is naïve to think that RE is simply teaching the Bible, the Quran or the doctrines of any one particular religion

in this kind of situation. The author then offers four distinct options of RE which pluralist African societies can choose from, depending on the degree of pluralism in each society.

The first option would be to choose one of the existing religious faiths that is dominant enough, to render all the others ignorable, and teach it alone, as the true faith. Under this option, you simply induct the pupils into and nurture them in the chosen 'national faith.' This type and approach to the subject is called Confessional RE. The second option would be to strike a balance or compromise among existing religious traditions that make almost equal claims on the society, by choosing what is common among them and teaching it to all pupils in schools. This option or choice requires an ecumenical spirit or mutual love, respect and maturity on the part of participating religions and their adherents if it is to succeed. This type and approach to teaching religion in schools is called 'Agreed' or 'Joint RE.'

The third option would entail dividing pupils in a class according to their religious or faith affiliation and teaching them separately, with all the planning and teaching of RE being in the hands of the various religions rather than the school or State. This type and approach to RE is also confessional, but to avoid confusing it with option one, it can be referred to as the 'Do it Yourself Choice.'

The fourth option, which can be called 'Educational RE', would be a form of RE that would treat all existing religions as neither true nor false, recognise that each of the religions has something valuable to offer to those who believe it to be true, or that there is relative and parochial truth in each of the existing religions. Educational RE would therefore aim at helping pupils to understand the phenomenon of religion and how it affects people through a study of examples drawn from all existing religions and based on their beliefs, practices, histories, sacred literature and 'saints.' This kind of RE would also aim at developing the pupils' religious sensitivity or potentialities, which is central to the development of a balanced personality; the general aim of education. According to Tumwesigire, this kind of RE is not only the most viable and meaningful, but also the most desirable in twenty-first century pluralistic and secular-minded Africa.

Before discussing the viability and justification of 'Educational RE', the author explains why the other three options cannot be educationally and morally justified in pluralistic African society. Selecting only one (major) religion to be taught as RE in schools would be unfair to the unfavoured religions and their individual members. It would also be morally inappropriate to teach one religion and its beliefs as indisputable truths in public schools that are maintained by the State and shared by all children of the society. The second option of choosing common elements among all religions and teaching them to all pupils as Agreed RE would not do justice to all the religions because it is the areas upon which they disagree that make the religions what they are. So teaching about religions without mentioning the areas of disagreement would be trivialising them. The third option of leaving RE in the hands of the various religions and dividing and teaching classes according to religious affiliation is educationally and socially unacceptable for a number of reasons. Such an arrangement is logistically difficult to run, religions may fail to provide the necessary personnel to teach the subject in schools, and the use of untrained teachers from the religions/churches as RE teachers will lead to indoctrination rather than proper education.

Tumwesigire then explains why and how Educational RE would work. It would begin by treating all religions equally before looking at their deepest beliefs and their most conflicting ones. It would also remain neutral about whether the religions are true or not. In this way, Educational RE would enable pupils to enter into the hearts or self-understanding of the religions in order to examine and understand them without fear or bias. Thus Educational RE would reject the traditional role of making pupils religious and giving them religious nurture as this job is better done by the religions or churches themselves. Its main concern, therefore, would be the understanding of the general concept of religion and development of pupils' potential of religious sensitivity. Its role would thus be that of informing pupils about the various religions found in the society in which they live. Educational RE would teach pupils to be intelligent and knowledgeable about religion/religions and enable them to ask ultimate questions.

So in its method, this form of RE would be rational, objective and open-ended, while its aims would be broader and much more educational than those of traditional RE. In his/her approach, the RE teacher would remain neutral and allow pupils to decide for themselves as to what beliefs they want to hold or to reject if they so wish. He/she would be expected to help them to think rationally about all that is presented to them so that if they have to choose or reject any of it, they do so objectively, on sound criteria and autonomously, using their free will.

There are two important issues to be learned from Tumwesigire's study. Firstly, like many other modern African countries, Zambia is a religiously and culturally pluralistic country where it is difficult to decide what kind of RE to offer in public schools. Secondly, although the Confessional RE, Agreed RE and 'Do it Yourself Approach' options are possible, it is only the Educational RE model that is appropriate for such countries. For example, in the history of RE in Zambia the three options above were tried but found to be inappropriate as (Zambian) society developed and became increasingly pluralistic. On the other hand, Educational RE is legally and morally appropriate because it treats all religions equally and examines their beliefs impartially. Therefore, the form or model of RE that this thesis will recommend for Zambia is in line with Tumwesigire's Educational RE option.

In South Africa, Gordon Mitchell (1995), discussed principles for the development of religious and moral education in a country emerging from years of minority rule. He first explained that despite considerable religious diversity in the country, the apartheid state education system supported and taught the White culture and religious tradition of the ruling party in the school curriculum. Consequently, most pupils felt devalued by this approach. So after the transition to democracy, it was expected that decisions about the curriculum would be the result of full discussion and negotiation involving all interested parties.

The author then stated some principles which were to guide the development of Religious and Moral Education in the country. Care had to be taken to consult all religious

traditions; there was need for suitable text books that gave a careful, accurate and fair picture of all religious communities; there was need to include in the (RE) syllabus the cultural traditions of all pupils, and the role of religion and aim of RE in the public education system would be to give pupils the opportunity to learn something about their own religion and the religions of their fellow pupils.

The significance of Mitchell's brief work was that it stressed the need for proper consultation of all interest groups in the process of developing a nationally accepted model of RE for South Africa and other countries including Zambia. However, the study's weakness is that it seems to marry RE with ME. Strictly speaking RE and ME should be treated as separate subjects, though it is possible that some of the aims of ME can be achieved indirectly through the former.

In West Africa, Rosalind I. J. Hackett (1999) discussed the ways in which educational institutions have been connected to the growth of religious education in Nigeria. In the nineteenth century and the colonial period, Quranic (Islamic) and early Christian missionary forms of education and instruction existed side by side, though Western Christian education later began to predominate due to its association with the colonial government and its economic activities. After Independence in 1960, subsequent civilian and military governments opted for strong state control of education. Thus during the 1970s voluntary agency or religious organisation-run schools were taken over by the state in an attempt to ensure secularism. However, instead of putting an end to both Christian and Muslim claims of religious discrimination in the education sector, the take over tended to aggravate these counter claims. Muslims in the Southwest of the country complained about Christian entrenchment, while Christians in the North complained about the local state's failure to supply Christian teachers. In an attempt to address these problems, the Federal government introduced the Universal Primary Education scheme in 1976, but people were quick to attribute the falling standards in education to the absence of confessional religious instruction.

According to the author, another round of controversies over religion in the schools was sparked off in the 1980s by the failure of some school principals in South-western Nigeria to comply with the constitutionally guaranteed freedoms of worship and religious instruction. Even though the National Policy on Education required that Christian Religious Knowledge (CRK) and Islamic Religious Knowledge (IRK) be taught alongside each other in all primary schools, accusations of bias continued to resurface from time to time well into the 1990s. The author further points out that despite educational reforms, the two single-tradition RE syllabuses continued with parallel examinations in Christian Studies and Islamic Studies. She concludes her examination by asserting that the Nigerian system which encourages a confessional approach to RE or RI in schools has contributed to the polarisation of Nigerian society along religious lines. The system also leads to violations of the principles of religious freedom embodied in the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination (based on religion or belief).

Hackett's study is useful because it shows the negative effects of confessional RE in a multi-faith society like Zambia and Nigeria. Thus in order to avoid promoting religious divisions, conflicts and violations of pupils' religious freedoms, RE in multi-faith countries like Zambia should be educational, inclusive and impartial.

In an article entitled, '*The Good South African Citizen: Then and Now*', H Christina Steyn (2003), reviews the history of religious education and citizen education in South Africa before comparing the approaches and aims of the subject area in the old South Africa with the proposed strategies and aims of the subject area in new democratic South Africa. Both before and after 1967 when the Christian National Education Policy was formally implemented, religion (Christianity) was integrated across all fields of education. Religious instruction determined (or was supposed to determine) the spirit, direction and content of all (school) education, while the same subject (RI), grounded in Christian Scripture, was compulsory for all trainee teachers in colleges. Through a combination of this kind of religious indoctrination and citizen education (through civics) the education system was supposed to produce stable, steadfast, patriotic Christian South

African citizens. African education too was grounded in the life and religious world-view of the whites. It was supposed to create African citizens who would serve the purpose of the State without any critical thinking, questioning and disobedience.

The author then states the proposed aims and approaches of religion and citizen education and explains the difference between the Christian indoctrination of the past and the pluralistic or multi-religion approach envisaged in the proposed policy. Thus unlike in the past, RE would aim at exposing learners to different belief systems in order to promote such values as respect for other beliefs, diversity, tolerance, justice, compassion and commitment. Similarly, citizen education as incorporated into learning materials across the curriculum will promote such related values as democracy, social justice and equity, equality, non-racism and non-sexism, human dignity, an open society, accountability, rule of law and reconciliation. Steyn also points out that there have been negative reactions to the proposed policy on RE, though these mainly Christian church reactions are likely to be overcome through consultation between the Department of Education and church leaders. In her conclusion, the author is concerned that the many years of Christian indoctrination and Christian privilege could lead to continued resistance to the introduction of multi-religion education. However, she advises that in a democratic country such as new South Africa, all citizens have the obligation to respect the equal rights of fellow citizens, regardless of their faith.

This study is important for my study because the changes in South African education (including RE) which it describes are very similar to those currently taking place in Zambia. Thus Zambia can learn something from the proposed South African national policy on religion and education, which ensures that RE will aim at exposing learners to different belief systems fairly and thus promote respect for other beliefs, diversity, tolerance, justice, compassion and commitment. All these aims and values are relevant to this study as they are similar to those I will recommend for Zambia. Zambia can also learn from the kind of consultation that went on between the South African state and the religious traditions, especially the Christian Church, in her own RE development process.

2.3 British/Commonwealth Studies

Like the African studies, most of the studies surveyed here describe the historical development of RE from confessionalism in the 1950s/60s, through phenomenological RE in the 1970s, to integrative experiential and phenomenological approaches in the 1980s/90s. Integrative approaches are currently being replaced, mainly in Britain, by newer approaches and methodologies that are still under research and development. Other studies discuss or examine current issues in RE. The main issues discussed and recommendations made include the need for school RE to be educational rather than religious; the need for RE to go beyond the exclusive-inclusive debate and adopt a more acceptable (middle-path) approach; the need for increased pluralism in RE in modern pluralist societies; the need for professionalism and integrity among religious educators in the handling of religious traditions and their beliefs and values; the need for co-operation between professional religious educators and religious insiders; and the need for RE to aim at religious literacy and maturity in learners. As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, the issues (above) surrounding RE in Britain, Australia, Canada and other Commonwealth member countries are relevant to Zambian RE because of the influence of British educational philosophies and Commonwealth educational traditions on Zambia (and other former British colonies).

The first such study is entitled, *‘From Christian Nurture to Religious Education: The British Experience’*, by John M. Hull (1984). He described and explained how RE in England and Wales developed from exclusive Christian nurture to an inclusive, multi-faith curriculum subject. According to Hull, the teaching of the Christian religion had been part of public education since 1870 and had been officially encouraged by legislation since 1944. Up to the late 1960s, there were Agreed or Ecumenical syllabuses based on the seeking of agreed truth. However, in the 1970s new syllabuses starting with the 1975 Birmingham Agreed Syllabus, began to come on the scene. Instead of truth, they sought agreement on procedure and on what all stakeholders held to be of worthy study. The syllabuses therefore, aimed at treating or describing all religions in such a way that believers would not disagree with their presentation.

By the mid-1980s, the RE situation in England and Wales was still patchy with areas and schools within the Local Education Authority (LEA) areas having considerable differences in their approach to the subject. The existence of ethnic communities and the plurality of cultures was used by different areas and schools to either justify a descriptive study of world religions, or an almost evangelistic or exclusive presentation of Christianity. The author pointed out that although Christians in Britain and other Western democracies felt that public education systems had reached an anti-Christian position, the churches' mission or role in education was and should be to safeguard the open secularity of education and to preserve pluralism.

He concluded the study by suggesting and explaining three factors to be considered in deciding the approach to be taken in RE in schools: the constitution of the school (or country), the composition of the staff and pupils (their rights and beliefs), and parents' rights (and beliefs).

This study is important because the stages of British RE development that it describes are almost identical with those of Zambia and is still passing through. Hull's view that the churches' role in education should be to help safeguard the secularity of education and preserve pluralism is important for religious harmony and stability in multi-faith societies like Zambia. However, his suggestion that decisions on the approach to RE should be based on factors like the composition of the school staff and parental rights is a weakness. Even where LEAs are in charge of school education policies (as in England and Wales), parents and teachers' beliefs and values should not dictate or unduly influence the nature of RE offered in schools. Decisions on the approach to RE in pluralistic countries like Zambia and Britain should be based more on the values of the national constitution than anything else.

In 1987, Michael Grimmit completed a big study in which he delved into philosophical, sociological and psychological issues affecting RE in democratic and pluralistic societies like Britain. In chapter 6 he focused on the (educational) concerns of the subject in such countries. They include interpretive, functional, personal and humanising concerns.

According to the author, RE has to contribute to the meaning-making process that all human beings engage in. It has to promote an understanding of the contribution that holding religious beliefs makes to the meaning-making process and the effects that holding particular religious beliefs have upon human development. The subject has to help the pupil to understand the relationship between 'human givens' or human attributes, core human values and religious values and how this relationship is interpreted within particular religions and religious traditions. It also has to help pupils to understand the implications of religious pluralism on their society's cultural continuity and identity.

According to Grimmitt, in order to achieve the above, RE's field of enquiry or areas of content should include 'Human Givens', Core Values, Substantive Religious Categories, Shared Human Experience and of course the Belief Systems or Religions. The RE curriculum and approaches should also take various pedagogical issues into consideration. Some examples of these are: the child/pupil's feelings, acts, experiences, needs, questions, beliefs, values and developmental stage.

The concerns or broad aims of RE in a pluralistic society discussed by Grimmitt are relevant to my study on Zambia because it is increasingly becoming a pluralistic country like Britain. Thus some of the aims of RE I will be recommending (for Zambia) are in line with those suggested by Grimmitt. Similarly, the author's view that the RE curriculum and teaching-learning approaches should take the pupils' feelings, acts, experiences, needs, questions, beliefs, values and developmental stage into consideration, is in line with the kind of RE that my study envisages for Zambia.

Although British RE had developed from confessionalism to the phenomenological approach in the 1970s, the confessional and phenomenological models of RE continued to be the two main competing approaches to the subject well into the 1980s. Thus Nicola Slee (1989), critically discussed the two approaches to RE on the British scene and argued that there was need for some measure of reconciliation between the two opposing models.

According to the author, the confessional model sees that task of RE in terms of initiating the child into a religious heritage, passing on religious and moral values and nurturing religious belief and commitment. It requires or strongly recommends religious belief and commitment on the part of the teacher and works towards the belief and commitment of the pupil. On the other hand, the phenomenological model sees the task of RE in terms of initiating the child into a form of knowledge or mode of human experience, developing religious understanding and a spirit of openness, and encouraging personal autonomy in this (religious) experience. The model rejects the idea of the school transmitting religious values and beliefs and sees its role or task as being confined to the transmission of information, the pursuit of understanding and the nurturing of tolerance, openness and autonomy as values or attitudes necessary for civilised life in a plural democracy.

Slee further explains that the aims of the confessional model as it developed up to the 1960s were conversion and nurture of the pupils in the Christian faith, the creation of Christian community in the life of the school, and the religious and moral reform of wider British society. On the other hand, in response to the plural and secular identity of British society, the phenomenological model developed with the aim of initiating pupils into a sympathetic, descriptive understanding of religion through the study of various religious traditions. The pupil was expected to temporarily 'bracket out' his/her own belief, ideas and presuppositions and to exercise an imaginative empathy in order to enter into experience and self-understanding of the religious believer.

The author goes on to explain why a reconciliation between the two models above is needed. In her view, opposing the confessional to the phenomenological means separating out nurture and education, truth and meaning, belief and understanding, commitment and openness, responsibility and autonomy, the transmission of a religious heritage and the preparation of persons for pluralism. However, a careful reflection shows that none of these characteristics, attitudes or skills promoted by the two contrasting models of RE can exist in isolation; instead they are held together in creative tension by their very opposite nature. For example, openness towards others cannot exist

without some sense of secure self-identity, necessitating the promotion of both qualities by RE. According to Slee, a consideration of the two models and the logic at work within them also indicates that both confessionalism and phenomenological religious studies are necessarily driven outwards beyond their own confines to meet and embrace each other in a larger reality. While the logic of Christian belief pushes outwards to encounter the neighbour, the logic of the phenomenological approach compels religious studies inwards beyond merely describing the external phenomena of religion towards encountering and dialoguing with the commitment and truth-claims at the heart of religion.

The author concludes her essay by emphasising that a reconciliation or ‘middle way’ between the two dominant approaches to RE is long overdue. This kind of RE should have a vision which does justice to the nature of religion, the full meaning of education and the needs and capacities of people engaged in the religious education process; this can be achieved partly by taking seriously perplexing questions about pupils’ commitments, spiritual development and quest for meaning.

Slee’s critical discussion of the confessional and phenomenological models of RE is very relevant to the first part of my study, i.e., examination and analysis of models of RE in modern/post-modern society. The author raises a number of important issues which I will refer to, criticise or build on. Her study therefore provides one of the main background studies to my own study.

In Canada, Ovey N. Mohammed (1992), justified or explained the need for pluralism in RE in a paper entitled, ‘*Multiculturalism and Religious Education.*’ The author examined the reasons for teaching non-Christian religions in Canadian schools, first from the side of education and then from that of religion. From the educational point of view, non-Christian religions should be taught in schools to help the young to understand, appreciate and respect religious differences as a preparation for life in a multicultural society. These religions should be taught in schools even if and even where there are no

non-Christians in schools. The teaching of the other religions will not only promote national harmony but international understanding as well in a shrinking world.

In explaining the religious point of view, Mohammed examines the Catholic attitude to these religions. He shows that since Vatican II, the church's attitude to other religions has been positive. It is acknowledged that all religions are instruments of salvation, and (Catholic) Christians are encouraged, in dialogue with the followers of other religions, to preserve and promote the spiritual and moral values found in these religions and cultures. According to the author, Vatican II and the Catholic church encourage religious educators to have knowledge of and teach about non-Christian religions because education in religion should not only be a preparation for eternal life but also a preparation for life in a multi-cultural society.

In reflecting and concluding his discussion, the author emphasises that from both the educational and religious points of view, it is important to have non-Christian religions taught in schools because it is through our encounters with others that we learn who we are and through their probing questions that we come to a deeper understanding of what we really believe. By studying the faiths of others along with our own, we come to experience and understand our connectedness with human diversity and are therefore called to full humanity. He stresses that in preparing children for life in the 21st century, religious educators must help them to know (or understand) their faith more profoundly and to understand the faith of others more accurately.

Mohammed's study brings out three issues that are of great importance to this particular study and Zambia. Firstly, different religious traditions, including those that may not be represented in schools, should be taught in order to help young people understand, appreciate and respect religious differences. This will in turn promote national harmony and international understanding. Secondly, by studying other religious traditions alongside their own, pupils are likely to understand their beliefs and values even better. Thirdly, in pluralistic countries like Zambia and Canada, RE should not be regarded as a

preparation for salvation, but as a preparation for life in a multi-cultural society. The three issues are thus in line with what this study will argue concerning Zambian RE.

After an exploration of RE as a school subject in Britain, the Westhill RE 5 - 16 Project Team produced a manual entitled, '*How Do I Teach RE?*,' in 1992. Garth Read *et al* showed how the aims of RE could be translated into classroom practice. In Part One of the manual/book, they gave the aim of RE as being 'to help children mature in relation to their own patterns of belief and behaviour through exploring religious beliefs and practices and related human experiences' (1992: 2). The authors went on to list and explain the principles of modern RE in a pluralist country as follows:

- (a) Children need to develop their own beliefs and values and a consistent pattern of behaviour.
- (b) RE has a particularly important contribution to make to spiritual, moral and social development of children.
- (c) In RE, the role of the teacher is that of educator.
- (d) As in all subject areas, the teaching of RE must be related to the ages and abilities of the children being taught.
- (e) RE will help children to explore a range of religious beliefs and practices and related human experiences.
- (f) RE has a major contribution to make in helping children to develop a positive and understanding attitude towards diversity in our pluralistic society.
- (g) RE does not make assumptions about, or preconditions for, the personal commitments of teachers or children.

Since Zambian RE has largely developed along British approaches to the subject, the principles of modern RE proposed by Read *et al* in their study are relevant or applicable to Zambia. Thus most of the principles discussed by the authors are in line with the approach to RE that my study envisages for Zambia.

In 1988, the British Government passed a new Education Act, which replaced the 1944 Act. Writing a few years afterwards, Andrew Wright (1993) used a critical, historical

approach to survey the situation British RE has passed through from 1944 to 1988. He analysed the 1988 Act and its implications for RE, challenged the existing assumptions and approaches to the subject and suggested how the way forward might be in light of the secular and multi-faith nature of British society. He observed that due to the Enlightenment, growth of scientific knowledge and secularisation, religion has lost its central position in (British) society, while RE had lost its significance in education. He referred to the various RE models developed and used since 1944: the confessional, the implicit, the phenomenological and the spiritual approaches as a policy of appeasement which promoted moral and spiritual development in the learner as society wanted and avoided the truth-claims that religions wanted.

The author discussed the need for toleration and morality in society, the need for a balance between Christianity and other major faiths in Britain, the controversy surrounding school worship and church schools, commitment versus neutrality in the classroom, child-centred RE and whether or not RE is an end in itself as the major issues and disputes that have dominated the 'current agenda for RE.' This agenda had, however, failed to offer pupils the skills and insights needed to understand and interpret the socially and religiously ambiguous world they are living in.

According to Wright, this was a challenge which had to become part of the aim of the 'new agenda for RE' in Britain. The overall aim of the subject should be to produce religious literacy through a 'linguistic competence' model that turns pupils into fledgling theologians and philosophers by equipping them with theological and philosophical skills appropriate to their developmental level. Thus the new agenda for RE should deal with the question of religious truth in relation to the ontological question and choice between Transcendence and Immanence. Additionally, the ambiguity of religion, the complexities of religious beliefs and the contradicting claims of the various religions had to be dealt with in the classroom. According to the author, the linguistic competence model of RE would entail a careful and balanced selection of topics so that deep religious understanding is promoted and superficiality avoided. The selection (of topics) would be based on the following perspectives: an introduction to all major world religions with

Christianity and one locally dominant religious tradition being studied in extra depth and eventually being compared and contrasted with a non-religious or humanistic truth stance. The selected topics would include the study of the world-view each religion holds, its specific truth-claims or concrete beliefs. These claims and beliefs were to be compared and contrasted so that their controversial nature could come out and get confronted right in the classroom.

This first study by Wright is important because it provides part of the background on which the 'religious literacy and critical understanding model' of RE that will be proposed for Zambia by this thesis is based. Some of the problems associated with what he refers to as 'the old agenda for RE' are also similar to those being experienced in the continued development of Zambian RE.

However, his proposal that Christianity and one locally dominant religious tradition should be studied in more detail than others is flawed because all religious traditions included in the RE syllabuses in multi-faith areas/countries like Britain and Zambia should be treated equally. Similarly, although humanistic truth stances might be important for comparison purposes, their study under or as part of RE seems to be inappropriate as they are not part of the religious area of knowledge.

Returning to the subject of competing models of RE in Britain, Kieran Scott (1994, published a study entitled, *Three Traditions of Religious Education*, in which she proposed and discussed the following three-pronged typology of traditions in RE:

- (i) the ecclesial enculturation tradition or 'inner border model' represented by catechesis and Christian nurture;
- (ii) the revisionist tradition or 'dialectical border model' portrayed by Christian religious education; and
- (iii) the reconceptualist tradition or 'border crossing model' which attempts to retrieve and reconstruct the root meaning of the term religious education.

According to Scott, the ecclesial enculturation tradition through catechesis is openly confessional. Its interest is to awaken, nourish and develop a learner's personal belief, to hand on the tradition, solidify the learner's religious identity and build up the ecclesial body. Its focus is on conservation of tradition and deepening of religious affiliation. In its conceptual stance, this 'inner border' model sticks to its own tradition. Although it claims to respect the territorial rights of others, the model's prevailing concern is to be vigilant about its own borders and to pursue its own way or tradition. Religious educators in catechetical tradition view their work as initiation, adaptation, transmission, translation and church maintenance through a process of enculturation, nurture, evangelisation and conversion. As such the ecclesial enculturation tradition or inner border model does not provide an adequate context for meaningful dialogue in the contemporary religious world as there remains a lingering suspicion with regard to the principles, process and purposes of this catechetical tradition. The author asks: Do they (catechetical principles, process and purpose) honour and are they compatible with the educational values of openness, enquiry, freedom and the critical spirit? In short, can this tradition or model of RE confront modernity or is it just a camouflage of old attitudes and values, she asks.

According to Scott, the revisionist tradition or Christian religious education takes as its frame of reference the intersection of religious tradition and contemporary human experience. It is informed by both theology and educational theory. The educational process in Christian religious education involves the application of modern critical reason to the belief, symbols, values, texts and lived-life of the Christian tradition. In other words Christian religious education is a dialectical border model in terms of its internal critical enquiry of tradition and its external reflectiveness on the public world. Religious educators in the revisionist tradition or Christian religious education emphasise two educational poles in their work; conservation and liberation, continuity and change, tradition and transformation, devotion and enquiry. The dialectical method embodied or used in the revisionist tradition engages learners in dialogue with the Christian tradition (past, present and future) which in turn opens up possibilities both for the recreation of the tradition and the individual persons or learners within the traditions. Thus education functions in the community to transmit tradition, to enable people/learners to interpret

their experience and to open their possibility of transforming the individual, the faith community and the world. However, the author points out that Christian religious education is not a critical educational method or approach designed to pass on open critical values. While the approach deepens the reflective process, the RE aspect is confined to being a delivery system for the prevailing theology or religious tradition. Theology or faith holds a place of primacy over curriculum content, criteria and concepts. In other words, Christian religious education is simply a form of practical theology as it fails to push the critical process to some of its logical conclusions. Thus fundamental Christian assumptions (on revelation) and existing ecclesial patterns of power are left unchallenged. So Christian religious education needs an educational (rather than a religious) framework in order to be true to its emancipatory interests and to become one genuine expression or form of RE.

Lastly, according to the author the reconceptualist tradition represents an attempt to retrieve and reconstruct the richest meaning of the term religious education (RE). The tradition is a 'border crossing model' whose vision goes beyond the local ecclesial community and crosses over into a large public context with new, redesigned curricula and content. RE takes education as its overarching frame of reference such that education becomes the arena for dealing with the critical religious issues and concerns of life. This entails or involves exploring the meaning of one's own religious life in relation to both those who share that life and those who do not. Genuine intra-and inter-religious dialogue is sought through a process of self-reflection, sympathetic understanding, open encounter and mutual exchange. Scott further explains that RE does not start with prior confessional assumptions nor is it tied to denominational self-interests. Proselytising, evangelising and dogmatising are contrary to its spirit and purpose. Instead, the commitment is to uninhibited interaction and enquiry in which understanding of religion and life is sought. In other words, RE is a way of learning to live intelligently and religiously in the modern world. It seeks to foster greater appreciation of one's (the learner's) own religious life and less misunderstanding of that of other people. Reconceptualised RE creates educational space or opportunity where public dialogue can take place between religious traditions and between the religious and non-religious on pressing religious questions of

today. Its ultimate goal is to assist/learners to think, feel, imagine, act and grow religiously and intellectually.

According to Scott, developmentally, reconceptualised RE can be considered the most mature form of religious education. This form of religious education can transform religious traditions, increase tolerance and enhance mutual understanding. It resists the domestication of the religious to church or religious tradition-talk and the educational to school-talk. However, this reconceptualist tradition of religious education is still problematic. It is largely undeveloped in practice and no consensus has yet emerged on its structure and nature for it to acquire the allegiance or support of (all) professional religious educators. Christian religious educators find it difficult to identify with the reconceptualist tradition. According to the author, their religious knowledge and commitments foster loyalty to their own tradition and the paradigm shift or change of attitude and approach required by the new RE seems to risk too much as it could lead to deconstruction of firmly held tenets in their religious tradition(s).

This study by Scott is very relevant to my study because it describes in detail three different RE traditions which mirror the three stages of development that Zambian RE has passed through. The Ecclesial enculturation, Revisionist and Reconceptualist traditions of RE are also in line with the three possible models of RE in modern/post-modern society which will be discussed in the first part of my study. Furthermore, an important point highlighted by Scott's study is the lack of consensus on the scope, methodology and principles of RE among the educators not only in Britain but other countries too. Thus in Zambia some religious educators see RE as representing Christian religious education, while others see the subject as representing education in different religions. My study will emphasise that Zambian RE should be pluralistic and aimed at critical understanding of different religious traditions.

In 1995, Terence J. Lovat carried out an important research study aimed at discovering Hindu and Muslim perspectives on public curricula (or syllabuses) in Religious Studies and Values Education in Australia's New South Wales. His paper entitled, '*Multi-faith*

Religious and Values Education: Apparent or Real, first traces the history of the Hindu and Muslim presence in Australia before reviewing his ethnographic research work among some communities belonging to the two religious traditions.

The researcher's historical survey enabled him to conclude that the two religious groups had sufficient historical significance and sufficient numbers to warrant major attention in the design and presentation of any genuine multi-faith and multicultural syllabus and curricula in Australia. Lovat's review of his research findings showed that the 'Studies of Religion' and 'The Values We Teach' syllabuses were warmly welcomed among the Hindus because they taught children about different religions and values and Hinduism itself was a tradition that was/is tolerant and accommodating to all other religions. Many Hindus were of the view that the primary role of a school, especially a state school, was to provide broad-based religious literacy rather than the more common, narrow, evangelical literacy. However, many Hindus also made it clear that there were ultimate religious values concerning the 'atman' (personal soul), which were beyond the capacity of the school, the syllabus and the lay teacher to deal with. For a Hindu, while a great deal of education in both the religious and moral spheres can be achieved within the confines of a good school curriculum or programme (including an effective and sensitive teacher), there will always be something about Hinduism (a spiritual dimension) that cannot be communicated in such a way or through such restricted educational approaches. Lovat therefore concludes that teachers and syllabus developers in New South Wales should be aware that if multi-faith and values education is to provide cultural continuity for Hindu Australians, the influence of practicing Hindus at each stage of syllabus development is required.

Among the Muslims too, Lovat found that there was general support for the introduction of the syllabus in religious studies and moral/values education. Most Muslims agreed that the school had an important role to play in fostering desirable values and attitudes in their children. Muslim children's exposure to other major world religions was seen as good for their own faith. However, some Muslims expressed serious concern about the impartiality of the teacher and felt that a Muslim should be available to teach all the Islam

sections of the syllabus. They also felt that while values such as tolerance, acceptance, fairness, equality and justice promoted by the syllabus were central to the Muslim belief system, there was lack of practical Muslim input in their teaching. Additionally, the disjunction between religious theory and practice in the secular schools was not helpful but confusing to the Muslim children.

In general terms, the researcher concludes from the foregoing perspectives (or findings) that Hindu and Muslim communities had not informed or influenced 'The Studies of Religion' and 'The Values We Teach' syllabuses. This was something that anyone who took multi-faith religious and values education in Australia (and elsewhere) seriously was supposed to be concerned with.

Lovat's study is helpful because, like the final part of my study, it sought to find out religious traditions (Hindu and Muslim) perspectives or views of existing religious studies and values education (or RE) syllabuses in Australia. As such some of his findings and conclusions are likely to be similar to those of my study (on Zambia). For example his view that state or public school RE should provide broad-based religious literacy rather than narrow, evangelical literacy is in line with the religious literacy and critical understanding model of RE which this study will recommend for Zambia.

In 1996, Geoff Robson discussed British Government Policy and professional practice in RE between 1985 and 1995. He described the problems of RE in England, especially after the Education Reform Act of 1988, and pointed out that instead of being considered in educational terms, RE was caught up in the debate on British national identity during parliamentary debates leading to the Act. As a result of a very powerful Christian lobby within the House of Lords, the vague 1944 Act was amended to require Agreed Syllabuses to reflect the fact that the religious traditions of British society were in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of other principle religions represented in the country. The policy makers were committed to ensuring that Christianity was given superior status over other faiths.

According to the author, between 1991 and 1994 there were a number of circulars to Local Education Authorities (LEAs) from the Department of Education and Science and the National Curriculum Council (later the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA)) with rather conflicting advice on the meaning of the 1988 Act for Agreed Syllabuses in RE. However, when the National Curriculum and Assessment Authority prepared model syllabuses for the LEAs, it ensured that the major world religions were to be taught at all key stages and that material or content to be used for each religion was authorised by the faith communities themselves. A combination of systematic and thematic treatment/coverage of (each) religion was also favoured. According to Robson, despite a divisive political use of RE during the period under consideration, the final version of the SCAA model syllabuses reflected the professional rather than the political vision of the nature of the RE curriculum.

An important point to be learned from this study is that in a multi-faith country like Britain and Zambia, there is need to include different world religions, especially those represented in the country, in the RE syllabuses. Also important is the idea that the material to be included in the syllabuses should be authorised or approved by the religious traditions themselves. In short, there should be serious consultations between educationalists and leaders or representatives of religious groups and communities.

In 1999, Elizabeth Templeton studied the position of RE in Britain which, according to her, was similar to that in many other Western European countries, New Zealand, parts of Australia and some Canadian states. She first rehearsed a little history behind the existing situation before arguing, as a lay Christian theologian, the merit of having many lay people as teachers (of RE). Until the 1960s, schools and legislators in the UK saw nothing wrong with schools being places for religious instruction (RI) or 'Scripture'. Everyday began with classes saying the Lord's Prayer and all teachers were expected to undertake this task. However, for a variety of reasons in the late 1960s and the 1970s, great change took place in British thinking about education in general and RE in particular. Britain was becoming an increasingly diverse society and was no longer monolithically Christian.

According to Templeton, the 1960s saw an explicit shift from teacher/subject to child-centred modes of education. The late 1960s also precipitated a serious critique of authoritarian attitudes in many areas of life. Structures of secular education that gave Christianity a privileged position were changed. So by the early 1970s it was recognised that there was an important distinction between the task of any faith community (or church) and that of the school, that the teacher's professional role was to present all faiths to pupils without distorting the self-understanding of those within the faith community in question, and that a competent RE teacher did not necessarily need to be a Christian.

The author then argues that the teacher as an educator, whether Christian or not, is not meant, professionally, to be an advocate of Christianity over or against other religions. The aim both the Christian teacher and non-Christian teacher share as educators is to maximise awareness, sensitivity, accuracy of discernment, integrity, self-critical exploration and recognition of the contribution made to society by the spiritual traditions which we encounter today. She further argues that the fact that the largest proportion of RE teaching is done by lay people, makes the subject more educationally effective. Although there are some (very few) clergy who are capable of teaching RE in an open and sensitive manner, it would be very difficult to overcome suspicions of protectionism (and indoctrination) or to disprove them if it were only clergy who were entrusted with the religious education of their receptive flocks or school community. According to the author, most clergy and chaplains lack pedagogical concerns or skills and cannot distinguish educational and evangelical roles. The closed and confessional nature of their work makes it even more difficult for them to handle RE professionally.

Templeton concludes her article by re-emphasising that the educational vision that lies behind contemporary, lay-taught, secular-authorised religious and moral education in the UK (and elsewhere) is one that nourishes pupils' spiritual growth while helping them to learn to cope creatively with the complexity of the global community in the third millennium.

This study raises two important issues for my study. Firstly, in modern society including Zambia, there should be a distinction between the work of a faith community or religious group and that of the school. While faith communities and religious groups teach the beliefs and values of one religion (their own) in an evangelistic way, the school presents different religions to pupils in an impartial manner. Secondly, in order to avoid the problem of indoctrination, school RE should be taught by professionally trained teachers, not the (untrained) clergy. While the former are able to take pedagogical concerns and skills seriously in their handling of the subject, the latter cannot easily distinguish their educational and evangelical roles. The distinction between the work of the religious group or church and that of the school and hence between evangelisation and professional teaching of RE is a major concern of my study.

However, Templeton's view that RE should nourish pupils' spiritual growth seems to be confessional and therefore not part of what this study will consider to be educational aims of RE in modern Zambia. In a multi-religious society RE should aim at promoting critical understanding of religion rather than spiritual growth. The promotion of spiritual growth should be the responsibility of religious groups and their private schools.

At the turn of the millennium, Michael Grimmitt (2000) edited a book which also carried his own article/chapter entitled, '*Contemporary Pedagogies of Religious Education: What are they?*'. In the chapter, he first identifies eight types of pedagogical models for use in non-denominational and non-confessional RE from scholarly literature produced in the UK during the last forty or so years. These are:

- (a) Liberal Christian Theological, Experiential, Implicit Models.
- (b) A Phenomenological, Undogmatic, Explicit Model.
- (c) Integrative Experiential and Phenomenological Models.
- (d) Human Development, Instrumental Learning About, Learning From Models.
- (e) An Ethnographic, 'Interpretative', Multi-Faith Model.
- (f) A Revelation– Centred, Concept– Cracking, Trinitarian Christian Realist Model.
- (g) A Literacy-Centred, Critical Realist Model.

(h) Constructivist Models of Learning and Teaching in RE.

The author points out that each of these pedagogies owes much to those that have preceded it and that although there have been shifts of focus and orientation in terms of insights and principles, each new pedagogy is a direct response to and a successor of those that have gone before it.

He suggests that in order to compare the different models, the following three questions should be used:

- (a) What kind or kinds of interaction between the pupils and religious content does the model seek to promote?
- (b) What pedagogical procedures or strategies does the model deploy in order to achieve the kind or kinds of interactions identified above?
- (c) What pedagogical principles inform the model's pedagogical procedures and strategies, including its approach to the choice of the curriculum?

The author's further discussion of the models focuses on identifying the pedagogical principles which have been developed in the attempt to reconcile phenomenology and experientialism. In brief he explains these pedagogies as follows:

1. *A Phenomenological, Undogmatic, Explicit Model*

It envisages pupils engaging with the religious content with three different intentions and interactions:

- (i) to study the tradition's self-understanding in an empathetic and non-evaluative manner, bracketing their own presuppositions and opinions;
- (ii) to acquire certain capacities to understand religious issues and the contribution of religion to human culture, i.e., a capacity to rationally understand beliefs and practices, and a considered awareness of the challenge and practical consequences of religious belief;
- (iii) to engage in a reflective process whereby experience and living religion are brought into dialogue with each other so that one can

‘interpret and reinforce the other.’

Lastly, the pedagogical principle informing the phenomenological model’s procedures and strategies can be said to be that learning and teaching in RE should promote both academic and personal forms of knowledge and understanding. However, according to the author, the model fails to provide adequate pedagogical procedures and strategies for supporting pupils in any of the three types of interaction. In popular understanding, the broad, liberal educational value that the phenomenological approach attributes to the study of religion, including its capacity to address the personal and existential concerns of the pupil, is largely absent so that it has become a narrowly descriptive and content-centred approach to teaching RE.

2. *Liberal Christian Theological, Experiential, Implicit Models*

As it developed, Christian experientialism aimed at going beyond Christian confessionalism while retaining its capacity to assist pupils in understanding religious (mainly Christian) concepts and beliefs and contribute to their personal development. Experientialism thus tried to establish an educational basis for teaching RE which is secular and pluralistic but not in conflict with a Christian view of faith or education. However, this approach has been attacked by evangelical Christians for distorting Christian truths and values and allowing them to be absorbed within a secular educational ideology.

3. *Integrative Experiential and Phenomenological Models*

They envisage pupils involved in a process of deep reflection on life (or existential analysis) so that they are able to develop skills, sensitivities and perceptions which enhance their ability to empathise with and understand the subjective religious consciousness of religiously committed people, and how religions address ultimate questions and provide a coherent interpretation of the whole of life. The models’ strategy for implementing this involves combining an Existential approach with a Dimensional approach or the use of pupils’ life experiences to understand religion(s). Lastly, the main pedagogical principle

informing the Integrative approach involves encouraging pupils 'to build conceptual bridges between their own experiences and what they recognise to be the central concepts of religion' (Grimmitt 2000: 31). According to the author, despite the models' attempt to closely associate the two approaches through religious experience, the transition from reflecting on personal experience to exploring individual experiences in different religions has not been supported by clear pedagogical procedures or principles.

4. *Human Development, Instrumental, Learning About, Learning From Models*

This 'Human Development' Model endorses the importance of presenting the beliefs and practices of religions to pupils accurately and in a manner which enables them to empathise with and understand the subjective religious consciousness of committed religious adherents. Thus it endorses and advocates the use of the phenomenological approach. In addition, it stresses the instrumental value that the study of religious content should have to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In order to achieve this the Model emphasises the need for pedagogical procedures or strategies which support learning about and learning from religion or strategies which help pupils in translating insights gained from their study of RE topics and material in personal terms. The pedagogical principle informing the 'Human Development' Model is that the structure of the curriculum and the choice of content and teaching methods must all be specifically designed or chosen to enable pupils to develop the skills and abilities of being able to apply religious insights to an understanding of their own situations and experiences and to their own self-concept.

5. *An Ethnographic, 'Interpretative', Multi-faith Model*

It encourages pupils to focus upon personal knowledge and experiences which can be related to material from the religious traditions or the interactive nature of the pupil's engagement with the (religious) content. It also encourages pupils to use material from a religious tradition as a stimulus to reflecting upon matters of personal significance or concern. The model's strategy for achieving the above

involves engaging pupils in interpretative activities similar to those of the religious believer in order to gain insights into their way of life. The strategy also depends on the teacher having the skills to help pupils ‘to build bridges between the experiences of children in the stories and the experiences of children using the materials in school’ (Ibid: 39). Lastly, the pedagogical principle informing this model is that understanding how religious people and groups within the same religious tradition interpret and express their understanding of faith in a variety of ways requires pupils to become active interpreters of religious meaning making, not just passive observers or recipients of information about a tradition.

6. *A Revelation-Centred, Concept-Cracking, Trinitarian Christian Realist Model*

According to this Model, any kind of interaction between pupils and religious material should result in achieving accurate understanding of Christian beliefs and pupils’ understanding becoming ‘more closely accommodated to the doctrinal meaning of the text’ (Ibid: 42). To achieve this, teachers should use the ‘concept-cracking’ process in the teaching of Christian beliefs. The approach involves finding parallels between Christian beliefs and pupils’ experiences and using them to lead pupils to understanding Christianity and learning from it. The pedagogical principle underlying this Model is that both the educational and religious outcomes of RE are achieved when the subject provides children with an accurate understanding of what religious adherents believe, not when some personal, existential insight occurs which is not directly related to a tradition’s self-understanding.

7. *A Literacy-Centred, Critical Realist Model*

This model of RE is (was) still under development, but the following broad concerns have (had) been identified as those which it would need to incorporate:

- (i) a genuinely child-centred RE must begin with the principle that the child’s pre-understanding is a vital component to the learning process;

- (ii) RE must encourage children to explore and develop their own emergent religious viewpoints, not by expecting them merely to rely on their own individual preferences and inclinations but by actively challenging them to consider other options;
- (iii) the concern will be with the selection of an appropriate range of contrasting narratives that will enable the emergence (or development) of religious literacy (in the pupil).

8. *Constructivist Models of Teaching and Learning in RE*

Like the Literacy-Centred, Critical Realist Model, these models too are/were still under development. However, the pedagogical principles already articulated by some proponents of the model are centred around ‘the encouragement of pupils’ life-knowledge that is ... gained from experience ...[and] is communicated and refined through selective conversation with others’ (Ibid: 45). Their intention is also to further develop a pedagogy which enables pupils to construct links between their life-knowledge and formal religious concepts. A related but slightly different pedagogical strategy being developed by proponents at Birmingham University embodies the following constructivist principles of learning:

- (a) The item of religious content is always brought into a dynamic relationship with critical and reflective thought which pupils undertake as situated or contextualised individuals.
- (b) Any communication of information about the item of religious content on the part of the teacher is always related to the constructions that pupils are using, applying and articulating.
- (c) The sequence of learning is always from encouraging egocentric interpretations of experiencing within situated thought or pupils’ life-worlds through alternative contextualised interpretations (represented by other pupils’ or the teacher’s), to evaluative judgments about the interests which each interpretation serves and expresses.

Grimmitt's 2000 study is reviewed in detail because the various models of RE in the UK that he discusses form part of the main background to my own study of possible models of RE in modern/post-modern society in the first part of this thesis. The three questions which the author uses to compare the different models are important as they will be integrated into the guidelines I will use to analyse and discuss the possible models of RE today in chapter 3.

In his book entitled, *Spirituality and Education*, published in 2000, Andrew Wright critically discusses the problems of existing spiritual education or RE and the way forward. He first reviews the historical development of the subject in Britain, paying special attention to the 1988 Education Reform Act and the issues and trends it gave rise to. He then identifies the unresolved tension between inclusive and exclusive approaches to spiritual education as a key issue in the development of the subject.

The author describes inclusivism as proceeding by constructing a 'common denominator' model of spirituality that seeks to reflect commonly held spiritual assumptions, establish public consensus, and present a single coherent framework for spiritual education. He criticises this approach, suggesting that it fails to do justice to specific spiritual traditions, is unable to establish a viable model of learning, and side-steps the issue of spiritual truth. Similarly, Wright describes exclusivism as proceeding by attempting to establish a specific model of spirituality and avoid the seemingly purposelessness of inclusivism. In his criticism he points out that although there are different forms of exclusivism, they are all at best paternalistic and at worst indoctrinatory. The author then tries to explain the need for a critical pedagogy for an approach to spiritual education which would go beyond the inclusive-exclusive divide above. He advocates for a liberal spiritual education that would enable pupils to take critical responsibility for their own spiritual development.

In the last part of the book, Wright attempts to develop the kind of critical pedagogy for spiritual education which he is advocating. He begins by establishing and proposing the following five basic principles for spiritual education:

- (a) A challenge to the current malaise of spiritual education.

- (b) A move beyond the intrinsic-extrinsic or inclusivism-exclusivism impasse.
- (c) The development of critical awareness of ideology.
- (d) An assimilation of liberalism as an interim ethic (rather than as a closed world-view).
- (e) The replacement of educational foundationalism with a process-oriented pedagogy.

He then proposes a new agenda for critical spiritual education, stating that spiritual literacy is likely to be enhanced if the teaching of RE/spiritual education focuses on the following three issues:

- (a) The integrity of the various traditions within which human spiritual understanding is embodied.
- (b) The question of spiritual truth, embodying not merely human concerns about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, but also of the ultimate nature of reality.
- (c) A critical wisdom that transcends the modernist polarity of rationalistic sense and emotive sensibility.

Finally, the author goes on to suggest that effective spiritual education must balance a hermeneutic of nurture with a hermeneutic of critical thinking. This means that:

- (a) Education as nurture must take into account both national values and the specific spiritual tradition of the individual school community. This demands a self-conscious advocacy of each school's ethos and collective worship or shared assembly;
- (b) Spiritual education as nurture requires supplementing with a critical spiritual education which is a process of critical empowerment rooted in the search for truth and the recognition that spirituality is both a vital and controversial issue.

This second study by Wright is relevant to my study in two ways. Firstly, the stages of development in British RE which it describes are similar to those in the development of

Zambian RE which I will discuss in the second part of this study. Secondly, the author's criticism of the (current) inclusivism versus exclusivism impasse in RE and his advocacy for a new critical approach that goes beyond it is in line with what I will argue and propose as the way forward for Zambian RE.

In 2001, Andrew Wright followed up his 2000 study with an exploration of the contribution of liberal school RE to the well-being of liberal society as a whole. His argument in this work or article entitled, '*Religious Literacy and Democratic Citizenship*', is based on the following main claims:

- (a) Liberal RE seeks to develop public religious literacy and enhance liberal values.
- (b) Although liberal RE is effective in supporting liberal values of freedom of belief and respect for others, its commitment to the principle of reasoned argument is often overshadowed by its attempts to censor and combat religious intolerance.
- (c) The resulting failure to achieve a genuinely liberal RE is related to a tendency to approach liberalism as a world-view in need of protection, rather than as an interim or temporary ethic designed to enhance reasonable human discourse (and dialogue).
- (d) RE can best serve liberal democracy by developing a religiously literate society in which the value of rational dialogue is given priority over any opposition to and censorship of religious intolerance.

In explaining his argument, Wright states that the forms taken by liberal RE are as diverse as liberal democracy itself. He gives examples of France and the United States of America where the teaching of religion or RE in the public education system is officially not allowed as a way of ensuring that the value of freedom of belief even among learners is upheld. Other examples are England and Wales (and many countries in Europe and the Commonwealth) where liberal RE takes the form of a commitment to state-sponsored public RE for all. Here a liberal understanding of the nature and function of religious teaching is adopted and the task of the religious educator is not to advocate or nurture religious faith, but to promote the development of an informed and intelligent

understanding of religion, independent of the actual faith commitments of both teacher and pupil. In their different ways; exclusion from the curriculum in France and the United States and inclusion in the curriculum in England and Wales, both examples seek to uphold liberal values.

According to Wright, despite the promotion and upholding of the liberal values of freedom of belief and respect for others, liberal RE still has significant flaws in its fabric. Due to lack of a secure sense of its own identity, liberal RE has adopted defensive measures that have led to the repression of open debate. As such the subject is not yet liberal enough to guarantee the emergence of public religion literacy. Secondly, liberal RE's approach and methodology tend to view religions from an immanent rather than transcendent perspective; religion is seen as a dimension of human culture rather than as a response to divine revelation. Thus liberal RE has brought with it a negation of the question of realistic truth that is central to the major religious traditions of the world. Thirdly, in its concern to remain neutral towards the various religious truth-claims, liberal RE tends to misrepresent the self-understanding of these belief systems. Fourthly, liberal RE is inconsistent in that rather than following the standard liberal route or approach of seeking to enable children to engage intelligently with what constitutes authentic and inauthentic religion, liberal religious educators instead opt for protection of liberalism from the perceived threat of anti-liberal religionism or sectarianism. Liberal RE, therefore, does not only fail to attend to the diversity of possible religious representations but also fails to allow non-liberal representations a fair hearing. Thus despite the enormous strides forward or positive developments made by or in liberal RE in enhancing the quality of public religious literacy, the subject still exhibits tendencies and characteristics that undermine the very foundations of liberalism itself.

As a way forward, the author suggests that liberal education should discard a 'hard notion of liberalism' as a comprehensive worldview committed to its own distinctive beliefs and morality and adopt a 'soft notion of liberalism' as an interim political ethic committed to reasonable dialogue. He explains that in its hard form liberalism faces many threats posed by anti-liberal forces and needs protection through repression and censorship. But in its

soft form liberalism seeks to nurture the human quest for knowledge, wisdom and truth across contrasting and conflicting worldviews. Therefore, there should be a shift within RE from hard to soft forms of liberalism. The author further suggests and explains that the task of the kind of RE that supports a soft programmatic version of liberalism will be to uphold and nurture intelligent conversation between ‘religious and secular traditions of all persuasions and tendencies’ (Wright 2001: 215). Rather than being a process of advocacy, education will be a search for intelligence, wisdom, insight and literacy. In addition, such RE for religious literacy will enable children or learners to begin to develop the ability to ‘make their own way through the maze of what are frequently diverse, messy and contradictory religious options’ (Ibid). It will further enable children, who are the adults of tomorrow, to become responsible, open and literate in the way they deal with the ambiguity of religion in both its liberal and non-liberal manifestations. In short, the cultivation of religious literacy will be the fundamental contribution that liberal RE will make to the well-being of liberal, democratic society.

In this third study, Wright reiterates his criticism of the existing liberal approaches to RE in Britain and his advocacy for a new critical approach that can enhance religious literacy. Like his second study above, this too is important because its recommendations are in line with the religious literacy and critical understanding model of RE which this thesis will put forward as the most appropriate for Zambia. Of particular importance is the author’s proposal that modern RE should be a search for intelligence, wisdom, insight and literacy in the area of religion and values.

In its ‘Religion and Education in Britain’ section, *The Economist* (2001, December 8), argues that the Tony Blair (Labour) government plan to boost religion’s role in education by allocating more money to schools run by faith-based organizations, is controversial; this is because while people should be allowed to educate children according to whatever religion they choose, state-funded education is not supposed to be in the hands of religious organisations. While a state-financed education system should cater to everybody equally, irrespective of their faith, religious schools discriminate against people on the basis of their beliefs. Every religion believes that it has a monopoly on the

truth and presents itself as such. So by paying for religious schools the state is spending tax payer's money to help schools promote one set of beliefs over another. But interference either by suppressing or by promoting particular religions is not supposed to be the business of the state.

This short article's point that a state-financed education system in a multi-faith and democratic country should benefit everyone irrespective of faith is important as it is in line with the position I will adopt in this study. In a pluralistic society like Britain and Zambia where all religious traditions are equally important, the state should avoid funding private religious schools which cater for only some sections of society and only fund public schools which cater for all.

In 1997, Robert Jackson published a book entitled, *Religious Education: An Interpretive Approach*. After further research in the ethnographic and interpretive approach to RE in Britain, the book was later substantially revised in 2002. The author gives a constructive critique of phenomenological approaches, which have been common in British RE since the 1970s. He argues for an interpretive approach, drawing on ideas from anthropology and hermeneutics. He observes that although the old phenomenologists of religion had a deep concern for issues of understanding and interpretation, their methodologies cannot provide the basis for an approach to RE which considers material from different cultural contexts authentically in its own terms. A new or contemporary version of phenomenology (advanced by Waardenburgh) is then discussed, with the conclusion that although there are possibilities of using its methodology as a basis for RE, 'New Style' phenomenology is not transformed enough to represent 'user-friendly' interpretive approaches for the subject (RE). Jackson then points out that techniques from interpretive anthropology are better when it comes to reconstructing or elucidating the religious or cultural way of life of others. The interpretive approach suggests methods of studying religion in the field, for selecting material for the 'content' of RE and for developing methods to be used in the classroom. He adds that although criticisms of the interpretive approach have exposed some potential weaknesses (such as the possibility of the

interpreter's abuse of his or her authority through the way in which an account is written), they have, however, not offered any convincing alternative methodology.

After this the author presents a case for reviewing the ways in which world religions have traditionally been represented in RE. He argues that there is need to avoid approaches which posit universal 'essences' and entrap insiders or adherents within schematic formulations of key beliefs and concepts. He suggests that there should be more personal accounts (of religion) which link individual experience to social experience. He appeals for more attention to be given to the internal diversity of religious traditions and to religious phenomena that do not fit neatly into taxonomies based on the six major world religions (in Britain). He adds that there should be integrity, authenticity, sensitivity and sound methodology in representing and interpreting religious data and subject matter (which includes the people whose ways of life are being reported). The author further argues that representations of culture (in RE) as closed need to be rejected in favour of those which reveal their dynamism. More flexible models of the multi-cultural society need to be developed, emphasising communication and the exploration of 'overlapping' values which cohere with and feed into, the civic and legal apparatus of the state. He adds that in such models there should be no structural, or ethical barrier to reconciling cultural, religious and ethnic diversity with national identity and that the school as an institution and RE as a subject need to mirror these values and provide a forum for communication across religious and cultural divides, respectively.

Having presented the arguments above, Jackson then gives examples showing how some of the points on the interpretive approaches to the study of religions (and RE) have been addressed in practice. First, he gives a brief summary of ethnographic work with children from various religious backgrounds in Britain through which an outline sketch of religious life in the context of families and communities is given. Next, he describes the workings and output of the Warwick Curriculum Development Project which uses data from such ethnographic studies as its primary source material. In the last chapter of the book, the author discusses implications of an interpretive approach. He states that the aims of RE in a publicly funded school should be to develop an understanding of the

grammar or the language and wider symbolic patterns of religions and the interpretive skills necessary to gain that understanding.

In addition, the interpretive process (in RE) should result in edification and learning from religion. The author points out that due to the 'conversational' view or nature of interpretive RE, there should be a partnership or co-operation between professionals and insiders. The professionals; curriculum writers and teachers should have the final editorial role, while making the involvement or role of religious insiders clear. Lastly but not least, Jackson emphasises that if justice and fairness are to be promoted through publicly funded education, then the ideal form of RE in state-funded schools should be 'secular' but not 'secularist.' RE should be secular in the same way that India regards itself as a secular country, rather than a country promoting secularism (Ibid: 139). He explains, however, that there remains tension between an epistemology or approaches based on the authority of revelation and a view of knowledge or approaches based on reason and experience. While there is unlikely to be any way of overcoming this paradox and tension, the author suggests that a pragmatic solution is that in a democratic and multi-faith situation, those claiming the universal truth and application of a particular way of life should first acknowledge that there are other people who hold different beliefs and who have different ways of life.

This study by Jackson is relevant to my study because its critique of phenomenological approaches to RE in Britain will be incorporated into my own critique of the phenomenological model of RE. The interpretive approach to the subject which the author proposes and argues for also forms part of the background to the religious literacy and critical understanding model of RE which I will propose and recommend for Zambia. Also relevant are his recommendations that the aims of RE in publicly funded schools should be to develop understanding of religions, their language and symbolic patterns, and that there should be co-operation between the professional religious educators and religious insiders in the development or production of RE materials. This study will fully subscribe to these views or recommendations in its discussion and analysis of Zambian RE.

Like Robson (1996) and *The Economist* (2001), William K. Kay (2002), critically discussed issues of political involvement and government policy in British RE. The author dwelt on political perspectives on church schools and RE during the period from Prime Minister Thatcher to Blair. He points out that in democratic countries such as Britain, politicians and educationalists often understand RE quite differently. While educationalists may argue the merits of the subject on philosophical grounds and concern themselves with issues of confessionalism or indoctrination, politicians consider RE valuable because it is seen as helping to improve children's morality, enhance the cultural identity of religious minorities and foster cultural pluralism. The author then contrasts the Conservative and Labour parties' understanding of church schools and RE. Conservative politicians see church schools as being an example of parental choice and RE as being an aid to moral education, while Labour politicians see both church schools and RE as contributing to a pluralistic society and aiding the cultural identity of ethnic groups. His conclusion, however, is that provided RE can be seen to offer morality, citizenship and cultural identity in addition to what it offers about religion, the subject is likely to be acceptable to politicians of all colours (and parties) except those who are determinedly secularist.

Kay's conclusion that British RE should be seen to offer morality, citizenship, and cultural identity in addition to the understanding of religion is partly relevant to what my study will recommend for Zambian RE. This will be on the basis that the Zambian national policy on education recommends the promotion of spiritual, moral and civic values by the curriculum, especially RE. However, moral education (ME) or moral values will be recommended only as part of the critical understanding of religions, not as a specific aim of RE. As much as possible, ME and RE should be treated as different subjects and not one.

The last relevant study reviewed under this (British/Commonwealth) category of literature is Robert Jackson's 2003 article entitled, '*Citizenship as a Replacement for Religious Education or RE as a Contributor to Citizenship Education?*' He points out that one of the lively debates (in the UK) that has resulted from social and intellectual

pluralism at the turn of the millennium concerns moral and religious education and education for citizenship. The author goes on to state the main points of David Hargreaves's argument that multi-faith RE should be replaced with citizenship education in secular or public schools, while denominational RE should continue in state-funded religious schools. Multi-faith or non-denominational RE in secular schools cannot serve as a buttress to moral education because religion is no longer as central as Christianity used to be in British society in the past.

The author then points out that Hargreaves's argument is flawed and tries to show that RE has a great deal to offer to citizenship education, for example through critical analysis of religion in relation to concepts such as ethnicity, community and nationality, and by providing various skills relevant to understanding social plurality. RE has some distinctive contributions to offer to the debates about national and global citizenship. He further argues that RE in common or public schools should help young people, at their own level, to participate in relevant debates so that they are equipped for the kind of intercultural and inter-religious communication that is necessary for the health of pluralistic and democratic societies (like Britain).

This second study by Jackson is important because of its criticism of Hargreaves's view that there should be state-funded denominational RE in religious schools. The criticism is in line with my own criticism, in the first part of the thesis, of the (British) policy of using taxpayers' money to fund some religious schools. The author's argument that RE has an important contribution to make towards citizenship education and to the health of pluralistic and democratic societies like Britain is valid and relevant to this study on the Zambian RE situation. The nature of educational, multi-faith RE today is such that it equips learners with skills relevant to understanding social plurality and global citizenship.

2.4 American Studies

Since the United States of America is outside the Commonwealth, the American studies surveyed are slightly different from the African and British/Commonwealth studies in terms of the issues they discuss with regard to RE. However, Zambia is a democratic and pluralistic society like the USA and some issues affecting RE in both countries are likely to be similar. The three studies surveyed here mainly discuss the role of religion (Christianity) in education and are concerned that religious beliefs and values are not adequately taught to young people, mainly due to the Constitutional separation between church and state and the prohibition of religion in American public schools. They recommend that there should be provisions within the state or public education system to allow for the transmission of religious or Christian beliefs and values. Although religion is legally allowed in Zambian schools, some tension still exists between religion (religious groups/churches) and the state on the nature of RE. So these issues raised by the American studies are already part of the challenges of Zambian RE as it undergoes further development.

The first study for our purpose here is that of Gabriel Moran (1994), who discussed two different ways in which religious education can be spoken about in the USA (and probably other countries too). He called the two ways or languages 'ecclesiastical' and 'educational'. He pointed out that the first had the value of concreteness, though it had the danger of parochialism. On the other hand, the second only existed in inchoate form and needed the concreteness which religious traditions and institutions such as the church, synagogue or mosque could bring to it. While not advocating an abandonment of the ecclesiastical language or approach for the educational one, the author opposed the reduction of religious education to the language of the church or mosque.

In examining the two languages further, Moran points out that the ecclesiastical language of religious education is governed by the relation of theology (which includes the Christian scriptures) to catechetics or Christian education. Nothing is allowed into the syllabus or content of catechetics and or Christian education unless approved by theology. The main thing or subject of the ecclesiastical form of religious education is the meaning of theology. Thus the ecclesiastical form of religious education has two

components namely, theology and catechetics or Christian education. However, theology stands outside the discussion or examination of this form of religious education and merely dictates the content to be used. Although there is usually rich religious material in theology such as Jewish and Christian scriptures which can be quite effective, there is more to education than a body of material called content. The institutional structure is itself educative or mis-educative and the controlled church (or religious) structure under which catechetics or Christian education operates is educationally unhelpful. The author therefore proposes that the study of religion needs to be placed in an educational context rather than an ecclesiastical one.

Secondly, Moran explains that the educational language of religious education refers to education in religion. Education in religion is governed by the problematic relationship between the two areas; education and religion. While religion breaks out of the ordinary, what is ordered, controlled and fixed as the world, education is concerned with bringing experience, concentrates upon the ordinary and tends to heighten the rational or controlling element of experience. The closer one gets to true religious education (RE), the greater becomes the tension between the two worlds. The author goes on to state and briefly explain three aspects of education in religion.

- (a) *The study of a specific religion from within* – The word ‘within’ here does not imply introversion or defensiveness, but rather the appreciation of things or a religion’s beliefs and traditions for their own unique selves.
- (b) *The study of religion ‘from a distance’* – As one component of a religious education programme, the study with distancing is crucial. The best place to engage in this form of religious education is the public sector of education where the state is rightfully against the imposition of prayers and proselytisation by any religious group or tradition. Since the great majority of children go to public schools, it would be to the churches’ or religious traditions’ advantage to hand over the control of religious education to public education and schools. However, the author maintains that the two common phrases: ‘teach about religion’ and ‘the objective teaching of religion’ used in literature to refer to religious education in public

schools are not very helpful because the best way to get rid of proselytisation is to 'teach religion' or to examine the issues of religion in a critical and unbiased way.

- (c) *The practice of religious life* – This refers to prayer and social action that every religious person, including learners, is supposed to engage in. This part of religious education is neither studied nor taught directly. The education in this area is more indirect than in the previous two aspects or elements of Education in religion. There is an element of privacy or intimacy that has to be respected here. This area of religious education is closely related to catechetics or Christian education and could easily be called as such. The author further explains that since practice is/should be at the centre of education, practice of religious life through prayer and social action can enrich Education in religion by bringing into it the contemplative and the protest against injustice.

Finally, Moran concludes his article by challenging religious education (RE) to save what Christians (religious people) most value from their past but open doors for the future, and to help people speak and live the truth they know while removing the intolerance that is embedded in their religious language.

Moran's study is important because the 'ecclesiastical' and 'educational' languages or approaches to RE which he describes are applicable to the current Zambian situation. Some Zambians, including religious educators, regard RE as having religious aims while others see it as having educational aims. This study will criticise the view that Zambian RE should have religious aims and emphasise the opposite view (that it should be educational). The author's proposals that the study of religion should be placed in an educational context rather than an ecclesiastical one, and that religious traditions should consider handing over control of RE to public education or schools, are relevant to what this study will recommend concerning the relationship between religious groups and the Ministry of Education in Zambia. In a multi-religious society like Zambia and the USA, it is important that religious traditions are studied according to educational principles in secular, public schools, if religious tolerance and harmony are to be promoted.

The second study is by Joseph P. Viteritti (1996), who briefly discusses the delicate relationship between religion, the constitution and the schools (education) in the USA. He points out that in the beginning education in almost all the states of the USA was regarded as inseparable from religious instruction and the clergy were supposed to provide both. However, the establishment clause in the First Amendment to the American Constitution which aimed at preventing the state from establishing a national religion ended up creating a 'wall of separation' between church and state, church and public school or simply religious instruction and secular education. Thus public money allocated for education belonged to the public school system and families wanting to provide children with an education reflecting their religious values (in parochial or religious schools) were not entitled to it. To make matters worse for such families, public schools have been transformed into vehicles of a secularist orthodoxy instead of remaining neutral on questions of religious faith and values.

The author further observes that the American public mood in the 1990s seemed not to be in favour of continued strict separation between religion/church and state and that a process of accommodation or reconciliation seemed to be under way. He urges all those who still adhere to the liberal tradition of tolerance to defend religious freedom in schools, which he refers to as the last frontier of freedom.

Viteritti concludes his discussion by reiterating that while government-run schools should remain secular, there should be alternative arrangements within the state-imposed educational standards to allow devoutly religious American families to educate their children in a setting that supports their (religious) values and convictions just like in other democratic nations.

There are two important points to note from this study. Firstly, in order to avoid the development or endorsement of a secularist orthodoxy, there is need for some kind of RE in public, state-run schools in pluralistic and democratic societies, including Zambia. Secondly, in order to ensure that state-run schools remain secular and equitable in

orientation, any RE programme developed for such schools should be multi-faith, impartial and fair to all.

However, the study's weakness lies in its advocacy for a system where the state supports or funds educational settings (or schools and colleges) where children of religiously devout Americans can learn and have their religious values and convictions supported. In pluralistic countries like the USA and Zambia, the state should not give such support to sectarian educational institutions because religion and the state are normally separated by the constitution. State-run schools too are not supposed to be used to promote the religious beliefs and values of any specific religious group.

The last study reviewed here is that of Carolyn D. Herrington (2000) who explores how the USA's educational reform movement's focus on curriculum standards, academic rigour and a larger role for the state may be failing to connect with the religious communities that place greater value on instruction in morality, strong interpersonal relations and ethos of individual responsibility. He points out that in the hyper-pluralist USA, the role of religion in public schooling has always been part of a larger conversation or debate about the relationship between schooling and society. This is because the debate about the curriculum is usually seen as a debate about what it means to be an American. The author then shows from research findings what traditional Christians (among Protestants, Catholics, and 'Born-again') think about public schools. While only 27% of the general population think it would be beneficial for the schools to reintroduce prayer (as opposed to moments of silence), 62% of traditional Christian parents think this (prayer) would in fact be useful. While about 47% of Americans think the schools should teach the Ten Commandments, three-quarters (75%) of traditional Christian parents strongly support their (Ten Commandments) teaching. Similarly, while only 39% of the general population objects to the teaching about non-Christian religions, 53% of the traditional Christian parents believe that their inclusion in the curriculum syllabus is actually not appropriate.

He concludes his exploration or discussion by stating that there is a serious disconnection between the values of a large segment of the American religious (Christian) community and the public school reforms agenda of professional educators (and political leaders), a situation that needs to be remedied.

Herrington's survey of Americans' views on the teaching of religion in public schools is similar to the third part of this study in which I will survey Zambians' views on current RE syllabuses. Another important and relevant issue raised by the author is the need for consultation of interest groups if educational reforms (including RE) are to succeed. Professional educators should not completely ignore the views of interest groups and parents.

However, the study is weak because it excludes the views of other religious traditions apart from Christianity. My study will therefore be more complete as it will include the views of not only the main religious traditions, but those of other interest groups in Zambia also.

In this chapter, I have surveyed as much literature related to the topic/problem as possible, noting key points, conclusions and recommendations by various authors and researchers. I have also highlighted and critically commented on the relevant points or issues raised by the various studies. In the next chapter (the third), I critically examine models of RE that are possible or in existence in modern/post-modern society, thereby setting the theoretical stage for further analysis of issues in later chapters.

CHAPTER 3

MODELS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN MODERN/POST-MODERN SOCIETY

In order to further lay the theoretical framework for the rest of the thesis, I will now critically discuss three main models and approaches to RE that are possible in modern/post-modern societies today. These are the Confessional, Implicit and Faith-Nurture Models, the Explicit, Phenomenological, Religious Understanding Models, and what I have referred to as the Religious Literacy and Critical Understanding Model. I should mention from the beginning, though, that I am discussing the Confessional and Phenomenological models of RE as ideal types. Admittedly, these models are not clear cut as different people have used or applied them differently. Nevertheless, the two models remain possible approaches to the subject to-date. I will also briefly discuss three examples of national policies on RE adopted in other countries before winding up the chapter.

In the description and analysis of the three models of RE above, I will use the following guidelines adapted from Rummery (1975), Greer (1982), Scott (1994) and Grimmitt (2000): Aims of RE, Conceptual framework or Description of the model, Educational process, role of the teacher in and pedagogical procedures and principles of the model, and Strengths and Weakness of the model in modern education.

3.1 Confessional, Implicit Faith-Nurture Models

The confessional, faith-nurture approach to RE is the oldest and perhaps goes as far back as the beginning of state-sponsored public education after the Enlightenment and beginning of Modernity in Europe. However, in its 'implicit RE' form, the model dates back only to the 1960s when attempts were made by religious educators, notably in Britain, to go beyond the educational weaknesses of open confessionalism. This was partly due to Ronald Goldman's (1964 and 1965) ground-breaking work which showed that the confessional teaching of Biblical and theological material to young learners was inappropriate because children were psychologically and intellectually not ready for such

teaching and material. Nevertheless, the model's aims remained the induction and nurture of pupils in the Christian faith (Wright 1993: 16).

3.1.1 *Aims*

The confessional model of RE aims at instructing pupils into the beliefs and values of one religion (e.g. Christianity), initiating learners into a religious heritage or transmitting the (religious) heritage, passing on religious and moral values, handing on the symbols of the religious tradition and deepening or nurturing faith, loyalty and commitment in and to that religious tradition. According to Scott (1994: 278), these aims of confessionalism are 'an inducement [of learners] to accept and to make their own, the faith, loyalty, piety and cognitive perspective of the main stream church as, presently understood and practiced.' In other words, on one level, confessionalism is 'denominational education in the faith' (Ibid). The confessional model of RE also assumes that all learners are Christians, Muslims, Jews etc., or that they are all adherents of the same religious tradition. Emphasis is therefore on the teaching from the Bible, the Koran or other scriptures concerned with the fundamental or main doctrines or beliefs of the religious tradition concerned. So on another level, confessionalism can be said to be ecumenical education in the faith. However, in both confessionalism and neo-confessionalism, the logical proof that the teaching has been successful is loyalty, commitment and practice of one's religion.

3.1.2 *Conceptual framework (or Description)*

In its conservative form, the confessional model of RE takes as its frame of reference service in and on behalf of the church. This means that it is 'catechesis ...which is set in the framework of Church ministry' (Ibid: 278). 'Its constitutive interest is to awaken, nourish and develop one [the learner's] personal belief ...and build up the ecclesial body' (Ibid: 277). Thus although the model claims to respect other traditions, it actually sticks to its own religious or faith tradition in terms of content and coverage. And being concerned, as it is, with conservation and transmission of tradition, the confessional model is generally authoritative and dogmatic (in approach).

In its liberal form, confessionalism is equivalent to implicit RE which is ‘neo-confessional’¹ in that it is open to all forms of religion though still keen to have religion understood and appreciated within its own tradition (Rummery 1975: 157). Implicit RE or neo-confessionalism is also less authoritative and dogmatic as it starts from and takes account of pupils’ own experience and perspectives on issues under discussion (Wright 1993: 16). As such, the liberal form of the confessional model of RE takes as its frame of reference service on behalf of both the church and the state. In other words, although induction and nurture in a specific religious faith remains liberal confessionalism’s aim, the model is also interested in the promotion of some general awareness of religious truth and how religion (such as Christianity) responds to the pupils’ own existential issues, problems and every day questions.

3.1.3 Educational process, role of the teacher and pedagogical principles and procedures

Naturally, the conservative, catechetical form of the confessional model requires religious belief and commitment on the part of the teacher. In the Christian tradition, for example, he or she is expected to be someone who is ‘a believer and worshipper, endowed with [both] parental and the Church’s own mandate [to teach]’ (Rummery 1975: 157). Consequently, teachers or religious educators under this model consider their work to include ‘initiation, adaptation, transmission, translation [and] Church [religious group] maintenance’ (Scott 1994: 278). Thus as indicated in the aims above, the educational or teaching and learning process under the model amounts to faith nurture, evangelisation and conversion. It includes teaching and learning faith tradition doctrines, beliefs and moral values from the Bible, the Koran or other scriptures concerned. It also includes activities such as worship, prayer, and hymn singing.

¹ The difference between confessionalism and neo-confessionalism is that while the former refers to instruction in particular beliefs to the exclusion of others, the latter attempts to become more acceptable by tolerating other world religions ‘as extras to the officially approved viewpoint [or religion], ...improving methods and techniques in accordance with the findings of educational research, and...constructing syllabuses based on the capacities, needs and interests of the pupils’ (Schools Council 1971: 30).

In its liberal form, the confessional model takes the teacher to be someone who is a committed person in the dominant faith tradition, though open to all aspects of religious thought and life. He or she therefore initiates pupils into the faith and transmits its beliefs and values to them, but he or she also subjects this process of initiation and transmission to some educational principles. Thus it partly concerns itself with other dimensions of religion, though emphasis is still on the doctrinal and the moral. It makes some critical appraisal of tradition so that while respecting the authority of the religious tradition's teaching, it does not do so uncritically. The model also upholds the public duty of the state to transmit to successive generations certain moral and religious values assumed to be important to the continued coherence and unity of society (Slee 1989: 127). It is therefore interested in the development of genuine, though limited, autonomy in the pupils and in encouraging some free religious commitment on their part.

The kind of interaction between pupils and the religious material which the confessional model of RE envisions taking place is in line with its aims for the subject, i.e., initiating pupils into one religious tradition (e.g. the Christian tradition) and nurturing faith, loyalty and commitment to its beliefs and values. So the pupils' engagement with the syllabus material should enable them to gain knowledge awareness and understanding of that religious tradition and the meaning of its teaching or the need for total commitment to its doctrines beliefs and values. The pedagogical procedures or strategies used by the model to achieve this revolve around direct instruction by the teacher on the creeds, corner stone beliefs and traditions of the denomination or religious group and the study of scriptures on selected themes or topics. Thus by receiving catechetical instruction on the creeds and dogmas of a faith tradition, pupils acquire knowledge of the key beliefs which form the foundation of faith in the religious tradition concerned.

By reading and discussing scriptural texts on carefully selected themes and topics and receiving further instruction or guidance from the teacher, the pupils begin to gain awareness and understanding of the meaning of the religious tradition's teaching on various aspects of life, especially moral conduct. This awareness and understanding is

often reinforced by actual prayer and worship within the school or classroom. Therefore, it becomes easy for many pupils, especially those coming from a religious background, to develop commitment to the faith.

From the foregoing, the main pedagogical principle informing the confessional model of RE can be stated as follows: Learning and teaching in RE should promote personal or subjective forms of knowledge and understanding (Grimmitt 2000: 17). RE should enable the pupil to understand religion from within; he or she should be helped to gain full appreciation and understanding of his or her own religion.

3.1.4 *Strengths (or positive aspects)*

Although generally frowned upon in educational circles in modern/post modern pluralist societies, the confessional, faith-nurture model of RE possesses a number of positive characteristics. To begin with, it upholds ‘both the democratic right of the individual to religious freedom and the public duty of the state to transmit to successive generations certain moral and religious values... assumed to be essential to the continued coherence of society’ (Slee 1989: 127). Many modern and post-modern nations are religiously and culturally plural and, therefore, have constitutions and laws which guarantee religious freedom for every citizen. The state in these nations also has a duty to promote civic, moral and religious values which contribute to the maintenance of a peaceful and coherent society. Religions and religious values have a big role to play in the creation and maintenance of such a society. It therefore, seems that the confessional approach to RE whereby the beliefs and values of different religious traditions are taught in public schools is important; it ensures that individuals (pupils and parents) enjoy their religious freedoms, and also that crucial moral and religious values needed for peace and national unity, are transmitted to future generations through the education system. Related to the foregoing is the point that the confessional model of RE has and continues to serve as ‘the means whereby successive generations... [are] initiated into the cultures to which they belong’ (Ibid). ‘It [also] functions as a reminder that there is a place for passing on the past in religious education’ (Scott 1994: 279).

As often argued, there is a close relationship between religion and culture. There is also a relationship between a society or nation's public way of life and the beliefs and values of its predominant religious tradition(s). Naturally too, society would like to preserve itself and maintain its cultural identity. So the need to pass on or transmit its social, cultural and religious values and traditions from one generation to another through public education (including RE) cannot be overemphasised. As such, the confessional model of RE with its emphasis on 'provid[ing] people [or learners] with the experience of belonging to a community' (Ibid: 278), seems to be a good and effective avenue for the transmission of social, cultural, civic, moral, religious and national values and traditions by the state.

Another point of strength in the confessional model of RE lies in its resistance to rationalistic tendencies of modern education at the expense of the non-rational or affective aspects of life. It is a recognised fact that after the dawn of the Modern Era in the 15th century in Europe, there was a movement in educational circles from all that was traditional and conservative towards what was modern, scientific and associated with critical thinking. This 'rationalisation' of education continued even into what has been called post-modernity in the Western world, though general rationalisation and the entire mind-set of modernity is increasingly being questioned and criticised (Wright 2000: 21-22). In educational circles such questioning is partly due to a renewed realisation that true education should be holistic and lead to an all-round development in the pupil, rather than cognitive and intellectual development only. So the confessional or catechetical model of RE, with its 'deep devotion to cumulative tradition, ritual ...[,] contemplation, life-long development and the particularity of ... people' (Ibid: 279), contributes greatly to reducing the rationalistic tendencies in education and addressing the affective aspects of learning which often seem to be neglected by the over intellectualisation of the curriculum. It also cannot be denied that there is some wisdom in the past or cumulative tradition, which can provide solutions to some of the problems faced by society today. Contemplation and devotion can equally be 'vital resources in education today' (Ibid) as they can bring a sense of seriousness in the teaching and learning process.

Related to the aspect of promoting life-long development as a positive characteristic of the confessional model of RE is the nurture of religious development (Ibid). As traditionally understood and commonly stated, the main aim of RE in most Commonwealth and English-speaking countries is to contribute to the spiritual, moral, [social], cultural, mental and physical development of pupils (Slee 1989: 126). As can be seen, this is a broad aim which does not only include nurture of religious development above, but also encompasses most other curriculum subjects' specific aims. This, therefore, means that the aim(s) of school education in general and RE in particular cannot be fully achieved without some form of confessionalism in the education or teaching and learning process. After all 'Christian nurture and liberal education are not necessarily incompatible' (Thiessen 1993: 207), and 'criticism [liberal education] without dogmatism [confessionalism] is empty' (Hull *et al* 1994: 272; Simuchimba 1997: 14).

3.1.5 *Weaknesses (or limitations)*

The above arguments in favour of the confessional model of RE do not, of course, mean that the model has no weaknesses or limitations. Perhaps the main flaw of this model in a pluralistic society is its inherent injustice towards learners from other religious traditions. Since, as explained above, the aim of the model is to initiate pupils into a particular religion, the participation of pupils or learners from other religious traditions or none in school RE means that they will literally be forced to abandon their beliefs and to adopt those into which the class is being initiated. This is not only a violation of the learners' fundamental human rights (especially that of freedom of conscience), but it is also dictatorial and undemocratic. As Grimmitt (1987: 39) puts it: 'the divine authority by which particular values and beliefs are given an absolute and normative status in one religious tradition cannot be assumed to be prescriptive for others.' Thus Christian values and beliefs, for example, cannot be regarded as superior to Muslim, Hindu, Baha'i or African Traditional values and beliefs and be imposed on learners from such backgrounds. Every pupil's religious (and secular) background should be respected.

A related weakness of the confessional approach to RE is that since major religious traditions, especially Christianity, are internally divided, some pupils will always be marginalised. If Christianity which, as well known, is divided into several hundred denominations or churches is taught, which interpretation of the religion is to be taught? If Catholicism prevails, Protestant learners will be marginalised and vice-versa. If an ecumenical or 'agreed syllabus' is attempted within Protestantism, the bigger churches' interpretations are likely to prevail over those of the smaller churches, thereby marginalising learners from the latter. The problem is even worse where there is an established state religion or church, most of whose beliefs and values all pupils, including non-members, have to learn. So whichever way one looks at it, the confessional model of RE is divisive, discriminatory and therefore inappropriate in a pluralistic society.

Another big weakness of the model is that it does not honour and is not fully compatible with the values and principles of modern liberal education, which include 'openness, enquiry, freedom [rationality], and the critical spirit' (Scott 1994: 279). Due to its confessional or catechetical aims, content and general conservative nature, the confessional model of RE cannot easily embrace and employ all the principles and critical methodologies of liberal education without threatening itself. Since, as earlier explained, one major aim of confessionalism is to nurture and deepen religious faith and commitment, it cannot, without difficulty, at the same time promote the critical spirit which could easily undermine such faith, commitment and loyalty to the religious tradition being studied. Similarly, the confessional approach to RE cannot easily allow openness and freedom or autonomy in the educational process as it could predispose pupils towards disloyalty, lack of commitment and possible change of religious affiliation. Therefore, although it can be said that there is a 'fair balance of both [the] religious and educational' especially in neo-confessionalism (Rummery 1975: 157), the model is educationally unsatisfactory for modern/post-modern liberal society. If the confessional model of RE is educationally unsatisfactory for modern/post-modern societies, then it is also socially inadequate. Due to the growth of scientific and technological knowledge, capitalism, industrialisation, urbanisation and migration, there have been 'fundamental shifts ...in the composition and identity of our world cultures'

(Slee 1989: 127). As a result of this cultural transformation, modern/post-modern societies or nations have become increasingly plural culturally, religiously, politically and socially. With efficient transport and communication systems and improved international relations, the world seems to be irreversibly developing into the proverbial global village. As such, the confessional model of RE, with its conservative, exclusive and in-ward looking tendencies, is often not only inadequate but also an 'illusory' and a 'misguided' approach to education in such a society (Ibid: 131).

A related but slightly different problem with the confessional model of RE is that it 'tends to conceal awareness of a larger world of religious diversity and to lack a public character to build bridges of communication with it' (Scott 1994: 279). As explained earlier, confessional RE involves the teaching and learning of the beliefs, moral values and doctrines of a particular religious or faith tradition. This exclusive focus on one form of religion (e.g. Christianity) alone is likely to do little or nothing at all to help pupils to become aware of the reality of the existence of religions other than their own, both within and outside their society. Yet modern RE is often seen as providing a unique opportunity and platform for interfaith dialogue in multi-faith societies (Simuchimba 1997: 33). Thus the confessional model of RE often fails to provide such an opportunity and platform (for dialogue) because of its intent on evangelisation, faith-nurture and conversion in the teaching and learning process. Confessionalism is frequently not open and flexible enough to facilitate meaningful communication and interchange between different religious traditions.

The foregoing argument brings us to another related limitation of the confessional approach to RE; that it can lead to fanaticism and prejudice. For example, by aiming at the 'induction and nurture [of pupils] in a Christian faith and value system' (Wright 1993:16), and insisting on 'understanding from within [Christianity]' (Rummery 1975: 157), the confessional model of RE 'can turn the mind of a denomination [or Christian tradition] upon itself as a standard for itself' (Scott 1994:280). Such a situation would be very conducive for the emergence and growth of Christian fanaticism, fundamentalism, and prejudice against people holding non-Christian views, beliefs and values. Needless,

therefore, to say that the consequences of confessionalism can be dangerous in modern/post-modern multi-faith and multi-cultural societies.

3.2 The Phenomenological, Explicit, Religious Understanding Model

As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, I am describing and evaluating the phenomenological model of RE in its original form. This is because it has undergone so much change that it would not be possible within the limitations of this thesis to describe and analyse the model in all its forms. So some of the criticisms raised here may no longer apply. However, for countries like Zambia where RE is still behind in terms of educational development, the issues raised are relevant and helpful.

The origin and development of the phenomenological, religious understanding model of RE can be traced back to the 1970s (in Britain). It developed as a response to both the increasingly pluralistic or multi-faith nature of society and liberal thinking in educational circles, which started back in the 1960s. The educationists' dissatisfaction with confessionalism and faith nurture then did not only lead to the emergence of implicit, confessional RE, but also to the development of what became known as the phenomenological model. This section, therefore, focuses on its details.

3.2.1 *Aims*

Given such a background, the aims of the phenomenological model and approach to RE are to initiate pupils into a sympathetic, descriptive understanding of religion through the study of a variety of religious traditions (Slee 1989: 128; Wright 1993: 17). Further, phenomenological RE aims at creating in pupils certain capacities to understand and think about religion in its different dimensions (Smart 1968: 90). According to Cox (1966: 68) and the (British) Schools Council (1971), the model also wants:

...to help pupils to understand the nature of ...present secular, pluralistic society, to think rationally about the state and place of religion in it, to enable them to choose objectively and on sound criteria between the many conflicting religious statements that are made in a pluralistic society, and to work out for themselves, and to be able cogently to defend, their own religious position or their rejection of the possibility of having one.

In other words, rather than advocating and encouraging commitment to one religion the purpose of phenomenological RE is to bring about an objective understanding of different belief systems, including secular or non-religious ones like Humanism. In the process of bringing about this understanding, the model also hopes 'to foster greater appreciation of one's [pupil's] own religious life and less misunderstanding of other people's (Scott 1994: 285). The model pointedly makes no specific demand for acceptance or rejection of religious commitment on the pupil.

3.2.2 *Conceptual framework*

As can be deduced from the name, the phenomenological model of RE mainly uses principles and techniques derived from the phenomenological approach to the study of religion. Grimmitt (1987: 209-210) identifies three such principles at work in the model's approach to RE as follows: exploration of religions from the point of view of those who are adherents; 'bracketing' out one's own beliefs, values, questions and experiences in studying and understanding religions; and evaluation of a religious tradition, only in terms of the self-understanding of that tradition. Similarly, Slee (1989: 128) describes the phenomenological model as an approach which 'advocates the temporary 'bracketing out' of the student's own beliefs, ideas and presuppositions, and the exercise of an imaginative empathy in order to enter into the experience and self-understanding of the religious believer.' This means that the model is descriptive and evaluative rather than authoritative and dogmatic. The model is also more intellectually and cognitively inclined than experientially and affectively inclined. It emphasises objective rather than subjective understanding of religion.

In a democratic and pluralistic society, the state through the education system wants to promote, among other attitudes and values, respect and tolerance for other people's views and beliefs, co-existence, mutual understanding and harmonious living. The same attitudes and values underly the phenomenological approach to RE in schools. Therefore, one can say that the model takes as its frame of reference service mainly on behalf of the state and its secular and religiously neutral education system. Some liberal

religious and faith traditions are also likely to see the phenomenological approach to RE as serving the useful purpose of promoting intra- and inter-religious understanding and ecumenism which are necessary in modern multi-faith societies.

3.2.3 *Educational process, role of the teacher and pedagogical process and principles*

Unlike confessionality, the phenomenological model of RE does not require or demand religious commitment on the part of the teacher. He or she may be committed but does not allow his or her commitment to interfere with the educational process. Thus the teacher's work is to present the subject or religious material in a fair and objective manner, while taking care not to offend any pupil's religious viewpoints and beliefs (Rummary 1975: 157). His or her role is not to nurture faith and initiate pupils into the beliefs and values of any particular religion, but to facilitate objective understanding of the different religious traditions, their beliefs, values and practices. Proselytising, conversion, evangelising and dogmatising are not part of the educational or teaching and learning process under the phenomenological model of RE. Rather, the process is largely descriptive and involves describing and discussing religion in terms of the six² major aspects suggested by Smart (1968: 15-18), namely: the doctrinal, mythological, ethical, ritual, experiential, and social (dimensions). Alternatively, religion is described in terms of typological themes such as founders, festivals, sacred places, holy books and pilgrimages, or rite of passage themes such as birth, initiation, marriage and death. Specially prepared RE textbooks covering the six dimensions of the religion being studied are used for reference but where possible, and depending on the topic, the actual scriptures or holy books are referred to.

As indicated in 3.2.2 above, this description and discussion requires that both teacher and pupil temporarily put aside their personal views, beliefs and values so that the teacher can effectively serve as an impartial presenter and moderator and the pupil can 'gain access to a universal religious experience and the different worlds of other

² As part of continued development of the phenomenological model and the dimensional approach to teaching about religions, Smart later added a seventh major aspect called the *material and artistic* dimension (Smart 1989; Watson 1993: 44).

religions' (Scott 1994: 284). The impartial or fair description, discussion and evaluation is supposed to enable the pupil to understand different religions from the point of view of the believers, adherents or insiders of those religious traditions. Going together with the phenomenological description and discussion of religious traditions are subsidiary processes of self-reflection, open encounter and mutual exchange, which do not only make dialogue among the pupils possible, but also lead to the shifting and enrichment of pupils' personal experiences and standpoints (Ibid).

The kind of interaction between pupils and the syllabus content or material that phenomenological RE envisages taking place is in line with the three main phenomenological principles mentioned earlier. Firstly, pupils should engage with the religious content with the intention of studying the self-understanding of religious traditions by bracketing personal views, opinions and beliefs and resisting evaluation of the traditions. Secondly, engagement with the religious content should enable pupils to develop or acquire capacities that will enable them to understand or become aware of the influence of religion in human life, society, culture and the people's way of life. Thirdly, studying the syllabus or religious content should lead to rational thinking, consideration of relevant facts and choice of a religious or non-religious position based on those facts. In order to achieve this kind of interaction, the phenomenological model of RE deploys Smart's six dimensional approach to the study of religions as the main pedagogical strategy. By studying, describing or analysing a religious tradition in terms of its doctrinal, mythological, ethical, ritual, experiential and social dimensions while bracketing their own views and opinions, pupils come to understand the beliefs and practices of the tradition almost in the same way as adherents do. But they also acquire skills and abilities that enable them to begin to understand the influence of religion on culture, society and individual or personal lives. By 'providing a broad conceptual framework of religion which emphasises the similarities between religions' (Grimmitt 2000: 28), the phenomenological model also makes it possible for pupils to acquire knowledge of different religious traditions and to treat them as of equal value or importance. Another pedagogical strategy deployed by the phenomenological approach to RE is the use of typological themes such as founders, festivals, sacred

places, holy books, pilgrimages, etc., and rite of passage themes such as birth, initiation, marriage and death in the study of religions (Grimmitt 1987: 229). By examining religious material or content in terms of these themes, pupils come to gain accurate knowledge and understanding of different religious traditions under study and can use this to think and make rational decisions and choices in the area of religious life. Studying religion in terms of rite of passage themes which, as can be seen, are cultural in orientation also helps pupils to become more aware of the influence of religion on their culture and way of life.

From the foregoing, it seems clear that the pedagogical principle informing the phenomenological approach to RE is that 'learning and teaching in ... [the subject] should promote both academic and personal forms of knowledge and understanding' (Grimmitt 2000: 27).

3.2.4 *Strengths*

Although the phenomenological approach to RE has received a lot of criticism, especially from religious circles, it still 'provides...[a] satisfactory rationale for religious education in state [or public] schools' (Grimmitt 1987: 41). The phenomenological model seems to provide an appropriate approach to RE in modern, pluralistic society for a number of reasons. To begin with, modern/post-modern pluralistic societies normally have democratic constitutions with guarantees of religious freedom for all citizens, including pupils. Like the confessional model, phenomenological RE respects and upholds both parents' and pupils' freedom of conscience and religion by covering and treating all religious traditions in society equally and avoiding imposition of any particular religious or secular beliefs and views on any pupil. However, this respect and upholding of religious freedoms is educationally more positive as it does not deny pupils knowledge of other religions by focusing on one religion only, as the confessional model does. Additionally, by aiming at understanding of religions rather than nurturing faith and commitment to any particular one, phenomenological RE remains true to the modern educational principle of respecting pupils' autonomy and freedom of choice in matters of faith and belief.

Furthermore, the model's aim of understanding different religious traditions existing in society is an important pre-requisite for dialogue, mutual respect, mutual tolerance and social harmony. The phenomenological model's descriptive and comparative methodology and its emphasis on acquiring detailed and accurate knowledge of the various religions tends to turn the RE classroom into a platform for some kind of inter-faith dialogue among pupils and to predispose them to attitudes of respect and tolerance for people with different beliefs and ways of life. It is in this light that some scholars have characterised the phenomenological model of RE as travelling unarmed from the fortress of one's own religious or ideological community to new insights that come from encountering members of other faith communities (Bolton 1997: 200; Simuchimba 1997: 35). So given the increasingly pluralistic nature of many modern/post-modern societies, it seems clear that the empathetic understanding of different religious traditions promoted by phenomenological RE may be crucial not only for religious harmony but for these societies' survival and continued development as well.

Moreover, the fact that the phenomenological model's pedagogical procedures and methodologies of classifying, juxtaposing and comparing religious data can help to sharpen pupils' understanding of their own religious traditions and identities. Although the pupils are required to put aside or bracket their own beliefs and opinions in the process of studying and understanding other religious traditions, it remains perfectly possible for them to compare their personal beliefs and values with those of others through personal reflection on what is being studied. This kind of comparative reflection is important and necessary if pupils are to fully understand their own religious and cultural backgrounds. As Scott (1994: 285) puts it: 'We need other persons, cultures, religions ... to aid us to know and be ourselves'. In other words, contrary to the common view and criticism (explained in the next section) that the juxtaposition and comparison of material on common themes from different religions leads to confusion, the approach can actually sharpen and consolidate the pupils understanding of their own religious traditions and ways of life.

Another point of strength in the phenomenological model of RE lies in its attempt to remain 'objective' while directing the study of religion 'towards an understanding of the subjective consciousness of the religious adherent' (Grimmitt 1987: 40). As earlier alluded to, the model achieves a great degree of objectivity by requiring that the learner's personal views, beliefs and presuppositions are bracketed so that they do not influence his or her study and understanding of other religious traditions. The model also avoids critical evaluation of other religious beliefs and values on the basis of one's (i.e. the pupil's) own beliefs and values as this would undermine the aim of understanding the subjective consciousness or self-understanding of religious adherents and religious traditions, respectively. Although objectivity is difficult to attain in the study of social phenomena like religious beliefs and practices, the phenomenological model of RE's approach of not imposing outside beliefs, values or criteria in understanding religions is very important, if not indispensable, when religions and their adherents are to be understood as they understand themselves.

Related to the foregoing point is the idea that by emphasising interrelatedness of religions, the phenomenological model of RE provides 'a broad framework of religion which...[is] a starting point for the study of any religion (Grimmitt 2000: 28). Such a framework is important, especially in school RE, because there are many different religious traditions in most societies today and trying to study and understand them without a common methodological and conceptual framework would not only be difficult, but also confusing to the pupils. The fact that the phenomenological framework is broad and applicable to the study of any religion also helps to ensure that the religions are studied and understood without prejudice, since the same facts, ideas or data on each religious tradition are collected and used. The lack of a common framework for the study of all religious traditions would lead to an unsystematic and unbalanced treatment or coverage of some religions, thereby negatively affecting the impartiality of the study of religion through RE.

3.2.5 *Weaknesses*

Despite the foregoing, the phenomenological model and approach to RE has weaknesses, limitations or points of criticism. For clarity, I will divide the criticisms into those that are religiously based and those that are purely educational in nature. Beginning with the religiously based category of limitations, it has been pointed out that the phenomenological approach ‘‘domesticates’ religion by reducing it to a secular academic discipline or to an expression of human behaviour and by equating ‘religious understanding’ with a way of interpreting...human experience’ (Grimmitt 1987: 40; Simuchimba 1997: 29). At issue here is the difference between the way different religious traditions understand and hold themselves and the way the phenomenological approach to RE holds and treats each one of them. All religious traditions, especially Christianity and Islam, see themselves as bearers of ‘revealed, eternal Truth’, while the phenomenological approach to RE sees and treats them only as ‘truth-claims’ of equal value which are all ‘worth of attention’ (Grimmitt 1987: 40) in the educational or academic study of religion. This is to say that education through the phenomenological approach to RE can misuse religions by interpreting religious beliefs and practices as mere expressions of human behaviour and treating religious beliefs and behaviour as a form or category of knowledge. For the religions and adherents, their beliefs, practices and behaviour are divinely motivated and should be studied with the aim of deepening religious faith and commitment rather than academic understanding; the study of their religious beliefs and behaviour should lead to the attainment of religious and spiritual goals and aims rather than secular, humanistic or academic ones.

Closely related to this point of view is the criticism that by using a broad framework which enables it to study as many religious traditions as exist in society, the phenomenological model of RE often relativises and trivialises the faith or truth-claims of the religions concerned. Critics and commentators have pointed out that phenomenological RE’s approach of religious equality and procedural neutrality (Ibid) and its apparent lack of concern for issues of religious truth (Jackson 2002/1997: 10) leads to the relativisation of the beliefs and values of the religions being studied. But as noted above, all religious traditions consider their beliefs and values as absolute and true

rather than relative and questionable. Explaining this weakness of phenomenological RE further, Slee (1989: 130) states:

The attempt to reduce religious faiths into manageable curriculum commodities can easily lead to unhelpful emphases on the superficial, the external and the exotic ... at the expense of such less obvious and less accessible factors as the profound interiority of faith, the mundane ordinariness of discipleship, and the radical reforming zeal within traditions which challenges them to continually renew themselves. The inevitable over-simplification ... [or] misrepresentation of the richness, complexity and dynamism of religious traditions can be deeply offensive to religious believers...[.]

So the phenomenological model of RE's multi-faith coverage, insistence on the equality of faith or truth-claims and procedural neutrality in class can amount to an indirect promotion and endorsement among pupils of an attitude of relativism towards religions. Clearly, this is the opposite of what each religious tradition expects to result from the pupils' encounter with its faith or truth-claims: religious traditions expect loyalty and commitment to their ways of life rather than a relativistic attitude towards them.

However, despite the foregoing concerns, it is difficult to find any other fair and equitable way of dealing with the various religious traditions in public school RE other than the multi-faith and neutralist approach of the phenomenological model. Attempts can be made to take the different truth-claims more seriously, but as Grimmitt (1987: 46) puts it:

Faith communities ...[have] to decide whether it is more desirable to exclude the study of religion from schools altogether because religious beliefs cannot be conveyed in a manner which enables the pupils' understanding of them to be identical to that of adherents, or whether it is more desirable that pupils should have some opportunity to explore religious beliefs and values even though their understanding of them may, in some respects, differ from those of adherents. If there is a price to be paid for establishing a relationship between education and religion, then, it seems...that cost has to be met by the religions, not by education.

Still related to the foregoing argument(s) or concerns is the view that since the phenomenological model of RE does not demand explicit religious commitment on the part of the teacher, the chances of the religious traditions' truth-claims, doctrines and values being misrepresented or even distorted by an outside observer teacher are very

high (Watson 1987: 145; Simuchimba 1997: 30). The basis of this concern and criticism is that religious experience, belief and faith is usually a very personal and subjective thing, which can only be fully understood and properly explained by a religious tradition insider. In many cases too, teachers of RE in state-run, public schools may not be religiously committed. Additionally, in most Commonwealth, English-speaking and European countries, most, if not all, teachers of RE in public schools are Christians. Although these teachers of the subject are professionally expected to be impartial, fair, understanding and respectful to all religions, they are only human beings and their impartiality and fairness cannot always be guaranteed. As such, the different religious traditions cannot be certain that their religious material and integrity will not be violated. For critics of the phenomenological model of RE, religious traditions can only be fairly and properly presented or dealt with in class by religiously committed teachers who fully understand what their truth-claims and values mean.

However, while the teacher's religious faith and commitment might be helpful, the ability to teach RE is not synonymous with the ability to believe and to become religiously committed, but rather with the ability to respect and be fair to religion as a result of professional training. Religious faith and commitment cannot be substituted for professional training as a qualification for RE teaching in public and even religious schools. An educator will normally be able to use his or her knowledge of the religions and professional skills to present the different religious traditions as fairly and as accurately as possible. So the foregoing is a rather extreme and unrealistic criticism of the model.

Coming to educational weaknesses, Cox (1983: 132) and Slee (1989: 129) have criticised the phenomenological model on grounds that it might be too complex for most school age learners. The thrust of this criticism seems to be that most pupils or learners have no interest and capacity for skills of 'self-transcendence' and empathy required by the approach; neither do they have the ability to understand the many difficult religious concepts from different religious traditions which the model describes. However, this criticism is not wholly valid because both the content and methodology in many

phenomenological RE programmes are age-appropriate. Religious educators employing the phenomenological approach to RE are fully aware of the model's origin in higher institutions of learning in Britain. They have therefore strived towards preparing programmes that are not only age-appropriate, but also capable of being presented in interesting ways. A good example of a very age-appropriate phenomenological model and RE programme is the one recently approved for South African schools (GRSA 2003).

A related, but slightly different weakness of the phenomenological approach to RE is that, while education is by nature critical and evaluative, phenomenological study is descriptive and non-evaluative, while education encourages pupils' freedom and self-expression, phenomenological study denies them the freedom to bring forward and express their own beliefs and values. Commenting on the same, Grimmitt (1987: 210-211) explains:

Although there are good grounds for discouraging premature judgment of a religious ... belief until ... it has been adequately understood, any educational process which excludes judgment or criticism as a matter of principle can hardly be said to be extending pupils' capacities for personal decision-making or contributing to their personal knowledge. Those who have argued that religious education consists in encouraging pupils to relate their understanding of religion to their own experiences and vice-versa have done so on the grounds that this allows children's perception of understanding of... [self] and of religion to undergo continual redefinition, refinement and re-evaluation, and that it is this process which engenders the study with educational value.

In an attempt to prevent premature judgment and criticism of religious traditions before they are understood as they understand themselves, the phenomenological approach to RE rightly requires that pupils bracket or put aside their own beliefs, values and opinions. Unfortunately, this requirement robs pupils of the only independent but educationally important criteria on which they could base their evaluation and understanding of different religious traditions. It also does not only reduce the phenomenological model to 'a narrowly descriptive and content-centred approach to teaching RE' (Grimmitt 2000: 28), but also contributes to the 'remoteness of its' subject matter from the experience and concerns of most school children' (Jackson 2002/1997: 10).

Lastly, the phenomenological model of RE's expectation and emphasis on the teacher's impartiality with regard to religious commitment does not seem to be practical or in line with human nature. In phenomenological RE:

The pupil's religious or non-religious background and the beliefs, teachings or truth-claims of the religions being covered are...not to be violated...[.] The teacher should exercise ... impartiality. He or she should act as an impartial arbitrator whose own life stance or religious beliefs and values are undisclosed to avoid any psychological influence and pressure on the pupil and his or her choice between religious and non-religious commitments, or indeed between the teacher's religious or faith tradition and other traditions (Simuchimba 1997: 19).

As can be seen from the foregoing, the teacher is required to observe strict neutrality or impartiality in order to avoid offending any religious tradition and influencing the pupils' perception of religious and non-religious commitment. However, this level of impartiality may not be possible because the teacher of RE is a human being who cannot manage to always pretend that he or she has no beliefs and values, nor to avoid disclosing those belief commitments in his or her daily interaction with fellow human beings or pupils. This is more since the question of one's commitments, beliefs, principles or life stance often comes to the fore in such (human) interaction. In any case, the teacher's neutrality can be educationally damaging in the sense that pupils who see him or her as their role model are likely to interpret his or her neutral stance to mean that religion and commitment are not important in life. As Hill (1994: 149) points out:

One conclusion students might reasonably draw from the teacher's neutrality, in the absence of explanations to the contrary, is that religious commitment is at worst a recreational option and at best a logically arbitrary personal choice. Either way, religious relativism is...pre-emptively endorsed.

So the phenomenological model of RE's approach of strict neutrality on the part of the teacher may not only be unrealistic and unpractical, but also educationally unsatisfactory. That is perhaps why in recent versions of the model it is no longer required that the teacher or anyone else keep their beliefs a secret. Only that they give everyone a fair hearing.

3.3 Religious Literacy and Critical Understanding Model

The confessional and phenomenological approaches to RE which I have analysed so far remain the most dominant models of how and why RE should be taught in schools. Both Grimmitt (2000: 26) and Wright (2000: 70) acknowledge that the problem of trying to reconcile the confessional and phenomenological models or the exclusive and inclusive approaches has helped to shape current theory and practice in RE. The tension between the two approaches and attempts to go beyond it has led to ‘the development of nearly all other [recent] pedagogical models of RE’ (Grimmitt 2000: 26). According to Grimmitt (Ibid), these models include:

- (a) Human Development, Instrumental, Learning-about, Learning-from Models
- (b) Ethnographic, Interpretive, Multi-faith Models
- (c) Literacy-centred, Critical Realist Models
- (d) Revelation-centred, Concept-cracking, Trinitarian Christian-Realist Models
- (e) Integrative, Experiential and Phenomenological Models.
- (f) Constructivist Models of Learning and Teaching in RE.

Despite significant differences between them, the first three of these models or approaches can still be seen as the same because the outcome of RE which the literacy-centred model envisages is ‘closely in accord with ... the intentions of both human development and ethnographic models’ (Ibid: 44). In other words, the literacy-centred model attempts to build on the human development and the ethnographic model in the further development of RE in Britain (and beyond). I have, therefore, merged the three approaches into the one I have called Literacy-centred and Critical Understanding Model, though it is mainly based on Andrew Wright’s (1993, 2000) approach.

3.3.1 Aims

As a result of the above stated merger, the aims of the literacy-centred and critical understanding approach to RE may be stated as follows: RE should enable pupils to

become religiously literate, i.e. to think critically, act and communicate intelligently about the ultimate questions that religions ask (Wright 1993: 64). RE should also enable the pupils to ‘develop an understanding of the religious worldviews of others, their religious language and symbols, and their feelings and attitudes’ (Jackson 2002/1997: 112). The subject should further help pupils to mature through exploring religious beliefs and practices related to human experiences and critical evaluation of their own beliefs and values (Grimmitt 1987: 141; Read *et al* 1992: 2). Thus, central to the aims of this model of RE is literacy or education in the area of religion. It refers to the ability not only to deal with religious issues critically and intelligently, but also to the ability to interpret, explain or give the meaning of religious language and symbols. This inevitably means that pupils have to be equipped with philosophical and theological skills appropriate to their educational level, since critical analysis and interpretation of religious language, grammar and symbolism require such skills and abilities.

3.3.2 *Conceptual framework*

As already stated, the religious literacy and critical understanding model of RE attempts to combine common aspects of the existing ethnographic and religious literacy models or approaches to RE into one. Therefore, the unified model proposes to base its development as an approach to teaching and learning in the area of religion on the following broad principles adapted from Wright (2000: 93-102) and Jackson (2002/1997: 45 –50):

- (a) *The need to go beyond the existing exclusive- inclusive, intrinsic- extrinsic impasse* - In order to overcome this impasse and do justice to both the integrity of specific religious traditions and the value of communication between different religious traditions, there is need for RE to help promote mutual recognition and better understanding between the traditions.
- (b) *The need to develop a critical awareness of ideology* - In order to identify and overcome the problem of ideological manipulation by the religious traditions, there is need for RE to promote critical thinking, which is needed to confront ideological representation.

- (c) *The need to establish a process oriented pedagogy* - In order to take the ambiguity and controversial nature of religion seriously and overcome the problem of imposing rigid religious definitions and solutions, there is need to replace a foundationalist approach with a process oriented approach in RE.
- (d) *The need for critical understanding and interpretation* - In order to clearly understand other people's religious or cultural ways of life or the nature of religion and thus overcome the danger of generalising about cultures and religions, there is need for critical analysis of religious data and treatment of religious traditions as 'organic, internally diverse and more complex than belief systems' (Jackson 2002: 197).

As can be seen from the foregoing principles, the model is critical and interpretive rather than merely descriptive and content-based. It emphasises critical understanding of different religious beliefs and values and awareness of their ideological nature rather than objective understanding of religious facts only. Despite its emphasis on critical understanding and awareness, the model takes seriously the different religious traditions by recognising their specificity and promoting better understanding between them in its methodology and approach. As such, the religious literacy and critical understanding model goes beyond the neutral religious knowledge and understanding intentions or aims of the phenomenological approach. However, like the phenomenological approach, the model takes as its frame of reference service on behalf of the state and its secular education system, though with more sensitive, consultative or dialogical use of religious material and general representation of the religious traditions. With such sympathetic treatment of the religious traditions, many religions are also likely to consider the model as serving their interests better than the neutralist phenomenological model of RE.

3.3.3 *Educational process, role of the teacher and pedagogical procedures and principles*

Like the phenomenological model of RE, the religious literacy and critical understanding model does not require religious commitment for teaching the subject. Teachers can belong to any religious background or none provided they are professionally trained and

have ‘a commitment to an open...and [critical] religious education’ (Jackson 2002/1997: 135). However, unlike the former, the religious literacy and critical understanding model does not require strict neutrality on the part of the teacher in his or her handling of religious traditions and their beliefs and values in class. Rather, it holds that ‘openness and honesty on the part of the teacher regarding their own beliefs in the classroom...[is] the first step towards their own professional integrity’ (Wright 1993: 102). This professional integrity ultimately entails ability to ‘countenance rival conclusions as well as those to which they are personally attached...[,] to contain their commitments and ... present material from a religious tradition from the point of view of an adherent’ (Jackson 2002/1997: 136). The RE teacher’s role and task is not just to promote objective understanding of the religions, but to help produce religious literacy and critical understanding and awareness which can enable them to think, reflect and communicate intelligently about religious (and moral) issues. Rather than being just a neutral, expert presenter and facilitator in the teaching and learning of different religious beliefs and values, the teacher is expected to be ‘a fellow pilgrim and learner’ (Wright 1993: 103) who is free to ‘draw upon their own religious or secular commitments as resource material alongside other resources...[such as] the testimony of pupils and of parents and other members of religious communities ... invited into the school’ (Jackson 2002/1997: 136).

As can be seen from the principles of the model stated under 3.3.2 and the task of the teacher above, the educational process in the religious literacy and critical understanding approach to RE is critical and interpretive. As such, the teaching and learning process needs to focus on the following aspects: the integrity of the various religious or spiritual traditions by studying forms of spirituality found in their historical, cultural, linguistic and social tradition; religious or spiritual truth by directly examining the question of truth as claimed by the religious or spiritual traditions; and critical wisdom by applying critical thinking and reflection to the religious beliefs and values being studied (Wright 2000:104, 112). These aspects or issues which concern the nature of religion and the skills needed to deal with it, can also be dealt with by focusing on reconsideration of the character of religions in the light of work from the social sciences and actual field

research by the class (i.e. critical interpretation and wisdom); recognising religions and cultures as dynamic and changing (religious truth); and avoiding, as much as possible, projection of assumptions from one religious tradition on to another (integrity of religious traditions) (Jackson 2002/1997: 108-110).

In order to effectively deal with the above issues the material or syllabus content used by the teacher should include sensitive and controversial as well as non-sensitive and controversial beliefs, values or viewpoints. The content material should also enable pupils to encounter a diverse range of religious or spiritual traditions and encourage the emergence of religious literacy. Therefore, apart from contrasting religious narratives, content material should also include critical narratives drawn from the social sciences such as anthropology, sociology, psychology, philosophy, phenomenology as well as theology and literary criticism (Grimmitt 2000: 44). The teacher has to ensure that pupils have balanced information on each issue or topic covered and use methods and techniques that encourage pupils to critically examine and evaluate the information. He or she should help to promote ‘the skills of listening, accepting difference and otherness, arguing a case, dealing with conflict and distinguishing between fact and opinion’ (Wright 2000: 136). In studying the linguistic forms of spirituality and interpreting the language and experience of religious adherents or insiders, similarities and differences between the vocabulary of insiders and that of outsiders including pupils should be discussed and attempts made to establish common meanings or bridges between them (Jackson 2002/1997: 111).

The kind of interaction between pupils and the content material envisaged by the religious literacy and critical understanding model of RE is in line with its aims and (adapted) principles stated under 3.3.1 and 3.3.2. Thus through encounter with different religions pupils will gain progressive or critical understanding of religious traditions including their own. This critical understanding will enable the pupils to articulate their own beliefs and values and the difference (and similarities) between them and others with greater competence. Additionally, the pupils’ understanding of other religious and cultural ways of life will enable them to develop good dialogical relationships with

others. The main pedagogical procedure which the religious literacy and critical understanding model should use to achieve this kind of interaction is the critical study of the historical, cultural, linguistic and social traditions of the religious traditions. By reading, examining and discussing contrasting and controversial material on the historical, cultural and social beliefs and traditions of the religions, pupils will begin to gain some understanding of the controversial and ambiguous nature of religion. By reading and examining appropriate material on religion from anthropology, sociology, psychology, philosophy and from theology and literary criticism, pupils will begin to acquire the skills they need in order to critically understand religious material and symbolism. By studying the linguistic traditions and religious language as found in religious texts and interpreting religious language as used by religious insiders and outsiders, pupils will gain further understanding of religious traditions. With appropriate teaching-learning strategies, these procedures should enable the teacher to help pupils become religiously literate, critical and wise in dealing with religious issues.

From the foregoing, the main pedagogical principle that would be seen as informing the religious literacy and critical understanding model of RE can be stated as follows: teaching and learning in RE should promote critical personal and academic forms of knowledge and understanding of religion.

3.3.4 *Strengths*

It is very clear that the main strength or positive aspect of the religious literacy and critical understanding model of RE as formulated here is that it goes beyond the exclusive versus inclusive or mono-faith versus multi-faith debate and problem in RE by proposing 'an agenda in which the plurality of spiritual [or religious] traditions are respected, the quest for spiritual truth takes centre stage and the overarching aim is to enhance children's level of spiritual [religious] literacy' (Wright 2000: 103). In other words, the model respects both the plurality and specificity of religion by taking the truth-claims of each religion seriously and dealing with its specific beliefs and values, including controversial ones, in class as part of the content material. This approach makes it possible for the model to promote both personal and academic forms of knowledge and

understanding of religion(s) rather than understanding only, as in the phenomenological model. In promoting both personal and academic understanding of religion, the religious literacy and critical understanding model also takes care of both the religious groups' concerns for religious truth and the need for commitment to it and the educational concerns for critical, evaluative understanding of religion. In short, the model is 'fair to both religion and education' (Simuchimba 2000: 17).

Another point of strength in the religious literacy and critical understanding model is in its being process-based rather than content-based. In line with the requirements of modern education, the religious literacy and critical understanding model seeks to replace the foundationalist and content-based approach to RE found in both the phenomenological and confessional models of the subject with a process-based approach which, as Wright (2000: 10) explains, opens up the possibility of educative exchanges between different religious or spiritual traditions; encourages controversy, ambiguity and tension; facilitates conversation, dialogue and debate; and stimulates the emergence of religious or spiritual literacy in pupils.

As can be seen, this process-based model or approach to the subject is likely to promote critical thinking, intelligence or wisdom and autonomy in pupils in the area of religion, rather than just knowledge and understanding promoted by the foundationalist approach of the phenomenological model. This means that the religious literacy and critical understanding model takes care of the main educational problem of phenomenological RE; that of suppressing pupils' beliefs, experiences, views and opinions and thus preventing the development of critical skills in them. Similarly, the model effectively solves the problem of uncritical commitment and loyalty to any religious or spiritual tradition's beliefs and values, which is characteristic of confessional RE. Conversely, the promotion of critical thinking and wisdom is also likely to check the problem of unreasonable rejection of religious faith and commitment in the pupils.

Additionally, the religious literacy and critical understanding model's approach of deliberately and actively encouraging discussion and debate of different religious or

spiritual truth-claims, controversies and ambiguities is likely to result in more effective dialogue and understanding between pupils or persons of different religious and cultural backgrounds. Under the confessional model of RE, other religious or spiritual truth-claims are ignored, while under the phenomenological model different religious truth-claims are treated superficially. Moreover, the controversial and ambiguous characteristics of religion(s) are conveniently rounded off or left out completely. This approach does not help to effectively prepare pupils for mutual understanding and co-existence in a pluralistic society as it denies them the chance to develop the skills and attitudes of debate, articulation, self-expression, listening, open-mindedness, tolerance and respect for others. It is in the vigorous promotion of these important and other related skills and attitudes rather than their indirect inculcation in pupils that the religious literacy and critical understanding model educationally goes beyond the confessional and phenomenological models of RE.

In addition, dealing with controversial and ambiguous religious matters in class using a process or skills-based approach to teaching will challenge teachers of RE much more than the confessional and phenomenological models. This means that the literacy and critical understanding model will call for proper professional training of teachers and help to curtail the existing tendency in many societies to regard RE as a ‘Cinderella subject’ (Wright 1993: 5-7 & 2000: 93) which anyone, especially religious people, can teach or which can be easily ignored and left out on the school curriculum.

3.3.5 *Weaknesses*

As already explained, the religious literacy and critical understanding model is a reconstitution or merger mainly of the Andrew Wright-created literacy-centred, critical realist model and the Robert Jackson-led ethnographic, interpretive, multi-faith model of RE. As such, the model does not completely avoid the main weaknesses, criticisms or charges of relativism and reductionism levelled against the ethnographic approach, especially since it continues to be multi-faith. However, since modern/post modern societies or nations no longer have ‘cultural stability, a common religion and moral certainty...[but are] highly pluralistic...with many different ways of life and claims to

truth' (Jackson 2002/1997: 122), no school RE model today can claim to be educationally adequate if it is not multi-faith.

Similarly, the model does not avoid the criticism or charge of 'a rationalism that does not do justice to the affective dimension of spiritual experience' (Wright 2000: 109) levelled against the religious literacy approach. While the reconstituted model's continued emphasis on critical analysis or examination of religious material might render some credence to this criticism, it should be remembered that the purpose of the critical approach is enhancement of religious understanding or wisdom in the area of religion and morality. Admittedly, what is expected from learners in terms of skills and abilities in the religious literacy and critical understanding model is more complex, especially for primary and junior secondary levels, than in phenomenological model. However, if the problems of superficial coverage of religious truth-claims and uncritical appropriation of religious facts that characterise existing forms of RE are to be effectively tackled, then the proposed critical and evaluative approach to the subject should start right from primary school. This, however, still means making and presenting the subject content or material in an age-appropriate manner. For example: at primary school level, pupils should begin discussing the historical, cultural and social aspects of different religions; at junior secondary school level, they should examine actual beliefs, values and truth-claims based on language and scriptures; while at high school level they should begin to examine, compare and evaluate contrasting and critical narratives on religion from the social sciences.

It should also be admitted that the very fact that the religious literacy and critical understanding model is a reconstituted approach means that it may not be wholly coherent in the manner it is formulated and stated from its aims, conceptual framework, pedagogical principles and procedures up to its strengths and weaknesses. Nevertheless, the model is a progressive and mature attempt to find a suitable model of RE for today's global society.

3.4 Models of RE and National Policies on RE

In most modern societies there is a close relationship between models of RE, national policies on RE and constitutional religious freedoms. National policies on RE are normally based on constitutional provisions on religious freedom for all citizens, while the development of models of RE is guided by the national policies on the subject. In this section I briefly explain the relationship between the national policies on RE in the United States of America, Britain and South Africa and the models of RE discussed above. This examination is important because it sheds light on the kind of recommendations this thesis will make on the kind of national policy or policy guidelines on RE which Zambia as a country should adopt in its continued development of the subject.

3.4.1 *United States of America*

In 1787 the US Congress passed the famous Establishment (of Religion) Amendment Clause. The Act, which is popularly referred to as the First Amendment of the American Constitution, states:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress.

This clause put a ‘wall of separation’ between church and state and created legal complications with many conflicting views concerning the teaching of religion in public schools. In resolving these problems, the USA Supreme Court interpreted this law and made decisions in 1947, 1962 and 1963 that made the teaching and practice of any particular religion in public schools illegal.

So in terms of the relationship between church and state and education and religion, a strict separationist model, which ensures that there is a ‘wall of separation’ between secular state institutions and religious or church related activities is in place in the USA. As such, not even non-denominational or ecumenical prayer, Bible reading and worship can take place in public schools and colleges. However, public schools can treat or cover

religions as part of broad subject areas such as social studies, economics, world history etc. Scriptures, especially the Bible, can be covered under literature. But unlike state or public schools, private, religious or church schools are legally free to teach and practice the religion or faith tradition of their managing religious group or church denomination.

As can be seen from the foregoing, there is no school RE over which the state has control. So while in many English-speaking countries the term 'Religious Education' refers to a critical and phenomenological study of different religions, mainly in state or public schools, in the USA the term refers to religious 'instruction' in church, religious or parochial private schools. As such, in terms of the models of RE discussed above, the US policy and approach to the subject can be said to be in line with both extreme confessionalism and extreme phenomenologism. The policy or approach depicts extreme confessionalism because it goes beyond ordinary confessional RE where one dominant religion (e.g. Christianity) is taught or promoted at the expense of minority religions and instead allows each religious tradition or church denomination to instruct pupils in its own beliefs and values in its own schools. The policy also depicts extreme or strict phenomenological RE because it goes beyond the normal procedural neutrality expected in a public school RE classroom and prohibits any kind of religious instruction altogether.

Whether this approach of strict separation between church and state and hence between religion and public education is satisfactory for a modern, democratic and pluralistic society like the USA ultimately depends on the values underlying the constitutional provisions on religion and the actual policy guidelines on RE. Thus the values carried by the First Amendment and the policy of prohibition of religious instruction in public schools include freedom, fairness, impartiality, neutrality and equality. While the main liberal value of freedom of belief which underlies all these other values is absolutely important for a modern democratic and pluralistic society like the USA, the total absence of formal RE teaching in the public school system is not the best way of maintaining such a value. This is because 'the potential cost of this strategy is high, since it threatens to undermine the liberal commitment to reasoned debate [and consensus]' (Wright 2001: 205). Additionally, since religion is not dealt with in public schools, pupils are taught by

default that religion is not important. The fact that religion is not dealt with as a normal part of school life also means that the pupils are or will be religiously illiterate.

3.4.2 *Britain*

The development of a national policy on RE in Britain (affecting mainly England and Wales) started with the enactment of the 1944 Education Act which made RE and daily Christian worship compulsory in public or state schools. As a country where Christianity, through the Anglican Church, was an officially established state religion, the kind of RE envisaged by the Act was the confessional model, based on the teaching of Christian and biblical beliefs and moral values. However, with Britain being a democratic and highly pluralistic society, Christian confessionalism in public school RE was soon found to be professionally, politically as well as religiously unsatisfactory. This dissatisfaction led to ‘a fundamental shift in the structure of religious education from a traditional Christian to a liberal [phenomenological] model’ (Wright 1993: 17), whose aim was to facilitate an understanding of different belief systems found in Britain. So while providing for continuity, the more recent 1988 Education Act also sought to regularise the changes and developments which had taken place in RE since 1944.

The Act required Agreed (RE) syllabuses to continue providing for the study of several religious traditions, while reflecting the fact that the principal religious traditions in the country were mainly Christian through a 51% coverage of Christianity. Pluralistic RE and a broadly Christian collective worship would continue to be compulsory in all state maintained schools, while church schools would remain free to provide denominational RE as before. Parents who did not want their children to learn state-controlled RE or take part in collective worship and teachers who did not want to take part in the teaching of RE or in collective worship would continue to have the right of withdrawal. Agreed syllabuses would continue to be the responsibility of Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and would be prepared by their Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACREs) in consultation with the Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA), if they wished.

However, unlike with the 1944 Act, the language and tone of the 1988 Act were 'educational' rather than 'instructional'. According to an editorial of the *British Journal of Religious Education* (1991: Vol 13, No. 3), 'the religious clauses of the Act were expressed in such a way that the educational and multicultural interests of the subject would not only continue but might find encouragement' (Ibid: 133). This means that there was scope for a broader educational interpretation of the 1988 Act than was the case with the previous Act. Furthermore, unlike under the 1944 Act where SACREs, were optional for LEAs, the SACREs, which are largely professional in composition, became mandatory for all LEAs; a move which would ensure that educational authorities in local areas received professional advice on RE matters and that Agreed syllabuses were professionally dealt with.

As may be seen, in terms of the relationship between church and state and between religion and education, a combination of theocratic and co-operative models could be said to be at work in Britain (i.e. England and Wales only). The theocratic aspect is reflected in the fact that the head of state, the Queen, is closely associated with the leadership of the established Church of England or Anglican Church and that there are more Church of England representatives in public institutions such as the SACREs and LEAs than other church and religious tradition representatives. The Anglican Church, other Christian churches and the Jews also receive state funding for their denominational, confessional or parochial educational activities. On the other hand, the co-operative aspect is generally reflected in the working together of the state officials and representatives of different religious traditions in local area educational policies, including Agreed RE syllabuses.

So in terms of the models of RE discussed above, the British national policy on RE is in line with both the phenomenological and confessional models. British RE is clearly phenomenological in the sense that both the law and policy guidelines by the Department for Education (DfE) and the Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) call for multi-faith, multicultural Agreed syllabuses in public schools. The policy guidelines also recommend subject principles and aims that are largely phenomenological in nature.

Similarly, British RE is confessional in the sense that the law and policy on RE provide for state funding for denominational or confessional RE in Judeo-Christian schools. It also insists on more coverage of Christianity in Agreed syllabuses and a daily broadly Christian act of worship in public schools on grounds that the religion is the most predominant in Britain. Other major religious traditions including Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism are also allowed to have their own confessional syllabuses in their own schools, though without any state funding.

Is the British policy on RE educationally satisfactory or not? Again, the answer to the question depends on the kind of values underlying the law and policy on the subject. As with the USA, the values behind the British law and policy on RE are freedom, pluralism, fairness, impartiality, neutrality and equality, but with the important additional value of tolerance. The phenomenological coverage and study of different religious traditions in public schools is primarily aimed at promoting empathetic understanding and toleration of other religio-cultural traditions and their adherents who are also citizens of Britain. These values are certainly important and desirable in a democratic and religiously plural society like Britain. However, unlike the US, the British policy on RE is inconsistent and educationally unsatisfactory because of its provision for 51% coverage of Christianity in Agreed syllabuses at the expense of minority religions.

Thus rather than being equal with other religions before the law, Christianity is given special treatment on the grounds that it is the majority religion in the country. The special treatment of Christianity is further shown through state funding for confessional Judeo-Christian RE in Christian and Jewish schools. This approach is not only discriminatory to the other religious traditions in Britain but also a contradiction of the values of fairness, equality impartiality and neutrality which the law and national policy on RE in a pluralistic country should fully uphold. In modern state-controlled education including RE, all religious traditions are regarded as truth-claims or belief systems of equal educational value. So the special place and treatment given to Judeo-Christian religion in the British national policy on RE is not only educationally flawed but also inconsistent

with democratic values. The *Economist* (Dec. 8, 2001: 14) was therefore right when it criticised the British government in the following clear words:

A state-financed education system should cater to everybody equally, irrespective of their faith ... By paying for [Judeo-Christian] religious schools, the state is spending taxpayers' money to help schools promote one set of beliefs over another. But it ought not to be the business of the state to interfere in these matters, either by suppressing or by promoting, particular religions.

Andrew Wright too (2001: 207) would rightly conclude that '[British RE] is not... sufficiently liberal... to guarantee...public religious literacy.'

3.4.3 *South Africa*

For many years before and during the undemocratic apartheid era in South Africa, religion and education were closely interrelated. The Christian National Education policy called for the 'integration of religion across all fields of education... and [t]he primacy of religious instruction' (Steyn 2003: 3). Religious Teaching or Instruction in Christian dogma, was, therefore, compulsory in school education. Following the end of apartheid and the beginning of the democratic era, the new Constitution adopted in 1996 has given rise to a new Outcomes-Based (National) Education system, National Curriculum Statement and a progressive national policy on Religion Education (RE)³. The South African Schools Act (Act 94 of 1996) upholds the constitutional rights of all citizens to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion, and freedom from unfair discrimination on any grounds whatsoever, including religion in public education institutions. Similarly, the national policy on RE upholds the democratic values implied in the above Act, including equity, tolerance, diversity, openness and accountability (GRSA 2003: 7-8). In order to effectively uphold these values, RE is defined as:

A curricular programme with clear and age-appropriate educational aims and objectives, for teaching and learning about religion, religions and religious

³ Religion Education (RE) is a conception of the subject (RE) as an educational activity with educational aims, principles and objectives. This differs from Religious Education (RE) which is the traditional conception of the subject as essentially a religious activity with religious aims, though this activity is informed by educational principles (Hull 1984: 284, 285; GRSA 2003: 9).

diversity in South Africa and the world. The study of religion must serve... educational goals that are consistent with the aims and outcomes of the other learning areas... (Ibid: 9).

Accordingly, RE forms part of the Life Orientation Learning Area of the National Curriculum Statement. RE further falls under Social Development, which is one of the five broad outcomes of the learning area. As a life orienting outcome, social development requires or means that:

The learner will be able to demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to constitutional rights and responsibilities and to show an understating of diverse cultures and religions (Ibid: 28).

In order to achieve this broad aim and related specific outcomes for RE, teaching and learning in the subject should be guided by the following briefly stated principles set out in the Religion and Education Policy document:

- (a) RE is an educational or school programme which needs to be taught by professionally trained educators registered with the South African Council of Educators (SACE).
- (b) The teaching of RE in pluralistic public schools must be impartial and sensitive to religious interests, ensuring that individuals and groups are protected from ignorance, stereotypes, caricatures and denigration.
- (b) Like all other teachers in public schools, the teacher of RE should have the skills, values and attitudes that are in line with the government stipulated Norms and Standards for Educators. In addition, the teacher should have good knowledge of the principles and practices of the main religions of South Africa, of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, show an appreciation of and respect for people of different values, beliefs, practices, and cultures, and know about and reflect on ethical issues in religion, politics, economics, human rights, and the environment.
- (e) Teachers should find and employ creative, sensitive and educationally responsible ways of integrating the study of religion in other learning areas of the curriculum such as history, language and literature.
- (f) In order to develop effective teaching methods and strategies, teachers

should adopt as a basic principle the distinction between teaching and preaching. An RE lesson should meet all the pedagogical standards of lessons in other areas of the curriculum.

- (g) The teaching of RE can be approached in two ways: some teachers may adopt a cognitive approach designed to clarify the meaning of religious beliefs and practices through elucidation, while others may adopt an interactive approach that attempts to involve pupils in exploring the meaning and significance of religion.
- (f) Learning about religion, religions and religious diversity in South Africa should serve important educational outcomes, which call for the empowerment of pupils through literacy (including religious literacy), creativity and critical reflection.
- (h) RE should provide a programmatic focus for some of the educational outcomes, especially developing the capacity to respect the rights of others and to appreciate cultural diversity and different belief systems. To achieve this, pupils may learn about differences and similarities in symbol, diet, clothing, sacred places and ways of worship of a range of belief systems. This could be taken further through learning about values, festivals, rituals, customs and sacred spaces of different belief systems. Finally, pupils should learn about how spiritual philosophies are linked to community and social values and practices.

With regard to the relationship between religion and the state and between religion and education, the policy proposes that a co-operative model, ‘which combines constitutional separation and mutual recognition’ (Ibid: 4) should be at work. This partly means that public institutions or schools have to teach about religions ‘in ways that reflect a profound appreciation of the spiritual, non-material aspects of life, but which are different from...religious instruction, or religious nurture provided by the home, family and religious community’ (Ibid: 5). It also means that religious traditions are free to set up self-maintained religious schools, in accordance with the law, as long as these schools ‘achieve the minimum [prescribed] outcomes for Religion Education’ (Ibid: 8).

In terms the models of RE discussed in this chapter, it is clear that South African RE, as defined by the Religion and Education Policy, is largely phenomenological. Thus in line with the aims of the phenomenological model of RE, the main aim of the subject in the country is to contribute to a civic or academic understanding of the diverse cultures and religions of South Africa (and the world). In order to facilitate this kind of understanding, the state and public institutions are required to adhere to the policy of ‘the equality of all religions before the law’ (Ibid: 12), while teachers are expected to be impartial, respectful and sensitive to the various beliefs systems and their adherents in their work. This is of course in line with the main phenomenological principles of impartiality in the study of religious traditions and handling of religious material in the classroom.

To achieve the kind of understanding above, the policy on RE also recommends a thematic coverage of religions in the Foundational and Intermediate Phases (Ibid: 18), a pedagogical procedure or approach that is phenomenological. Furthermore, the policy emphasises on the distinction between RE in the public schools which is educational, and RI or religious nurture in the homes and religious communities which is confessional and catechetical. This again reflects the phenomenological principle of impartiality in dealing with different religions in a multi-faith set up.

As to whether this national policy and approach to RE is educationally adequate for South Africa, I think it is. The core values underlying both the law and the national policy on RE are, as with the American and British policies, freedom, pluralism, fairness, tolerance, equality, impartiality and openness. As already explained, these values are not only important and desirable, but absolutely necessary for the well-being of a newly founded democratic country like South Africa which is also racially, culturally and religiously very diverse. The (phenomenological) study and understanding of religion, religions and the cultural diversity of South Africa will promote not only respect for and tolerance of other citizens’ beliefs and values, but will contribute to ‘building national unity’ and the realisation of ‘unity in diversity’ (GRSA 2003: 6; Kruger 2003: 7) which the country needs. Apart from this, unlike the United States policy on RE which denies pupils critical knowledge of religion(s) in pursuit of freedom of religious belief and

conscience, the South African national policy avoids this by adopting a co-operative model which combines constitutional separation and mutual recognition as its guiding principle in regulating the relationship between religion and education. Similarly, unlike the British policy and approach to RE which discriminates against some religions through state funding of only Judeo-Christian schools and requiring more detailed coverage of Christianity, the South African national policy goes beyond this by adopting a ‘positive impartiality’ stance whereby the state treats all religions as equal before the law. As such, it can be said that the policy is not only internally theoretically consistent (Kruger 2003: 4), but also ‘one of the most progressive in the world’ (Steyn 2003).

In concluding this chapter and discussion of possible models of RE in a modern democratic and pluralistic society like Zambia, it should be recalled that although Grimmit (2000) comes up with as many as eight different models, the most dominant, elaborate, influential, widespread and enduring are the confessional and phenomenological models. The two models are the direct opposite of each other because the confessional model is associated with traditional conservative approaches to education, while the phenomenological model is associated with modern, liberal forms of education. Consequently, attempts by religious educators and scholars to reconcile the two and come up with an approach that overcomes the two approaches’ weaknesses have led to the formulation of the different interrelated models stated earlier. Apart from being closely interrelated, these models are also either half developed or still under development. Despite their weaknesses therefore, I consider the confessional and phenomenological models as continuing to be among the main possible approaches to RE today, although the confessional model is increasingly becoming legally and morally impossible to sustain in modern/post-modern societies’ education. Using the same approach of reconciliation above, I have tried to exploit the similarities between two of the most consistent newer models to come up with ‘religious literacy and critical understanding’ as the third possible model and approach to RE today. Although it may have weaknesses, it is still a progressive step forward. Additionally, I have examined three national policies on RE: the American, British and South African. I have shown how a country’s constitutional provisions on religion affect its national policy on RE,

which in turn affects the model of RE that that country adopts. All this will be helpful when I make conclusions and recommendations on Zambian RE in the last chapter.

CHAPTER 4

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN COLONIAL ZAMBIA

One of the aims of this thesis is to recommend an educationally adequate form or model of RE for Zambia. In order to do this, it is necessary and important to make the context clear by exploring the history of RE in the country. This is what the next three chapters (4-6) will do.

The period before *Zambian Independence* in 1964 can be divided into three roughly different parts: the traditional, pre-missionary period before 1883, the missionary period from 1883 when the first mission school in the territory was opened, and the colonial period from 1925 when the Northern Rhodesia colonial government got involved in funding and directing African education (Snelson 1974: 4). This chapter describes RE during the three periods and critically examines the role of both the Christian mission churches and the colonial state in the development of RE as a school subject (during the last two periods). The chapter ends with the statement and explanation of the view that the subject remained largely denominational at the end of the colonial period because of the mission churches' understanding that RE was there to promote conversion to Christianity.

4.1 Pre-Missionary Period (Before 1883)

Before the arrival of missionaries in the areas which were later to become Northern Rhodesia/Zambia, people were organised under clans, tribes or ethnic groups, chiefdoms and kingdoms. Although each of these tribes or ethnic groups had its own culture, there were a lot of common elements in their social, political, religious and economic beliefs and activities. One such element or feature that is very important for the theme of this thesis is that for all these people, like other African people, '[I]t is [was] religion, more than anything else, which colour[ed] their understanding of the universe and their empirical participation in that universe' (Mbiti 1969: 262). This means that in the traditional, pre-missionary form of education and socialisation of the young, which was mainly informal, religious beliefs and values were an integral part of everyday learning.

In line with the theme of the thesis, there was a two-way relationship or interaction between traditional religions and the traditional states or chiefdoms in matters of teaching and learning. Firstly, since religion permeated all aspects of life, it can be said that religion, by and large, dominated the content, goals, aims and objectives of education. As Snelson (1974: 2) puts it:

Life for the young African was punctuated by religious experience since almost every event, the birth of twins, the death of a dog, sickness, drought, the breaking of a treasured calabash, was accorded a spiritual significance. The young had to learn when and how the spirits of the departed had to be propitiated, when ceremonial purification had to be performed [etc.].

In short, most of the teachings and learning experiences, whether formal as in rituals and initiation ceremonies or informal as in myths, proverbs, riddles, customs and traditions, that the young people were subjected to, had religious, spiritual or moral lessons.

Secondly, since chiefs were often taken to be intermediaries between the gods or ancestral spirits and the people, and since in some cases the royal spirits formed the basis of a tribe's religion, it can be said that the chieftainship or state determined the form of religious education that went on in such societies. According to Roberts (1976: 63-64), original stories or myths of origin among many Zambian tribes in which founder chiefs feature prominently have been 'compressed and transformed into moral lessons for the latter day listener.' The ruling groups more than the ruled, were also interested in 'maintaining [and transmitting]... ideas and beliefs underlying the social order' (Ibid: 64).

So in the 'fusion of the social, political and religious' (Sanneh 1993: 157) and 'religious universe' (Mbiti 1969: 262) that traditional African (and Zambian) communities were, both the general religious populace and the ruling political elites had a great stake in the religious teaching of the young. They consciously co-operated in the religious teaching of the young because it was crucial for their own survival as socio-religious (groups) and socio-political groups or chiefdoms.

Due to the communal and 'static' nature of African society, traditional education including religious teaching and learning was 'conservative' (Castle 1966: 17; Mwanakatwe 1968: 6; Snelson 1974: 3). Rather than developing a young person's individuality and critical intelligence, traditional education aimed at preserving the 'cultural heritage' by encouraging 'conformity to community norms.' So religious teaching and learning in pre-missionary Zambian society promoted such values as 'obedience, unselfishness... endurance of hardship... honesty, self-restraint ... respect for the rights of others, and ... how man can [could] come to terms with the spirit world' (Snelson 1974: 3). All elders, parents and specialised people such as priests and healers were religious teachers who, because of the goals and aims of education described above, used various indoctrinatory methods in transmitting the moral and religious beliefs of their tribe. Such methods included, for example, instilling fear of individual and communal punishment by ancestral spirits, threats of various kinds, actual punishment by parents or elders, public ridicule, isolation and many more.

At a time when other sources of information were virtually non-existent, the spoken word and (past) experience of elders constituted the final authority. As such, it can be said that the young people or learners went through a process of unconscious indoctrination whose results were both positive and negative for traditional society. The positive effects or results were that social stability and cultural continuity were effectively maintained. The negative effects or results, on the other hand, were that individual creativity and autonomy of thought in social, economic and religious life were largely suppressed, leading to very slow social and economic progress.

3.2 The Missionary Period (1883 - 1924)

The inspiring figure behind missionary work in Central Africa including Northern Rhodesia was Dr David Livingstone. Following his death in 1873 in Northern Rhodesia, eighteen missionary societies had by 1945 entered and established themselves in the area (Ibid: 10). A few more Protestant mission churches such as the Lutheran Church of Central Africa, Apostolic Faith Mission and Pentecostal Assemblies of God arrived afterwards in the 1950s and 60s (Henkel 1989: 39, 40).

In 1890 the territory of Northern Rhodesia came under the control of the British South Africa Company (BSAC) whose administration lasted until 1924 when it handed over the territory to the British Colonial Office. The BSA Company state's administration structure (by 1924) was as follows: the Territory Administrator at the capital and District Commissioners, Native Commissioners and Assistant Native Commissioners at district centres or towns and local centres or areas. There were also (District) Magistrates and Assistant Magistrates to take care of legal and other related matters throughout the territory. I have placed the 34 years of Company rule under the missionary period because the Company had virtually nothing to do with African (formal) education, which this thesis is concerned with. It welcomed and encouraged missionary societies to establish themselves in Northern Rhodesia and then left the responsibility of providing education to the local people almost entirely to them (Snelson 1974: 121; Gadsden 1992: 98). With regard to provision of African education, perhaps the most prominent missionary groups were the London Missionary Society (LMS), the Church of Scotland Mission (CSM), the Primitive Methodists (PM), the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS) and the Society of Jesus (Jesuits).

Almost without exception, missionary groups established themselves in different areas of Zambia by building a church and starting a school. The chief aim and purpose of these mission schools and missionary education was 'evangelisation' and 'conversion' of the local people to Christianity (Snelson 1974: 269; Mwanakatwe 1968: 11; Carmody 1992; Gadsden 1992: 99). In accordance with this aim, the missionary school curriculum generally consisted of the following subjects: 'Vernacular or local languages, Basic Literacy, Church Doctrines, Bible Knowledge, Morality, Hygiene, ... Arithmetic (Numeracy)...Woodwork and Bricklaying' (MOE 1999: 7). Apart from Hygiene and Arithmetic, all the other subjects contributed directly towards the achievement of the overall aim of missionary education stated above. While Basic Literacy enabled the local people to read and teach others the Bible or Word of God in their own languages (later even in English), Church Doctrine, Bible Knowledge and Morality deepened the learners' knowledge and understanding of the new religion of Christianity. Similarly, Woodwork and Bricklaying gave the local people the crucial practical skills needed for continued

construction of more churches, schools and other mission projects. Most original or main mission schools run by the missionaries served as training centres from which African students or converts who became able to read, write and count were sent out as catechists/teachers to satellite, bush schools to continue teaching the 'three Rs' (reading, writing, arithmetic) and Bible Knowledge.

As can be seen from the foregoing, the establishment of schools and provision of education was 'complementary to the [main] missionary objective of increasing the number of Christian followers' (Masterton 1985: 4; Mwanakatwe 1968: 11). What this means is that every available opportunity and all possible means had to be used to give religious instruction to the young people who attended school. Apart from class time teaching of Church Doctrine, Bible Knowledge and Morality, regular morning and evening worship (including prayers and sermons), catechumen lessons, Bible study or recitation and other related denominational activities were used. So religious instruction (RI) both in and outside the classroom, which was also a church in the early stages, was crucial to the whole missionary education system.

During this period, the church was a mixed bag of various missionary groups with different ideologies, backgrounds and policies with regard to the role of education in missionary work. So although there was a lot of similarity in the curriculum and general ethos taught by different missionary societies, some differences in the general approach to African education and in the RI syllabuses existed. For example, among Protestant missionary groups, the Free Church of Scotland Mission and the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society stood out for being more open and ready to provide education not merely as a means to conversion but as 'a source of social mobility and intrinsically valuable to the [local] individual' (Gadsden 1992: 101). On the other hand, extreme evangelical groups like the Christian Missions to Many Lands, the South African General Mission, the Dutch Reformed Church Mission and the Baptists were only ready to provide education as a means to conversion before anything else. In their view, '[c]onversion... did not need extensive book learning, [but] only the ability to read from sections of the Gospels translated into the vernacular' (Ibid: 103). As such, the form of RI

offered in the former groups' schools was likely to be a little more liberal than that offered in the latter groups' schools. Similarly, among the Catholic missionary groups, the Jesuits' position was that education was important in the evangelisation and conversion of the local people (Carmody 1992; Gadsden 1992: 103). On the other hand, for the White Fathers, an individual's moral worth was more important than his educational achievements, except in the training of priests (Gadsden 1992: 104). Again, this might mean that the Jesuits were likely to be a little more liberal in their approach to RE than the latter.

According to Snelson (1974: 127): 'The need for a common curriculum [even in RE]...was being increasingly recognised by the missionaries themselves.' However, despite '[the] unified curriculum...' being discussed at the 1914 or First General Missionary Conference (Bolink 1967: 145), a common syllabus for RE does not seem to have been a priority for the missionaries. The issue was not even raised or discussed at the 1919, 1922 and 1924 General Missionary Conferences held at Kafue and attended by delegates from Protestant missionary societies and representatives (except for the 1924 Conference) from the Catholic Jesuits in Northern Rhodesia. What this means, then, is that each missionary society or church denomination had its own syllabus for RE which was taught in all schools under it or within its sphere or area of influence. Each missionary group maintained its character and identity by teaching its own doctrine, practices and traditions in their syllabus.

In line with the theme of the thesis, the interaction between church and state over RE will now be briefly discussed. As mentioned earlier, the BSA Company administration which had replaced the various chiefdoms as a unified state from 1890 had very little to do with African education, including RE. Since the Company (state) administration left the financing and provision of education to Africans entirely in the hands of the missionary societies, it had no (official) control or say on what kind of RE was offered in the different mission schools. Due to security concerns however, an attempt was made through the Company's 1918 Proclamation on Native Schools to try to 'exercise some control over [local] teachers', through registration of schools, inspection and certification

of teachers (Snelson 1974: 128-130; Carmody 1992: 47). However, the 1919 General Missionary Conference reacted angrily to the Proclamation, recommended changes to the main or most controversial parts of the Proclamation and asked the government to make grants in aid to the missions' educational work. The Company administration was therefore forced to back down through a new Native Schools Proclamation in 1922, which repealed the 1918 Proclamation, excluded the holding of religious service from the definition of a school, dropped the marriage requirements for teachers and provided for certification of local teachers and inspection of schools by missionaries-in-charge (Snelson 1974: 133 - 134). This therefore means that the churches or the different denominations remained in total control of RE and that religious institutions continued to be in control of education.

So, while each missionary society taught its own specific religious doctrines and practices in addition to general biblical values through school RE, the Company administration was satisfied that these 'values...facilitated peaceful administration... [and] African acceptance of European authority' (Gadsden 1992: 98; MOE 1999: 7). From the missionary societies' point of view, the value of RE lay in its facilitation of conversion of the local people from their old traditional beliefs and practices to Christianity, while from the Company or state's point of view, it lay in the pacifying effect it had on the semi-educated and converted local people. So the missionary societies' concern and interest in the subject was purely religious or catechetical, while the state's concern and interest was primarily political. Thus both church and state had a stake in RE during this period.

While the coming of missionary education and BSA Company rule set in motion the process by which Northern Rhodesia was changed from a traditional society to a modern one, the nature of missionary RE was not very different from that of the preceding traditional religious teaching in terms of dogmatism, rigidity and, in modern educational thinking, indoctrinatory methods. According to Snelson (1974: 11):

There was general abhorrence expressed by pioneer missionaries at the way of life in traditional tribal society. They regarded the people as immoral, lazy,

and drunken, steeped in superstition and witchcraft and doomed to spiritual damnation. There could be no question of grafting the Christian message on to the traditional culture. That whole culture was rotten, in their view, and had to be replaced root and branch.

Because of this basic attitude and approach, RE was RI, which aimed at totally converting the pupils or learners from their traditional culture to the Christian/Western culture. The Christianised pupils had to abandon their traditional beliefs, values and practices and adopt Christian beliefs and values, which also had a European or American cultural jacket. Encouraged by the fact that no other major religion (like Islam) had seriously established itself in the territory (Ibid: 22), the Christian missionaries ignored and looked down upon most of the local beliefs even though some of them were not too different from their own.

Further, with the (mission) school or class ‘under the control of an evangelist teacher who also preached Christianity, led services, and taught basic literacy’ (Gadsden 1992: 99), there were likely to be more threats of hell fire, recitation of biblical texts and Church rules and praise or adoration of Christian life through RI than educational attempts to promote an understanding of religion or Christianity. In the missionaries’ understanding, education (including RE) meant Christian education. There was no difference between RE, RI and Catechesis. As such, it can be said that mission education and RE in particular was a process of conscious indoctrination of young people into Christianity.

As under the previous section, the results of this indoctrination may be said to have been both negative and positive. On the negative side, ‘it alienated many students from their [cultural and religious] background; it weakened the African personality [and] aroused aspirations which could not be satisfied’ (Snelson 1974: 22). But on the positive side, it set in motion the process by which the territory began to progressively develop into a modern country or nation.

4.3 The Colonial Period (1924 - 64)

Colonial rule proper for Zambia began on 1st April 1924 when the British Colonial Office took over administration of the territory from the BSA Company. Unlike the BSA Company state, the British colonial state administration was more elaborate. Under the British Colonial Office in London was the Governor of Northern Rhodesia, who was assisted by the Secretary of State at the capital. There were Provincial Commissioners at Provincial headquarters and District Commissioners, District Officers and Assistant District Officers at district and sub-district centres. There was a High Court Judge assisted by a few other judges, Magistrates and Assistant Magistrates at lower levels to provide judicial services, and a Legislative Council with European settler representatives and European representatives for Africans (until a few years before Independence) to ensure some checks and balances. Additionally, there were Native Authorities built around chiefs through which the colonial state controlled the people up to the local level.

The change over of power from the BSA Company to the British Northern Rhodesia government coincided with the visit to Eastern and Southern Africa, including Northern Rhodesia (in June 1924), by the American-funded Phelps-Stokes Commission, which was requested to survey and report on African education in East and Southern Africa by the Committee on Native Education in London. The substance of the Commission's specific recommendations for Northern Rhodesia was that African education should be adapted to the conditions and needs of rural society and that the government should not only give financial assistance to missionary societies but should also co-ordinate and regulate their educational activities (Snelson 1974: 139; Carmody 1992: 48).

Accordingly, in March 1925 the Colonial Office issued its first policy memorandum called 'Education Policy in British Tropical Africa' which closely followed or reflected the Phelps-Stokes Commission recommendations. In April 1925, a sub-department of Native Education, which later became a full department in 1930, was established in Northern Rhodesia. The purpose of the department was 'to co-ordinate and supervise the education of the Native' (Snelson 1974: 148). An Advisory Board (on Native Education) comprising five colonial government representatives (including the first Director of the

department, Mr G.C. Latham), eight representatives of the missionary societies and two representatives of the white settler community were also appointed by the Governor in the same year (1925). Thus the stage was set for changes, which would increase government involvement in the affairs of African education.

What would be the effect of this government involvement or co-ordination and supervision of African education on school RE? What would be the effect of this government control of RE and the curriculum on church-state relations? As early as 1925 itself, the Department issued to all missionary societies a 'School Code' consisting of a 'suggested curriculum and some explanatory notes' (Ibid: 160). In 1927, the Native Schools (Amendment) Ordinance was passed, further consolidating government control of curricula in mission schools. The primary school curriculum now included 'Vernacular Languages, English, Hygiene, Bible Knowledge, Arithmetic, Singing, ... Social Studies (Geography, History, Civics)... Woodwork... Bricklaying... Domestic Science... Agriculture, Typesetting or Typewriting... and Physical Education' (MOE 1999: 8). Apart from greater emphasis on RE, Vernacular Languages, Mathematics and Science, the secondary school curriculum (when secondary education was introduced much later) was similar to the primary school one. Although both the previous missionary-controlled curriculum and the new government-controlled curriculum were divided into academic and practical or life skills subjects, there was a significant difference in content with regard to RE. While the missionary-controlled curriculum provided for three distinct subjects namely Church Doctrine, Bible Knowledge and Morality under RI, the colonial government-controlled curriculum only provided for five periods a week of RE as a single subject. This big reduction of the dominance of RE on the curriculum indicates the colonial state's desire to move the country's education system along the path of the Phelps-Stokes Commission's recommendations. But it can also be seen as an indication to the missionary societies that, though important, RE was by no means the main subject on the curriculum of their mainly primary school system. While the missionary societies' concerns were still purely religious and catechetical, the state's concerns included socio-economic and political considerations.

In 1939, the African Education Ordinance was passed. While the 1927 Ordinance had affected RE mainly at the level of the curriculum, the 1939 Ordinance went deeper because it:

...insisted that every government, native authority and assisted school should be open to 'African children without distinction of religion'; provided, in a conscientious clause, for the withdrawal of children from religious instruction; gave power [to government officials] to inspect schools; [and] required every teacher in charge of a school to be in possession of a certificate...The definition of the term 'school' was [also] deliberately limited to exclude catechetical centres or prayer houses....(Snelson 1974: 223).

Since, by 1939, most missionary societies were receiving one form of government aid or another and many of their schools could be categorised as grant-aided, they had to adhere to the open enrolment policy and other related requirements above. For the first time since establishing themselves in Northern Rhodesian territory, missionary societies had to re-think the idea of using the school as a tool of conversion and prepare themselves to receive pupils or students who could already be converts of other religious (Christian) denominations, deal with pupils or students who had an official right to withdraw from RI, and generally handle pupils or students who could, at the end of the day, not be automatically counted as members of their church denominations. The definition of a school as non-catechetical nor prayer centre, and the requirement that a teacher in charge of a school be in possession of a (government) certificate dealt a further blow to purely denominational RE. Moreover, government inspection through the Department of Native Education's managers of schools was supposed to ensure that the guidelines above were followed.

As such, it can be said that one of the aims or intentions of the 1939 Ordinance was to encourage the missionary societies and churches to begin to think about RE not in denominational or catechetical terms only but rather in ecumenical and educational terms also. This was actually in line with the government's desire, from 1937, 'to increase the number of Local Education Authority [or secular] schools' (Carmody 1992: 82), and its 'intent...not only on gaining control but eventually on creating a neutral state system of education' (Ibid: 84).

However, the fact that the colonial government through the Director of the Department of Native Education still saw the most important aim of the school as ‘character development’ (Snelson 1974: 160) and the role of the curriculum at both primary and secondary school levels as that of ‘promo[ting] character and moral... excellence’ (MOE, 1999: 9), means that RI was still the second or the most important subject on the curriculum. Thus apart from Vernacular and English, RI had the highest number of periods (five) per week at primary school level (Ibid: 11-12). Similarly, at ‘Normal Schools’ or teacher training colleges, the subject had the highest number of periods (five per week) together with English and Education methods (Snelson 1974: 153). Moreover, while some of the 1939 Ordinance guidelines or requirements such as inspection of schools by government officials, schools being run by government certified teachers and school or learning centres being separated from catechetical or prayer centres generally affected all missionary societies, other guidelines did not affect all missionary societies and all areas of the country in the same way. Missionary societies with large areas and huge populations under their ‘influence’ had little or nothing to worry about open enrolment and conscientious withdraw¹ from RI lessons by pupils. On the other hand, missionary societies or mission churches operating in areas of rivalry or competition with only small numbers of followers under them had cause for concern about the same guidelines.

Additionally, the fact that the mainly primary school system was predominantly in the hands of the missionary societies (which, apart from providing the facilities in aided schools, also still run some un-aided schools) also means that the government’s authority could not be easily and fully enforced. And as already mentioned, the missionary societies were heavily represented on the Advisory Board on Native Education with missionary members dominating its sub-committees, which dealt with syllabuses, examinations and textbooks (Ibid: 249). It is due to such influence that the missionaries were able to either force amendments to some unfavourable government regulations or

¹Although RI was taken for granted in grant-aided mission schools and conscientious withdrawal from it was not an issue among parents and pupils then, the state still provided for it through a ‘consciencious clause’ in the 1939 African Education Ordinance. This was in line with the state’s desire to make African education as neutral as possible, despite the churches’ dominance of the sector.

programmes such as the 1945 proposed rationalisation of teacher training colleges into provincial development centres where missionary societies would have no controlling influence (Ibid), or to retain substantial control over their schools and teachers (Carmody 1992: 82 - 83).

The missionary societies' influence over the country's education policy could still be felt as late as 1962 (two years before Independence), when the last or new primary school curriculum was 'approved by both the missionaries and the government' (MOE 1999: 9). Although the new syllabus was now divided into lower and upper primary levels, RE continued to enjoy the same status as a key subject with the same high number of periods (five) per week.

So as the end of the colonial period (in 1964) approached, RE in Northern Rhodesia was still denominational (Masterton 1985: 7). Government attempts to move RE beyond pure denominationalism to something ecumenical and educational had not yielded much change. African education in the territory began as a mission school system during the missionary period and was still almost entirely in missionary hands towards the end of the colonial period. Most missionary societies still believed that education and school were vehicles for evangelisation. They felt that mission schools and Christian teachers were needed to 'provide a specifically Christian education ...which might not always be given in government institutions' (Snelson 1974: 248).

However, as earlier alluded to, there were differences in attitude and approach with regard to ecumenical and educational changes during this period between Catholic and Protestant missionary societies. So in response to the state's plan to professionalise or rationalise teacher training in Northern Rhodesia, the Protestant Christian Council was ready to reduce the number of their teacher training institutions or 'Normal Schools' to seven (instead of the required six), while the Roman Catholic or Bishops' Conference was not ready to remain with less than twelve of such institutions. Also, while the Protestant churches were ready to unconditionally allow and co-operate in the establishment of the envisaged 'national' grant-aided interdenominational teacher

training centres or colleges, the Roman Catholic Church attached denominational or confessional conditions to their participation in such colleges, resulting in the plan's failure (Carmody 1999: 58-60). Similarly, in response to the state's offer to the church to open two grant-aided secondary schools after 1946, the Roman Catholic Church wanted the two schools to be divided between Catholics and Protestants and to run on denominational lines, while the Protestant churches proposed that both schools 'should be interdenominational in character' (Ibid: 65). In the end, the state opened doors to denominational secondary schools (besides interdenominational state secondary schools like Munali Boys School) where, despite open enrolment, religious teaching was that of the church running the school.

If the situation in secondary education and teacher training could be like this only a few years before Independence, it means that RE was not only denominational but indoctrinative too, throughout the colonial period. As during the missionary period, the missionary teachers continued to ignore and condemn their students' traditional religious beliefs, presenting Christianity as the only true religion. Their understanding of RE was that it was synonymous with Christian education. There was no difference between teaching about religion and preaching Christianity or evangelising. The colonial state also made no serious attempts to promote an open approach to the teaching of the subject and to protect local religious beliefs through its ordinances and other official guidelines on African education. This was in spite of the favourable Colonial Office guidelines or advice contained in the 1925 Memorandum, 'Education Policy in British Tropical Africa,' that:

Education should be adapted to the mentality, aptitudes, occupations and traditions of the various peoples, conserving as far as possible all sound and healthy elements in the fabric of their social [and religious] life. The content and method of teaching in all subjects [including RE] should be adapted to local conditions (Snelson 1974: 142).

However, much as the state would want to encourage RE which would include indigenous religious beliefs, it considered Christian beliefs which generally went together with European values, to be more important for the pacification of the local people,

European dominance and stability of colonial society. Thus it indirectly allowed Christian religious instruction (or RI) to go on even in the grant-aided schools. As such, there can be no doubt that this kind of sectarian education and indoctrination had a very negative impact on many Zambians' thinking about RE as a school subject and about indigenous cultural and religious beliefs. The same kind of thinking and negative attitude continued after Independence and is still prevalent today. Many Zambians still consider RE to be the same as Christian education or catechesis and are uncomfortable with the current pluralistic approaches to the subject, which are appropriate in modern multi-faith Zambian society. Similarly, many Zambians today continue to look down upon their own indigenous religious and cultural beliefs and values even when these do not conflict with their Christian beliefs and values.

On the other hand, it cannot be denied that despite its sectarian and indoctrinative nature, missionary/colonial education contributed greatly to the birth and development of the modern nation of Zambia. All the early nationalist leaders and founding fathers of the nation such as Dr Kenneth D. Kaunda and Harry M. Nkumbula were products of mission schools. Many other Zambians who came to hold key positions in both the public service and private sector after Independence also received their foundational (primary and in some cases junior secondary) education in mission schools. Apart from the mission primary schools that the government took over at Independence, the 1962 curriculum (including RI syllabuses) that was inherited provided the foundation or basis on which an expanded school system with improved curricula and new RE syllabuses were later developed.

CHAPTER 5

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN POST-COLONIAL ZAMBIA

This chapter describes the state of RE after Independence or during the First and Second Republics (1964 - 72 and 1973 - 90). As in the previous chapter, the role of both church and state in the development of RE during the two periods is critically discussed or examined. The chapter will show that despite some changes, RE as a school curriculum subject continued to be largely denominational and confessional in approach during the First Republic and part of the Second Republic. As a result of educational reforms in the mid-1970s, the subject became (more) educational in approach during the second part of the Second Republic (from the mid-eighties).

5.1 First Republic (1964 - 1972)

Northern Rhodesia became the independent country called Zambia on 24th October 1964. Like in many other newly independent African states, and as alluded to in the last chapter, many missionary societies or voluntary agencies were still responsible for providing African education mostly in grant-aided primary schools and in a handful of secondary schools. Actually, although some church denominations such as those belonging to the Christian Council of Zambia handed over their schools to the new government at Independence (Carmody 2000: 365), others still wanted to maintain control over their schools for purposes of conversion and Christian education. For example, even after a long debate dating back to the 1950s, the Roman Catholic Church still decided, as late as 1966, that handing over its primary schools to government or the Local Education Authorities (LEAs) would mean 'lowering of standards as regards Religious Education and Moral Training' (Ibid: 366).

Due to the neglect of African education by the colonial government, the new nation had only 'about one hundred' graduates in 1964 and 'approximately 1,500 and 6,000 Zambians in possession of Form V and Form II certificates, respectively' in 1965 (Mwanakatwe 1968: 38). Inevitably, the United National Independence Party (UNIP) government of Kenneth Kaunda had to embark on 'massive expansion in the field of education at all levels, particularly in the provision of primary and secondary school

places' (MOE 1999: 13). At the same time the new government, like many others in newly independent African countries, began the process of establishing its authority and control over the remaining church managed primary schools and making education generally more secular.

This process began with the passing by Parliament of the Education Bill to become the Education Act of 1966. Apart from repealing and replacing many provisions of the 1956 Education Act and the African Education Ordinance, other changes that had already taken place in the administration of education were legalised by the Act. To this effect the Act '...included a number of ... measures intended... to enable the Minister of Education to exercise effective control over the implementation of [the whole educational] policy' (Mwanakatwe 1968: 197). Like the Department of Native Education before Independence, the Ministry of Education would continue 'to direct the school calendar, syllabus, and subjects of instruction' (GRZ 1966: 239; Carmody 1992: 105) in government and grant-aided schools. In addition, the Minister would regulate the admission, punishment, expulsion, exclusion and transfer of pupils including the appointment of staff (Ibid). So whereas the colonial government had controlled only the school curriculum the new government sought to control even the syllabuses of the subjects of instruction. This was achieved through the first curriculum review started soon after Independence and aimed at 'putting the contents of the curriculum including the methods of teaching in the context of Zambia' (MOE 1999: 13) so as 'to suit the aspirations of the new nation' (Ibid). Therefore, the education policy of the new government was that of 'massive expansion, elaboration and Africanisation of existing colonial structures' (Saxby 1980: 260).

The curriculum review culminated into the Zambia Primary Course (ZPC) with the following subject areas by 1974: Creative Arts, English, Environmental Science, Mathematics, Physical Education, Practical subjects, Social Studies and Zambian Languages (MOE 1999: 14). Although RE does not appear among these subjects, it was actually part of the ZPC except that after 1964, Religious Instruction was not timetabled in government schools. Instead it was taught for one period a week by representatives of

the various [church] denominations found in each local area where a school was located (Masterton 1987: 15). This was due to the fact that at the time of handing over their schools to the state, the churches had retained ‘a say in school management and the right of entry to give religious instruction [to their members]’ (Ibid 14). Since there was no common RE syllabus up to 1964, a class or classes had to be divided into denomination or faith groups for purposes of RI and each church denomination used its own course or instruction material and methods. Thus unlike other school subjects, RE was firmly in the hands of the church and there was no educational syllabus for the new Ministry of Education to inherit and control at Independence. That is partly why the subject was left out during the first curriculum review or localisation of the curriculum by the state. This therefore meant that as a school subject RE continued to be as denominational and confessional as during the colonial period.

However, this does not mean that the state had no intention of gaining control of school RE and generally secularising the school system. On the contrary and as earlier alluded to, the spirit of the 1966 Education Act and the first curriculum review was that of change towards state control and secularisation. The aspirations of the new nation were towards a united, fully independent secular or pluralist Zambian society, and not one where education mainly promoted character development, moral excellence and subservience, as was the case during the colonial/missionary period. Actually, the church had all along been aware of the state’s desire to control the education system because the policy of eventually granting full control of primary education to Local Education Authorities (LEAs) (under central government supervision) had been on the cards as far back as 1953 (Carmody 2000: 363). That is partly why some denominations began to hand over their schools right from the 1950s. It was also perhaps due to the same awareness that despite having the right of entry to give religious instruction in schools and despite being left unaffected by the state’s first curriculum review, the Protestant churches decided to respond to on-going changes by coming up with a Joint Syllabus for Religious Instruction by the end of 1965. By 1971 two junior secondary school RI syllabuses: Syllabus ‘A’ for Catholics in both Roman Catholic Church and state schools and Syllabus ‘B’ for all Protestants in schools were in place (Masterton 1987: 15).

However, a Joint Protestant RI syllabus and two separate RI syllabuses (A and B) for Catholics and Protestants was educationally not good enough. For RE was still denominational, confessional and indoctrinative. It continued to be taught or provided by the two branches of the Christian Church (Protestant and Roman Catholic) which also produced syllabuses and teaching materials as if the state had no regulatory role to play. Even if Zambian society was not as religiously and culturally plural then as it is today, the 1964 or Independence Constitution already provided for religious freedoms, which, therefore necessitated Ministry of Education involvement in RE to protect the rights of pupils from minority religious or faiths groups and the non-religious in state schools.

Admittedly, the state did try to provide some protection for such pupils (and parents) through the 'Exemption Clause' in Section 25 of the Education Act, which said:

If the parent of a pupil attending any school requests that he be excused from receiving religious instruction or from taking part in attending any religious ceremony or observance, then, until the request is withdrawn, the pupil shall be excused there from accordingly (GRZ 1966: 247).

However, on its own this was not enough and was not effective because the demand for education during those early years of Independence was so high that no parent or pupil could even stop to think about his or her human (or religious) rights before enrolling for a place. As one observer has pointed out:

[M]ost parents sent their children to the nearest school where they could find a place and it did not matter whether it was run by their church, another church, or GRZ [the state]. Everyone was interested in getting an educational certificate and religious initiation [through RI] became less crucial (Henze 1979: 1).

Additionally, most parents were perhaps too illiterate to consider such a thing as their rights and those of their children within the state education system. Therefore the exemption of pupils from Religious Instruction and observances in the Act needed to go together with state or Ministry of Education involvement in the designing of an educational RE syllabus and the production of its teaching and learning materials if indoctrination into Protestantism and Catholicism were to be avoided.

So unlike other subject areas where the state through its professional educationists were in charge of the syllabuses and teaching techniques, RE continued to be the ‘Cinderella subject in most schools’ (Smith 1982: 43), and was characterised by chaos and a lack of clear direction. This situation prompted the state through the Primary Education Committee to recommend, in November 1968, ‘that consideration be given to the introduction of a common [RE] syllabus in all Zambian primary schools’ (Flynn 1989: 2). Similarly, in April 1970, a meeting of RE tutors from the teacher training colleges in the country advised the Ministry of Education to implement the Primary Education Committee’s recommendation to introduce a common syllabus in schools (Smith 1982: 74). The Ministry of Education responded, in November the same year, by challenging the church to discuss and come up with a common syllabus for RE (Flynn 1989: 3; Mujdrlica 1995: 27). With a growing realisation that ‘historical Church reasons were not sufficient for having religion in schools’ (Henze 1979: 1) and that ‘only, sound educational reasons would justify the inclusion of religious education as an official subject in the school curriculum’ (Masterton 1987: 1), the church through the Christian Council of Zambia and the Zambia Episcopal Conference responded positively by coming up with an, Agreed or Joint Primary School RE syllabus in 1972. An interdenominational team of RE tutors in the teacher training colleges was also tasked to produce textbooks for the syllabus. (Flynn 1989: 3). This greatly pleased the Ministry of Education which wrote very enthusiastically and encouraging about the new joint syllabus:

This syllabus of religious education has been planned for use in all Zambian primary schools without the distinction between Roman Catholic and non-Roman Catholic teaching which has been made until now. Many problems arise in schools when the children, and even the teachers, are divided on a religious basis. We think the time has come when teachers and Church leaders should reach agreement on the religious education to be given to all our children while they are in school. (MOE 1972: 1).

During the same period, a meeting to plan for a Joint Junior Secondary School RE Syllabus was called by the Ministry of Education (in December 1971) (Flynn 1989: 4). This finally led to the adaptation of a two-year East African Syllabus called *Developing*

in Christ, with an additional one-year *Zambian Supplement* part as the Joint or Agreed Junior Secondary School RE Syllabus in 1973.

Although the two syllabuses above were produced 'by the co-operation of the Zambia Episcopal Council and the Christian Council of Zambia with the addition of ... the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia' (Masterton 1987: 16), the circumstances and events leading to their production show that the state played an important guiding role. Without the professional concern and recommendations of the Primary Education Committee and the college tutors, it is unlikely that this ecumenical achievement would have been recorded so easily by the churches on their own. In any case, the introduction of the two Agreed syllabuses was educationally significant in that from that time RE or Scripture, as the subject was sometimes referred to in official documents, 'began to be called 'Religious Education' [RE] and so 'began to take its place in the educational policy of Zambian schools' (Smith 1982: 43; Masterton 1987: 15). These syllabuses also became the foundation or basis upon which future educational developments in the subject's syllabuses and approaches would depend.

However, although RE as a curriculum subject had passed from total church control to shared control with the state at the close of the First Republic, it was still confessional and therefore uneducational. While the Agreed or Joint syllabuses were an achievement in the sense discussed above, the two (ecumenical) syllabuses and their textbooks were 'clearly Education in Christianity' (Flynn 1989: 3) and not education in religion as constitutionally required in a multi-faith society like Zambia. According to the Ministry of Education (1990: 6), the three steps followed in each lesson under the primary school syllabus were: Children's Experience, Development and Response. Similarly, each lesson had the following four steps under the junior secondary school syllabus: Pupils' Experience, Wider Experience, Bible Experience, and Synthesis. An analysis of these steps shows that all the religious source materials used were Christian and therefore, the expected response and synthesis by pupils was commitment to the Christian faith rather than an understanding of religion in its plural sense. So in reality, all that took place was a change from denominational to interdenominational Christian education, from

catechesis and faith nurture leading to baptism and church denomination membership, to evangelisation leading to commitment to the Christian faith and Gospel values. Therefore, a lot still needed to be done to develop the subject to a level where it could deserve its new name of Religious Education (RE).

5.2 Second Republic (1973 - 1990)

The Second Republic in Zambia began in January 1973 when the country adopted the socialist one party socio-economic and political system, which was becoming increasingly popular on the continent in the 1970s. All political parties except the ruling United National Independence Party (UNIP) became outlawed. President Kenneth Kaunda and UNIP promoted socialist ideas through the national philosophy or ideology of *Zambian Humanism*. So attempts were made by the state to bring humanist socialist ideas and influence to bear on all areas of national life including education, where this meant the introduction of elements of socialist ideologies in the curriculum.

Meanwhile, the momentum in the development of RE into a full curriculum subject controlled by the state's Ministry of Education was not lost. During the early years of the Second Republic up to 1976, there were tremendous improvements in the material coverage and approaches to the teaching of the joint syllabus for primary schools. As Flynn (1989: 3) states:

Firstly, the religious base was widened and several lessons were included on 'Zambian Traditional Beliefs and Customs.' Secondly, there was a change from teacher-focus aims to pupil focus objectives. Thirdly, there was a definite emphasis on the educational component.

The inclusion of *Zambian Traditional Beliefs and Customs*, which had hitherto been discouraged and excluded by the church-controlled denominational RI syllabuses was an indication that the state through the Ministry of Education intended to make RE as a curriculum subject conform to the principle that education should be contextual. Thus:

It was recognised that any syllabus produced for this country should be relevant to The religious past of the Bantu peoples, taking due cognisance of their spiritual achievements and deepest aspirations as a nation' (Flynn 1993: 2).

Similarly, the shift from teacher-focus aims to pupil-focus objectives was something significant. Since teacher-centred teaching characterised denominational RE and interdenominational evangelisation, the change to pupil-centred teaching indicated the desire of the professional educationists at the teacher training colleges and the Curriculum Development Centre to move RE away from denominationalism and pure evangelisation. Pupil-focus objectives and pupil-centred teaching were associated with good education and were in line with current or modern educational principles. The new emphasis on the educational component of the subject meant that a clear distinction between faith formation in the churches and RE in the schools was now emerging. Whereas faith formation aimed at promoting growth in faith and commitment to the Christian religion among pupils, RE aimed at education in religion and the deepening of the skills of reflection and analysis of personal faith among them.

With regard to senior secondary school, two Cambridge ‘O’ Level Bible Knowledge syllabuses: ‘the Synoptic Gospels’ and ‘Luke with Acts of the Apostles’ were adopted for use in Zambia at School Certificate level right after Independence in 1964. Although the church denominations were not yet ready to give up control of the religious instruction syllabuses in primary schools, they were nevertheless comfortable with the two Bible Knowledge syllabuses because they were Christian, biblical and non-denominational. On the other hand, although the state (through the Ministry of Education) allowed the adoption of the syllabuses (perhaps due their neutral or ecumenical nature), it could not have been very comfortable with them because they were more confessional than educational in approach and focus. The syllabuses could also be taught only where missionaries, priests, pastors or church ministers were available for invitation by school headmasters (Masterton 1987: 17).

Consequently, the search for a better senior secondary school RE syllabus continued until 1975 when the Ministry of Education introduced ‘Christian Living Today’ (CLT), a continuation of the junior secondary school ‘Developing in Christ’ syllabus as an alternative to the two biblical syllabuses. While the state was more comfortable with this

more critical and educationally focused CLT syllabus, Protestant churches were uncomfortable with it because it was life or pupil experience-centred and not evangelical. Due to its origins at a Catholic seminary in Uganda and its reference to specific Catholic beliefs such as 'sainthood', CLT was also perceived to '[have] a Roman Catholic bias and philosophy' (Masterton 1987: 17). Due to this perception, the syllabus was not taken in most schools run by Protestant churches as well as in some state schools. It was, however, taken in most of the schools managed by the Roman Catholic Church as well as in some state schools. As can be seen, joint primary and junior secondary school RE syllabuses were in place by the end of the First Republic in 1972. Two University of Cambridge School Certificate Bible Knowledge syllabuses had been adopted for senior secondary school at Independence in 1964, while meetings and discussions aimed at introducing an alternative life/experience-centred senior secondary school RE (CLT) syllabus from 1975 were ongoing.

So it can be said that by the beginning of the Second Republic in 1973, RE had shed off the 'Cinderella' subject status to become a respectable curriculum subject with its own Inspector of Schools (appointed in 1971) and a professional association in the name of Zambia Association of Religious Education Teachers (ZARET) soon to be formed (in 1974). The Inspector of Schools for RE was the chief professional and technical advisor on RE matters to both the state and ZARET, while the association provided a forum for discussion and exchange of professional ideas among RE teachers in the country. Actually one of ZARET's main objectives was 'to promote the [professional] status of Religious Education teaching throughout Zambia' (ZARET 1974).

The major educational reforms of the 1970s were, to some extent, 'an attempt by the government to break away from the colonial past and set our objectives and strategy for an independent, plural, secular society' (Henze 1994: 19). This was a result of the people and governments' realisation that despite some reforms after Independence, the Zambian education system was still largely colonial or British in terms of structure, content, aims and especially the skills and attitudes it promoted. At the First National Education Conference in 1969, President Kaunda had already called for serious reform of the

educational system (Carmody 1992: 106). So the beginning of the Humanist Socialist Second Republic in 1973 also marked the start of serious work by the state towards a transformed educational system that would be ‘a potent instrument of individual and national development’ (MOE 1977: v) and ‘serve the nation’s development ...at every stage’ (MOE 1976: 3). The product of this work by the Ministry of Education was the 1976 document, *Education For Development*, a draft statement or proposal meant to provoke a national debate on educational reforms but also to steer the country’s education system in a socialist direction. Accordingly, the aim of national education would be ‘to develop the potential of each citizen to the full, for the creation of a humanist socialist society and for selfless service to humanity’ (Ibid: 1).

In order to achieve this (socialist) aim, the document *Education For Development* proposed that new ‘well-balanced curricula with a core of essential compulsory subjects and a limited number of options’ and ‘incorporating political education in all programmes’ (Ibid: 60) should be designed. Given the Marxist tone of the document and the fact that there was no specific mention of RE throughout the relevant chapter on curriculum, the churches, concerned citizens and religious educators concluded that RE would be dropped from the school curriculum. All along, RE was regarded by most church leaders, church members, parents and teachers as a key or even compulsory component of primary and secondary education due to the predominantly Christian composition of Zambian society. As Draisma (1987: 342-343) explained:

In Church-managed institutions, it [RE] was supposed to pervade the life of the school...Besides formal lessons in Bible Knowledge or religious instruction [or RE] which are included on the timetables, a variety of supportive activities take places such as hymn singing, Sunday services confirmation classes, Bible study groups, Sunday schools, and so on. Teachers are expected to lead exemplary ‘Christian’ lives. Christian ethics and convictions are supposed to permeate into the ‘secular’ subjects and into staff-students relationships. In ... government secondary schools, each week, or even each school day, is opened (sometimes closed) with a religious assembly at which prayers are said, hymns sung and passages read from the Bible (besides other items on the agenda).

Therefore, although the religious character of schools had already started declining after Independence, many churches were very unhappy with the omission of RE from the curriculum. Thus:

[T]he Steering Committee's complete disregard for religious education as an integral part of...all curricula came as a rude shock to many leaders and members of the major churches. Many felt offended by the neglect, and saw it as a deliberate attempt by 'left-wing atheists' to confine the Christian community to the inner space of their church buildings (Ibid: 344).

So after slightly over a decade of co-operation between the post-Independence state and the church over RE, the stage was now set for the first serious conflict between the two. While welcoming positive, progressive or unoffending reform proposals, many church leaders at national level adopted a defensive attitude, seeking to maintain the church's position of influence or say in school religious and moral education (Ibid: 338). Although no common, official statement seems to have been issued by the churches together at this stage, at least the main church denominations in the country voiced their individual dissatisfaction in one way or another. For example, the Roman Catholic Church through the Bishop of Livingstone, stressed to the Ministry of Education that 'the omission of religious instruction in the draft was not satisfactory' (Carmody 1999: 116). In addition, two main Catholic educational institutions, Charles Lwanga and Mongu Teacher Training colleges 'called for explicit inclusion of Religious Education in the Curriculum' and for '[continued] high academic standards in institutions of learning' (Ibid: 117), respectively. Similarly, in an interview (on 23.05.02) Isabel K. Simukonda, the Educational Secretary for the United Church of Zambia recalled that:

In line with the church's view that education should develop the mind, body and spirit, UCZ was concerned that RE was being seen as a second-class subject which could even be dropped from the curriculum. Any other subject could be dropped but not RE. The church therefore called upon all members, especially those who were teachers [like herself then] to respond to the educational reform proposals and participate in the national debate on them by explaining and emphasizing the UCZ's view that the teaching of religion in schools was needed if education was going to promote moral uprightness in the country.

In a letter to the Ministry of Education, the Seventh Day Adventist Church also:

[N]oted that there was no mention [in the draft] of any religious instruction which it believed was very essential to the overall development of the individual, his mind, body and soul. The Church reminded government that character building, high moral standards, healthful living, respect, honour and obedience towards ...government, love and unselfish service towards fellow men...are all part of religious instruction (Hazemba 1996: 60).

Due to these and other similar responses and reactions from church leaders, ordinary members of the church and other concerned Zambians, the second highest number of submissions (about 600) received by the Ministry of Education at the end of the national debate were expressions of concern at the dropping or intended dropping of RE from the school curriculum and timetable (Smith 1982: 13; Flynn 1993: 3). Given the fact that the majority of Zambians including ordinary church members did not have the literacy and communication means to participate in the debate and give their individual opinion, the high number of submissions on RE was very significant and could not be ignored by the state.

Therefore, this and other concerns raised by the churches were addressed in the final policy document entitled *Educational Reform: Proposals and Recommendations* (MOE 1977). RE was included in the curriculum under a new name or area of learning called 'Spiritual and Moral Education' (Ibid: 17), and generally the Marxist/socialist language and interpretation of education was toned down. The Spiritual and Moral Education Subject Panel later adopted the following aim statement:

The main aim of Spiritual and Moral Education is to enable pupils to appreciate spiritual, moral and religious values and behaviour based on them. This appreciation is drawn from the four main religious traditions in Zambia, (namely: Christianity, Hinduism, indigenous Zambian Beliefs and Islam), and from the religious elements of the Zambian Philosophy of Humanism (CDC 1982; ECZ 1984: 4; Masterton 1987: 97-98).

This meant that for the first time in the history of Zambian school RE, non-Christian religions were to be included in the new RE syllabuses. To be included too were

humanist and socialist ideas or values from the national philosophy of *Zambian Humanism*¹, which were similar to those of religion.

An important question to examine further, therefore, is: where did the push for pluralism in the syllabuses come from? Since the Muslim and Hindu population was very small (less than 1% of the total population then), it was unlikely that the pressure came from these religious communities. Similarly, the initiative could not have come from the church because Christianity was so dominant that most Christians were content and took it for granted that school RE meant the teaching of the Christian religion. Therefore, this initiative came from the state itself, through the Ministry of Education's professionals, especially the team of tutors in the teacher training colleges. Although these men and women such as Joe Henze, Olive Wilks, Tom O'Brien, and Allan Freeburn, were ordained priests and church ministers, they were employed by the Ministry of Education as college tutors of RE on the basis of professional qualifications as educationists which they also possessed (Henze 2004: interview). Similarly, other people like Frank Carey and Cecil King who later became the Ministry of Education's first Inspector of Schools for RE and RE Curriculum Specialist, respectively were one foot in the church (i.e. ordained men) and the other in education (i.e. qualified educationists). This rare combination of qualifications provided a perfect bridge between religion and education and meant that the early RE professionals' work could more easily be trusted and accepted by both church and state (Ibid).

Actually the seeds of and justification for the secularization and pluralisation of the RE syllabuses in the country were to be found within the 1964 and 1973 constitutions which gave every *Zambian* the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 14) and the 1966 Education Act which ensured that the pupils' religious freedoms were not

¹ *Zambian Humanism* has been defined as both a philosophy and an ideology. It was however, more of a political ideology than a philosophy since it had a definite pragmatic aim of organizing *Zambian* society into a Humanist-socialist or Man-centred society. As an ideology, *Zambian Humanism* was theistic in nature, accepting belief in God and being firmly rooted in African Traditional Religion and corresponding to Christian Humanism or Christian social teaching. Created by Dr Kenneth David Kaunda, the first President of the country, it was formally endorsed by the United National Independence Party (UNIP) as the official national philosophy and ideology for *Zambia* in 1967 (Kaunda 1967; Dillon-Malone 1989: 3-7).

violated through education. The movement towards secularisation and pluralism in RE can also be traced back in the 1969 Report on Education which, as Henze (1979: 3) shows, implied this process in its description of the aim of education and role of the teacher as follows:

The aim of religious education is essentially the same as that of education as a whole...The teacher should therefore... not press pupils to accept a faith; his aim is no to evangelise but to aid the development of the pupils' personalities...[T]he religious educator's task is ...to give insights of the nature of community and human relationships...It is not the business of the religious educator to impose moral concepts upon the pupil, but rather to help him recognize the moral, social and religious claims being made upon him by [multi-faith Zambian] society.

The same pluralist intentions were indirectly reflected in the following views on religion and morality by President Kenneth Kaunda (1974: 118):

The teaching of public morality must be the concern of all the various sections of our community....We need religious leaders to give us guidelines. But moral and spiritual development must also be part and parcel of [a neutral] Government programme.

Additionally, pluralism and respect for human rights and freedoms (including religion) were implied in Zambian Humanism's emphasis on the centrality of man. So with these provisions in mind, the state decided to take the syllabus pluralisation process further by including other significant (minority) religious traditions in Zambia, i.e. Hinduism, Islam, and Traditional Zambian Beliefs in the RE or Spiritual and Moral Education syllabuses from 1983. It also advised that 'no one can claim to be religiously educated in Zambia unless he/she is familiar with these [other] traditions' (CDC 1983: 3).

So one can say that having been forced to shelf its undeclared intentions to drop RE from the school curriculum by the churches, the state was not ready to grant them total victory by reinstating RE in its previous confessional and or ecumenical Christian form. It took advantage of the situation, firstly, to implement the pluralism that was already provided for or implied in the Constitution and Zambian Humanism documents, and secondly, to reduce the churches' authority and involvement in school RE. This pluralisation appears to have been a compromise which the churches found acceptable. This can be seen from

the church leaders' letter to members on the President's Seminar on Humanism and Development which stated: ' Government and Church need to be in dialogue, speaking and listening to one another. We wish to collaborate with other religious groups, Hindus and Muslims' (Christian Council of Zambia, Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia & Zambia Episcopal Conference 1982). Similarly, the United Church of Zambia General Synod Paper on Scientific Socialism (1982: 9) stated:

With UNIP [the ruling party], the Synod of the UCZ acknowledges that not all of the citizens of Zambia are Christians. Furthermore, we realize that not all Zambians are believers in God. With UNIP we agree that individuals are entitled to their own beliefs. At the same time...we accept that the study of religion[s] is important for our growing citizens.

So both church and state gave away something in order to move forward. While the church was ready to forego continued confessional RE in schools, the state was ready to drop the idea of complete secularisation of the school system.

Another important question or issue deserving further explanation here concerns what was actually meant by the idea of 'appreciating spiritual and moral values' as the new aim of RE in Zambia. It seems fairly clear that in line with the pluralisation of the syllabuses, the intention of the Ministry of Education in this phrase was that RE should enable pupils to acquire knowledge of facts about the main religious traditions in Zambia so that, where possible, they would also apply the religions' teachings in their daily lives. Unlike before when RE was confessional and exclusively Christian, the subject was now partially phenomenological and multi-faith. As Henze (1994: 23) later explained:

[Zambian] RE does not teach scriptures, Christianity or any other religion. It uses examples from the scriptures, from traditional belief, from Christianity, from Islam [and] from Hinduism to educate the pupils to be aware, prayerful, honest, forgiving tolerant, etc.

This new aim of the subject also meant that different teaching methods and approaches were needed. Thus as mentioned above, while remaining largely Christian in content, RE adopted a partially phenomenological and comparative approach in which Christian, Traditional, Muslim and Hindu beliefs and values on a given theme or topic were studied. Child-centred and participatory ways of teaching were more emphasised than the subject

and teacher-centred ways or approaches that characterised RE during the pre-Educational Reform period.

5.2.1 *Scientific Socialism versus Religious Education*

Despite the general reduction in the Marxist language and interpretation of education, the policy document still retained an area of learning called ‘political education and social studies’ which would involve an understanding of Zambian Humanism, Zambian political institutions and their functions (MOE 1977:17). Political education would also involve ideological education (Carmody 1999: 117) and would be a core, non-examinable subject from Grade 1 to 12 (MOE 1999: 22-23). Accordingly, courses on Marxism for UNIP leaders and for ‘political educators’ began to be held locally (Christian Council of Zambia, Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia & Zambia Episcopal Conference 1979: 20-21) as well as abroad in Eastern Europe or Soviet block countries. At the same time, from 1979, ‘[Party] leaders began to state clearly that they saw no contradiction between Christianity and Scientific Socialism’ (Ibid 1999: 118). There was increased socialist rhetoric by the state and the stage seemed to be set for the introduction of the teaching of scientific socialism² through political education in schools. Realising that scientific socialism would obviously be a threat to RE and fearing that the subject could easily be replaced by political education on the curriculum, the Zambia Episcopal Conference, the Christian Council of Zambia and the Zambia Evangelical Fellowship decided to pre-empt the state (or UNIP) moves by issuing a statement entitled *Marxism, Humanism and Christianity* (in August 1979). Apart from spelling out crucial differences and contradictions between Marxism (or scientific socialism), Zambian Humanism and (Christian) religion, the church leaders’ statement (Ibid: 21) questioned:

Is Scientific Socialism to be taught in our schools? If so, to what extent will it interfere with the teaching of religion [RE], which is the strong desire of the great majority of our parents?

² Scientific socialism as understood and intended to be taught refers mainly to similarities between Zambian Humanism and Marxism-Leninism (Communism) in their search for a better, exploitation-free society. For example, socialism is perceived by both as the key weapon in the struggle against the exploitative capitalist system. However, while the state emphasized such similarities, the church emphasized key differences between Zambian Humanism and Communism such as their theistic and atheistic nature, respectively.

The statement concluded by calling on all Christians or church members including members of the ruling party (UNIP) to ‘take a stand so as to protect our present [constitutional] liberties’ (Ibid).

The state was obviously not happy with the religious leaders’ statement. However, in order to avoid an open confrontation with the church which would give negative publicity to the reforms, ‘[g]overnment never publicly and clearly reacted to...[the] criticism’ (Carmody 1999: 118). Instead, a private meeting between President Kaunda and the church leaders was held at State House where the latter seem to have reiterated their earlier statement, for the meeting was a stormy one (Ibid). As if to show how unfruitful the State House meeting had been, political education was soon afterwards finally introduced into both teacher training colleges and primary schools. Having been a student at Kwame Nkrumah Teachers’ College between 1980 and 1982, the author actually recalls attending lectures, reading and writing a number of assignments on scientific socialism, Marxism and historical materialism. So although cautious about negative publicity, the government was determined to go ahead with the introduction of political education in educational institutions.

Since it became clear that the church would also continue protesting against political education and scientific socialism, President Kaunda decided to hold a second meeting or seminar for church leaders at Mulungushi International Conference Centre on the theme ‘Humanism and Development’ in 1982. The meeting resulted in two important statements affecting RE. First, in his address, Kaunda as Head of State ‘assured Church leaders that scientific socialism would not replace religious education [RE] and that no decision had been made to adopt a Marxist ideology for the [country]’ (Kaunda 1982; Kelly 1991: 114). Second, in their reply to the above address and letter to members about the seminar at Mulungushi Conference Centre, the church leaders (Christian Council of Zambia, Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia & Zambia Episcopal Conference 1982: 3) wrote:

Government and Church need to be in dialogue, speaking and listening to one another. We wish to collaborate with other religious groups, Hindus and Muslims...The Churches can only help youth if they are allowed to teach religion, especially in schools. The tendency of political educators to teach that there is no

God undermines love, trust and moral behaviour of our young citizens...Scientific (atheistic) Socialism cannot be taught side by side with religion [RE], since they are contradictory.

In short, the church leaders' reaction to the seminar was 'an endorsement of the Zambian form of humanism and...[a] unanimous rejection of scientific socialism, both as an ideology and as a school subject' (Kelly 1991: 114).

Despite this rejection, some sections of the ruling party (UNIP) and government leadership were determined to continue with political education in educational institutions. The issue therefore became so divisive that later in the same year (1982), President Kaunda had to ban all further debate on it (Ibid). However, political education or scientific socialism continued to be a compulsory subject in teacher training colleges until just before the UNIP government was voted out of office in 1991. The subject was, however, never officially introduced in secondary schools; even in primary schools where it had been introduced, it seemed to die a natural death as opposition to one party rule and socialist policies grew.

Meanwhile, the Curriculum Development Centre's Spiritual and Moral Education Subject Panel in conjunction with the RE Inspectorate and ZARET continued to revise existing RE syllabuses in conformity with the 1977 *Educational Reform* document's policy guidelines. In fact, as Flynn (1993: 5) records: 'Religious Education was the first [subject] to produce teachers' and pupils' text books in line with the educational reforms.' Accordingly, the new junior secondary school syllabus was introduced in 1982 and was followed by two new senior secondary school syllabuses, 2044 and 2046 in 1985. So it can be said that between 1976 when the national debate on the educational reforms was launched and 1982 when debate on the teaching of scientific socialism was banned by the President, the churches 'played a cautious but determined role in keeping political education in check while...[they] secured a central place for Religious Education in the schools' curricula' (Carmody 1999: 120).

The Ministry of Education accepted that RE should be a compulsory subject at basic education level (Grades 1 to 9) with at least two thirty to forty-minute periods per week, while the subject would be an important optional course at School Certificate or senior secondary school level with at least four forty-minute periods per week. However, despite being compulsory, RE was to remain non-examinable at primary school level (Grades 1 to 7) and would be examined only at the junior secondary school level (Grades 8 and 9). Despite being multi-faith, syllabuses would also continue emphasising the Christian tradition because of the predominantly Christian composition of Zambian society. This was also partly why the subject was made optional at School Certificate level so that ‘pupils who do not wish to study... [Christianity] in more detail need not take religious education...’ (Masterton 1987: 100).

The three post-reform RE syllabuses continued in operation beyond the end of the Second Republic in 1991. However, their multi-faith approach and content was never fully accepted by conservative members of Zambian society and Christian community whose understanding of RE was that it was still catechesis, the teaching of the Bible or simply Christian education. On the other hand, in educational circles, the syllabuses’ weaknesses and the need for further improvement could already be seen. This need was to become even more pronounced later after the 1996 launching by the state of a new liberal national education policy called *Educating Our Future*.

5.2.2 *No Longer Confessional but an Educational Subject*

The aim of RE that went together with the joint or agreed syllabuses developed by the state in co-operation with the churches from 1972 was stated by the Ministry of Education (1972: 1) as follows:

Religious education is really an introduction to the living Christ. If we truly believe in the Resurrection, we must believe that Christ is alive and active today, revealing himself to us in so many different ways. Our work as RE teachers is to bring about a meeting between the children and Christ... It is the privilege of the teacher to act as the “introducer”...The ultimate aim of religious education is worship, i.e. the acknowledgement of God as our Father by due praise and thanks giving, and by a Christ-like life of service. This is an adult matter and we cannot expect it immediately of... children. We must try to lead them to Christian maturity step by step, according to their age and ability.

Now, as can clearly be seen from this statement and as earlier pointed out, RE at this stage was exclusive, mono-faith and confessional in approach. Although lessons were supposed to proceed educationally from ‘Children’s Experience...[to] Christian Teaching ...[and to] Response’ (Ibid), the subject was still largely an exercise in Christian nurture and catechesis.

However, with the introduction of the revised and Zambianised Junior Secondary School Syllabus in 1982, the Zambianised Christian Living Today or 2044 and the reformed Cambridge Bible Knowledge or 2046 Senior Secondary School syllabuses in 1985, RE as a curriculum subject firmly entered what has been referred to as the educational stage or phase of its development in the country (Flynn 1993; Henze 1994). As can be seen from the earlier stated subject aim adopted by the Spiritual and Moral Education Subject Panel in 1982, SME or RE became pluralistic or multi-faith in approach by including in the syllabuses three other main religious traditions in the country, namely Hinduism, Islam and Zambian Traditional Religion. Religious and moral aspects of the philosophy of Zambian Humanism were also incorporated. By reflecting the multi-faith and multi-cultural nature of Zambian society, RE became more contextual and thus more educational. While the state saw this development as positive and progressive, it was likely to be considered as a negative one by the church, especially the evangelical denominations. For the state or the professional religious educators in the Ministry of Education, a multi-faith and pluralistic approach to RE in an increasingly pluralistic Zambian society was ideal because it was neutral, ecumenical, professional and constitutional. The subject would therefore promote religious harmony and ecumenism, which would in turn help to promote national unity in line with the national motto of ‘One Zambia, One Nation’. The teaching of religion in schools would thus unite rather than divide, as was the case in some other countries.

On the other hand, for the (Christian) church, the inclusion of other religious traditions’ beliefs and values and consequently the reduction of the Christian content or material in the syllabuses was something they could accept only reluctantly or simply because they

had no choice. For unlike neighbouring countries like Malawi and Tanzania, where other religions, especially Islam, were significant and in existence right from the early missionary days, Zambia was overwhelmingly Christian. Apart from Indigenous Zambian Religion, there had been virtually no other foreign religion to challenge the dominance of Christianity in any way. The churches had, with little state interference, provided Christian religious instruction and moral training during the colonial period. They had also retained the right of entry to continue providing the same kind of instruction to their pupil members even after handing over their schools to the state after Independence. So although the churches had gone beyond denominationalism to ecumenism in RE by 1976, to have non-Christian religious beliefs and values taught along side Christian ones was something unbearable for the more evangelically inclined churches; they accepted the situation only because they had little, if any choice.

After emerging victorious in the 1976 debate and struggle for the curriculum by forcing the state to yield on the planned replacement of RE with political education, the churches were perhaps in too weak a position to seriously contest the nature of the new, reinstated RE. Despite giving in to the churches, the state still emerged from the debate in a stronger position which enabled it to dictate the nature of RE as well as to push its own agenda for the subject's development in the country. The Ministry of Education could argue that the state had received the mandate, through the national debate on and responses to the draft document, *Education for Development*, to reform both the education system and curricula. The changes in the RE syllabuses were also in line with the 1973 constitutional provisions for religious pluralism and freedom. So the churches had no option but to cooperate with the state and this cooperation went even as far as allowing the new pluralistic RE syllabuses to be taught in mission or church-managed secondary schools. Apart from Hindu, Islamic and Zambian Traditional beliefs and values, the inclusion of humanist and socialist tenets and principles of the ruling party's ideology (Zambian Humanism) in RE syllabuses further shows how strong the state's position was to direct the nature and course of the subject's development. As mentioned earlier, President Kaunda himself had made it clear that moral and spiritual development or education was supposed to be part and parcel of the state programme. So the

government was determined to have the national philosophy and ideology incorporated in the curriculum, especially RE and to use the subject not only to promote religious and moral values, but humanist and socialist values as well.

The state's dominance of the relationship between the churches and itself in the development of RE in the country continued throughout the post-reform years of the Second Republic and, as will be seen in the next chapter, even into the Third Republic.

CHAPTER 6

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE THIRD REPUBLIC (from 1991 to-date)

Zambia entered the Third Republic at the beginning of November 1991. This was after the first democratic or multi-party elections on 31st October which not only marked the end of nearly two decades of one party rule, but also ushered into office the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) government led by Fredrick J.T. Chiluba. The new government immediately embarked on liberal social, economic and political reforms aimed at changing the country's socialist orientation. Like the socialist reforms of the Second Republic, these liberal and democratic reforms were to affect education in general and RE in particular in a number of ways which are the focus of this chapter. Thus the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation and its effects on RE, and the 1992 and 1996 educational reforms and their bearing on the subject are discussed. In line with the thesis aims, the role of both church and state in the continued development of Zambian RE is critically examined. It is shown that due to the state's liberal educational policies, RE continued to be pluralistic and multi-faith in nature even though the country had been proclaimed to be a Christian nation.

6.1 The Declaration of Zambia as a Christian Nation

The coming to power of the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) government and the beginning of the Third Republic in Zambia in 1991 brought with them major policy changes that not only affected education generally, but RE in particular. One such important change was the controversial declaration of Zambia as a 'Christian nation' on 29th December 1991, by President Chiluba at State House. In declaring the country a Christian nation, Chiluba, on behalf of the Zambian people, repented of 'our wicked ways', prayed for Zambia's restoration and revival, entered into a covenant with God, and submitted the government and the nation to the Lordship of Jesus Christ so that the principles of the Word of God, righteousness and justice could prevail in all levels of authority and governance (Gifford 1998: 198). There are four possible reasons why Chiluba declared Zambia a Christian nation. Firstly, the country was just coming out of an era dominated by the philosophy of Zambian Humanism, which was based on socialist/communist ideologies. Since Zambian Humanism was automatically dropped

when the capitalist-oriented MMD came into power, an ideological vacuum was created which President Chiluba sought to fill with some kind of 'Christian ideology', which the majority of Zambians were familiar with and would support. Secondly, since Zambia would soon start implementing harsh socio-economic reforms commonly known as Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) under International Monetary Fund and World Bank supervision, President Chiluba wanted to use religion or spiritual matters to divert people's attention from the hardships that would come with the programme (Cheyeka 2002: 173). Thirdly, since the late 1980s, Islam as a religion in Zambia (and other parts of sub-Saharan Africa) has been growing so steadily that leading Evangelical and Pentecostal church leaders such as Pastor Nevers Mumba (Victory Ministries) and Reverend Joe Imakando (Bread of Life Church International) prevailed on the MMD government to consider declaring Zambia a Christian nation (Cheyeka 1998: 56-58). Due to this pressure and out of his own fear that some Islamic countries friendly to former President Kenneth Kaunda would assist him to overthrow the new government, Chiluba declared the country Christian and expelled Iranian and Iraqi diplomatic officials a year later. Fourthly, President Chiluba might have made the declaration as a result of his own personal conversion or transformation as a 'born again' Christian (Lumba 2000: Oral presentation; Mwebe 2000: Oral presentation).

Whether these reasons provide an adequate explanation or not, the declaration of the country as a Christian nation was controversial because the Zambian Constitution guarantees religious freedom to all citizens. Article 14 of the 1991 Constitution under which multipartism was reintroduced stated that:

Every person in the country has the freedom to change religion or belief and in community with others, and both in public and in private to manifest and propagate his or her religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.

So both the democratic political system that the country had just embraced in 1991 and the provisions of the Constitution on religion demanded that there should be wide consultation and a national consensus before an important declaration like the one above was made by the state. This however, was not the case. For only a few prominent

Evangelical and Pentecostal church leaders who, as mentioned earlier, had actually called for the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation were probably aware of what the President would soon pronounce.

The meaning of such a declaration in a country like Zambia generated a lot of debate in various circles, especially among the clergy and intellectuals. It was also received with mixed feelings among both Christian and non-Christian Zambians. Although the Evangelical and Pentecostal churches through their umbrella body, the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia, joined the mainline churches represented by the Christian Council of Zambia and the Zambia Episcopal Conference in officially reacting cautiously to the declaration by praising it and warning against divisive interpretations on 16th January 1992, there was a general euphoria among many of the former (Gifford 1998: 198). With President Chiluba himself and the third highest ranking leader, Minister Without Portfolio, Brigadier General Godfrey Miyanda as 'born-again' Christians, the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia 'saw this [declaration] as their hour, having in the past felt slightly overshadowed by the Christian Council of Zambia and the Zambia Episcopal Conference' (Ibid). Despite being cautious in their official response, some of the mainline churches were very critical of the declaration and the unconsultative manner in which it was done. The Communications Officer at the Catholic Secretariat, for example, wrote in the *National Mirror* of 17th February 1992:

I still feel that the declaration of Zambia as a Christian Nation was unnecessary, ill-timed, poorly thought-out, and unfortunately framed in a covenant ceremony which made President Chiluba look like the new Moses of modern times. The televised show [of the declaration] did and does contain, for him, the seeds of political embarrassment in the future.

In a seminar presentation at the University of Zambia, the Secretary General of the Catholic Secretariat, Fr Ignatius Mwebe (2000: Oral presentation), explained why his church could not whole-heartedly welcome the declaration:

The instant declaration of a covenant between God and Zambia was presumptuous. There was lack of preparation as not all people were ready for such a major event or step in their lives. The President himself recognised the need for preparation and repentance by praying for forgiveness of the country's sins. The President might have made the declaration as a result of his personal

conversion or transformation (which is acceptable), but the general populace did not convert or transform with him. In any case, at this time of human civilization when there is separation of church and state, who legitimately declares a nation as Christian - politicians or religious leaders? The declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation had political, partisan overtones and was therefore robbed of its religious and spiritual significance.

Thus contrary to what one would expect, the Christian community and churches in Zambia did not unanimously welcome and embrace the declaration of the country as a Christian nation. While those in the Evangelical, Pentecostal and 'born again' traditions generally welcomed it, those belonging to the mainstream Protestant and Catholic traditions were cautious and sceptical about the whole issue.

Apart from Zambian Traditional Religion, the main non-Christian religious traditions in Zambia are Hinduism and Islam. Although Muslims make up only 1% of the total Zambian population (Gifford 1998: 189) and are not as many as in neighbouring Malawi and Tanzania, the religion is accorded its constitutional right to exist, propagate and to be included in state school RE syllabuses. One would therefore expect the Islamic Council of Zambia (ICZ) to have reacted sharply to the declaration, but it did not. Nine days after the declaration, the Chairman of the Council, Dr John Mwale, issued a statement in which he welcomed the declaration, but added that:

Muslims were not bent on disturbing the spiritual balance in the nation, but many Christians were crossing over to Islam. Government should respect the constitution in total and the Declaration is no licence to blaspheme Islam by some Christian clergy (*Times* Dec 8 1992: 2).

Given the fact that '70% of the Muslims do not welcome the declaration' (Siachubo 2001: 9), this cautious statement did not satisfy all sections of the Zambian Muslim community. However, it was probably a tentative statement reflecting a 'wait and see' attitude and approach by the Muslim leadership.

Unlike Islam, Hinduism accounts for less than 1% of the Zambian population. But like Islam, the religion enjoys its constitutional right to be considered in public affairs including RE. However, unlike Islam, Hinduism did not issue any official response to the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation. The general impression, though, is that

the declaration was ‘not...very welcome among the Hindus’ (Ibid: 5) because of the fear that it could lead to discriminatory practices against them as a minority religion.

In the absence, at that time, of a vibrant civil society or non-governmental organisations championing civil and political rights, the general, secular opinion and response was perhaps summed up by a very critical *Times of Zambia* editorial (*Times* 1991; Gifford 1998: 199) which described

...this sudden preoccupation with the non-issue of whether or not Zambia is a Christian country is ominous and very unsettling...There can be very little at the end of [this road] except a polarised society and the gnashing of teeth.

From the foregoing, it is clear that only a small section of Zambian society, mostly Evangelical, Pentecostal and ‘born-again’ Christians, whole-heartedly welcomed and embraced the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation. The larger section comprising mainstream Protestant and Roman Catholic Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Traditionalists, other smaller religious groups and secularists either welcomed it in principle or rejected it altogether as unpractical, unconstitutional or discriminatory. Despite this state of affairs and despite the Mwanakatwe Constitutional Review Commission’s recommendations ‘not to adopt a state religion’ (Cheyeka 1998: 66), the MMD government went ahead to constitutionalise the declaration by inserting it in the preamble to the new amended 1996 constitution in the following words:

We the people of Zambia by our representatives assembled in...parliament, having solemnly resolved to maintain Zambia a sovereign democratic republic declare the Republic a Christian nation while upholding the right of every person’s freedom of conscience or religion.

Does this statement make Zambia constitutionally a Christian nation? Although the declaration now constituted a policy on religion for the government, a preamble, as well-known, is not part of the law and has no legal authority or force. In addition, Article 19 of the new 1996 constitution provided for exactly the same religious pluralism and freedoms as Article 14 of the amended 1991 constitution referred to earlier. This in effect meant that no other parts of the constitution, other laws and public policy would be

changed to accommodate the declaration. Therefore, Zambia is predominantly and officially a Christian nation, but constitutionally a pluralistic and multi-faith country.

Having discussed the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation by the state and the responses to it by the different sections of Zambian society, it may be asked: of what relevance is the declaration to the theme of this thesis? How does the declaration affect RE in the country? I will address this question towards the end of the chapter after discussing the 1992 and 1996 educational reforms. This is because although the two reforms did not attempt to make RE confessional, there were some developments in the country after the declaration, which negatively affected the subject.

6.2 The 1991/92 Educational Reforms and Religious Education

In 1990 Zambia participated in the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand. In order to follow up on the resolutions of this conference, Zambia organised a National Conference on 'Education for All' in March 1991, at Mulungushi International Conference Centre in Lusaka. The Conference drew participants from a wide spectrum of Zambian society, including politicians, academics, labour leaders and donor-agency representatives. The Conference led to the establishment, by the state, of a Task Force responsible for making proposals and working out strategies not only on how education for all could be implemented or achieved, but also on 'how best education in Zambia could be improved' (MOE 1992: i). It is this Task Force or Review Team's proposals, recommendations and final report that came to constitute the Third Republic Ministry of Education's transitional policy document entitled *Focus on Learning: Strategies for the Development of School Education in Zambia*, published in 1992. It replaced the *Educational Reform* document, which had been in force since 1977.

Although *Focus on Learning* dealt primarily with primary education, some of the document's recommendations, especially on the aims of school education, covered the secondary school sector as well. According to the document and the Ministry of Education, the main weakness of the primary (and secondary) school curriculum was that it was concerned principally with cognitive knowledge and skills almost to the complete

exclusion of genuine understanding through discovery, investigation, and independent thinking (MOE 1992: 27; MOE 1999: 28). The Ministry of Education (1992: iv) therefore suggested that:

The fundamental aim of a school system of education is [or should be] to promote the integral, harmonious development of the physical, affective, moral and spiritual endowments of all students so that they can develop into complete persons for their personal fulfilment and for the common good of the society of which they are...members and in whose responsibilities they will share as adults. In ...Zambian society today, this necessitates a thorough and sound intellectual formation; an appreciation for the achievements and traditions of the past; a careful and critical study of the social and physical sciences and of technology; the development of the imaginative, affective and creative dimensions of each student; the development of important character traits and of a personal sense of moral values; and appreciation of the importance of work in human development and the provision of a substantial and recognisable preparation for adult life.

Referring more specifically to the primary school curriculum, the document (Ibid: 25) suggested that it should promote:

Student learning: learning to think, investigate, question, reflect, discover, appreciate; achieving competency in the essential skills of reading, writing and numeracy; acquiring knowledge and skills of reading writing and skills that enhance the quality of life; laying the basis for skills that can be useful in making a living; forming a sense of values and growing in the ability to evaluate a situation.

As seen earlier, Spiritual and Moral Education or RE became a core subject at basic education (or primary and junior secondary school) level and an important optional subject at School Certificate (or high school) level after the 1977 educational reforms. The subject also fell under more state or Ministry of Education control than before. However, although the subject's post-reform syllabuses were educationally more meaningful than the pre-reform ones, they, like other curriculum syllabuses, could not match up to the ideals set out in *Focus on Learning* above. As mentioned in the last chapter, the RE syllabuses had weaknesses which were already being noticed by professional religious educators by the end of the Second Republic and which would become even more pronounced during the Third Republic. Therefore, the above criticism

and recommendation to improve applied to RE no less than it did to other state-controlled curriculum subjects.

So when, in response to *Focus on Learning's* critique, a National Symposium to review the primary school curriculum was held in August 1993 at Mulungushi International Conference Centre, the primary school RE syllabus was subjected to review like any other subject syllabus. The Symposium itself was attended by various stakeholders including representatives of the community, inspectors of schools, teachers, lecturers, scholars and curriculum specialists. In line with the 1992 policy document's critique, the Symposium 'addressed itself to the question of relevance, diversity and flexibility in the curriculum' (Ibid: 29). It came up with a new School Curriculum Structure which was presented to the Senior Management Committee at the Ministry of Education Headquarters in May 1994 for approval. The committee also recommended that the Ministry of Education through the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) should immediately embark on revising basic education syllabuses according to its resolutions.

Accordingly, workshops for individual subjects at which old syllabuses were reviewed and amended were organised (by CDC) with participants coming from among subject teachers, subject curriculum specialists, inspectors of schools and lecturers or teacher educators. The Spiritual and Moral Education (RE) Subject Panel or Review Team was an eight member panel consisting of a former Inspector of RE (Fr T. McGivern), a Senior Religious Studies Lecturer at the University of Zambia (Fr E. Flynn), a Senior Social Studies Curriculum Specialist (Ms C. Nalwamba), a Basic School Head Teacher (Mr L. Mataka), an Examinations Officer (Mrs M.N. Sakala), a Head of Social Sciences Department and seasoned religious educator (Mrs A. Milimo), and two senior RE teachers and Heads of Department (Messrs L.H. Longwa and O. Daka) (CDC 1996: ii). Carrying out the exercise between July and August 1995, the team made two important changes in their review of the Basic Education Spiritual and Moral Education (RE) Syllabus. First, they revised the 1982 Spiritual and Moral Education aim statement for the subject and dropped all religious and moral aspects of Zambian Humanism from the syllabus content. The syllabus aim statement (Ibid: iii) now read as follows:

The main aim of Spiritual and Moral Education is to enable pupils to appreciate spiritual, moral and religious values and behaviour based on them. This appreciation is drawn from the main religious traditions in Zambia, Christianity, Hinduism, Indigenous Zambian Beliefs and Islam.

Secondly, the team incorporated current national issues such as human rights and democracy, gender issues, population education, environmental education, and health (including drug abuse) and HIV/AIDS education into the syllabus. These changes were not only in line with the state's desire above to make school curricula more relevant, flexible and critical, but also in accordance with the constitutional provisions for socio-political pluralism and religious freedom.

Looking at the foregoing in terms of the theoretical framework and aims of the thesis, it can be said that like in the Second Republic, the state rather than the church, was in charge of the changes and developments in education as well as RE. Although there were church representatives at the 1991 National Conference on Education For All which brainstormed on the reforms, the Conference itself was state-initiated and organised. Similarly, the follow-up 1993 National Symposium on Primary School/Basic Education Curriculum Review which made recommendations on, among other things, the structure of the new school curriculum, was organised by the state through its Curriculum Development Centre. The Subject Panel above that was eventually appointed to carry out the actual review of the RE syllabus had only one church representative, Fr Thomas McGivern from the Catholic Secretariat. In fact, he was probably nominated to the panel more because of his professional experience and qualifications as a former Senior or National Inspector for RE and a sitting Education Secretary for the Roman Catholic Church than for his status as a priest and religious leader in the country.

However, one important outcome of the 1993 Symposium where church representatives seem to have played an important role was the removal of political education from the proposed school curriculum. As explained in the last chapter, the church and some individual Christians were against political education in schools, arguing that it would be used to teach scientific socialism which was anti-religion. On the other hand, the state

maintained that Marxism or scientific socialism could co-exist with religion and that political education could go along with RE. So taking advantage of the democratisation and liberalisation of Zambian society and also the declaration of the country as a Christian nation in December 1991, the church leaders had already won this battle half way by pressuring the Ministry of Education into accepting, in principle, to remove scientific socialism from the school curriculum even before the Symposium. Thus according to Vincent Marko Tembo, a former Senior Inspector for Civics and History and Deputy Chief Inspector of Schools at that time (Interview 2002):

The missionaries [church leaders] had all along been against political education. So as soon as the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) came into power in November 1991 they put pressure on Arthur Wina, the Minister of Education at that time, to remove the subject from the school curriculum. Due to this pressure, the Minister in 1992 made a [non-formal] pronouncement to the effect that political education would be discontinued.

The Minister's unofficial pronouncement had actually led to the discontinuation of political and ideological education in teacher training colleges (Tembo interview 2002). The pronouncement could also have been one of the reasons why the Inspector of RE had recommended a reconsideration of the teaching of material on Zambian Humanism and Socialism in existing RE syllabuses at the ZARET Regional Meeting in Lusaka in 1992, and at the association's Annual General Meeting in 1993. At both meetings, ZARET had decided to discontinue the teaching of the Zambian Humanism and Socialism sections of the syllabuses (Daka interview 2002). So for the church and its representatives, the August 1993 Symposium provided an opportunity where the removal of political education from the school curriculum could be formalised by the state.

The Symposium was not only a success for the church in the sense described above, but also significant in that by influencing the removal of political education from the school curriculum, the churches achieved what they had earlier failed to achieve during the Second Republic- preventing the state from introducing political and ideological education in the first place. With the teaching of Marxism and Socialism through political education out of the way, and the declaration of a Christian nation in place, the teaching of religion (mainly Christianity) through RE would once again have no serious

obstacles and would go on without any fears of the subject being replaced or removed from the curriculum by the state.

However, the Symposium could also be seen as having not been completely successful for the churches in the sense that, like in other subjects, the reviewed and existing basic education RE syllabus that came after the 1993 Symposium (MOE 1999: 32):

...integrated societal issues such as HIV/AIDS, environmental, population, gender, health education etc...[It] encourages self-expression, independent thinking and problem solving.

By agreeing that the syllabus accommodate so many societal issues, the churches were indirectly sanctioning the continued secularisation of RE. By promoting critical and independent thinking among young people, the churches were also weakening their own authority among those who may already have been their members as well as among potential members. However, given the pace and rate at which Zambian society was changing towards democracy and liberalisation, the churches had little choice. To begin with, the churches themselves had played an important role in bringing about the new political climate in the country (Carmody 1999: 132). Opposing the promotion of independent thinking and free self-expression in RE would therefore have shown inconsistency on their part. Secondly, the integration of societal issues such as HIV/AIDS, environmental, gender and health education into the RE syllabuses was not necessarily negative for the churches, since these issues form part of what has been called the 'social gospel' and were therefore part of the churches' business (Bourdillon 1990: 302-3).

The failure by the churches to be more deeply involved in the reforms above can, to some extent, be explained by the possibility that the churches might have felt that since the country had been declared as a Christian nation, curriculum reforms in general and RE syllabus changes in particular would be in their favour. However, the failure of the churches to press for a more religious or Christian-oriented syllabus can largely be attributed to the churches' trust that whatever syllabus the state finally came up with would be subject to their approval as had always been the case since Independence. It

should be remembered that '[t]he Government has [always] been fair and consistent in dealing with RE' (Henze 1994: 24). The Ministry of Education was happy to leave RE in the hands of the churches until 1972 when their continued failure to develop a common syllabus forced it to intervene. After assuming control of the subject, the state continued, as much as possible, to involve and respect the church's opinion on RE. This led to some degree of mutual trust and co-operation, which the church could count on even during these (1992) reforms.

As for the state, the 1993 Symposium was a major success in that its resolutions and recommendations provided some practical steps towards answering and meeting the problems and needs identified in *Focus on Learning*, the 1992 educational policy document. The Symposium's resolutions which centred on 'relevance, diversity and flexibility in the curriculum' (MOE 1999: 31), also provided the basis for the future development of school education in Zambia.

6.3 The 1996 National Education Policy and Religious Education

The 1992 document, *Focus on Learning* and the 1993 National Symposium on the Review of the Primary School Curriculum have been referred to as having been 'the embryo' to the 1996 national education policy document entitled *Educating Our Future: National Policy on Education* (EOF) (Ibid: 32). This is because the document took on board and built on most of the recommendations in *Focus on Learning* and the resolutions of the 1993 National Symposium.

Among the new general goals of the education system proposed by *Educating Our Future* (MOE 1996: 5; MOE 1999: 32), RE has a special contribution to make towards the achievement of the following (Simuchimba 2001: 112):

Producing a learner capable of:

- (i) being animated by a personally held set of civic, moral and spiritual values;
- (ii) developing an analytical, innovative, creative and constructive mind;
- (iii) demonstrating free expression of one's own ideas [or beliefs] and exercising tolerance for other people's views;
- (iv) appreciating Zambia's ethnic cultures, customs and traditions, and

upholding national pride, sovereignty, peace, freedom and independence.

In order to help achieve these goals, the lower and middle basic (or primary) school RE programme:

Should be concerned with the pupils' complete needs...[especially] moral (values, attitudes), [and] spiritual needs (living in harmony with self, with others, with the supernatural) (MOE 1996: 32; MOE 1999: 33).

At upper basic (or junior secondary) school level, the RE curriculum or syllabus is supposed to build on the foundation laid at the two lower levels. In addition, the programme should, according to the age and development of the pupils, include or lead to an education in sexuality and interpersonal relationships, formation of socially acceptable habits, development of moral and religious values and attitudes, and adoption of a set of personally held values (MOE 1996: 38).

Apart from building on what is done at upper basic school level, high school RE should contribute to the achievement of all the curriculum objectives suggested for this level of education, especially the following (Ibid: 51-52):

- (i) establishing an environment that will cater for the psychosocial-needs of pupils and that will facilitate their growth to maturity as moral and responsible individuals;
- (ii) instill a spirit of self-discipline, integrity, accuracy and hard work;
- (iii) awaken concern for the promotion of civil liberties and human rights, for the consolidation of the democratic character of Zambian society, for the more equitable distribution of global and national wealth, and for sustainable development in Zambia and elsewhere;
- (iv) develop desirable attitudes and qualities of personal, inter-personal, national and international peace and understanding.

In short, the overall objectives of RE at this (high school) level should be 'religious literacy and religious maturity', requiring an approach that involves:

- (i) exploring at depth the search for meaning, value and purpose in life so that all [pupils] come to a greater awareness and understanding of the importance of religious beliefs and the actions of these beliefs;
- (ii) demanding higher educational skills such as application, analysis and

evaluation...and not merely memory work; these will call for greater depth...relevance...courage in facing dilemmas and difficulties and a more...open-ended and participatory approach (MOE 1997).

In addition to the foregoing, the RE curriculum at both basic and high school levels was expected to be designed and presented in such a way that it contributes to the development and equipping of pupils with a wide range of cross-curricula or inter-subject life-skills, including: coping with personal problems, exercising personal autonomy and independence, ability to confront and resist drug and other substance abuse, decision-making, problem-solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, effective communication, stress and anxiety management and self-esteem and confidence (MOE 1996: 43; Henze 1997: 1).

Given the situation of Zambian RE in the early and mid-1990s, the foregoing policy recommendations for the review of the syllabuses were justified. As earlier mentioned, the syllabuses had a number of weaknesses which developed into serious educational problems by the time the Third Republic educational reforms and curriculum reviews began in the mid-1990s. For example, after conducting a professional evaluation of Zambian secondary school syllabuses, Mujdrlica (1995: 45-46) concluded:

The quality of RE in Zambian secondary schools is mediocre... The major weakness of the syllabuses is in the type of RE they represent. The religion of the syllabuses is presented in very idealistic [appreciative, respectful, uncritical] terms.... As far as RE is concerned, all three syllabuses are one sided: the Junior and the 2044 use exclusively the life-themes approach and the 2046 uses the systems approach. In addition, the two senior syllabuses are narrow in scope and heavy in content. The 2044 and 2046 represent confessional RE and approach God as if He was exclusively for Christians.

Thus as already seen, the basic education RE syllabus was revised in 1995. Although the work was completed some months before the publication of *Educating Our Future* in 1996, the revision was done according to the requirements and recommendations (stated above) of the draft national policy document.

As part of continued basic school curriculum reforms after 1996, the Zambia Teacher Education Reform Programme (ZATERP) was started in 1997 and piloted at three primary teacher training colleges (Kitwe, Mufulira and Solwezi) for three years before being taken to scale as the Zambia Teacher Education Course (ZATEC) at all the ten primary teacher training colleges (PTTCs) in 2000. The main aim of the course was to improve the general quality of basic education by focusing on relevance to local needs, practical learner-centred methods, competencies such as literacy and numeracy, and some cross-cutting themes such as gender, health and HIV/AIDS awareness and environmental and population education which were seen as central for the future development of the country (MOE 2001). In a radical shift from previous teacher education curricula, ZATEC was 'based on the principle of integration of the traditional subjects, rather than their differentiation' (Ibid: 4). Thus six study areas namely, Educational Studies, Expressive Arts, Literacy and Language Education, Mathematics and Science Education, Social, Spiritual and Moral Education, and Technology Studies were introduced in the college curriculum. Each of the study areas had two or more contributory subjects from which its integrated content was drawn. RE became only a contributory subject to Social, Spiritual and Moral Education (SSME) together with History, Geography and Civics.

This major change in the teacher education curriculum inevitable meant that the primary school curriculum also had to change from a differentiated, knowledge-focussed one to an integrated, competence or outcomes-based curriculum. This process began with the publication and distribution by the Ministry of Education of the document, *The Basic School Curriculum Framework*, in 2000. It was soon followed by the *Teacher's Curriculum Manual* in April 2001. Distributed to all primary or basic school teachers, in the colleges and district education offices, these documents served to bring teachers and educational officers up-to-date with on-going reforms in education, particularly with regard to the relationship between the new approach to teacher education and the new primary or basic education curriculum or syllabuses that were being prepared and would be introduced in schools in 2004. Accordingly, the new integrated and outcomes-based curriculum was introduced at Grades 1 and 5, the entry classes to lower and middle basic education levels, respectively, in January 2004. The Ministry of Education's plan was to

complete the implementation of the change over from the old to the new syllabuses in all the lower and middle basic education classes (Grades 1 to 7) in 2007.

Now, although all subjects were affected by the integrated approach to the teacher education curriculum, RE seems to have been the most negatively affected. For the first time in the long history of teacher training in the country, RE was not going to be taken as a distinct subject in the colleges. From a subject that commanded great respect in the primary teacher education programme due to the predominance of (Christian) religion in Zambian society, RE would now merely contribute a few topics to a largely historical and geographical area of study, SSME. The negative effect was perhaps even worse in the four church-managed colleges; Charles Lwanga and Mongu (Roman Catholic), David Livingstone and Malcom Moffat (Protestant), where RE was supposed to contribute towards the promotion of a general Christian college ethos. Therefore, if the church had failed to stop the state from making the primary and basic school RE syllabus social, liberal and critical, it now decided, through the Roman Catholic Church, to react to this reduction of the subject in the teacher education curriculum. Thus in an undated evaluation report on the ZATEC SSME syllabus sent to the Teacher Education Department, the Jesuit Fathers at Charles Lwanga complained:

Zambia is said to be a Christian nation; however, the Ministry of Education seems to be making every effort to phase out religion and thus Christianity in the Zambian educational system...Social Studies is incomplete as a way of life without emphasis on RE and [yet] the ZATEC SSME syllabus has failed to give RE...its proper priority.

Similarly, the National Catholic Education Commission (2001: 1) wrote to the Ministry of Education expressing dissatisfaction with the poor state of affairs in RE at the primary teacher training colleges since the beginning of the ZATEC programme.

Despite these representations, the state was determined to continue with the reforms at both primary and teacher education levels. That is why under the new primary and basic education curriculum RE forms only part of Social and Development Studies (SDS), with reduced coverage of religious content or topics. However, it can still be said that the state has just been 'pursuing a consistent process of reform, characterised by decentralisation

and liberalisation' (MOE 2000: 3). In other words, the curriculum reforms were in line with the country's democratic constitution and liberal national education policy. Additionally, the state also wanted to make the education system 'more relevant and effective for societal as well as individual needs' (Ibid). It cannot be denied that the identified issues of gender, the environment, HIV/AIDS and reproductive health and human rights and democracy are crucial for the future development of Zambia and need to be taught as cross-curricular issues in our school subjects, including RE.

However, the revision of the two high school syllabuses (2044 and 2046) did not go as smoothly as that of the basic education syllabus. In April 1996 the Senior Inspector of RE appointed a team of about 18 experienced RE teachers (including the author) and two college tutors drawn from all provinces of the country, teaching both 2044 and 2046, to undertake the syllabus review exercise. Working under the facilitatorship of Fr Henze, the RE Advisor for the Copperbelt Province, the team was supposed to meet once or twice a year and was supposed to produce and send out raw or draft materials to key religious bodies and key educational establishments in the country for comment and contribution (MOE 1997). In the end, the team was supposed to produce a single syllabus that would be in line with the requirements of the 1992-1996 curriculum reforms. However, this 'New RE Project', as it came to be commonly referred to, was soon faced with serious problems.

To begin with, after the first drafts (of Grade 10 work) had been circulated in key institutions of learning and schools, some Syllabus 2046 and evangelically inclined teachers (including a few members of the original team who were not happy with the critical approach in the draft material) decided to form a separate Syllabus 2046 Revision Team with the aim of coming up with an updated or revised but still biblical syllabus 2046. I think the main reasons for this split were the usual Catholic-Protestant divide (Simuchimba 1999: 2) and the long standing Evangelical tradition of Bible teaching and belief in the infallibility and authority of the scriptures (Masterton 1987: 126; Mujdrlica 1995: 28). It should be recalled that it was partly due the same reasons that the country ended up with the two existing high school syllabuses (2044 and 2046) during the 1977-

84 curriculum reforms (see Chapter 3). Led by Messrs Daka and Mwandobo, both Senior School Certificate RE 2046 Examiners, the 2046 group held their first meeting or workshop in 1998 where members decided on the topics and material to be included in their revised syllabus.

Secondly, the umbrella church organisations: the Christian Council of Zambia, the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia and the Zambia Episcopal Conference as well as the non-Christian religious bodies which had initially made numerous enquiries at the RE Inspector's Office concerning the New RE Project, suddenly kept quiet and never made and sent comments on the draft materials sent to them by the Project Co-ordinator. It seems they could not do so either because they did not have educational experts to competently deal with such matters or because they did not agree with the new critical approach to the subject in the draft material. There were also very few contributions and comments from other religious educators outside the Project Team either because most of them were used to receiving and dealing with already prepared syllabus materials or the draft material was rather difficult and beyond their capacity to handle confidently (Simuchimba 1999:1).

Thirdly, the Project failed to attract the 50% counter part funding from the state for allowances and transport costs for the Project Team members, as agreed with a Netherlands-based donor agency which provided the other 50% for members' bed and board to the RE Inspectorate. This could either be because the agreement between the donor and the government was not properly processed by the Inspectorate or the Ministry of Education did not just release the money because it regarded RE as less important than other subjects such as Civics which were adequately funded around the same time. Consequently, there was low morale among the Project Team members and some of those from rural areas could not attend all the workshops as their Provincial Education Offices could not honour their subsistence and transport allowance claims.

Despite the foregoing problems, the remaining members of the New RE Project Team completed their work in the year 2000. According to the Project Co-ordinator, 'the

guiding principles in assembling and drafting materials in draft pupils and teachers' books were the reform objectives and recommendations in the current national education policy document, *Educating Our Future*' (Henze 2002: discussion).

Similarly, despite lack of funding from the state and with only meagre resources from private sponsors, the Syllabus 2046 Revision Team completed their work in early 2001. According to one of the team leaders, S.K. Daka (2002: discussion) 'the revised material contains more current societal issues including human rights, gender issues, environmental education and HIV/AIDS', though this remains to be seen. Thus in their own ways or approaches, both revision teams took into account the above stated criticisms and recommendations for reform. However, the New RE Project Team was more critical and seems to have come up with a totally new RE syllabus (Mujdrlica n.d.: 3). At present the two revised syllabuses' draft pupils and teachers' books are being prepared for publication, although the state through the Ministry of Education has directed that the two syllabuses, 2044 and 2046 should be merged into one (Sililo 2002: oral presentation). To this effect, the Curriculum Development Centre intends to appoint a neutral team comprising curriculum specialists from CDC, teacher educators from the University of Zambia and secondary teacher training colleges and ZARET (teacher) representatives to undertake the task (Ibid). If, for some reason (such as the usual lack of funds) the Ministry of Education fails to go ahead with the proposed merger, then it is likely that the country will continue to have two (revised) high school RE syllabuses and individual schools and teachers will continue to be at liberty to either choose one or offer both.

An examination of developments in RE just before and immediately after the publication of the 1996 educational policy document shows that like in 1991/1992, the role played by the church was very limited. Although in its introduction the document, *Educating Our Future*, mentions the churches among non-governmental organisations whose participation made the production of the policy document possible, it is difficult to see any significant role that the churches may have played. This is because the consultation, research, dissemination workshops and professional meetings leading to the production

of the policy document (MOE 1996: ix) were all organised by the state with a very clear agenda of how it wanted the education system, including RE in the country to develop. On the other hand, it is highly unlikely that the church representatives at these consultation and dissemination meetings and workshops had any clear ideas or proposals on how the churches wanted RE to develop. Such constructive ideas would be possible only if the church representatives were professionally qualified religious educators.

So the state continued to be in control of school RE development. Through its professional educationists, the state continued to set both the principles and agenda for the subject's development. Similarly, it was the state's professional religious educators who, despite receiving only words of encouragement and no financial support from the Ministry of Education, still went ahead to review the two high school syllabuses, albeit in two camps: the New RE Project Team and the Syllabus 2046 Revision Team. As earlier mentioned, the revised syllabuses' material was not only in line with the state's educational policy guidelines but also more educational (or critical) than religious (or confessional). So apart from some unprofessional tendencies explained below which resulted from the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation, the Third Republic generally recorded a continued pluralistic and educational development of school RE. This was imperative because apart from the country's 1996 Constitution providing for religious pluralism, the country had reverted to multipartism and democratic governance where democratic and liberal values and principles should govern all education.

Although the church did not influence the development of the formal high school RE curriculum, it had considerable influence on the informal curriculum, which individual churches gained as voluntary agencies still running some grant-aided secondary schools and teacher training colleges in the country. Thus the new policy regulations in *Educating Our Future*:

Provide for the establishment at each aided institution of virtually autonomous Boards of Management which exercise extensive control over every aspect of educational provision at the school or college... [T]he new regulations.. empower the Boards of Management to protect the particular ethos of each

institution through control over the appointment and retention of staff (Ibid: 137).

In addition, the state had already offered to hand back to the churches some of the primary schools that had been taken over after Independence (Carmody 1999: 132). This means that unlike under the Second Republic's 1977 educational reforms when grant-aided mission schools and colleges increasingly lost their religious identities and took on a more national, interdenominational character (Carmody 2002: 369-370), these institutions would now be more free to restore their religious identities through various controls and deliberate catechetical or religious formation co-curricula programmes. However, while this could be seen as a positive development by the churches and other interested people in that it enhances religious freedom and propagation in the country, it would not help the cause of RE as the church institutions' controls and co-curricular activities would undermine the educational values and objectivities of the subject. I will elaborate a little more on this in the next section where I discuss problems created in the field of RE by the declaration of the country as a Christian nation.

6.4 Effects of the Declaration of Zambia as a Christian Nation on Religious Education

As the meaning of being a 'Christian nation' continued to be debated among religious, political, civic and academic leaders in the country, one interpretation floated mostly by Evangelical Christian leaders at a meeting with the Vice President in 1995 was that 'the current religious education syllabus[es] in schools be set aside and replaced with the Bible' (Gifford 1998: 215; Simuchimba 2000: 11). The same interpretation and call was made four years later when an Evangelical religious leader justified his call for the teaching of Bible Knowledge by arguing that 'the [current multi-faith] RE syllabus is of no spiritual, let alone moral value to our children' (Ngoma 1999; Simuchimba 2001: 107). The effect on RE of this interpretation and call was that many RE teachers belonging to the Evangelical tradition and 'born-again' groups were encouraged to begin adopting unprofessional, confessional practices in their work. Perhaps the most serious of these was starting RE lessons with a prayer or a reading from the Bible followed by a brief comment or sermon by the teacher before the lesson could proceed.

On the other hand, liberal RE teachers and many of those belonging to the orthodox Protestant and Catholic traditions rejected the above interpretation and calls for the reintroduction of Bible Knowledge or Christian education in schools. These religious educators insisted on continued professional handling of the existing multi-faith syllabuses because the religious freedom and pluralism in the country's constitution and the liberal, pluralistic goals of the national policy document on education demanded so. It was argued that Zambian RE had progressively developed from Denominationalism in the 1960s through Ecumenism in the 1970s to Pluralism from the 1980s and therefore needed to continue maturing along that path (Flynn 1993; Henze 1994; Mujdrlica 1995; Simuchimba 2001). So while confessional attitudes and practices in Zambian RE may be traced back to the 1960s and 70s, it is arguable that the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation reaffirmed these attitudes and practices in some teachers and therefore consolidated the division of RE teachers and educators into two camps. As Carmody (2001: 18) emphasises:

Clearly, they have different viewpoints on, among other things, whether the syllabuses should be predominantly Christian....Tension exists between those who still view ...RE in confessional rather than educational terms and those who do not.

It was partly due to the same division and reasons as explained earlier, that the revision of the two high school RE syllabuses 2044 and 2046 could not proceed in unity as originally planned by the RE Inspectorate in 1996. Instead, some of the RE teachers and educators in the country allowed their different points of view and faith commitments to come before professional commitment to the subject, resulting in two syllabus review panels instead of one.

Analysed from this thesis' theoretical framework and aims, the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation and its effects on RE poses a few problems. Perhaps the main one of these is that the state contradicted itself by making a declaration that could be interpreted to imply the introduction of exclusive teaching of Biblical Christianity in RE and at the same time spelling out very liberal and democratic educational goals and principles in the 1992 and 1996 national policy documents on education. Although

there were no official instructions to Ministry of Education technocrats to translate the meaning of the declaration into RE programmes, the fact that the declaration came from the state, which was supposed to remain consistent in promoting a liberal education system in the country meant that there was a contradiction in its role. The declaration or proclamation of the country as Christian on grounds that the majority of Zambians are Christians would have been more consistent if it came from the church whose role or interest it was to make such religious pronouncements and demands on society in general and the curriculum or RE syllabuses in particular. Thus by sending contradictory signals to society through the Presidential declaration of a Christian nation and the Ministry of Education's publication of liberal national education policy documents in 1992 and 1996, the state was making its own work through professional educationists and religious educators very difficult.

A related but slightly different problem caused by the state's declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation was that by doing so, the state could be seen to be undermining its own efforts to promote the values of democracy, tolerance, religious harmony and inclusiveness through pluralistic RE. For apart from the reintroduction of Bible Knowledge and Christian education discussed above, another possible interpretation of the declared Christian status of the country was that churches or denominations could now establish as many Christian private schools as possible where, by law, they would be free to teach only Christian beliefs, values and ethos to young Zambians. This, coupled with the state's offer to hand back to the churches primary schools repossessed after Independence, could mean taking the country back to the days of denominational and sectarian religious education, with its attendant dangers of religious intolerance, bigotry, prejudice and fanaticism.

Clearly this would be the opposite of what pluralistic RE was trying to achieve and what the state wanted to avoid if it was to maintain a liberal, democratic, multi-faith and harmonious Zambia. Already, by the year 2000, Evangelical and Pentecostal churches had begun to put the above stated meaning of the official status of the country as a Christian nation into practice by establishing a few Christian private schools in the

cities, while the Roman Catholic Church and the United Church of Zambia were cautiously considering taking back some primary and basic schools offered by the state. Not to be outdone and knowing that they were protected by religious freedom guarantees in the country's constitution, non-Christian religious traditions, notably Islam and the Baha'i Faith, had also started to establish their own private educational institutions (with Islam being more vigorous than even some Christian churches). Therefore, as more and more of such religious schools and educational institutions come to be established in future, the possibility of the positive values and effects of multi-faith RE in state-controlled schools being undermined and overshadowed by denominationalism and sectarianism remains real.

In concluding this chapter on RE in the Third Republic, it should be pointed out that the period from 1991 to 2001 was a decade of major social and political changes in Zambia. The reintroduction of multi-partism and the general liberalisation of society meant that the 1992 and 1996 educational policy documents also demanded radical reforms or changes in school curricula, subject syllabuses (including those in RE) as well as teaching approaches and methods. RE was therefore challenged to grow and develop further. The state, through its professional religious educators, rightly took up this challenge and ensured that despite some difficulties created by the declaration of the country as a Christian nation, the subject continued developing along a pluralistic path. The church equally played its role in the development of RE by largely co-operating with the state in general and the Ministry of Education in particular so that all curriculum and syllabus reforms could go on without undue antagonism and opposition.

In the last three chapters, I have discussed RE in colonial Zambia, post-Independence Zambia and under the current Third Republic (since 1991). From the discussion, it is clear that the subject has steadily developed from being denominational and confessional to being partially pluralistic and educational. However, this development towards pluralism and an educational emphasis has been questioned in favour of a return to denominational or confessional approaches in some quarters of Zambian society. So in the next chapter, which is the third focus of the thesis, Zambians' views and opinions on

the current school RE programme and how it can be improved are presented and critically discussed.

CHAPTER 7

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN PLURARIST ZAMBIAN SOCIETY - I

In Chapter 1, I explained that this part of the study was primarily qualitative in focus, employing open-ended interviews with top leaders of the main religious traditions in Zambia, relevant non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and Ministry of Education technocrats concerned with the curriculum and educational standards. The main aim of this component of the study was to gather and analyse the various views, opinions and understanding of a number of individuals who represent various organisations. Their views and understanding of the current liberal education system and pluralistic RE in particular are the object of this part of the study. In conclusion, an educationally adequate RE model for Zambia will be proposed. In order to gather the opinions of the participants and to evaluate their understanding of what constituted an educationally adequate RE programme for Zambia, a number of issues were included on the interview schedule, which formed the basis of the discussions. The issues were: whether the national policy on education was satisfactory or not; whether the existing RE syllabuses were educationally adequate or inadequate; whether the existing RE syllabuses had contributed to the growth of religious tolerance and ecumenism in the country or not; what form or model of RE they would prefer Zambian schools to offer; and whether the faith or religious traditions should be more involved in the affairs of school RE or less involved.

In the first part of this chapter, I will mainly report the data from the interviews and briefly discuss the findings. In the second part of the chapter, some of the findings will be discussed more critically. However, the analysis and interpretation of the interview data can be summarised as follows:

CATEGORY		BREAKDOWN			
		Christi anity	Other Religions	NGOs	Educatio nists
<i>Interviewees</i>	19	5	8	3	3
Syllabuses are educationally adequate	9	2	2	2	3
Syllabuses are educationally inadequate	10	3	6	1	0
Syllabuses should be pluralistic	10	4	0	3	3
Syllabuses should be denominational	9	1	8	0	0
Religions should be less involved in RE	4	0	0	2	2
Religions should be more involved in RE	15	5	8	1	1

For purposes of clarity, the data or views and reactions to the issues raised are presented and discussed under the following sub-headings: Christian views and reactions, other religious traditions' views and reactions, Non-Governmental Organisations' views and reactions, and Educationists' views and reactions.

7.1 Christian Views and Reactions

The five Christian leaders interviewed were two from the Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC) for Catholics, two from the Christian Council of Zambia (CCZ) for mainline Protestants, and one from the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ) for Evangelical and some Pentecostal Christians. Hereafter, I will refer to the three Church mother bodies or umbrella organizations simply as ZEC, CCZ and EFZ, respectively.

7.1.1 *Educational Adequacy of RE Syllabuses*

In Chapter 1, I defined educational adequacy of the curriculum in Zambia in terms of conformity to the democratic and pluralistic values and guidelines of the Constitution and the national education policy document, *Educating Our Future*. So for school RE syllabuses or programmes to be educationally adequate, they should be pluralistic, multi-faith, neutral or inclusive rather than denominational and exclusive. They should also contribute to the realisation of the goals and aims of the Zambian education system by being contextual and broadly-based rather than narrowly-based, democratic and open rather than authoritarian, and critical and evaluative rather than simply appreciative of religious beliefs and values.

Data interpretation shows that the ZEC's view or understanding of educational adequacy is more in line with the meaning and understanding above than that of CCZ and EFZ. According to ZEC the primary or lower basic school RE syllabus was adequate because it was 'more process-based and [therefore] very good' (Meade 2003), while the two high school syllabuses (2044 and 2046) were inadequate because they were 'content-based rather than process-based and could, therefore, not prepare school leavers to be critical, independent and mature' (Ibid). This understanding of the educational adequacy of RE syllabuses by the ZEC representative was further shown in its satisfaction with the provisions of the national educational policy document on education. According to the organisation's Education Secretary who was the interviewee: '*Educating Our Future* [as a document] provides for an RE syllabus or programme that challenges learners to think critically and maturely' (Ibid). Earlier, the church organisation had welcomed the publication of the new educational policy document because it included:

An education in the areas of sexuality and interpersonal relationships, appropriate to the age and development of ...pupils. The document also stresses the development of life-skills that will equip pupils for positive social behaviour and for coping with negative pressures (ZEC 1998: 7).

So for the ZEC, the educational adequacy of RE syllabuses partly lies in their being process-based, skills-oriented, critical, and autonomy or maturity promoting, while their inadequacy would lie in the opposite, such as being content-based, knowledge or fact-

oriented, appreciative, and dependence or subservience promoting. This understanding is in line with the state's stated aims of RE which included helping to promote 'the intellectual, social, affective, moral and spiritual qualities of all pupils' (MOE 1996: 29); enabling pupils to develop an understanding of the main religions existing in Zambia (MOE 1983: 3) and stressing the '[positive] attitudes and [life] skills rather than on information and knowledge' (Henze 2003: 11).

However, a slightly different criterion of adequacy which ZEC sees as missing in the existing RE syllabuses is an emphasis on moral formation. According to the Education Secretary:

RE is not just information, it is also formation. The subject should not be merely for examinations but for moral formation of pupils as well. Our concern as a Church is that there is no strong formative element in the syllabuses (Meade 2003).

This could be taken to mean that in addition to equipping pupils with various life skills, positive social attitudes and knowledge of different religious beliefs and values, RE syllabuses should also lead to a specifically Christian (or Catholic) moral transformation in them. This may be good for religion or the church, but it cannot be one of the aims of public or state school RE because it falls outside the provisions of the Constitution and would infringe on the religious freedoms and conscience of pupils belonging to other, non-Christian (or Catholic) religious traditions.

As earlier indicated, the ZEC participant's understanding of the educational adequacy of RE syllabuses is closer to the educational understanding used in this study than the CCZ and the EFZ's. The CCZ considered the primary and high school RE syllabuses to be satisfactory because they both covered more Christian content than other beliefs and material. Thus the more Christian content a syllabus covers the more educationally adequate it is perceived to be. This understanding of educational adequacy is further shown by the church organisation's view that the national policy document on education, *Educating Our Future*, is 'not satisfactory because it is not practical...[but] very

hypothetical' (Hampende 2003). What the interviewee seems to be saying is that the CCZ does not fully accept the liberal goals, aims and principles of education set out in the document because of its rather conservative understanding of educational adequacy.

As for the EFZ, the participant finds both the primary/middle basic and high school RE syllabuses to be inadequate because of two main reasons, namely 'mixed religious content' and 'a defective mode of transmission or simply wrong teachers.' According to the church organisation's Executive Director, the mixed or multi-faith nature of the syllabuses means that they cover 'some areas or topics which Evangelicals do not agree with.' He further explained:

For us [Evangelicals] there is no middle path in our expression of faith in Jesus Christ. So we do not accept that our God is the same for Muslims, Hindus, Jews or Baha'is, and that these faiths are equal ways of reaching him (Mususu 2003).

So the existing RE syllabuses were inadequate because they included materials on the other main religious traditions found in Zambia. The EFZ would consider the RE syllabuses adequate only if they covered Christian beliefs and values. Apart from the unsatisfactory content coverage, the teaching of the subject or the transmission of the religious beliefs and values in the syllabus is also regarded as defective. This is because, according to Bishop Mususu (2003):

There should be certain minimum moral standards demanded of all RE teachers. Should anybody regardless of whether they believe and practice what they are teaching teach the subject? This is what is happening in the country at the moment and it is a defective mode of transmitting religious beliefs and values to our young people.

This means that in order to be educationally effective and adequate, Zambian RE was supposed to be taught by committed Christian teachers. In Bishop Mususu's words: 'There is no problem with committed Christians only teaching RE because even the other religious groups will be more satisfied with a committed Christian transmitting religious and moral values than a non-committed Christian doing so' (Ibid). Further, although the national education policy document, *Educating Our Future*, had not been officially

tabled and discussed by the EFZ, one can deduce from the views above that the organisation would consider the document's liberal guidelines on education, especially in the area of curriculum reforms, very unsatisfactory. So for the EFZ, the criteria of educational adequacy of RE syllabuses would be their coverage of only Christian beliefs and values and the subject being taught by committed Christian teachers who are able to live what they teach and can be models of good moral conduct to the pupils.

From the foregoing, and as earlier mentioned, there is a slight difference in the understanding of the adequacy of RE syllabuses and programmes between the ZEC (Catholic) on one hand, and the CCZ and EFZ (Mainline Protestant and Evangelical) on the other. While the ZEC has a slightly more liberal understanding of adequacy, the CCZ and EFZ have a rather conservative understanding of the concept. While the ZEC's approach to the issue or problem of adequacy is closer to the educational understanding adopted in this study, the CCZ and EFZ's falls short of modern educational characteristics. Despite this minor difference though, the three church organisations are proceeding from the same standpoint of religious values rather than constitutional values on which modern RE in a democratic and pluralistic country like Zambia should be based. For example, all the three, the ZEC, EFZ and CCZ, seem to be more concerned with the need for RE to have a transformative impact on the moral conduct of the learners than with other educational skills.

7.1.2 Pluralism or Denominationalism?

Despite minor differences in their views, the three church umbrella organisations (ZEC, CCZ and EFZ) have the same understating and approach to the issue or problem of pluralism versus denominationalism in Zambian RE. The three organisations agree that there is need to have one high school RE syllabus instead of continuing with the existing two syllabuses: 2044 and 2046. Some reasons given for this by the ZEC were that 'church unity and ecumenism generally would be further promoted through one common syllabus' (Mwebe 2003), and that the preparation of a new common syllabus would be a chance for religious educators to come up with 'a programme that prepares school leavers for the challenges of life, to think critically and independently' (Meade 2003). Similarly,

the EFZ's view was that the development of one syllabus would provide an opportunity for 'Protestants and Catholics to agree on what is important and agreeable to both and to avoid the current split over 2044 and 2046' (Mususu 2003). This understanding shows that the church organisations would like the existing ecumenical and pluralistic approach to RE to continue rather than go back to the denominational approach of the 1960s and early 70s. They see the need to accommodate each other's points of view for the sake of enhanced church unity or ecumenism and further educational development of the RE syllabuses as envisaged by the state through the Ministry of Education.

Closely related to the above is the three church organisations' view that the existing RE syllabuses have, to a certain extent, helped in the promotion and growth of religious tolerance and ecumenism in Zambia. According to Fr Mwebwe of ZEC, 'the syllabuses have helped in the promotion of ecumenism, tolerance and understanding between different churches' (2003). This achievement is perhaps due to the fact that 'the syllabuses were originally ecumenically agreed upon and schools, including those run by the church, have taught them throughout' (Meade 2003). Similarly, according to the General Secretary of the CCZ, 'Although there is still some intolerance for others among some Christian groups, it is possible that the syllabuses have contributed something towards the growth of ecumenical understanding' (Ndhlovu 2003). Expanding on its two sister organisations' views, the EFZ agrees that:

The syllabuses have allowed people to freely express their religious beliefs. Because of the mixed religious content and diversity, no one, no Church or religious groups has felt that they have lost out to the other. Even non-Christian religions have been catered for (Mususu 2003).

The fact that the three church umbrella organisations are able to attribute a certain level of religious tolerance and understanding between their different member churches to existing RE syllabuses suggests that they understand and support the state-driven pluralistic approaches to the subject. It further indicates that the church organisations share with the state the values of religious harmony and national unity which underpin the pluralist approaches to RE. In line with the foregoing, ZEC would like to see a model or form of RE which:

challenges learners, helps them to think critically, helps them to acquire some ultimate meaning, gives them an understanding of other religions and churches, fosters individual autonomy and freedom of conscience and gives them skills of handling social problems like HIV/AIDS. In short, a model of RE that responds to the needs of modern Zambian society (Meade 2003).

Similarly, the CCZ is in favour of ‘an inter-faith, ecumenical model of RE which can [further] promote Christian co-existence and co-existence with other faiths’ (Ndhlovu 2003). In the same but slightly different spirit, the EFZ would like the country to have a model of RE that:

puts Christ at the centre, but does not make other religions uncomfortable. It would dwell on themes like morality and ethics which cut across all Church denominations and religious traditions (Mususu, 2003).

Again, these views generally show the church, especially the Roman Catholics’ willingness and commitment to going along with the state’s pluralistic, inclusive and pragmatic approach to RE. So the church generally wishes to support the direction of the RE programme or syllabuses as currently articulated and provided for by the state. However, the EFZ’s view or idea of a ‘Christ-centred’ model of RE rather than a totally open or neutral one also highlights the fact that the church’s support above cannot be 100% because of the Evangelicals’ historical insistence on having more Christian or biblical content in RE syllabuses. As earlier seen under 7.1.1, it is for this very reason that the EFZ considers the existing syllabuses educationally inadequate.

7.1.3 Religious Traditions’ Involvement in School RE

The study findings show that the three church umbrella organisations would like to be more involved in the affairs of school RE than they are at present. According to Fr Mwebe (2003) of the ZEC: ‘Unless the church is involved, pupils will only acquire [religious] knowledge without spiritual and moral growth or maturity.’ This is because, according to Hampende (2003) of the CCZ, ‘each religious group whose children are in...Zambian schools ...[are] experts in matters of religion.’ Similarly according to Bishop Mususu (2003) of the EFZ: ‘The country is fast losing its moral fibre and there is

need for the churches to...infuse more religious and traditional moral values into the RE programme.'

According to the church organisations, their increased involvement should include working with the Ministry of Education in syllabus design and even educational policy formulation (Mwebe 2003; Mususu 2003); helping in the selection, preparation and provision of teaching and learning materials (Hampende 2003); more contact with pupils in government-run schools (Meade 2003).

What is meant by these views is that despite their general willingness to support the direction of the RE programme or syllabuses as currently articulated by the state and as explained under 6.1.1 and 6.1.2 above, the church is not ready to leave public or state school RE totally under Ministry of Education control. This might be seen as reflecting some degree of self-contradiction in the church's understanding of its role in Zambian school RE. This is because in a democratic and multi-faith society like Zambia, the church supports state-sponsored RE and is less involved in the programme.

Conversely, the less support the church gives the state-sponsored RE programme, the more involved it would like to be in that programme. The main reason for this is that since every faith or religious tradition has its own truth-claims to protect, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for the religious traditions in a multi-faith society to agree on any educationally adequate RE programme that includes religious activities. Therefore, they should all accept and support a state-mediated programme which is more equitable and fair to all.

7.2 Other Religious Traditions' Views and Reactions

Apart from Christianity which accounts for 75% of the population the other religious traditions which command some significant following in Zambia are Zambian Traditional Religions (about 23%), Islam (about 1%) and Baha'i Faith and Hinduism together (about 1%) (Gifford 1998: 183). Therefore the leaders interviewed were representatives of the Hindu Association of Zambia, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Zambia,

Traditionalists, and the Islamic Centre of Zambia run by Shiite Muslims and the Makeni Islamic Society run by Sunni Muslims.

7.2.1 *Educational Adequacy of RE Syllabuses*

Data show that Hindus consider the RE syllabuses to be educationally adequate because, according to Prakash (2003):

They cover a fair amount of Hindu beliefs and values. The syllabuses introduce pupils to different religious beliefs in Zambia, and this gives the learners chance to make their own choice of what kind of religious way of life they will follow during as well as after school.

Although the Hindu Association of Zambia had no access to *Educating Our Future*, and its view on whether the national educational policy document is satisfactory are not known, it is clear that its understanding of the adequacy of RE syllabuses as expressed above is in line with the educational approach used in this thesis. On the other hand, the other three religious traditions understand educational adequacy quite differently (from the Hindu interviewee). Beginning with the Muslim representatives, they consider both the primary and secondary school RE syllabuses to be inadequate mainly because of religious or confessional reasons. According to the National Co-ordinator at the Islamic Centre of Zambia:

The RE syllabuses are inadequate because they are more of theory and academic study than practical preparation for adult religious life; they do not prepare the child for future adult roles like Islamic education does. Full religious education should include religious activities such as prayer, worship and right moral behaviour. Pupils can pass very well but this does not mean that they have become well prepared Muslims or even Christians (Phiri 2003).

Further, the Islamic Centre finds the RE syllabuses to be educationally inadequate because in terms of content and coverage, 'they are mainly Christian and very little of other religions' (Ibid). 'In fact, the syllabuses should be called Christian Education because 'religious' means covering other religions equally, but this is not what is done', continues (Ibid).

Similarly, according to the participants from the Makeni Islamic Society, the school RE syllabuses are not educationally adequate because: ‘Due to lack of consultation there are distortions in the way Islamic material is presented in RE books.’ (Juba & Karim 2003) Sheikhs A. Juba and A. Karim who are heads of the Islamic Department of the Makeni Islamic Society School and Teacher Training College, respectively, add: ‘material on Islam is presented in a rather dilute and belittling manner’ (Ibid). They further explain: ‘While the Bible is well quoted, the Koran is not, and while Christianity is fairly and wholly presented, Islam is unfairly and partially presented’ (Ibid).

In short, from a Muslim perspective, the RE syllabuses are inadequate because they lack a practical aspect, are predominantly Christian in content, cover Islamic material in a distorted manner and generally dilute Islam as a religion. Thus, the syllabuses would be adequate if they involved practical activities such as prayer and worship in class or school, covered Islam as much as they cover Christianity, covered Islamic material correctly without any distortions, and presented the religion of Islam with its truth-claims fully. This understanding of educational adequacy is also reflected in the Muslims’ general dissatisfaction with *Educating Our Future*, the national educational policy document. The Islamic Centre of Zambia is not satisfied with the document because in the representative’s view, the education system being promoted by the document cannot prepare young people for a morally and religiously responsible adult life (Phiri 2003). Similarly, the Makeni Islamic Society feels that a spiritual and moral society cannot be achieved in Zambia because the educational policy document relegates RE to optional subject status and integrates RE with social studies at primary or middle basic education level (Juba & Karim 2003).

The Baha’is of Zambia also consider the RE syllabuses in the country to be educationally inadequate. According to a representative of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha’is of Zambia, Mr. Michael Richmond (2003), the syllabuses are not adequate because:

They do not reflect God’s laws and understanding in the moral education area, metaphors such as ‘growth’ and ‘development’ are not used skilfully

enough to convey the true nature of spiritual reality. Similarly, in religious education...religions are presented wrongly as different and segmented rather than as being essentially the same and progressive or on-going.

Similarly, while generally happy with *Educating Our Future's* policy provisions on education, the Baha'is of Zambia are partly dissatisfied with it because they hold that 'no education model or syllabus can fully address the purpose of humanity like Bahai education does' (Ibid).

The Baha'is of Zambia would thus consider the RE syllabuses educationally adequate if they conveyed the true nature of spiritual reality as taught by the Baha'i Faith, if they presented the different religions as being (essentially) one and progressive in development as held by the Faith, and if they fully addressed the purpose of humanity like Baha'i education does.

Like the Muslims and Baha'is of Zambia, Zambian Traditionalists do not consider the RE syllabuses educationally adequate because of reasons similar to those advanced by the former. According to Prof Mapopa Mtonga (2003):

Our school RE syllabuses are inadequate because they are mostly concerned with the teaching of Christianity. RE is still Bible-based and aimed at the promotion of Christian beliefs and Western values at the expense of traditional African or Zambian religious and moral values. Very little of the Zambian Traditional Religious heritage has been incorporated in the syllabuses at school level.

Similarly, according to the leader of the African Cultural Religious Assembly (ACRA), Kikomokai Nkwanda (2003), our RE syllabuses are based more on the teaching of Jewish and other foreign beliefs instead of the opposite being the case – that is focusing more on African cultural history and the continent's religious heritage. This approach to RE is destructive not only to Africa or indigenous Zambian culture in general, but to indigenous religious beliefs and values in particular. In line with these views, Traditionalists are not satisfied with *Educating Our Future*, the national policy document's provisions on education. They feel that the education system and the proposed reforms are still too Western in terms of the values and attitudes being promoted. According to Nkwanda (2003), 'the dominance of Western values over indigenous African values, and the

dominance of Christianity over African Traditional Religion still continues in the new educational policy.’

So *Zambian Traditionalists* would consider the RE syllabuses educationally adequate if they became less Christian and more indigenous or Traditional in content, and promoted African or *Zambian* beliefs and values more than foreign, Western values.

Now as earlier alluded to, this understanding of educational adequacy is not wholly in line with this thesis’ approach or position, that syllabuses should adhere to the provisions of the country’s constitution on religion and to the national educational policy guidelines on school curricula. The leaders of the three religious traditions’ evaluations are always from their religious standpoints and almost never from an educational viewpoint, which has to start with the constitution. Their view that there should be equal or better coverage of the non-Christian religions in the syllabuses is partly justified because of the constitutional religious freedoms for all *Zambians*. However, public or government-controlled school RE syllabuses in a democratic, multi-faith country like *Zambia* cannot be expected to cover religious traditions as deeply as the Muslims and *Traditionalists* would like it to be covered or in the confessional manner in which they would want it to be covered. This is because the syllabuses have to adhere to educational principles. Neither can the educational policy and system in the country be tailored to prepare young people for responsible religious adult life because this is the duty of the parents, religious leaders and religious organisations.

7.2.2 Pluralism or Denominationalism?

The four other (non-Christian) religious traditions in this study have the same understanding and approach to the problem of pluralism versus denominationalism in *Zambian RE*. All the representatives of the religious traditions prefer one high school syllabus instead of the existing two syllabuses. According to the Co-ordinator of the Islamic Centre of *Zambia*, although religious traditions have ‘conflicting interests’, the preparation of one high school RE syllabus by the state will allow them to have their

'views, opinions and suggestions taken on board' (Phiri 2003). And in the view of the Makeni Islamic Society:

While syllabus 2046 is very Christian and biblical and in content, syllabus 2044 is less biblical. To avoid Christian extremism and fundamentalism which the former can easily lead to, there is need to combine the two into one syllabus. This would build on the junior secondary or upper basic school syllabus which is more ecumenical and inclusive in approach (Juba & Karim 2003).

Similarly, the participant from the Hindu Association of Zambia sees no need of having many syllabuses if the aim of school RE is to encourage unity in religious circles in the country. The Baha'is of Zambia's view is also that there should be one high school syllabus which aims at presenting divergent religious views and helping learners to appreciate them before arriving at their own independent perspectives. Although Traditionalists would want to have a separate supplementary or complimentary syllabus on African/Zambia Traditional Religion (Mtonga 2003), they are also supportive of the idea of one main RE syllabus for high school level. 'Since Christians themselves are divided over the two existing syllabuses, one neutral syllabus can help them and other religious traditions to move forward together' (Nkwanda 2003).

This understanding clearly shows that like the Christian Church, Muslims, Hindus, Baha'is of Zambia and Traditionalists would like the existing ecumenical and pluralistic approach to RE to continue. The four religious traditions are ready to support the educational development of the RE syllabuses as planned by the state's Ministry of Education.

On whether the existing RE syllabuses have helped the growth of religious tolerance and mutual understanding in the country or not, the four religious traditions have different views with Hindus believing that they have, Muslims and Traditionalists believing that they have not, while the Baha'is of Zambia are simply not sure whether the syllabuses' influence has been for or against tolerance and ecumenism. According to the Public Relations Chairman of the Hindu Association of Zambia, the syllabuses have contributed to religious tolerance and understanding 'by introducing learners to minority religions

like Hinduism which could have easily been left out of the education system and ignored by the predominantly Christian Zambia society' (Devalia 2003).

On the other hand, according to the Islamic Centre of Zambia, the tolerance and understanding that exists between Christians and Muslims in the country has not been promoted or fostered by the existing RE syllabuses. 'What has led to this co-existence is the fact that Zambian people are naturally tolerant and understanding,' (Phiri 2003). The Makeni Islamic Society has exactly the same view. Rather than resulting from existing RE syllabuses, 'the religious tolerance in the country can be attributed to the Zambian culture or attitude of peace, friendliness and generosity' (Juba & Karim 2003). Similarly, the African Cultural and Religious Assembly feels that if Christians whose religion has always dominated the syllabuses are themselves divided into Catholic and Protestant camps, then the syllabuses have not helped to promote religious tolerance, especially with other religions (Nkwanda 2003). Prominent Traditionalist, Mtonga (2003) also points out that Western and Christian thought is still so dominant that non-Christian religions are just mentioned in passing with no real commitment to incorporate them in national activities or to help them grow.

The fact that the other participants from religious traditions, apart from Hinduism, do not believe or accept that the existing RE syllabuses have helped to promote tolerance and mutual understanding, especially between them and Christianity, suggests that they do not fully understand and support the state's pluralistic approaches to the subject. It further shows that although the religious traditions value religious harmony and national unity, they feel that the state and Christianity are neither keen nor ready to promote these values fully.

In line with the foregoing view, the Islamic Centre of Zambia would like to see a model of RE whose syllabuses place emphasis on the preparation of learners for practical, responsible and committed religious life after school (Phiri 2003). The Makeni Islamic Centre would also like to have syllabuses, which include 'dialogues' or different religious

traditions' views, beliefs and justifications on the topics covered in the syllabus (Juba & Karim 2003). Similarly, though somewhat differently, the Baha'is of Zambia's view is that a 'progressive' model of RE is that which:

includes what all religions teach as that purpose of creation and what the human being's place in it is; an examination of the lower and higher natures of human beings; the role of free will in both personal and social transformation; types of language used by founders of religions and why; a holistic view of religion and the emphasis God places on each individual to investigate the truth (Richmond 2003).

The participant representing the Traditionalists would also like a model of RE whose syllabuses include the teaching of the traditional concept of God or the Supreme Creator, ancestral spirits and the strong moral teachings that go with these concepts based on punishment for any wrong doing to family and community. The expected (moral) conduct for every category of people in society, including men and women, husbands and wives, parents and children, boys and girls and grandparents should be emphasised (Nkwanda 2003).

These RE model proposals are again generally confessional and show the religious traditions, especially Islam's and Zambian Traditional Religion's disapproval of the state's pluralistic approach to RE. Thus although it is the state's duty to look after issues of national unity, the religious traditions see its concern for and the promotion of religious pluralism as being less important than encouraging religious commitment, which is their (the religious traditions') job.

7.2.3 Religious Traditions' Involvement in School RE

On the issue of whether religious traditions should be more involved in the affairs of school RE than they are at present, the study's findings show that like Christianity, all the four other religious traditions are agreed that they should be more involved. Both the Islamic Centre of Zambia and the Makeni Islamic Society would like to be consulted on RE curriculum or syllabus design and revision so that they can suggest 'correct and appropriate material for inclusion' (Phiri 2003). Similarly, although it is never consulted

by the Ministry of Education, the Hindu Association of Zambia would like to be involved in matters of RE and moral education. The National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Zambia would also like to be more involved in collaborative work with the Ministry of Education on school RE. Traditionalists would also like to see their representatives being consulted and involved in the revision of existing RE syllabuses or the design of new ones (Nkwanda 2003).

As to the nature of their involvement in school RE, the Muslims would like to be invited to give lectures or talks to pupils in RE classes, to hold workshops for RE teachers, to prepare supplementary teaching and learning materials for use in schools, to help in identifying relevant literature or books on Islam for use in schools and to contribute examination questions on Islamic material to the Examinations Council of Zambia. Although they are yet to consult and learn from their more experienced brothers and sisters in the Hindu Association of Kenya, the Hindus also indicated that they would spell out their intended involvement in school RE to the Ministry of Education as soon as they had done the consultations. The Baha'is of Zambia would also like, in conjunction with other religious traditions, to prepare teaching and learning materials for use in schools and to generally work with the Ministry of Education in the area of spiritual and moral education. Similarly, Zambian Traditionalists would like to be invited or allocated a day or two to teach Zambian traditional religious beliefs and values in schools, and to prepare supplementary teaching and learning materials for use in RE classrooms.

These views clearly show that in line with their skepticism in 7.2.2, and like the three Christian Church umbrella organisations, the four other religious traditions are not ready to leave public school RE entirely under the control of the state. While they would like to co-operate and work with the state's Ministry of Education in public school RE affairs, the religious traditions still feel that they should have the right to make the final decision on how their (religious) material is used or explained to the learners. While this understanding or stance may have some validity due to constitutional religious rights and freedoms, in a multi-faith set up with a multi-faith approach to RE such as the Zambian one, the final say on what goes into the RE syllabuses and especially on how the material

is taught should rest with the state's professionally trained religious educators. However, the fact that the religious leaders can make a contribution is not to be denied and the Ministry of Education will be wise to include them in all consultative processes.

7.3 Non-Governmental Organisations' Views and Reactions

The three non-governmental organisation (NGO) leaders interviewed in this study were the General Secretary of the Forum for Democratic Process (FODEP), Simon Kabanda; the Executive Director of the Inter-African Network for Human Rights and Development (AFRONET), Ngande Mwanajiti; and the Executive Director of the Zambia Civic Education Association (ZCEA), Eda Lopa. The FODEP, AFRONET and ZCEA are the leading civil and political rights organisations in the country, hence their selection.

7.3.1 Educational Adequacy of RE Syllabus

There is a slight difference in the views the three NGOs have on the issue of educational adequacy of RE syllabuses. Despite the school RE syllabuses being predominantly Christian in content, the FODEP and ZCEA consider them to be educationally adequate while AFRONET considers them to be inadequate. According to FODEP's Kabanda (2003):

A lot depends on how the Christian and non-Christian content of the syllabuses is interpreted or explained. Is the interpretation meant to help transform the learner into a person who lives according to accepted human values and how people ought to relate with one another in society? Is the interpretation meant to enable learners develop respect, love and concern or is it just meant to enable the learners to acquire factual knowledge of the religious content? Obviously the former is better than the latter.

Since Zambian RE promotes these and other similar values, it means that the subject syllabuses are, according to FODEP, educationally adequate. Unfortunately, their views on the national educational policy document, *Educating Our Future*, which would have reinforced or subtracted from this view on the syllabuses could not be obtained because the organisation 'has not even seen the document although it would have loved to' (Ibid).

Like FODEP, ZCEA also considers the school RE syllabuses to be educationally adequate because:

Over the years efforts have been made by the state to make them 'religious' rather than just Christian in content. The syllabuses' emphasis has shifted from Christian teaching to moral and religious teaching, an approach which should be satisfactory to all (Lopa 2003).

Thus the syllabuses are educationally adequate because they are religiously pluralistic and do not aim at converting the learner to Christianity, as was the case in the past. This understanding of educational adequacy by ZCEA is further reflected in its view that the liberal national educational policy document, *Educating Our Future*, 'is good and fairly satisfactory, since it covers a lot of issues such as human rights and gender equality which were lacking in previous educational policies' (Lopa 2003).

Unlike FODEP and ZCEA, AFRONET's view is that the school RE syllabuses are educationally inadequate because of the predominance of Christianity in their content. According to Mwanajiti (2003):

There is merit in having Zambia as a secular state where there is no dominance of Christianity or any other religion over another in the syllabuses of public schools. Non-Christian parents are free to contest the predominance of Christianity in RE syllabuses in court because it is a violation of their constitutional freedoms of religion and conscience.

In AFRONET's view, strict adherence to constitutional provisions on religious freedoms for all, is an important criterion of the educational adequacy of RE syllabuses. This means that regardless of the size of their following and spread, all religious traditions in Zambia are equal and deserve the same treatment or coverage in RE. Unfortunately like FODEP, AFRONET's views on the current national education policy which could have further shown its understanding of educational adequacy could not be obtained because the policy document had not been made available to the organisation.

So while the representatives of FODEP and ZCEA emphasise pluralism in content as a criterion of educational adequacy of the RE syllabuses, the AFRONET participant emphasises their adherence to constitutional provisions on religious freedoms in terms of

equal coverage of all religious traditions. Both emphases are in line with this thesis' understanding of educational adequacy of RE syllabuses as explained in chapter one and other sections in succeeding chapters. It is clear that if any programme of learning in a multi-faith and democratic country like Zambia is to be considered educationally adequate, it has to reflect the pluralistic, liberal and legal nature of such a society.

7.3.2 Pluralism or Denominationalism?

Interview data reveal that there are almost no differences in the three non-governmental organisations' understanding on the issue or problem of pluralism versus exclusivism or denominationalism in *Zambian RE*. While FODEP and AFRONET are fully in favour of pluralistic RE syllabuses, ZCEA is partially in favour of such syllabuses.

Thus in response to the question on whether Christianity should be presented or taught on an equal basis with other religious traditions in Zambia, the General Secretary of FODEP has the following to say:

Human values from as many religions as possible should be extracted and taught in RE. The teaching of human values from different religions implies that the religions will be treated equally. No religion is superior to other religions. Even in a country like Zambia where Christians are the majority, Christianity cannot be said to be superior. Predominance in society does not make a religion superior better or more right than minority religions (Kabanda 2003).

So the size of the religious traditions' following or membership should have no bearing on their inclusion and extent of coverage in the country's RE syllabuses. Rather, it is the educational value of the religious traditions in terms of their beliefs' promotion of human values that should determine the extent or depth of their coverage in the RE syllabuses.

Similarly, the Executive Director of AFRONET's response to the question above is:

Christianity should be treated or covered on an equal basis with the minority religions in the country because that is what the constitution dictates. The spirit or meaning of the constitutional provisions for freedom of conscience and religious freedoms in Article 19 in as far as education is concerned is that religions should be treated equally in public schools (Mwanajiti 2003).

In AFRONET's view, all religions are equal before the law and must therefore enjoy equal presentation and coverage in public or state-run school RE. Adherents of the different religious traditions in the country, including minority ones, have the right to have their beliefs taught or introduced on an academic basis to their children in public schools as long as religion (RE) is one of the subjects on the curriculum of such schools.

Unlike FODEP and AFRONET, ZCEA's view is that minority religions in the country should be treated on an equal basis with Christianity, but that the latter should receive a more detailed coverage in the RE syllabus. According to ZCEA's Executive Director: 'Despite the religious freedoms provided for in the constitution, it will be difficult to present or teach Christianity on an equal basis with minority religions such as Islam, Hinduism and Baha'i Faith because the majority of Zambians are Christians' (Lopa 2003). For ZCEA, although the constitutional provisions on religious freedoms and the national education policy guidelines provide for pluralism in RE, the subject syllabuses have to reflect the fact that Zambia is a predominantly Christian society. In other words, for ZCEA, since most of the pupils and perhaps all teachers of the subject will be familiar with Christian beliefs and values, it is just natural or in order that Christianity is given a higher percentage of coverage than the other religious traditions.

While the positions of FODEP and AFRONET are acceptable and within the theoretical framework of this thesis, that of ZCEA is not. In a country like Zambia which is constitutionally multi-faith and democratic, public school RE has to cover all religious traditions equally. Although giving Christianity special status and covering it in more detail seems reasonable, it is logically and legally unacceptable because it would be undemocratic.

7.3.3 *Religious Traditions' Involvement in School RE*

There is a slight difference in the three NGOs' understanding and approach to the issue of religious traditions' involvement in school RE. While AFRONET and ZCEA would like the religious traditions to be less involved, FODEP would like them to be more involved.

According to AFRONET: ‘What is needed is a professionally prepared curriculum that strikes a balance between all religions’ (Mwanajiti 2003). This entails that ‘interest groups or religious traditions should be less involved in the preparations and implementation [or teaching] of the syllabuses, while professionals are more involved’ (Ibid). Similarly, ZCEA’s view is that:

Religious traditions and denominations should not be more involved in the affairs of school RE because there are too many of them with competing doctrines. If each one of them is allowed to push its own agenda of influencing RE and getting attached to schools, there will not only be confusion but the subject will also become confessional, too Christian or denominational as was the case in the past (Lopa 2003).

AFRONET and ZCEA’s view is that while the different religious traditions and Christian denominations are key interest groups in school RE, they should not play a more direct role in it. Unlike in the past, the subject is now educational and equitable in approach with professional educators in charge of teaching the subject. The religious traditions or groups can be consulted in the process of preparing syllabuses and teaching materials, but the actual preparation and use of these syllabuses and materials in the school and classroom rests with the curriculum specialists and educators. This understanding and approach to the problem of religious traditions’ involvement in the affairs of school RE is in line with the educational approach of this thesis. It is fairly clear that as Zambian society becomes more religiously, culturally and politically plural, Zambian school RE will equally become more pluralistic. The role of religious traditions in this situation will be one of consultation as the Ministry of Education’s professional curriculum designers and RE teachers take full control of the subject.

In contrast to the view of AFRONET and ZCEA, FODEP would like the religious traditions to be more involved because ‘RE is not just a subject like History, Mathematics, Geography etc., but is meant to transform people’s behaviour’ (Kabanda 2003). Kabanda further explains:

Religious traditions should be involved by sending resource persons to teach various aspects of their religions to RE classes in schools. The coming of religious resource persons to schools will help pupils to see that RE is not just an academic subject or for passing examinations only, but is a subject to

be taken seriously and put into practice (Ibid).

In FODEP's view, under the present set up, RE is not taught and approached seriously enough to help transform learners' behaviour. In order for this to happen, religious traditions have to become directly involved not only in syllabus and learning material preparation, but also in teaching some aspects of their beliefs and values which the professional religious educators may not competently handle. The presence of religious tradition representatives in schools as resource persons or guest teachers will also help to promote the sense of seriousness that the subject requires if it is to transform learners' attitudes and behaviour.

As can be seen, this understanding and approach to the issue of religious traditions' involvement in school RE is not in line with this thesis' educational approach. In a democratic and multi-faith society like Zambia, there will naturally be many interest groups, including religious traditions, in school RE. In order to accommodate the different beliefs, values and needs of the various religious traditions and other interest groups, the subject has to be multi-faith, pluralistic and constitutional in approach. Such an approach to RE entails the different religious traditions being less involved and the state, through its professional educationalists, being more involved in the affairs of the subject. The religious traditions can be consulted where and when necessary but do not share the teaching of the subject with religious educators.

7.4 Educationists' Views and Reactions

In order to get educationists' views and reactions to the issues being raised by this study, two key Ministry of Education officials: the Principal Curriculum Specialist and Head of Social Sciences at the Curriculum Development Centre (Ms B. Chimpandu) and a Principal Education Officer at Ministry Headquarters (Mr R. Kaulule) were interviewed separately. Also interviewed was the Head of the Language and Social Sciences Education Department in the University of Zambia's School of Education (Dr P.C. Manchishi).

7.4.1 *Adequacy of RE Syllabuses*

Data show that there is unanimity among educationists on the issue of the educational adequacy of the RE syllabuses. In the Inspectorate or Standards Office's view, the primary or lower and middle basic education and secondary school RE syllabuses are quite adequate because 'they address the religious and social lives of all pupils regardless of their religious and cultural background' (Kaulule 2003). Similarly, the participants from the Curriculum Development Centre and the University of Zambia consider both syllabuses to be adequate in terms of coverage, though they could be made even more relevant to today's Zambia by the inclusion of more life skills, attitude training and urgent issues that cut across the curriculum such as gender issues, environmental education and HIV/AIDS sensitisation (Chimpandu 2003; Manchishi 2003). Apart from the multi-faith coverage or content and promotion of skills, the educationists agree that the educational adequacy of the existing RE syllabuses also lies in the fact that they have contributed to the growth of religious tolerance and ecumenism in Zambia. According to the Standards Office:

So far there has been tolerance on both sides - Christians and non-Christians. There are few, if any, religious fundamentalists or extremists in Zambia at the moment mainly because of the educational RE syllabuses we have had in the country (Kaulule 2003).

Chimpandu (2003) from the Curriculum Development Centre has the same view – that 'to a large extent, the RE syllabuses have promoted the growth of religious tolerance in Zambia because of being inclusive'. Similarly, the participant from the University of Zambia's Department of Language and Social Sciences Education agrees that 'since through RE, both pupils and teachers are encouraged to respect and practice any religion of their choice, the syllabuses have contributed to religious tolerance in the country' (Manchishi 2003).

As can be seen, this understanding of educational adequacy is not only in line with the educational one used in this thesis, but also with that envisaged in the Ministry of Education's policy guidelines set out in the document, *Educating Our Future*. Thus the

syllabuses are adequate because they are, in line with constitutional provisions on religious freedom, pluralistic or multi-faith. They cover the four main religious traditions in the country; Christianity, Zambian Traditional Religion, Islam and Hinduism. These are covered in an equitable and inclusive manner such that the syllabuses have helped to promote the religious tolerance and harmony that the state is primarily interested in. In addition, the syllabuses also cover some cross-curricular social and cultural issues in such a way that they respond to some other social and psychological needs of the young people in the country.

7.4.2 *Pluralism or Denominationalism?*

Apart from slight differences in emphasis, the educationists interviewed are agreed on the need for pluralism in Zambian RE. This position is clearly reflected in the three educationists' views on whether there should be one high school RE syllabus or more. According to the Principal Curriculum Specialist who, as earlier explained, is also Head of Social Sciences at the Curriculum Development Centre:

It is costly to implement two or more syllabuses in terms of syllabus production, training of teachers and examinations. When there is more than one syllabus, as the situation currently is, pupils who transfer from one school to another are inconvenienced and disadvantaged if one school offers 2044 while the other offers 2046. Therefore to avoid these problems and biases for or against one syllabus, there is need for only one high school RE syllabus (Chimpandu 2003).

Emphasising, the (same) need for one syllabus but with slightly different reasons, the Principal Education Officer in the Standards Office, Kaulule (2003) explains that there is need for one RE syllabus at high school level just as there is one syllabus at junior secondary level. In his view, since Zambian RE syllabuses cover all religions, there is no justification for the existence of many syllabuses. Similarly, the Head of the Department of Language and Social Sciences Education at the University of Zambia points out the need for one syllabus at high school level in the following words:

There should not be different RE syllabuses based on different churches or religions. Churches and religious groups are all searching for the same God and the aim of school RE should just be to help the learners to understand the different religious and moral teachings so that if possible, they can apply

them in their lives (Manchishi 2003).

In other words, the educationists consider one pluralistic and multi-faith RE syllabus to be educationally more meaningful and beneficial to pupils in Zambia than many confessional and denominational syllabuses. Whereas one multi-faith syllabus will enable learners to understand religions and appreciate the need for tolerance, many confessional and denominational syllabuses will help to promote uncritical commitment and intolerance. In addition, one high school syllabus will build on the one basic education syllabus and thus ensure that the RE programme is consistent and systematic. The Ministry of Education will also be able to implement one high school syllabus more cheaply and efficiently than two or more syllabuses.

The educationists' support for pluralism rather than denominationalism or confessionalism in Zambian RE is also shown in their views on whether Christianity should be presented or taught on an equal basis with the other major religions in the country or not. According to the Principal Education Officer, 'since all religions are equal...' (Kaulule 2003), Christianity should, as much as possible, be taught on equal basis with other main religious traditions in Zambia. Similarly, according to the Head of the Department of Language and Social Sciences Education at the University of Zambia: 'If...we are to inculcate respect for all religions, then there should be no discrimination or difference in the way the religions are presented in school RE' (Manchishi 2003). The Principal Curriculum Specialist for Social Sciences at the Curriculum Development Centre also has a similar but slightly different view, which is that 'Christianity should be taught as the main religious tradition while others are just sampled as examples' (Chimpandu 2003).

These views mean that although the educationists are prepared to allow Christianity which is the most dominant religious tradition in the country to be covered in more detail than others, they still consider other religious traditions to be important in the education of young people in Zambian society. Zambia is a democratic and religiously plural society where an increasingly large number of people are becoming members of minority religions, including Baha'i Faith, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Zambian Traditional

Religion. As such, the religious education of young Zambians cannot be complete without some knowledge of the beliefs and values of these religious traditions. This knowledge is important and necessary if Zambians are to respect and tolerate each other's religious beliefs and therefore co-exist or live in harmony. A pluralistic or multi-faith model of RE is therefore imperative.

The educationists' support for a pluralistic approach to Zambian RE is further shown in their views on what should be the aim(s) of the subject in the country. Thus according to the Principal Education Officer in the Standards Office, 'RE should promote and inculcate family values, a sense of responsibility, love for humankind, tolerance for one another and a sense of appreciation and care for the environment' (Kaulule 2003). Similarly, in the words of the Principal Curriculum Specialist for Social Sciences at the Curriculum Development Centre, 'RE should promote the development of spiritual and moral values among the learners' (Chimpandu 2003). The Head of the Department of Language and Social Sciences Education at the University of Zambia also sees the aim of RE in Zambia as being 'to instil or inculcate in the learners key human values including truth, love, peace and non-violence' (Manchishi 2003). These suggested aims indicate pluralism rather than denominationalism. Spiritual and moral values, including other key human values, love for humankind, respect and tolerance for each other can best be developed and promoted through an open, inclusive and pluralistic or multi-faith model of RE, not through a denominational, exclusive or mono-faith model. The aims above are also in line with the official, non-denominational aims of Zambian RE as set out by the Ministry of Education in its current national education policy document, *Educating Our Future* and, in the curriculum or syllabus documents.

7.4.3 *Religious Traditions' Involvement in School RE*

Analysis of data shows that the three key educationists interviewed have slightly different views on the issue of religious traditions' involvement in the affairs of school RE. While the Principal Curriculum Specialist for Social Sciences and the Principal Education Officer at the Ministry of Education would like the religious traditions to continue being less involved, the Head of the Department of Language and Social Sciences Education at

the University of Zambia would like the traditions to be more involved than they are at present. In Chimpandu (2003)'s view, Christian churches and other religious traditions should be involved in the affairs of school RE. However, the Ministry of Education, through the Curriculum Development Centre, should take the lead in the development of the syllabuses. The Centre should do this in consultation with the church and other religious traditions. Similarly, according to Kaulule (2003):

While the church and other religious traditions should be involved in school RE, their involvement should be limited because of each traditions', desire to have its doctrines adopted by the education system. While there should be consultation of the church and other religious traditions, the design and articulation of the syllabuses should be left to qualified educationalists. This will ensure that an all-inclusive and educational RE programme is in place, in line with the policy in *Educating Our Future*.

So for these two educationists, the current situation where Ministry of Education experts or educationists prepare and review RE syllabuses and consult the religious traditions only when or where necessary, is satisfactory and should continue. The church and other religious traditions should not be actively involved in the design and review of RE syllabuses and even in the preparation of teaching and learning materials because it will be very difficult for all of them to agree on what kind of content to be included in the syllabuses. It will also be difficult for them to adhere to educational principles which their beliefs and doctrines will be subjected to by educationists and professional religious educators because of their inherent need and desire to propagate their faith. So the religious traditions' involvement in the affairs of school RE should be subject to state or Ministry of Education invitation or control.

Taking a somewhat opposite stand, Manchishi (2003) has the following to say:

The church and other religious traditions are stakeholders in school RE and should therefore be invited to meetings and workshops on the subject. The religious traditions should be involved in the formulation of the RE curriculum and its review. They should be similarly involved in the teacher education curriculum.

This means that as owners or holders of the religious material or beliefs and values being taught in RE, religious traditions are the main interest groups in school RE. They should

therefore not just be consulted when the Ministry of Education deems it necessary, but rather, they should be actively involved in the preparation of the syllabuses as well as teaching and learning materials. Of the two views or approaches, the former is more in line with this thesis's approach than the latter. In other words, in a democratic and multi-faith society like Zambia, the state through Ministry of Education experts (curriculum specialists and teachers of religious education and other related subjects) are responsible for preparing and reviewing public school RE syllabuses. The religious traditions concerned are consulted on the beliefs, doctrines and scriptures to be included under the topics covered by the syllabuses, but they do not determine or dictate what finally goes into the syllabuses and how the material is presented or taught in class. The current situation in Zambia nearly meets this description, but there is probably need for better or more consultation of the religious traditions, especially the minority ones, by the Curriculum Development Centre and the Zambia Association of Religious Education Teachers.

In concluding this part of the chapter, it is important to summarise the findings of the empirical part of the study in relation to the research question stated in chapter 1. It is clear from the data above that the Christian churches are divided over whether the existing RE syllabuses are educationally adequate or not. While the Roman Catholic Church considers the current school RE programme and syllabuses to be generally educationally adequate, the Protestant churches consider the programme and syllabuses rather inadequate. These evaluations are however made on religious (and not educational) grounds. While the Roman Catholic and mainline Protestant churches would like RE in Zambia to continue developing along the current pluralistic and multi-faith model, the Evangelical (and Pentecostal) Protestant churches would like the subject to adopt a thematic, multi-faith, but 'Christ-centred' model. The other religious traditions are also slightly divided over the adequacy of existing RE syllabuses. While Hinduism considers the school RE syllabuses to be educationally adequate, Islam, Baha'i Faith and Zambian Traditionalists consider them to be inadequate. However, all the four religious traditions would like RE in the country to continue developing along the existing

pluralistic or multi-faith approach, but under a model that covers their truth-claims more than the existing syllabuses do.

Unlike the different religious traditions which are divided, the non-governmental organisations have a more united position. AFRONET, FODEP and ZCEA all consider the existing RE syllabuses to be educationally adequate, though AFRONET is a bit concerned with the predominance of Christian content in them. Similarly, the three NGOs would like RE in Zambia to continue developing along the existing pluralistic approach or multi-faith model, though ZCEA would like Christianity to be covered in more detail than the minority religions in the country. Like civil society or NGO leaders, Zambian educationists too are agreed that the existing RE syllabuses are educationally adequate and that they should continue developing along the existing pluralistic and multi-faith lines despite the declaration of Zambia as a 'Christian nation.'

In Part II of this chapter, these findings are further discussed and more critically analysed.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN PLURALIST ZAMBIAN SOCIETY – II

In Part I of this chapter, I reported my findings on the problem of the third part of this study, i.e.,: How adequate do Zambians consider the current school RE programme to be and what form of RE should be adopted in schools? Religious leaders, non-governmental organisation leaders and educationists' views and opinions on the issue were stated and briefly discussed. In this part, I look back to these data and findings with the aim of further analysis, discussion and explanation. I will, therefore, identify and take up more views and opinions that need more critical analysis and discussion, especially in light of the Zambian constitutional and educational policy provisions on religion and education. The discussion and analysis will be done under the leading headings: Educational adequacy of RE syllabuses, Pluralism versus denominationalism, and Religious traditions' involvement in school RE, as in the last chapter.

7.5 Educational Adequacy of Religious Education Syllabuses

As stated earlier (in chapter 1), educational adequacy of RE programmes in Zambia (and any other democratic and pluralist country) should be defined in terms of conformity to provisions and values of the country's constitution and principles of its national education policy in general and national policy on RE in particular. As can be seen from Article 19 of the Zambian Constitution, the constitutional values that come out clearly are freedom, liberty, equality, fairness and pluralism. Others are rational and moral autonomy, neutrality and impartiality. These are the values, which the school curriculum including RE is supposed to reflect. The Ministry of Education (1996: 1) makes this very clear when it states in the national education policy document, *Educating Our Future*, that 'Zambia is a liberal democratic society...[where] the values of liberal democracy...must guide the formulation of educational policies and their implementation.'

This means that for Zambian RE syllabuses to be educationally adequate, they must be democratic, pluralistic, multi-faith, and broadly-based. As such, some interviewees' (i.e. religious leaders') views that the current RE syllabuses in Zambia are adequate because they cover Christianity more than other minority religions and inadequate because they cover other religions and social issues instead of covering their own religious beliefs and

values in the way they would like them to be covered are unacceptable and inadequate. The first view is unacceptable because giving more coverage to Christianity simply because most Zambians are Christians is not only undemocratic but also against the spirit of religious pluralism which underlies Article 19 of the Constitution. So rather than being adequate, the current predominantly Christian RE syllabuses in Zambia are educationally inadequate as they fail to uphold the constitutional values of religious pluralism, equality, fairness and impartiality. The official status of Zambia as a Christian nation in the preamble of the Constitution has no legal authority and cannot be used by the people concerned to justify the predominance of Christianity in the syllabuses.

Similarly, the second view is unacceptable because public school RE syllabuses in Zambia cannot focus on the beliefs and values of any particular religious tradition when the Constitution makes it clear that all religions have equal legal status. The publicly funded education system in a democratic country like Zambia cannot be used to promote one set of religious beliefs and values at the expense of others. Therefore, rather than being a measure of inadequacy, the part coverage of other religious traditions (Islam, Hinduism and Zambian Traditional Religion) and some cross-curricular social issues (such as HIV/AIDS and environmental education) is a step towards attaining educational adequacy and should be taken even further.

Equally unacceptable is the view that the RE syllabuses are inadequate because they are taught by teachers who, in many cases, are not religiously committed and cannot serve as moral role models for the pupils. This view is inadequate because as a matter of policy, the only requirement and qualification for teaching RE and other subjects in schools is professional training at recognised teacher education institutions in the country. Religious commitment is clearly not one of the official requirements for RE teaching in public schools because, as the Constitution shows, Zambia is a democratic, multi-faith country where confessional and denominational approaches to the subject are unacceptable, except perhaps in private religious schools. The intention of the RE syllabuses is not just the transmission of knowledge about religious beliefs and values but the development of

religious understanding, skills and positive attitudes which learners need in order to fit in the modern, democratic and pluralistic Zambian society.

Actually, it should be understood that ‘the ability to teach [RE] is not synonymous with the ability to believe; it is synonymous, however, with the ability to respect or to see something [important] in religion’ (Phillips 1994: 451; Simuchimba 1997: 20). In other words, ‘the prior commitment of religious education teachers working in the secular context...[is] to educational principles rather than to their personal religious beliefs’ (Cooling 1994: 157; Simuchimba 1997: 20). So it is not the religiosity and moral uprightness of the teacher that makes RE syllabuses adequate. Despite being taught by teachers with nominal religious commitment or those with a secular life stance, RE syllabuses can still be educationally adequate as long as such teachers are professionally trained, have respect for people with deep religious commitment and are committed to fairness and objectivity in the study of religion.

The view above that RE should be taught by religiously committed individuals or teachers is in fact still widely held by Zambians. Teachers of RE are usually regarded as pastors or priests and expected to behave as such even by fellow teachers and school administrators. This can be partly explained by the history of education in both colonial and independent Zambia. During the colonial period, indigenous Zambians received most of their education in mission or church-run schools and colleges where RE was fully catechetical or denominational and the teacher was either an ordained person (i.e. a priest, reverend or minister) or a senior church worker (i.e. a catechist, deacon or church elder). Similarly, even after the independent state took over most of the schools after 1964, RE remained under church control, with representatives of the various churches going into schools to offer religious instruction to member pupils for almost a decade after Independence. This, coupled with the predominance of Christianity in Zambian society and the more recent official declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation, has led to the incorrect association of RE teaching with religious commitment, evangelisation and pastoral or church work. This is an inaccurate perception, which needs to be corrected if Zambian RE is to continue developing professionally.

Like Article 19, the provisions and principles of the national education policy document, *Educating Our Future*, on RE are liberal and pluralistic. As explained in chapter 6 (under 6.3), the document sets out new general goals and aims of the education system towards whose achievement RE should contribute. In order to do this effectively, RE at primary or lower and middle basic school is ‘concerned with pupils’ complete needs... [including] moral (values, attitudes) [and] spiritual needs (living in harmony with self, with others, with the supernatural)’ (MOE 1996: 32; MOE 1999: 33). At junior secondary or upper basic school, RE should, according to the age of pupils, aim at an education in sexuality and interpersonal relationships, formation of socially acceptable habits, development of moral and religious values and attitudes, and adoption of a set of personally held values (MOE 1996: 38). Similarly, at senior secondary or high school level, RE should especially contribute to the establishing of an environment that caters for the psychosocial needs of pupils and facilitating their growth to maturity as moral and responsible citizens; awakening concern for the promotion of civil liberties and human rights for the consolidation of Zambian society’s democratic character; and developing desirable attitudes and qualities of personal, interpersonal, national and international peace and understanding (Ibid: 52). In short, RE at this level should lead to ‘religious literacy and ...maturity’ (MOE 1997).

These aims and objectives of RE mean that besides upholding the constitutional values explained above, Zambian RE syllabuses have to be in line with the principles of liberalism, inclusivism, holism, critical thinking, autonomy and problem-solving in order to be educationally adequate. However, like with the constitutional provisions, an examination of data in the previous chapter shows that most of the interviewees do not seem to understand that it is conformity to these policy guidelines that constitutes educational adequacy for the RE syllabuses in the country. On the contrary, these interviewees see and explain adequacy of the syllabuses in largely religious and confessional terms. This lack of understanding can be explained in two ways. First, it might be due to the usual religious conservatism, which tends to make religious leaders and adherents rather slow in accepting any change. Thus the interviewees concerned and many other (religious) Zambians still regard RE as Bible Knowledge and Religious

Instruction which effectively made the public school an extension of the church parish or congregation in the past.

Second, since as leaders of interest groups these interviewees are people who should have known and appreciated the new changes and provisions in the curriculum, their lack of understanding could be an indication that they were not properly consulted or involved in the reform process. So although the Ministry of Education (1996: ix) records that the national education policy document was a product of a broad-based consultation of government officials, teachers, universities, communities, international aid donors, churches and non-governmental agencies, it may be that some of the religious organisations and non-governmental organisations I surveyed were actually not consulted. Thus apart from the Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC) and the Zambia Civic Education Association (ZCEA), the other religious and non-governmental organisations were either not aware of *Educating Our Future*'s existence and had just heard about it at the time of the research, or were aware of its existence but had never seen the policy document. So perhaps a national debate like the one that preceded the country's 1977 Educational Reforms and the one that recently took place in South Africa (Steyn 2003: 11-12; GRSA 2003: 5) would have been more effective than 'consultation, research, dissemination workshops and professional meetings' (MOE 1996: ix) which were used. RE in modern democratic and religiously and culturally plural societies is usually a controversial issue whose policy requires proper and broad consultation before it is put in place.

7.6 Pluralism versus Denominationalism

A close examination of the data reveals that like with the educational adequacy of RE syllabuses, most of the interviewees do not seem to understand the difference between learning to be religious and learning about religions in RE. While learning to be religious usually focuses on the beliefs, values and practices of one particular religion and commitment to them, learning about religions aims at acquiring understanding of the beliefs, values and practices of the different religious traditions existing in society and the world. Learning to be religious is a confessional, denominational or catechetical activity

that can only take place in religious communities and their private schools, churches, mosques, temples, synagogues and homes, while learning about religions is an educational or academic activity that should take place in society's public and grant-aided schools.

By setting itself the goals of 'producing a learner capable of being animated by a personally held set of civic, moral and spiritual values while 'exercising tolerance for other people's views [and beliefs]' (Ibd: 5), the Ministry of Education envisages a pluralistic approach to RE which involves teaching and learning about religions rather than learning to be religious or Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Baha'i or Zambian Traditionalist. As such, the view of some interviewees that Zambian RE syllabuses should adopt a Christ-centred model is unacceptable because it falls outside the official goals and aims of RE stated above. Such a model or approach to the subject would amount to Christian faith nurture or learning to be Christian within a multi-faith society. This would not only be unfair to other religious traditions but also a violation of many non-Christian Zambians' constitutional freedom of conscience (and religion). The approach would infringe on non-Christian public school pupils' right not to be forced to learn or receive instruction in a religion not related to their own religions. It would also hinder the autonomous development of a set of civic moral and spiritual values among pupils, as envisaged by the Ministry of Education through the national education policy document, *Educating Our Future*.

Related to the foregoing is the quite prevalent view of some interviewees and other Zambians that Zambia should adopt a model of RE which practically prepares pupils for religious commitment and responsibilities expected of them in adult life. Such RE would inevitably involve participation by pupils in actual religious activities such as prayers, worship, rituals and ceremonies as part of their practical preparation for a religiously committed adult life. Such a model of RE, however, is unacceptable for Zambia (and other democratic and pluralistic countries) because it amounts to learning to be religious. Apart from falling outside the educational goals, aims and principles of RE as provided for by the national education policy document, the approach would also infringe upon

some pupils' constitutional right not to be forced to attend and take part in religious ceremonies and observances not related to their own religion (see 6.5.1 above). The approach would also create a lot of practical and logistical problems reminiscent of the period before 1972 when the churches were responsible for religious instruction in schools. This means that such specifically denominational, catechetical or religious preparation of young people can only legally take place under religious community programmes in private schools, at churches, mosques, temples, synagogues and homes. Publicly funded educational institutions in the modern, religiously and culturally plural Zambian society can thus not be reasonably expected to practically prepare pupils for a religiously committed adult life.

Another view by some interviewees that needs discussion is that RE should promote tolerance between Christianity and the minority religious traditions in the country and foster the growth of the latter, especially Zambian Traditional religious beliefs. This is a rather tricky view because it can be argued that the growth of dialogue and understanding between different religions in a multi-faith society is a latent aim of pluralistic RE. The national policy document on education also lists '...appreciating Zambia's ethnic cultures, customs and [religious] traditions...' (Ibid: 5) as one of the main goals of the education system - which would seem to justify the second part of the view under discussion. However, promotion of dialogue, understanding and ecumenism among the various religions cannot become one of the manifest aims of public school RE because it is just not the duty of the state and its institutions in modern democratic societies of which Zambia is one. The state today is not supposed or expected to interfere in such religious affairs except where it is absolutely necessary and as mandated by the law. Similarly, while there is some reasonable justification for promoting Zambia's indigenous cultural identity through RE (Simuchimba 2000: 20), care needs to be taken to avoid making Zambian Traditional religious beliefs and values special or superior to other religious traditions and cultures, just as Christian beliefs and values should not be given such superior status despite the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation. This is because the overall meaning of Article 19 of the Constitution is that all religions in the country are equal before the law.

Yet another issue worthy of commenting on is the view that RE should promote the development of family values, human values and spiritual and moral values among pupils. While the promotion and development of family and human values such as peace, love, care, responsibility, tolerance, non-violence, etc is certainly part of RE, it should not be viewed as the responsibility of RE alone. The national policy document on education gives the main aim of school education in Zambia as being ‘to promote the full and well-rounded development of the physical, intellectual, social, affective, moral and spiritual qualities of ... pupils so that each can develop into a complete person, for his or her own personal fulfilment and the good of society’ (MOE 1996: 29). This means that all subjects across the curriculum have a responsibility of imparting life skills and inculcating social, spiritual and civic values to enable pupils develop into mature and responsible citizens of the country. Additionally, the development of spiritual and moral values in pupils should not be seen as the main aim of RE, but rather as a secondary or latent one. The primary aim of modern RE as understood and explained in this thesis is an objective understanding of the various religious or spiritual traditions existing in society and the world. Whether or not pupils develop spiritual and moral values in the process of learning about the religions is not a major concern of RE. However, it is most likely that the pupils will actually learn something affecting their spiritual and moral beliefs and values from religion (Grimmitt 1987: 141 & 2000: 35; Jackson 2002/1997: 131).

7.7 Religious Traditions’ Involvement in School RE

There is clearly some misunderstanding among some interviewees about the role of religious traditions in public school RE. This misunderstanding is reflected in the views that religious traditions should be more involved in the affairs of school RE because, unlike other curriculum subjects, RE is more concerned with the transformation of pupils' moral behaviour, and that churches and other religious groups should be allowed to infuse moral values in the current RE syllabuses in order to ensure spiritual and moral growth among the learners.

The views above revolve around the question: what kind of relationship should exist between religion and the state in matters of education? Accordingly, both Article 19 of the 1996 Constitution and *Educating Our Future*, the national education policy document, call for separation, with room for some kind of partnership between the two. The separation aspect is reflected in the legal provision that religious groups can only provide religious instruction to their member pupils in their own private schools, while the partnership or co-operation aspect is reflected in the policy provision for grant-aided church or religious group-managed open-entry schools and colleges, free grants of land for building private religious schools, facilitation for tax concessions, educational materials, training programmes for staff, donor funds and bursary assistance for poor or vulnerable pupils in these schools. Strictly speaking, then, there is no room for the involvement of religious traditions in the affairs of public school RE because that is the responsibility of the state through its professional religious educators and curriculum specialists. Being democratically elected, the state has the mantle of authority to decide for people what knowledge and values will contribute to the common good of society and which should, therefore, be promoted by the school curriculum, including RE. The fact that RE touches on the beliefs, values and practices of religious traditions does not give them the (legal) right to become more involved either in teaching the subject or in preparing its teaching and learning materials. These responsibilities should remain firmly in the hands of the professionals because in modern education, RE is as a curriculum subject like any other.

However, because of the sensitive nature of the subject matter involved and the need to observe the democratic principles of fairness and transparency, the religious traditions may be consulted or invited to advise when and where necessary. The decision on whether or not or when and where religious traditions need to be involved rests entirely with the state through the Ministry of Education and its professionals; it is not something that the religious traditions and groups can actively demand.

Furthermore, the school RE programme and syllabuses cannot be handed over to the religious traditions and groups for ‘infusion of spiritual and moral values’ merely

because of the perceived moral breakdown in Zambian society. Firstly, as earlier explained, RE is not primarily concerned with instilling morals in pupils, but with promoting the understanding of various religious traditions, their beliefs, values and practices. The promotion of good moral behaviour that is in line with specific religious teachings and values is the responsibility of the religious traditions themselves in their communities and not RE in public schools. In any case, it remains perfectly possible for people to be morally good without both specific religious instruction by religious groups in society and RE in schools. Secondly, putting the religious traditions and groups in charge of the RE programme and syllabuses now would not only be going back to the missionary and denominational period of Zambian education, but also developmentally retrogressive. As the country develops further into a strong democratic and pluralistic country, there is need for religious traditions to become increasingly less involved in the affairs of public school RE. So perhaps the religious traditions and groups should be looking at strengthening their private, confessional religious programmes rather than requesting the confessionalisation of the public school RE programme. Thirdly, and lastly, even if granted by the state, how practically possible would it be for the different religious traditions and groups to come up with topics that would convey their different moral teachings? As is well known, there are many differences in the approach to ethical issues among the different religious groups even within the same religious tradition. These differences can only get worse where the religious traditions have to agree on topics to be included in a programme designed to ensure that each religious tradition's ethical values are effectively communicated to young people who are the future generation and potential members of the religious traditions. For each tradition would want to defend and preserve its values and beliefs at all costs, thereby making the whole enterprise difficult, if not impossible to accomplish. Thus rather than attempting to impart moral excellence and spiritual growth through public school RE, the religious traditions and other concerned sections of Zambian society should consider accepting the equitable educational aims and objectives of the subject as set out in the national education policy document.

In concluding this discussion and analysis of Zambians' views and opinions on the nature of RE in the country, it should be pointed out that the general misunderstanding of school RE in the country even among people who should know better is almost alarming. It is actually doubtful whether some of the interest groups and participants in the study who accept or support a multi-faith model of the subject fully understand the consequences of such a programme. As such it is important to re-emphasise that the only non-contentious and equitable criteria of educational adequacy for RE syllabuses in a pluralistic country like Zambia is conformity or adherence to the democratic values of the constitution and principles of the national policy on education. Christianity may be the most predominant religious tradition and the preamble of the *Zambian Constitution* may declare the country as a Christian nation, but the meaning of Article 19 is that all religions are equal before the law. The values of the Constitution such as justice, freedom of thought and belief, tolerance and co-existence constitute the common good which school education in a pluralistic country should promote. Therefore, RE in Zambia should only develop along the current pluralistic and multi-faith approach. Reversion to confessional or denominational approaches of the pre-educational reform period would be unlawful and unworkable. Accordingly, religious traditions should not become more involved in public school RE because their aims and principles are largely confessional and the opposite of what the law and policy on education provide for. Their participation in the affairs of the subject, therefore, should always be determined by RE professionals.

CHAPTER 8

TOWARDS AN EDUCATIONALLY ADEQUATE FORM OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN ZAMBIA

Conclusion and Recommendations

Due to the controversial nature of the relationship between religion and education in a pluralist society, constitutional provisions on religion should govern the national policy on education in religion or RE. In Zambia the seeds of religious and cultural pluralism were planted at the coming of colonialism and have continued to multiply. Although colonial Zambia had no constitution of its own to which RE could conform, the British South Africa Company and later the British Colonial Government policies on African education were, to some extent, responsible for the kind of RE that developed in schools. The BSA Company's policy of not funding African education and leaving it under the control of Christian missionary societies meant that the model of RE followed was confessionalism, catechesis or denominationalism as each missionary society or church taught its own doctrines, beliefs and values. The Company's encouragement of the teaching of Biblical or Christian doctrines and values because of its hope that these beliefs would facilitate African acceptance of European authority and administration further meant that, like the missionary societies, it saw conversion of the local people to Christianity as the main aim of RE/RI. On the other hand, due to its policy of funding, gaining control and eventually establishing a neutral state system of African education from 1925, the British colonial state made specific policy interventions that affected the development of RE; they included control of mission schools' curricula, open-enrolment of pupils in mission schools and conscientious withdrawal of pupils from religious instruction. Although little was achieved and the subject continued to be confessional, these policy measures indicated the state's determination to move RE beyond mere catechesis and denominationalism to neo-confessionalism or something ecumenical and educational.

After Independence, the Zambian state has been slow in coming up with a clear policy on RE that is in line with the religious freedoms enshrined in the 1964, 1973 and the current 1996 constitutions as well as the 1966 Education Act (to be replaced by the Draft 2000

Act). Under the 1977- 83 National Education Reforms in the Second Republic, RE became multi-faith with the inclusion of Zambian/African Traditional Religion, Hinduism, Islam and religious aspects of Zambian Humanism. However, this represented only a partial pluralisation of the subject as the changes adopted fell short of the liberal and democratic values of the Constitution. In the current Third Republic's educational reforms of 1996 and beyond, more pluralistic aims and objectives of school curricula, including RE or Spiritual and Moral Education, have been adopted and are in the process of implementation, beginning with the primary or middle basic education school level. While these curriculum reforms are educationally positive and progressive, many Zambians today still hold on to the traditional, neo-confessional view where the beliefs and values of one religion (in this case Christianity) are taught with the implicit aim of converting the learner. This view is partly due to the country's Christian Church dominated history and partly due to the 1991 official (but not legal) declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation. So clearly, there is a big gap between the state or Ministry of Education's view and understanding of RE as reflected in its policy documents and that of the rest of Zambian society. While the state would like to have an educational RE programme, many Zambians, especially members of the different religious traditions, would rather have an even more confessional programme and syllabuses in schools.

In order to deal with this lack of understanding among the people of the purpose of RE in an increasingly pluralistic and democratic Zambian society, the state, through the Ministry of Education, needs to come up with a separate, clear and elaborate national policy on RE. Such a policy should be based mainly on the pluralistic values of the Constitution, the Education Act and principles of the national education policy document, *Educating Our Future*. However, a more consultative process involving all interest groups and a national debate are required in order to come up with a truly national policy on RE. In the past, the Ministry of Education's consultation with interest groups on RE or Spiritual and Moral Education has targeted only the three Christian Church umbrella organisations; the Christian Council of Zambia, the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia, and the Zambia Episcopal Conference. Since the country is now more pluralistic and democratic than before, such consultation should in future be extended to other interest

groups such as the Islamic Council of Zambia, the Hindu Association of Zambia, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Zambia, Traditionalists and the main civil society organisations dealing with civic education and human rights.

In order to facilitate such consultation between the state and the non-Christian religious traditions above, the latter should each appoint a qualified educationalist to be their liaison officer or spokesperson on educational matters. The Council of Churches in Zambia, a few of its member churches such as the United Church of Zambia and the Anglican Church and the Zambia Episcopal Conference already have Education Secretaries who handle all their educational affairs. They also work together under the Education Secretaries' Forum. So the other religious traditions' liaison officers or spokespersons on education should play the role of Education Secretary as explained above and should, if possible, even become members of the Religious Groups' Education Secretaries Forum. After such broad consultation, the state should be able to put in place a national policy that broadly defines the nature and form of RE in the country.

Currently, Zambian RE is pluralistic with a large component of ME. It is multi-faith in intent but remains largely exclusive and confessional in practice. Thus while the official aim of the subject is to enable pupils to appreciate spiritual, moral and religious values drawn from Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Zambian Traditional beliefs including behaviour based on these values, the content and approaches of the school RE syllabuses, especially at high school level, are largely Christian and confessional. Zambian RE is not totally confessional and exclusive because it provides for the coverage of other main religious traditions found in the country, but neither is it fully pluralistic and educational because these other religious traditions are only partially covered and referred to in passing. These differences between intention and practice or the subject's main aim and the syllabus content and approaches are, as earlier indicated, due to lack of a clear and consistent policy on RE (since Independence) which can serve as a guide for religious educators, curriculum specialists, education standards officers and different interest groups. So the syllabuses need to become more pluralistic and critical. At present, the two high school syllabuses: 2044 and 2046, are more of Christian education than neutral

RE. The syllabuses are also too heavy in content with material in both the teachers' handbooks and pupils' books presented in a very paternalistic manner. This leaves very little room for the pupils' own autonomous understanding of religion and spiritual development. The approach to the teaching of the subject is somewhat unprofessional at the moment. Many older teachers regard RE to be the same as the old Bible Knowledge or Christian education. Such teachers therefore concentrate on the Christian sections of the syllabuses and the Bible at the expense of the non-Christian sections. Even many of the younger and more recently trained teachers seem to have been encouraged by the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation to engage in confessional and unprofessional practices as starting RE lessons with a (Christian) prayer or a reading from the Bible followed by a brief sermon (Simuchimba 2000: 13). These practices are a violation of both the pupils' constitutional rights to religious freedom and the national education policy's key goal of helping a learner to develop his/her own set of social, moral and spiritual values. So the national policy on RE being recommended here should take care of these problems.

In order to provide an adequate framework for defining the nature and form of Zambian RE, the national policy should include such aspects as the aims, guiding principles, key features and content, and assessment of the RE programmes (GRSA 2003). In order to be educationally adequate, the aims of RE in Zambia should be stated in such a way that they are consistent with the legal provisions for the subject. The aims should reflect the fact that all religions found in Zambian society are equal before the law and thus deserve equal treatment in RE. One way of stating such aims would be as follows:

The aim of RE in Zambia is to help pupils to:

- (i) acquire and develop a critical understanding of different religious traditions with a significant following in Zambia;
- (ii) develop a critical understanding of the influence of (religious) beliefs, values and traditions on individuals (including themselves), communities and culture;
- (iii) develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgments about religious and moral issues with reference to the teachings of religious traditions in Zambia; and
- (iv) develop a positive attitude towards other people, respecting their right to hold different belief from their own, and towards living in a society of different religious traditions and faith communities (SCAA 1994; Simuchimba 2000: 16 -17).

Such an aim or aims mean(s) that apart from Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Zambian Traditional Religion, other significant religious traditions should be included in the RE syllabuses. The criteria for deciding whether or not a religious tradition is significant and deserves inclusion in the syllabuses should be laid down bearing in mind the constitutional need to include, as well as the practical need to limit the number of religious traditions to be included in the syllabuses. Zambia is increasingly becoming religiously and culturally plural and it is just not possible to include every religious tradition existing in the country in the RE syllabuses.

The main guiding values of an educationally adequate form of RE in democratic Zambian society should be rational and moral autonomy, equality, fairness and liberty. Despite the predominance of Christianity in the country, Zambian RE should not indirectly promote and impose the Christian belief and moral system on learners at the expense of other belief and moral systems, as the case is at present. The values of rational and moral autonomy and liberty imply that RE teaching and learning in Zambia should not deny the learner the right to be exposed to different belief and moral systems and the freedom to choose one or develop their own set of beliefs and moral values to live by. Similarly, the import of the values of equality, fairness and liberty is that RE teaching and learning in Zambia should not deny any religious tradition the right to be considered and explored by member learners and others in public schools. Christianity, Zambian Traditional Religion, Islam, Hinduism, Baha'i Faith and Buddhism (at the moment) must be regarded as truth-claims of equal educational value to which pupils should (therefore) be equally exposed.

It is proposed that in order for Zambian RE to become educationally adequate, the subject should go beyond the present unclear status in which it is partly confessional and partly phenomenological and adopt the religious literacy and critical understanding form or model proposed and discussed in chapter 2. The broad principles which would govern Zambian RE would include the following:

- (a) *Being beyond the exclusive- inclusive or intrinsic- extrinsic problem and promoting mutual recognition among religious traditions*

Currently, the primary and junior secondary school RE syllabus is more inclusive than the two high school syllabuses, especially 2046 which is 82% Christian. Zambian religious educators are also divided into two camps; those who are in support of the exclusive approach and those who are in favour of a more inclusive approach. As such, the religious literacy and critical understanding model is suitable for the country since it takes care of both intrinsic and extrinsic values of religion. By taking the truth-claims of specific religious traditions seriously and subjecting them to educational criticism, analysis and evaluation, the religious literacy and critical understanding approach (to RE) will satisfy both those in support of religious specificity and those in favour of religious pluralism. While the pro-religious specificity camp should find satisfaction in the religious literacy aspect of the model, the pro-religious pluralism camp should find theirs in the critical understanding aspect of the model.

- (b) *Developing awareness of religious ideological manipulation and representation and confronting it through the promotion of critical thinking*

As Grimmitt (1987: 46-48) has pointed out, all religions are ideologies, each purporting to provide a synoptic meaning of life or the truth about the world which people should hold on to. Religious traditions and church denominations in Zambia are no exception. Zambian RE should, therefore, firstly, enable young people to be aware of this religious ideological representation and manipulation; and secondly, equip them with critical and analytical thinking as the main tool needed to confront, overcome or minimise the problem. This new approach to RE is all the more important and urgent in that it is at this tender school-going age that human beings are more susceptible to (religious) manipulation and indoctrination.

- (c) *Being process-oriented rather than foundationalist in approach*

Although Zambian RE entered its educational phase of development in the 1980s, it has remained largely foundationalist or content-based and appreciative of

religion (especially Christianity) in its aims and approaches (Mujdrlica 1995: 46). The current syllabuses (produced in 1983/84) treat religion in idealistic terms as a phenomenon that is always positive, clear and unambiguous when in reality some of its beliefs are controversial and can be negatively enslaving. RE in Zambia should, therefore, avoid imposing rigid religious (or Christian) definitions of the world and solutions to life's problems; instead, it should become evaluative of Christian, Muslim, Hindu, and other religious definitions and solutions. It should enable learners to explore these different beliefs, discover their relevance and develop their own set of religious and moral values to live by.

- (d) *Being critical, interpretational, but sensitive and particular or specific in the treatment of religious material or data*

One weakness of RE in Zambia is its generalised or uniform treatment of religious traditions. Apart from Zambian Traditional beliefs which are, to some extent, shown to be internally diverse (i.e. certain beliefs differing from ethnic group to ethnic group), the RE syllabuses portray the other three religious traditions, i.e. Christianity, Hinduism and Islam as simple belief systems with almost no internal differences or complexities. However, the reality about religion in Zambia (and many other sub-Saharan African countries) is that Christianity is divided into Catholicism, mainline Protestantism, Evangelical churches, Pentecostal churches and ministries, and Independent African churches. Similarly, Islam is divided into Sunni and Shi'a branches, while Hinduism has conservative and liberal followers. So Zambian RE should seriously take these intra-religious differences and complexities into account in its coverage and analysis of religious traditions. Sociological, historical and psychological factors behind these internal differences need to be examined and explained, especially in higher grades of the school system.

With regard to key features, it is clear that Zambian RE should be more educational than it is at present. It should expose pupils to different religious traditions in a well-informed manner, which can give rise to a genuine respect for the members and practices of these

traditions, but without diminishing or undermining the religious (or secular) background or choice of the pupil. RE should be education about the religious and cultural diversity of an increasingly diverse or pluralistic Zambian society. It should be education about social, civic and moral values which people in a predominantly religious and democratic Zambian society need in order to co-exist harmoniously, relate with one another and the international community. In modern approaches to curriculum planning, RE can either be part of an integrated social studies programme or a specialised curriculum subject. However, in order not to lose the religious literacy and critical understanding aims of the RE model proposed above, the integration of the subject into social studies (in Zambia), if adopted, should be restricted to the primary school or lower and middle basic education levels only.

As for content and assessment of the RE programme, at primary school or lower and middle basic education level, some age-appropriate social, cultural and historical aspects of different religious traditions should either be taught on their own as RE or as part of an integrated Social, Spiritual and Moral Education (SSME) programme or syllabus. Key people and important events in the histories of the religious traditions, their main customs and practices, and their social organisation, response to and involvement in social issues and activities should be discussed. At junior secondary school or upper basic education level, the main beliefs, values and truth-claims of the different religions should be covered. Facts or ideas held by the different religions to be true about humanity and the world and their ideas of what is wrong, right and important in life should begin to be discussed and examined. Lastly, at senior secondary or high school level, critical narratives on religion generally and specifically from the social sciences, including sociology, psychology, philosophy, phenomenology as well as theology should begin to be discussed. Age and grade level-appropriate social science narratives on aspects of religion or religious topics should be examined, compared, contrasted and evaluated.

Being educational and different from religious instruction, an RE programme should not assess a pupil's faith, but his or her abilities, skills and attitudes. Like other subject areas, RE in Zambia should help learners to cope with personal problems, to exercise personal

autonomy or independence, come to terms with their sexuality, confront and resist drug and other substance abuse, and establish mature relationships with others. Additionally, RE should help to equip learners with life skills, including decision-making, problem-solving, critical-thinking, creative-thinking, and effective communication (MOE 1996: 43). It should also help learners to develop key attitudes, including self-esteem, creativity, open-mindedness, critical awareness, respect and appreciation and awe (SCAA 1994; Henze 2001: 4). So RE in Zambia should be ‘tested, examined and assessed by the same methods [and assessment standards] used in other Learning Areas’ (GRSA 2003: 20).

Thus the kind of RE that is envisaged here is that which leads to religious literacy by taking religions and their truth-claims seriously on one hand, and being critical, interpretational, evaluative and reflective on the other. This is a model of RE that is respectful to both religion and education and which, therefore, satisfies both the religious and educational (or secular) needs of the learner in Zambia today and tomorrow.

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APPENDIX 1

PROVISIONS OF THE 1996 CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA ON RELIGION

APPENDIX 2

PROVISIONS OF THE 1966 EDUCATION ACT ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION/ INSTRUCTION

APPENDIX 3

PROVISIONS OF THE 1996 NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY DOCUMENT ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

APPENDIX 4

**SOME REACTIONS OF THE ZAMBIA EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE (CATHOLIC CHURCH)
TO 'EDUCATING OUR FUTURE'**