The development of Religious Education in Secondary Schools in Zimbabwe in response to Pluralism.

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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ABSTRACT

This study has explored and described how Religious Education (RE) in Secondary Schools in Zimbabwe has developed in response to pluralism. It has been inspired by my teaching experience in different secondary schools in the country. There has been a growing need in Zimbabwe to expand the horizon for RE as the nation is becoming more sensitive to religious diversity among the learners. The government through its Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education has been implementing changes in RE secondary schools with the hope of making it open to pluralism. This study shows that despite the government's efforts, little has changed in the teaching of RE in the classroom. This has been a result of failure by the government to engage teachers in the implementation of the proposed changes. There is a strong relationship between teachers and religious education in schools. They are the main determinant of the quality of education learners receive as they make choices, both conscious and unconscious, in regard to how to structure academic and social relationships in the classroom. Their perceptions towards religious pluralism also influences the way they teach about religion in the classroom. Unfortunately, this relationship between teachers and religious education was not given much attention in the development of the subject in secondary schools in Zimbabwe. This study investigates this relationship and contributes some knowledge in this area for further discussion.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This study focuses on the development of Religious Education (RE) in Zimbabwe secondary schools in the light of pluralism. The chapter is an introduction of the study and it begins by illustrating that even though the new black government in 1980 acknowledged the multi-cultural and multi-faith nature of the country, Christianity still remained the dominant religion. Despite adopting the multi-faith approach policy to teaching of RE in schools, the subject remained rooted on Christianity and to be more precise, on the study of the Bible. As S.J. Nondo (1999) asserted, the government process towards the multi-faith approach was carried out only in terms of the aims of the syllabuses whilst the content remained primarily Christian as in the past. The chapter discusses the religious demography in the country, the status quo of RE in schools and the new education curriculum of 2015. The study layout and scope is also included in this chapter.

Background of the study

Religious Education in Zimbabwe has been dominantly Christian and confessional in nature. This has been a result of the Missionary influence in the educational system of the country from the nineteenth century. However, due to growing religious pluralism, attempts have been made by the government to make the subject more sensitive to religious diversity within the classrooms. In many discussions around pluralism in religious education in Zimbabwe, the emphasis has been on the academic structure and content of the subject. Whilst this is important, my study argues that the starting point for the development of religious education in the light of pluralism was supposed to be on the teachers. Teachers are the main agents in education and they play an important role in the lives of the learners. The impact of education

on the learners' development rest on their enthusiasm, passion and training. In Zimbabwe, the involvement of teachers in the education of religion has not been effective and this has resulted in many government initiatives failing to materialize. Despite efforts by the government to make religious education more sensitive to pluralism in the classroom, little has changed mainly because RE teachers have not been engaged in the development of the subject. Their views, perceptions and religious backgrounds have not been considered and they have simply been expected to teach what the government has offered them. As Judith Everington et al (2011) assert, this is detrimental to education since teachers' perceptions, background and training need to be considered first before the implementation of any changes in the curriculum. Many teachers have not accepted religious pluralism, and this has resulted in government's efforts towards pluralism failing to be realised in schools.

Zimbabwe Religious Demography

To appreciate the magnitude of religious sensitivity in the country, one has to consider the changing religious demography. Soon after independence in 1980, a little more than 90% of the population was Christian (Ambrose Moyo 1986). This Christian dominancy is attributed to the strong Missionary zeal of the colonial period. According to Moyo (1986), Missionaries aimed at making the whole country Christian because they believed that the future of Zimbabwe was to be rooted on Christianity. As a result, they opened schools as the fastest way of Christianizing the indigenous people. Up to 1956, Missionaries were solely responsible for the education of the indigenous people and their schools were centres for recruiting neophytes and teaching them about their religion (Lovemore Ndlovu 2009). However, today, the number of Christians have slightly gone down and according to the 2019 World Population Review,

Christians only constitute 86% of the population.[1] More than 10% of the population now practise religions which were not recognised in schools before independence like Judaism, Hinduism and Islam. According to Agnes Chiwara (2014), this change has been a result of immigration and increasing number of converts. She explains that the population of Muslims in the country has doubled from independence due to the youths who have been attracted by the availability of scholarships offered by Islamic Institutions both abroad and locally. As a result, due to the increasing numbers of their followers, more and more formerly minority religions are evolving to become significant players within the religious landscape in Zimbabwe (Ezra Chitando 2018). Zimbabwe, therefore, is no longer a homogenous Christian nation and there is more pressure now to be sensitive towards those of other religious backgrounds.

Pluralism in Religious Education.

The role of the Church in shaping religious education in Zimbabwe cannot be underestimated.[2] According to Ndlovu (2009), religious education was synonymous with Christian Education during the colonial period. The Church worked closely with the government and it influenced many policies on education. However, the Church lost most of its influence on education with the coming of independence as it was associated with imperialism. The new government led by the late Robert Mugabe did not take long before taking full charge of education in the country. It took it upon itself to control and provide education for schools in the country (Ndlovu 2009). Despite the attempts to localise the educational system, the government continued with the British oriented school curriculum. For instance, despite the Education Act

[1] This is based on estimates produced by the World Population Review in 2019. http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/zimbabwe-population/

[2] During the colonial era from 1890 to 1980, Zimbabwe was formerly known as Rhodesia after its colonial master, Cecil John Rhodes (1853 – 1902). It was part of the Federation between Zambia (Northern Rhodesia) and Malawi (Nyasaland). The country became known as Zimbabwe at independence on 18 April, 1980.

of 1980 which encouraged pluralism, the government continued using the British RE curriculum which was Christian oriented. Pluralism, which according to Mark Silk (2007), is the acceptance of different religious paths as equal, was not quickly accepted by many after independence in Zimbabwe. Many people still maintained that there was only a single path to God which was through Christianity. As a result, Christianity remained dominant in religious education. However, there was toleration of different Christian faiths in the schools and different denominations could teach RE according to their respective doctrines.

However, the coming of the new Constitution, which was approved by a referendum on 16 May 2013, opened room for inclusion of other religions for study in RE. Since it prohibited religious discrimination, schools could no longer continue ignoring teaching religions other than Christianity. Consequently, a new Religious Education syllabus was introduced in February 2015 which included four religions namely, Indigenous Religion, Christianity, Judaism and Islam. The subject was also renamed Family and Religious Studies (FRS). This development was received with mixed feelings and it has been a subject of great controversy ever since its implementation.

The Curriculum Framework of 2015

In the light of the 2015 Curriculum Framework, the Zimbabwe Education System was also reorganised. The system was divided into three levels. Primary education which was normally seven years was divided into two levels: Early Childhood Development (ECD) and the Junior School. ECD consisted of Grade 0 to 2 and focussed on teaching foundational skills to the learners. Junior school consisted of Grade 3 to Grade 7 and it reinforced the foundational skills whilst providing the learners with life and work skills. It is at this stage when religious education was introduced to the learners and many parents were not happy with this as they felt that the learners were still too young to be taught about religion at that age. The subject at

this stage was referred to as Family, Religion and Moral Education (FAREME) and it exposed the learners to religions like Indigenous Religion, Christianity, Islam and Judaism. The last stage of the education system was Secondary School and it consisted of four years that is Form 1 to Form 4. At this stage, the learners were prepared for either university education, technical vocation or to enter professional training programs. Religious education at this stage was called Family and Religious Studies (FRS) and it focused on four religions namely, Indigenous Religion, Judaism, Islam and Christianity.

Classification of Schools

The Zimbabwean Government plays a prominent role in education as it claims that it is its primary responsibility to provide education to its citizens. As a result, the Government runs most of the schools in the country. According to the Education Act 25:04 (2001), schools in Zimbabwe are classified as either Government schools or Non-Government schools. Government schools are established and maintained by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. The fees in these schools are prescribed by the Ministry and they are generally lower because they are subsidised by the Government. The curriculum and examinations in these schools are set up by the Zimbabwe Schools Examinations Council (ZIMSEC) which is an autonomous parastatal of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education.

Non-Government or Private schools are those owned and run by private organisations like Trusts, Religious Organisations or individuals. All these schools are registered with the Ministry of Education in accordance to Education Act 25:04 (2001). These schools have freedom to choose their own curricula and some of them are still using the Cambridge International Curriculum.

In addition to these two main classifications of schools in the country, there is another third classification known as Mission Schools. These are schools owned and run by Churches like

the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Salvation Army and Seventh Day Adventist. These schools are also government aided. The teachers' salaries are paid by government and the schools receive government funding. They were started by missionaries during the colonial era, but they have adopted some of the characteristics of Government schools. Some Mission Schools have privatised themselves and they function as Non-Government Schools. Privatised Mission Schools enjoy greater autonomy and have the freedom to choose the curriculum which suits they background.

Study Layout

The second Chapter of this study looks at the development of RE as a subject. It focuses on United Kingdom and South Africa as it is from there that Zimbabwe's own religious education has its birth and cradle. It explores the historical development of RE in United Kingdom which had great influence on South Africa and Zimbabwe through colonialism. Religion played a very important role in the building of British imperialism and the influence of the Judaeo-Christian tradition cannot be underestimated. The Chapter explores how this influenced the development of religious education in the schools and how the schools tried to respond to pluralism in the process. It also explores the development of religious education in South Africa focusing on the policies made in response to the pluralistic nature of the nation. Because of its long history of racial discrimination, South Africa has gone through complex developments in religious education. Some of these developments have influenced Zimbabwe because of proximity and the shared colonial history. Religious education in Zimbabwe was built on the foundation of missionaries who came from Britain through South Africa. This Chapter therefore connects the development of religious education in these three countries.

The third Chapter particularly outlines the development of religious education in Zimbabwe. It divides the developments into two sections that is, the colonial era (1859-1979) and the post-

colonial era (1980 to present). As Dickson A. Mungazi (1993) asserts, the greatest tragedy of colonization in Zimbabwe was the colonial assumption that the indigenous Zimbabweans were primitive and uncivilised. Thus, the Missionaries and the British colonisers took it upon themselves to 'civilise' the natives by imposing a Eurocentric educational system on them. Through this, the indigenous Zimbabweans regrettably lost their unique identity and culture which they had developed. The fourth chapter discusses Michael Grimmit's models namely, *Learning Religion*, *Learning about Religion* and *Learning from Religion.* It relates these models to the development of RE in Zimbabwe. The chapter also discusses the methodology used in gathering data for the research. Fifth chapter analyses the reactions and responses of the teachers in the light of the implementation of the Family and Religious Studies syllabus of 2015. The last chapter gives the findings, recommendations and conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER 2: DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Introduction

This Chapter looks at the development of religious education and it focuses on United Kingdom and South Africa. The historical developments of RE in United Kingdom have greatly influenced religious education in many of its former colonies. Many have inherited the Judaeo-Christian tradition of Britain through colonisation (P. R. May and O.R. Johnston 1968). Religion played a crucial role in the spreading of British imperialism and schools were used as instruments for this. However, as the world is becoming more sensitive to religious diversity, these schools are being pressured to reassess the ways they teach Religious Education to accommodate the diversity. This Chapter, therefore, looks at how schools in United Kingdom have responded to the religious pluralism over the past years. It will also look at the development of religious education in South Africa focusing on the policies made in response to its history of racial segregation. In conclusion, the Chapter will discuss how the developments in United Kingdom and South Africa have affected religious education in Zimbabwe.

Religious Education in Early Western Europe.

As Laura Ellen Shulman (2002) asserts, religion is one of the oldest traditions in the history of human civilisation and religious ideas have been evident more than 10 000 years ago. Religion has been a big part of humanity and its link with education is equally ancient. Humans had to be taught how to live with each other and their surroundings and religion offered guidelines to this. However, religious education in Western Europe has its roots in the Judeo-Christian

tradition with the Bible in the centre (John Riches 2000). The influence of the Bible in the Western Europe started with the decline of the Roman Empire in the 4th century. The conversion of Emperor Constantine ended the Christian persecutions and this marked the beginning of the rise of Christianity in the Western Europe. Christianity in the form of Roman Catholicism became the dominant religion across Western Europe from the 4th to 16th century C.E. (Arnold Toynbee 1947). Religious education became synonymous with Roman Catholic Catechism. Cathedrals and monasteries became centres of learning and trained clerics were the teachers of religion. The Church became authoritative in both spiritual and secular issues. Through its great scholars like ST Augustine of Hippo and ST Thomas of Aquinas, the Roman Catholic Church influenced much of Western thought and ethics.

Reformation

The Roman Catholic domination in Western Europe came to an end with the coming of the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century C.E. (Holmes 1962). The Reformation era was triggered by Martin Luther, a German Catholic priest, who was dissatisfied with the teaching and practice of the Roman Catholic. Luther's main dispute against the Church was the abuse of indulgence.[3] This was followed by further formation of splinter groups by Ulrich Zwingli in 1519 and John Calvin in 1541. This marked the end of Roman Catholic dominance and exclusivism in Western Europe as smaller and different forms of Christianity began to grow and spread throughout the world. Despite the emergence of different Christian groups, Western European society remained exclusively Christian and impenetrable to other religious beliefs. In England, Reformation started with King Henry VIII's expedition to have a male heir (Holmes 1962). Under the Roman Catholic laws, he could not remarry since he was already

[3] Indulgence was a practice by the Roman Catholic church that one could reduce the amount of punishment one had to undergo for sins committed when he/she dies by praying or making some donation to the church. Luther argued that this practice was being abused by the Church to fundraise for its projects.

married to Catherine of Aragon with whom he had failed to have a male heir. So, when Pope Clement VII refused to annul this marriage, the English King declared himself in 1534 as the new head of the English Church. By this, he replaced the Pope and consequently became the final authority of the English Church. He also confiscated all the monasteries and Cathedrals in England and outlawed the Roman Catholic Church. After King Henry VIII died, Queen Elizabeth I took the throne and in 1551, declared the Church of England as the official Church of the State. Later, this central place of the Church had great impact on England and as well as its colonies all over the world. The Church of England became the religion of all the British colonies.

The Elizabethan Schools

The Church of England took control of education system and founded many schools within England. These schools became known as the Elizabethan Schools and received a lot of support from the Queen. They became the pride of the nation where English nationalism and culture was taught to the learners. Despite having a glorious beginning, the Elizabethan schools soon started to become inefficient as the financial aid diminished with the succession of monarchs who had less enthusiasm in education. The standards of education in these schools became poor and this prompted the establishment of independent schools which were run in a more professional way. This marked the beginning of the distinction between public schools and independent schools in England. Since they charged a fee for their education, independent schools were able to get well trained teachers who provided quality education. However, this created some social imbalances as good education was available for the rich minority who could afford it whilst the poor majority were left to the run-down public schools. Nonetheless, religious education in all schools remained dominated by Christianity.

Enlightenment and Religious Freedom

The Enlightenment era of 17th to 18th C.E. century was a turning point in religious freedom in England. The Enlightenment emphasis on reason, scepticism and open-mindedness challenged the traditional religious views. As David Keane (2008) highlights, traditional Christian views were seen as archaic, irrational and undemocratic and were challenged by many scholars. In this age of reason, the human mind was perceived as the best authority to determine life experience (Andrew Lewis and Johann C. Steyn 2003). As a result, scholars began searching for truths in other traditions. Christianity began to be challenged as the only true authority and there were movement towards religious freedom and diversity. Philosophical ideas from scholars like Locke and Spinoza challenged the restriction of rights to religious minority by the state. As Pierre Bayle (1997) argued, if one religion had continued claiming to be the only true faith and possess the right to persecute those who were different, all other faiths possessed the same right to do the same. This in turn could result in a volatile situation where each religion and tradition could be fighting to defend its right. As a result, some level of religious toleration had to be maintained.

Noel Johnson and Mark Koyama (2018) argue that the main reason for the push of religious pluralism in England during this period was mainly political and social. It was not ideas from Lock or Spinoza which pushed for religious freedom in England but the need for social security amidst the growing economy. Since there was an influx of immigrants into cities due to industrialization, there was need for toleration between people of diverse religious backgrounds. Thus, according to Johnson and Koyama this was the main reason for religious freedom in England during the 17th and 18th C.E. centuries. As shall be discussed later in this study, politics and economy and not religion, remain at the forefront in the push for religious pluralism in British colonies. Religious freedom was all about power and control.

Religious Education in United Kingdom

Despite the movement for religious freedom after the Enlightenment era, religious education in England remained largely Christian. Whilst scholars were debating about religion and science, schools continued teaching about Christianity. In most of the schools, religious education took the form of Anglican, Presbyterian and Non-conformist doctrines. Despite having some Roman Catholics, teaching of its doctrine to learners was banned. Until 1829 C.E., anyone holding public office had to make a public oath denying Catholic doctrine. Thus, religious discrimination was pervasive until the 20th century.

In Robert Jackson's view (2004), pressure for religious freedom reached its peak in the mid twentieth century. This was caused by the influx of immigrants into the United Kingdom making it highly cosmopolitan. In this regard, the nation could not afford to continue ignoring diversity in the public sphere especially in schools. Thus, schools started reconsidering their ways of teaching religious education to accommodate the religious diversity among its learners. He identifies five responses in schools from the 1950s.

According to Jackson, the first response to diversity was marked by "nostalgic attempts to return to earlier and more secure positions and deny the impact of plurality on social and personal identity" (Jackson 2004: 2). This approach was supported by Christian conservatives who strongly believed that Christianity was the only true religion that could preserve the culture and identity of the British learners. Schools with such an approach saw pluralism as a betrayal to the British cultural heritage which could not be compromised. They also saw danger in pluralism as they felt that it made truth relative (Jackson 2004). As a result, proponents of this approach opposed religious pluralism in schools. However, this group was criticised for overlooking the fact that the British society was not originally Christian. They were pagans and they took up Christianity later and this did not give them right to deny the right of other religions which were also in England. Christianity was one of many religions in England and

they were all equal. Therefore, religious education in England could not be limited to one religion because the society was made up of different religious traditions.

Some religious groups who had come to realise the reality of diversity in the late modern England society, sought to preserve their own identity and culture by setting up their own private schools where they could teach their religion. This became the second response to religious pluralism according to Jackson (2004). These private schools were funded by the state as stipulated by the 1870 Education Act which introduced state-funded education for Church schools (P Chadwick 1997). This was confirmed in the 1944 Education Act that classified schools in England into County Schools and Voluntary schools. The County Schools were entirely funded by the government whilst Voluntary Schools were originally funded by the responsible authorities (Jackson 2004). The Voluntary schools were further divided into three categories namely Aided, Controlled and Special Agreement. These schools were supported to varying extend by the State, but they had some flexibility to determine which religious education to teach to their learners. As a result, many of them chose to teach their particular faith as a way of preserving it. Many minority religions took up this opportunity to establish their own schools and according to Jackson (2004), many Islamic and Hinduism schools were established between 1980s and 1990s. However, such an approach has been criticised for widening the gap between different religious groups. It erodes the social harmony which brings about tolerance and unity within a society.

The third response recognized plurality but attempted "to retain the integrity of different religions as discrete systems of belief, distinct sources of spirituality, and as ideologies with universal claims to truth" (Jackson 2004: 2). Thus, schools which took this approach taught religions as instruments for guiding learners in their day to day experience. According to Wim Wardekker and Siebren Miedema (2001), this approach was influenced by the postmodernist ideas which rejected a mere transmission of religious knowledge to learners while advocating

a transformative approach to religious education. What this meant was that that the learners get exposed to content of different religious traditions and relate it to their life experience and transform them. This was a radicalized view of education in the study of religion and it was against the confessional approach. This critical approach to religious education was helpful to the learners as they could apply what they learnt to improve their day to day life experience. However, as Jackson (2004), highlights the only difficult with this approach was accommodating learners with conservative religious views. Those learners who were rooted in a religion would feel uncomfortable if their religion is scrutinized in class. As a result, this approach could fuel religious tensions in classrooms.

The fourth response by some schools in UK was to acknowledge plurality whilst keeping "the integrity of different religions as discrete systems of belief, distinct sources of spirituality, and as ideologies with universal claims of truth" (Jackson 2004: 3). But it encouraged learners to develop and practice necessary skills that helped them to arrive at their own views but through using materials from the different religions. This was founded on Andrew Wright's (2008) principle of '*religious literacy'*. According to Wright (2008), religious education was not supposed to be limited to a religious experience but to immerse the learner to different traditions that seek to give account of the ultimate realities of nature. This approach was inclusive, and it exposed the learners to different truths. It also encouraged religious tolerance among the learners to those who are different to them. The fifth and last response by Jackson (2004) also took note of secularization in the UK. It acknowledged plurality but attempted to keep the various debates at their own level through a reflexive study of sources of materials in relation to personal concerns.

Despite these different responses, religious education in UK is still mandatory in secondary schools (Andrew Wright 2008). As highlighted by Jackson (2004), although it is compulsory, religious education is not part of the UK National Curriculum like other subjects. Religious education is determined locally, and it does not have national examinations. It is drafted by all the major stakeholders in the local community which include representatives of religious traditions, councillors and the teachers themselves (Wright 2008). This wide consultation and engagement of diverse stakeholders guarantees a curriculum which is comprehensive and relevant to the local context. However, this also means that there is no uniform curriculum for UK since each borough has its own approach which suits its needs. Despite the multiplicity of approaches, each syllabus responds to local needs, which promotes the relevancy of religious education within the societies.

Religious Education in South Africa

Religious Education in South Africa has equally gone through many changes since its arrival in the 17th century C.E. in the Cape colony. But as J.L. van der Walt (2010) asserts, it has remained controversial up to today. There are still debates on how Religious Education should be approached in a society which is highly cosmopolitan and diverse. Religious Education in South Africa has been largely associated with dominance and power (Giliomee 1995). For instance, when it was introduced by Jan van Riebeeck to the slave children who had been brought to the Cape by a captured Dutch ship in 1658, it was meant to '*civilise'* them.[4] They were coming from a different society so they had to be assimilated into the culture and identity of colonial Cape and religious education was an instrument to this. Similarly, with the Khoikhoi and the San who were the local inhabitants of the Cape, the Dutch settlers tried to assimilate

[4] Amersfoort Legacy" South African History on Line, accessed 27/09/2019 https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/amersfoort-legacy-history-education-south-africa,

them by imposing Christianity on them. However, the Khoikhoi and San resisted this by running away into the mountains . This section therefore investigates how religious education in South Africa has developed.

The newly established formal schools in the Cape colony by the Dutch shaped the nature of the schools to be established in the succeeding years in the history of education in South Africa. The purpose of the schools was to instil a new identity to the slave children by denying them their old one. In terms of religion, it aimed at Christianising them. The confessional approach was used, which by definition disregarded the religious diversity within the newly founded Cape society. But the schools were often poor in equality and run by people who were not trained. There was no coherent educational system and each school basically had its own curriculum.

The establishment of a proper educational system began with the period of British rule in 1795. This was a period of British colonialism and it aimed at Anglicising the whole of the Cape and education was a sure means to this. By 1839, an Education Department was founded, and it provided a coherent education system. English became the official language and mission schools were formed to promote the British culture. Most of the teachers in these mission schools were from Britain and education was used to attain colonial power. Amongst the Africans, education was used to make them more docile and Christianity was used to achieve this. However, the Afrikaaners who had been defeated by the British were not too happy with this form of education because they felt that it was going to alienate them. As a result, they formed their own schools based on the emerging idea of Christian National Education (R. G. MacMillan 1967). Through these schools, the Afrikaaners sought to maintain their identity, language and nationality (MacMillan 1967: 43). The objectives of the Christian National Education were the same with the British Missionary Education. They both polarised education

and used religion for their ends (Kruger 1995). They systematically organised South African political, social, and economic life along religious and racial lines.

Before the independence of South Africa in 1994, black people were regarded as inferior to the white people and educational systems were used to instil this (Kruger 1995). In 1953, the Bantu Education Act was enacted to sanction racial discrimination. The term Bantu was used by the South African government to refer to black South African children (Patricia Bauer 2018). Before the enactment of this Act, many of the schools offering education to black children were missionary schools and the government did not have much control over them. However, the Bantu Education Act gave the government control and it required that black children should attend government schools. According to Bauer (2018), these schools trained learners for manual labour and basic skills that would make them more useful for the labour force. They were also taught the Christian religion in ways which made the black children accept white supremacy as God's plan. Through the later Extension of University Education Act (1959), black learners were not allowed to attend open universities, and this resulted in having very few qualified and trained blacks in the country. Later, the schools sparked series of massive protest and demonstrations against the apartheid government which finally came to an end with the passage of the South African Schools Act of 1996. Bauer (2018) rightly concludes that, decades of substandard education and barriers entrenched historically in white schools left the majority of black South African far behind in educational achievement.

The end of apartheid in 1994 was welcomed by many as it marked a new beginning for South Africa as a country. The newly found democracy gave the country an opportunity to readdress its deeply discriminatory educational system. A hallmark national policy on religious education was presented to the Parliament by the Minister of Education, Kadar Asmal on 12 September 2003 and this marked the beginning of a new era (David Chidester 2008). This new policy was developed against the background of the previous confessional religious education and it

sought to accommodate the rainbow character which came with the independence of South Africa in 1994. According to Chidester (2008), this policy was the first of its kind in South Africa to redress the religious privileging and discrimination of Christianity in the apartheid era. It replaced the mono-religious educational system which was shaped by the Christian National Education Policy. The policy marked a clear break from the old religious education. The new policy encouraged learners to critically engage with religious plurality in the new post-apartheid context of the country and the rest of the world (Chidester 2008: 273). It was not only meant to encourage religious plurality but also to create better citizens among the learners. According to Chidester, the policy targeted the learners "to demonstrate competence and commitment regarding the values and rights that underpin the constitution in order to practise responsible citizenship and enhance social justice and sustainable living" (2008: 274).

The South African policy of 2003 realized the danger of untrained teachers and insisted on training of the teachers in the schools. The policy encouraged school managers to take into account the interest, capabilities and sensitivities of each teacher as this affected the way they teach religion in class. Any educator therefore in the new policy was called upon to teach in a way that recognises different religions of his/her learners regardless of his or her personal religious orientation and background. In addition to training of teachers, the policy also encouraged the engagement of representatives of religious organisations to occasionally come as guest facilitators to teach the learners about their religion. As much as the teachers are trained to teach about other religions, they cannot teach it better than the practitioners of those religions. However, despite these improvements brought about by the new policy, religious education in South Africa still needs to be further developed. As pointed out by Abdulkader Tayob (2016), the new policy has been contested by powerful groups. Despite teaching other religions in classrooms, it did not resolve the tensions that already existed between different religious members in the society.

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the development of religious education in United Kingdom and South Africa. It has shown that the developments in these two countries are connected with Zimbabwe as they share a common history of British imperialism. Religion played a crucial role in the spread of British imperialism and schools were used to achieve this. Britain adopted the Church of England as the religion of the nation and this was later inherited by its colonies including South Africa and Zimbabwe. Christianity was used to support white supremacy and domination of other races and religions. In schools, religious education was synonymous with Christian education and the study of the Bible was at the centre. However, as the world became more aware of human rights after the Second World War, people started to become sensitive to religious diversity. This affected schools as well and they started changing their approaches to religious education so that they could accommodate religious diversity. The chapter has shown how these changes influenced the development of religious education in England and South Africa. The next chapter will take a closer look at RE in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER 3: RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN ZIMBABWE

Introduction

This chapter outlines how religious education developed in Zimbabwe from the time of the arrival of the first Europeans to the present. It starts from the colonial era (1859-1979) up to the post-independence era of 1980. It discusses the role of the Missionaries in the development of religious education and how they furthered the European colonial enterprise. It also discusses the efforts by the first black government led by the late Robert Mugabe in trying to redress the educational system left by the British colonisers. In the process, the chapter investigates the roles teachers played in the development of religious education both before and after independence in 1980. It concludes by arguing that teachers have great power to influence the outcome of any changes in religious education because they are the ones on the ground. Failure to consider them in any curriculum development can be detrimental to the learners. As Kimberly White (2009) asserts, teachers are not always neutral agents when teaching, their individuality, social constructions of race, socio-economic class and gender all impact the way they teach in the classroom.

Arrival of the First Missionaries

The education system in Zimbabwe owes its existence to various Missionary groups who came to the country in the 19th century (C.M. Zvobgo 1996). As Dickson A. Mungazi (1993) asserts, religious education in Zimbabwe emanated from the tragic assumption that the indigenous people belonged to a primitive society. According to the Missionaries, indigenous people were a *tabula rasa* society, and the European colonisers took it upon themselves to 'enlighten' and civilise them. As a result, they imposed their religion and culture on them through education. The first group of Missionaries to come and attempt this was the London Missionary Society

(LMS) and they founded their first mission station in Matebeleland in 1859 (C. M. Zvobgo 1996). The LMS was a protestant Missionary society that was formed in England in 1795 to spread Christianity among the so-called unenlightened people being colonized by the British Empire. The group was coming from Cape colony and they had already established many Christian stations and support bases there. The LMS missionaries were followed by the Jesuits who arrived in Matebeleland in 1879 and opened their first mission in Empandeni. The Jesuits were a group of Roman Catholic priests who had been formed in 1540 in Rome for the sake of establishing missions all over the world. However, these Jesuits were coming from Grahamstown in South Africa where they had established a staging post for their expansion. The LMS and Jesuits were competing for converts among the indigenous peoples of the interior region of the Southern Africa. Because of their resourcefulness, the Jesuits became dominant in missionary work in most of the territory of modern-day Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, and the neighbouring parts of Botswana by the end of the 19th Century. However, various other mission societies, such as the Dutch Reformed Church, the Berlin Missionary Society and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel also made some contact with the indigenous population before the arrival of the British South Africa Company (Sybille Kuster 1999).

Early Resistance

As C. M. Zvobgo (1996) asserts, the Matabeleland governing structure was too strong for missionaries to get converts and thus the missionaries failed in their first attempts to convert the indigenous people. According to Michael Gelfand (1979), from 1859 to 1880, the LMS did not win even a single convert in Matabeleland and their efforts were futile. By 1882, both the LMS and the Jesuits missionaries had concluded that Christianity was not going to thrive in Matabeleland. The biggest reason for this failure according to Kuster was “the Ndebele King Lobengula’s opposition to any project likely to undermine his authority, which intimidated his subjects and kept them away from missionary influence” (Kuster 1998: 39). According to the

missionaries, the only way Christianity could thrive in Matebeleland was to put down the Ndebele system by brute force (C. M.Zvobgo 1996). But the missionaries could not do this on their own so the coming of the British South African Company (BSAC) in 1890 was greatly welcomed. The BSAC was a company owned by one of the champions of British Imperialism Cecil John Rhodes who had plans to conquer Africa from Cape to Cairo. Thus, the arrival of the Company promoted missionary work in the country.

Colonisation of Zimbabwe

The colonialization of Zimbabwe was organised from South Africa by Cecil John Rhodes. This was realized in 1890 when a military invasion force of white settlers raised the Union Jack flag at Fort Salisbury in now Harare (R.J. Zvobgo, 1994). This military invasion was sponsored by Rhodes who had intentions of getting mining rights in that area. Rhodes' business partner, Charles Rudd managed to trick King Lobengula into signing a treaty which gave them mining and administrative rights of the area north of the Limpopo river. Without the knowledge of King Lobengula, Rhodes used this treaty to get a Royal Charter from the British government which allowed him to act on its behalf. This Charter authorised Rhodes' BSAC to administer the newly formed colony on behalf of Queen Victoria's government for the next twenty-five years. Consequently, "many British citizens were encouraged by their Government to come and take advantage of the opportunities the country offered" (R.J. Zvobgo, 1994: 8).

First *Chimurenga* Uprising

According to Robin Palmer (1977), the European population in Zimbabwe rose from 196 to 11 000 in the first 10 years of the invasion that had adverse effects on the lifestyle of the indigenous population. The rights of the indigenous population were denied by the European settlers, and they were massively abused. They lost their land and were forced to work on the settlers' farms and mines for low wages. Unjust taxes were imposed on them pushing them to

live in destitution on their land. This disgruntled the indigenous people who then organised the 1896 – 1897 rebellion which is known in Shona as the *Chimurenga*. In this uprising, the Shonas and Ndebeles engaged in violent attacks against the settlers. The uprisings were inspired by spirit mediums namely Mukwati in Matebeleland in May 1896 and Kaguvi and Nehanda in Mashonaland in October 1896. The role of the traditional religion in these rebellions cannot be understated and these three spirit mediums were regarded as the voices of the gods. Within weeks of the uprising, many white families had been killed both in Mashonaland and Matebeleland. The response from Rhodes and his forces was brutal and furious. They used their superior weapons to fight the indigenous people who had only arrows and shields as weapons. Nehanda and Kaguvi were subsequently captured and hanged in 1898.

Colonial Education from 1890 – 1920

Upon the suppression of the *Chimurenga* uprising, the BSAC encouraged missionaries to establish themselves (R.J. Zvobgo 1994). This was meant to promote the propagation of Christianity which was believed to make Africans less rebellious and easier to control. The settlers had learnt through the rebellion that the indigenous religion was a powerful threat to them, so it was to their advantage to replace it with Christianity. Missionaries played a key role in this project. The settlers supported the missionaries in evangelizing to the indigenous people as this made them more docile and submissive. After their first failed attempts in getting converts, the missionaries embarked on educating the young indigenous children. They believed that without schools, "there would be no missions, no African attendance, no adherence, no success… pupils meant catechumens and converts" (A.J. Dachs and W.F. Rea 1979: 107). However, the indigenous people were not too quick in accepting missionary education. Parents did not want their children to lose their identity and way of life through missionary education. Also, it meant that most of the children's time would be spent away at school and not in the homesteads where they were expected to do some work helping around.

Those who went to school expected to be paid as they believed that they were helping the missionaries. Given these circumstances, it was difficult for the missionaries to get regular attendance in their schools. As a result, some missionaries were so desperate to get converts that they established some enticing techniques to increase enrolment. Missionary centres and schools became known among the indigenous people as places where they could be given European gifts like sweets and clothing. Thus, from its foundations, Christian Schools in Zimbabwe were associated with material benefits and this had later implications for church and state relations and the place of Christianity in Zimbabwe.

Just like in South Africa, the curriculum in the missionary schools comprised of reading, writing and arithmetic but the Bible remained the main textbook especially for Protestant missionaries. The missionaries were initially educating the indigenous children with the hope that they would in turn go and educate others (C. M. Zvobgo 1996). After leaving the schools, the learners would return to their people and teach them about Christianity. Some of the missionaries opened teacher training schools for pastoral reasons. For example, the London Missionary Society opened a teacher training school called Hope Fountain in Matebeleland in 1902. Upon completion of the first group of learners, all fifteen of them were sent back to teach and evangelise to their own people (C.M. Zvobgo 1996). Missionary education during this time shaped the character of an educated Zimbabwean. The mark of a good educated Zimbabwean was being a good Christian whilst those who held on to their traditions were backward and uneducated. As a result, a lot of rich African values, identity and cultures were lost in the name of education and Christianity.

A Bifurcated Education System

By 1920, the British settlers had created two parallel systems of education which reinforced the racial divisions in the country (R.J. Zvobgo 1994). African education was left entirely in

the hands of the missionaries whilst the government took charge of developing the educational system of the settlers' children which was more advanced. In the beginning, there was general understanding between missionaries and the settlers over education policy. For the Africans, basic literacy and numeracy was regarded as sufficient. The main purpose for their education was to civilise and Christianise them. There was minimal industrial training in missionary schools, which greatly disadvantaged them in the colonial economy. By offering inferior education, the missionary schools perpetuated the suppression of the indigenous people. This made it easier for the colonisers to advance their political and economic agenda in the country.

Whilst the African children were being taught how to pray and become good Christians, white settlers' children were being taught how to run the country and make profits from it. Unlike the missionary schools, settlers schools were highly academic and industry oriented. According to R.J. Zvobgo (1994), as early as 1910, white school children were taught in their schools that they belonged to a ruling group that had authority over their black countrymen. The schools taught that the white people were superior, and the Africans were supposed to work for them. Unfortunately, the missionary schools were reinforcing this attitude by providing inferior education to the African children. Right from their early stages of education, Africans were taught to see white people as their masters and missionaries did not do much to challenge this racial discrimination.

Religious Education in Missionary and Government Schools.

According to Ndlovu (2013), there was no clear government policy on how Religious Education was to be taught in both missionary and the government schools. Each institution was left to design its own curriculum which suited its background. The first National Educational Curriculum was introduced in 1949 by John Cowie who was the Secretary of Education of Rhodesia (C.J.M. Zvobgo 1996). This was inherited from the British Educational

System and was meant to promote British imperialism in Zimbabwe. However, the missionary schools continued using their own curricula tailor-made for their background. Religious Education became linked to a school's faith and religious doctrine. In government schools, Religious Education became known as Bible Knowledge. At this point, study of other religions in both missionary and government schools was inexistent.

Following the footsteps of South African government, the Rhodesian government in 1956, moved in to control the running of the missionary schools (R.J. Zvobgo 1994). They did this not to help in proselytization, but to increase the labour force. The demand for labour was increasing in the country and missionary schools were failing to cope with the demand of preparing the indigenous people. Despite the government getting involved in the education of the Zimbabweans, it continued to unfairly prioritise education for the white minority. It allocated more funds for the education of the white children thereby maintaining the unfair racial practices. According to Mungazi (1992), the colonial government spent $0.40 per black learner whilst spending $20.00 per white learner in 1959 and the difference was just outrageous. This is one of the reasons which led to the outbreak of the liberation war by the black Zimbabweans from July 1964 to December 1979. The aim for this war was to end the White supremacy and racial discrimination in the country.

Post-Independence Education in Zimbabwe

When Zimbabwe became independent in 1980, it sought to reform the legacy which had been left by colonialism. The new ZANU PF government under the leadership of Robert Mugabe did not take long to implement reforms. It believed that educational reforms were key in confronting the social, economic and political problems inherited from the colonial era. The government quickly democratised education and made it available to all races leading to the

rapid increase of learner enrolment in schools. The following table shows enrolment of learners in schools from 1974 to 1983:

Pre and Post-independence enrolment in Educational Institution, 1974 – 1983.[5]

	1974	1979	1981	1983
Primary Schools	836,500	893, 651	1,680,143	2,164,118
Secondary Schools	66,458	72,335	144,735	188,467

From the table above, the enrolment of learners increased almost three times in a period of nine years. The highest increment happened after independence and this was mainly a result of the policies which were implemented by the new government. According to Mungazi (1992), as a result of these policies, thousands of schools were built in the first 10 years of independence and primary education was made free. This resulted in massive increments in learners' enrolment in schools.

The government also initiated curriculum reforms in Religious Education. Soon after independence, a Religious Education Consultative Conference was held to come up with a curriculum relevant to the demands of post-colonial Zimbabwe. According to Ndlovu (2009), the participants of this conference agreed among others that

i. Religious Education should incorporate the teaching of other religions beside Christianity.

[5] Zimbabwe Monthly Digest of statistics, November, 1981 and Zimbabwe: Parliamentary Debates, August 1983.

ii. A confessional and dogmatic exploration in the teaching of Religious Education was no longer acceptable.

iii. Religion or faith should relate to the daily life of the learner.

This was followed up in 1984 by the change of the subject's name in secondary schools from Bible knowledge to Religious Studies. This was done to broaden the scope and content of the subject. Learners were now expected to study beyond the Bible and Christianity.

The rise of Minority Religious Groups

Despite the Zimbabwe Religious Policy of 1980 guaranteeing the freedom of any person to practise his/her faith publicly or privately, twenty years after independence there was still religious discrimination in schools. The turning of the second millennia came with rising demands by minority religious groups to be recognised in schools. According to Ndlovu, in August 2003 the Zimbabwean government was threatened to be taken to court by group of Muslims in Harare for failing to implement the multi-faith approach in government schools (Ndlovu 2009). They argued against the forced teaching of Christianity to members of its faith in schools as this constituted religious discrimination. In 2007, parents of a Rastafarian learner took a school to court for barring their son from attending class due to his dreadlocks (Zenda 2019). Since dreadlocks were associated with Rastafarianism, a religion which was not accepted by the school, the learner was obliged to cut it off or risk being expelled from the school. However, the court ruled that the school would be violating the boy's constitutional right if it discriminates against him because of his religious background. As a result, the learner continued learning in the school with his dreadlocks (Zenda 2019). In 2014, a Christian Sect took legal action against a school which expelled four of its members for wearing long hair. Since the Sect rejected cutting of hair due to its religious beliefs, the Constitutional Court ruled against the expulsion of the learners from the school thereby affirming their religious freedom.

As asserted by Zenda (2019), from the early 2000s, the demands by minority religious groups to be recognised in schools in Zimbabwe increased significantly. This was a result of the increasing awareness of religious rights and freedom for learners coming from different religious backgrounds.

Family and Religious Studies 2015

Due to the increasing pressures on religious education to accommodate the diversity of the country, a new syllabus known as the Family and Religious Studies (FRS) was implemented in 2015. This was a result of a long process of consultation which officially started with the Nziramasanga Commission of Inquiry in 1998. According to Siyakwazi (2016), this commission was formed by the late President Robert Mugabe to inquire and give recommendations to the government on how the Education Sector could be improved. It was led by a renowned educationist Professor Caiphas Nziramasanga. One of the recommendations from the commission was to make education serve the needs and aspirations of all Zimbabweans regardless of their religious background. As argued by Lazarus Dokora (2015), this syllabus came to ground religious education in the lived experiences of the learners. It sought to foster an understanding of the importance of belonging to a family, religion and a community. This was in line with the African concept of *ubuntu* (*I am because we are*). The syllabus promoted a multi-faith approach which aimed at making the learners aware of their respective religious identities in the context of religious plurality. It focused on four religions namely: Indigenous Religion, Judaism, Islam and Christianity. It was allocated 4 periods of 40 minutes per week and the learners were given enough time to study the materials in detail. Despite these reforms, little has changed in the teaching of religious education in the classrooms. This is mainly because the teachers have not yet changed. They are still using old approaches in teaching despite the changes in the content of the subject.

As John M. Hull (2002) asserts, we now live in an era of Human Rights, where religious discrimination cannot be tolerated. Consequently, religious exclusivism in schools in Zimbabwe could not continue unchallenged. Schools had to respect religious backgrounds of their learners. Thus, the introduction of the new Family and Religious Studies 2015 was in line with Religious Freedom in schools. By increasing the religions to be studied in the classroom, the government was promoting religious indiscrimination and tolerance. However, as highlighted by Lazarus Dokora (2016), who was the Education Minister behind the introduction of the syllabus, which was not supported by many. According to Dokora, the greatest criticisms against his proposed syllabus came from the leaders of Christian communities. They thought that it was their right to defend their Christian legacy in education which had developed over the years in the country. However, as Hull (2002) says, this argument is misplaced. Whilst defending their religious freedom, the Christian leaders had also the duty to respect the same right of those from different religions in the country.

The Role of teachers of Religious Education

As Kimberly White (2009) asserts, teachers play an important role in the teaching of religious education. They are the ones that day after day and year after year deliver the subject to the learners. As a result, the effectiveness of religious education begins with teachers. Any review of religious education curriculum cannot afford to ignore teachers' engagement. White (2009) affirms this as she argues that a genuine curriculum development can be achieved only if it proceeds from below, that is the teachers, and not from above. Teachers have been regarded as professionals when it comes to teaching of religious education in classrooms, but the nature of the subject makes it prone to subjectivity and personal biases. Judith Everington et al (2011), argues further that teachers' family background, life experience, personal beliefs and professional training, all affect the way they perceive and teach religious education. For example, if a teacher is not convinced by his/her personal experience to religious pluralism, it

becomes problematic for him/her to teach about it to the learners. Everington (2011) further argues that national and local politics of the socio-cultural context in which teachers find themselves also affect the way they teach learners in the classroom. There are many factors which influence teachers in the classrooms, but little research has been done in this area.

The future of Religious Education lies in those who teach it. As highlighted by Everington (2011), effective religious education requires training, commitment and enthusiasm of teachers. Furthermore, teachers need to be well trained to handle the complexities which comes with teaching the subject. There have been cases where ill trained teachers have caused havoc to those they teach. According to Rosalind I.J.Hacket (1999), schools were breeding grounds for the religious violence which engulfed Nigeria soon after its independence in the 1960s. Despite being a secular nation, there was massive religious divisions between the Muslims and Christian. This division was further widened by the teachers who taught religion in support of their religious background and affiliation. This resulted in the spreading of religious intolerance which led to clashes between Muslims and Christians. This was caused by the teachers who were not well trained to separate their religious biasness from their profession. The ability by teachers to handle complicated issues about religion need to be fostered through ongoing training and formation on their part. It is only through this way that religious education can become more effective in the classroom as it depends on the one who is teaching it.

Another example for the importance of teachers in religious education is illustrated by Harriet Zilliacus (2013) study on the Finnish educational system. She investigates how teachers handle plurality in classrooms in Finland and she explores the complexities involved. Religious Education in Finland is known as Religion and Secular Ethics Education and it is named this to accommodate its diverse and secular society. The government supports this subject and it is

compulsory to all learner between 7 – 16 years of age. Each learner has the right to be instructed according to the religion of choice. However, this choice is made by the learners' parents and this has been criticized by children rights advocators since the learners' voice is not necessarily heard in making the choice. The schools in Finland have the duty to organize classes if there are three or more learners in the school belonging to the same religious affiliation. They have developed a multi-confessional system that provides education according to the learners' worldview (Zilliacus, 2013). Despite the seemingly developed religious educational system, Zilliacus argues that a lot of pressure is put on the teachers who handle the subject directly. In addition to being understaffed, the teachers work is complicated by grouping of learners together from different backgrounds. The diversity in learners' race, size, age, sex, nationality and religious background makes it difficult for the teachers to work easily. Since the learners are different, pressure is put on the teachers to meet all the needs of their learners. Zilliacus concludes by arguing that it is not only for Finland but for the rest of the world to take seriously the role of teachers in religious education of the learners. Religious education is done in the classroom and for it to remain relevant extra effort is to be put on the teachers so that they may handle the pressures which come with handling the complicated world of religion and education of the young. There is need for constant support and training of the teachers so that they remain relevant in responding to the growing religious pluralism in their classrooms.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined how religious education has developed in Zimbabwe from the time of the arrival of the first Europeans to date. It has discussed the role of the Missionaries in the development of religious education and how they furthered the European colonial enterprise. The Missionaries had great influence on the government, and they influenced many of the government policies on education. As a result, pre-independence Zimbabwe was overly Christian in nature. The independence of Zimbabwe in 1980 ignited educational reforms which

opened up religious education to the different religions in the country. Zimbabwe has been slow in responding to religious pluralism. The main reason for this has been that the reformations has targeted the aims of the subject and not the pedagogy. The subject is still being taught in the classroom the same way it was taught by missionaries. The chapter has argued that the slowness in the response to pluralism in schools has been caused by failure by the government to engage teachers who are the main agents when it comes to teaching of the learners. Teachers have the power to determine the outcome of any changes in the curriculum since they are the ones on the ground. Their individuality, social constructions of race, socio-economic class and gender, all impact the way they teach in the classroom. Therefore, teachers can promote or inhibit learners' response to religious freedom and thus, it is necessary to engage them in implementing any changes in religious education. The following chapter presents the main theoretical framework and data collected for analysis of the role of teachers in the new syllabus of 2015.

CHAPTER 4: THEORY AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter is a discussion of the theoretical framework used to examine the data collected for this thesis. As this study is focussed on how teachers relate to RE, it has chosen to use Michael Grimmit's models which have been familiar to teachers and educators in Zimbabwe. After presenting these models, the chapter will discuss the research methodology used in obtaining the data from four different schools in Harare. The teachers' views from these schools on the development of religious education and particularly on the new Family and Religious Studies (FRS) syllabus will then be analysed in the next chapter.

Models of Religious Education

As an attempt to adjust to increasing religious diversity in Zimbabwe after independence, most schools and teachers have adopted progressive models of religious education. Grimmitt identified these models in 1973 and they have been used widely in understanding the development of religious education in many countries (Geoff Teece 2010). These models comprise of *Learning Religion, Learning about Religion* and *Learning from Religion*. I propose that these models help in identifying how teachers think about the subject and relate to the development of the subject in Zimbabwe.

Learning Religion

According to Grimmitt (2000), *Learning Religion* involves the instruction of a single religious tradition to the learners. This model is similar to Robert Jackson's (2004) first approach of religious education in the United Kingdom in the 1950s which has been discussed earlier in

this study. This model was based on the teaching of religious education in United Kingdom before the 1970s which was largely centred on the Christian faith. The model involves teaching of one religion to the learners which is thought to provide the sole answers to human quest for meaning. The aim of religious education in this model was therefore to propagate beliefs of the faith to the learners. It was meant to lead learners to a stronger commitment of the religion being taught. In Zimbabwe, this was the traditional model for religious education in schools from the time of colonialism. When religious education was initially introduced into schools by Missionaries, its aim was to teach Christianity only to the indigenous people. As John M. Hull (2002) asserts, this model was greatly criticised by many scholars for being exclusive. It only gave preference to one religion leaving no room for pluralism. For many years in Zimbabwe, religious education was founded on such a model and it only started to change after independence as the government began to acknowledge other religions in the country.

Despite the pressure after independence to abandon the *Learning Religion* model in schools in response to religious pluralism, many schools continued using it. They did so as a way of preserving their respective religious identity amidst rising religious diversity. The model became a mechanism by some religions to cope with the threat of pluralism in Zimbabwe. Religions like Christianity, Islam and Hinduism resorted to establishing their own schools to teach exclusively their religions to the learners. By adopting the Non-Government/Private School status, such schools had the freedom to teach their respective religious background whilst promoting it. The teachers of religious education in these schools were members of the religion and were expected to propagate their faith amongst their learners. However, this model had the danger of indoctrinating the learners thereby making them intolerant to those different to them. The schools built imaginary walls around themselves cutting them off from any interaction with those of other religious backgrounds. Thus, as Hull (2002) asserts, this model promoted the separation of religions which could lead to inter religious conflicts.

Learning about Religion

Grimmitt's second model, *Learning about Religion,* refers to learning about the beliefs, teachings and practices of the great religious traditions of the world. This model is purely educational and not confessional. Nigel Fancourt (2014), alludes that this model gives the learners skills to interpret, analyse and explain religions. It also gives learners the knowledge and understanding of religions thereby expanding their religious literacy. The main characteristic of this model according to Grimmit (1973) was to introduce learners to religious modes of thought and awareness so that it widens and deepens their perceptions in ways that contributed to their human development. The purpose for this model was to enhance human development and the choices of its content and the pedagogical approaches were rooted on this. It also expanded learners' religious literacy by giving them knowledge and understanding of other religions.

In Zimbabwe after independence, this model was adopted in government schools. It sought to expose the learners to beliefs, teachings and practices of Judaism, African Religions, Islam and Christianity (Ndlovu 2009). This was meant to expand the horizons of the learners on religious issues and introduce them to the world of pluralism. Learners from different religious backgrounds could now be accommodated in religious education classes. Despite the subject opening to other religions in the classroom, it was criticised for superficially studying the religions. As Maravanyika O. E. (1997) asserts, the post-independence multi faith approach to religious education in schools focussed on peripheral issues about religions as it provided narrow knowledge which was targeted towards examination. According to E. F. Gwaravanda et al (2013), this new approach did not give flexibility and open mindedness that was needed in the globalised world of today. It only required the learners to be descriptive and not analytical. According to Crittenden (1993), a good religious education should introduce both empirical and rational forms of knowledge. However, the Zimbabwe Ordinary Level Religious

Education focussed on the empirical form (Maravanyika 1997). It is based on comparison of different religions without looking at them from a critical point of view. The rational part of religious education is done at Advanced Level but not everyone gets to do it in Zimbabwe since most of the learners end at the Ordinary level. It is only through the analytical study of religions that learners may be prepared for the reality of religious pluralism and avoid the pitfalls of religious intolerance, disrespect and fundamentalism which are the roots of religious conflicts (Gwaravanda et al 2013).

Learning from Religion

Grimmit's third model, *Learning from Religion*, has received great attention and support from professional educators of religion in Zimbabwe and elsewhere. As Teece (2010) asserts, *Learning from Religion* is more valid in religious education in today's pluralistic societies as it encourages learners to apply what they have learnt in class to their real lives. Grimmit refers to this model as an existential approach and he defines it as "an approach which focuses attention on the whole of the child's experiences, or, more precisely, which focuses the child's attention on the whole of his experiences, and uses these as the basis for forming religious concepts" (Grimmit 1975:52). Many scholars have reconsidered their approach to Religious Education teaching in the light of how it affects the life of the learners and this has made the subject more relevant and useful. This model has been adopted and modified by many scholars of religious education. Unlike the other two earlier models, *Learning from Religion* engages the '*down-up-down'* approach of religious education. Whilst focusing on the learner the approach starts from what the learner knows from his/her experience and relate it to the religious concepts under study and then applies it back into the life of the learner. In this way, religious education becomes a critical process of evaluating religious beliefs and traditions leading to the learner arriving at his/her truth claim.

Ndlovu (2009), asserts that *Learning from Religion* has been around religious education discussion in Zimbabwe for many years. According to him, the life experience approach which is the centre of this model dominated much of educational discussions from the time of independence. Since the post-independence government was concerned with localising the contents of the subjects, it sought to make education more centred on the life experience of the learner (Ndlovu 2009). As highlighted by J. B. Machokoto (1983), despite the dominance of Christianity in post-independence Religious Education, the government insisted that its teachers should use examples and illustrations from the life experiences of the learners. This life experience approach made use of the learners' own experience as a starting point for learning. Despite being limited to Christianity, the Religious Education became learner centred . It helped the learner to discover ways that would enhance his/her development from his/her experience. It therefore contributed to the personal development and growth of the learners in their context. The learners could relate what they see in their everyday lives to what they were being taught in class. For instance, by seeing the effects of injustice in their communities, the learners would appreciate the importance of the Christian values they were being taught in class and inspire them to make better choices in their lives. This was a valuable teaching approach which enabled religious education to move from theory to praxis. However, the only limitation to the approach was that it was limited to Christianity only. Both teachers and the learners in most schools after independence were not yet ready to share their religious space with any other religion other than Christianity.

Despite adoption of Grimmit's models in teaching religious education in schools after independence, Christianity remained dominant in the classrooms. Religious Education remained Christocentric, and confessional. The efforts by the government to make religious education more sensitive to pluralism did not change much in the classroom This was largely a result of failure by the teachers to buy into the government's vision of pluralism. The

government had failed to consider and engage the teachers' who were the main agents in the delivering religious education. Teachers were not consulted in the developments of the subject after the independence and as a result, they were never fully part of the developments. By and large, the developments were imposed on them and this created a negative backlash from the teachers. This section focusses on a close examination of how teachers and educators experienced religious education, especially the new Family and Religious Studies (FRS) syllabus as it tries to respond to pluralism.

Collection of Data

The study adopted a qualitative research method which according to J. W. Creswell (2003) is ideal for holistically understanding a phenomenon, in ways it is experienced by the participants. This method enabled me to obtain the perceptions, feelings and attitudes of teachers toward Religious Education in the light of pluralism in Secondary Schools. I employed the multiple case study research design to gather my data. This design helped me to have deeper and broader understanding of the issues pertaining to my research. It was also important for me to be in the context of my research as this gave me to directly interact with my participates and get to know them better. I could directly get wide range of answers on complex issues in my research.

Sampling technique

To obtain my data, I used observation and interviews. As Helena Harrison et al (2017) assert, these methods help to address wide range of questions that ask the why, what, and how of a phenomenon thereby helping the researcher to explore, explain, describe, evaluate, and theorize the research. The outcomes of my methods led to an in depth understanding of my area of study.

The study population and data collection procedure

To achieve my objectives, I purposefully identified schools that could provide me with the data I needed. I selected four schools in Harare due to their accessibility and convenience. Since I had spent some time teaching in Harare it was easier for me to get access to the schools and conduct my research. Harare also had the most diverse and multi-religious population which was an advantage for my research. It is also the Province with the highest number of secondary schools totalling 26% out of the 8 Provinces.[6]

In each of the four schools, I selected three teachers whom I observed teaching and later interviewed. Observing the teachers in the classroom provided me with important information especially on the teacher's methodology and its effectiveness. The interviews also provided me with opportunities to follow up on issues which I needed further clarification thereby supplying me with more detailed information. The interviews lasted approximately 20 to 30 minutes each and were done in settings which were mutually convenient. I recorded the interviews and transcribed them. To protect their confidentiality and privacy, I did not record the real names of the teachers I observed teaching and interviewed. I used pseudo names.

For the purpose of the research, I engaged the following schools:

i.**ST Georges College** is a Private Mission School owned by the Jesuits. It is one of the most elite and expensive schools in the country. It is also one of the oldest schools as it was established in 1896 by Jesuit missionaries. It started with 6 learners, but it has grown now to have 765 learners and 106 teachers. The school is situated near the centre of Harare and it's a both day and boarding school. For many years, the school privileged education for white

[6] Zimbabwe Fact Sheet. https://zimfact.org/factsheet-where-does-zimbabwes-education-stand/ accessed on 12/11/2019.

children and this only changed in the last 25 years. It offers the Cambridge International Education Curriculum and it prepares its learners for universities outside the country. The majority of the learners come from affluent families who are prepared to pay for the best education of their children. As result, it is well resourced and has the best education facilities. The learners also come from diverse religious backgrounds and they have a substantial population of Muslims and Hindus. Despite the school being Christian faith based, it uses a multi-faith approach in religious education. There is regular in-house training of teachers and the teachers are well equipped to handle religious pluralism in the classes. I observed that the learners were very enthusiastic in learning about religions, and they had lively discussions with their teachers.

ii. **Parirehwa Secondary School** is a Government school located 30 kilometers away from the city center. The school provides education to 980 boys and girls from the surrounding semi urban areas. It has 24 teachers. The school was opened after independence in 1984 as one of post-independence initiative drive to increase the number of schools in the country. Because of the national economic hardships, the school was going through financial constrictions. The meagre school fees from the parents was not enough for the school's budget and the government was struggling to financially support the school. The school had not enough books and teaching aides. In some cases, the teachers were using their own resources to aide them in teaching. Most of the time in class was spent by dictation of notes from the teacher since he/she would be the only one with the textbook. The school had just introduced the new Family and Religious Studies (FRS) but very few learners had taken it up. The subject was optional for 'O' Level learners, but many had avoided it in favor of more marketable subjects like Commerce, Accounts and Sciences. The general enthusiasm from both the teachers and learners over the subject was very low.

iii. **Makumbi Mission School** is run by the Roman Catholic Church and it is located 40 Kilometers away from the city center. It was founded in the early 1960s as a secondary school for girls. In 1973, it opened a technical school for boys who were taught building and carpentry skills. However, these two schools later amalgamated after independence to form one school. Now it enrolls 846 learners of which 600 of them are boarders. The rest of the learners come from the surrounding areas. The school offers education from Form 1 up to Form 6 (Advanced Level). All the learners are Christians but from different denominations. The school adopted the Family and Religious Studies (FRS) syllabus and it was preparing its first class to sit for the ZIMSEC examination. The teachers were anxious because they did not know what to expect from the examination. They did not have enough material to use for the classes since the Ministry of Education had not given them any. They were not certain if the materials they had gathered around and used for teaching had prepared the learners sufficiently for the examinations. Nonetheless, the learners seemed confident and ready for the examinations. They just wanted more information from the teachers that would make them pass. However, it being a Church school, the learners were exposed to the Roman Catholic faith outside class hours. They began each day with prayers and all the learners and stuff were obliged to attend the weekly service at the school chapel. There was also obligatory midday prayer every day.

iv. **Mbare Secondary School** is a Government school located in one of the poorest high-density suburbs in Harare. It had 840 learners and 21 teachers. It started in 1964 as a study center for those who could not enter formal schools like adults who had missed education when young. Initially, it offered night classes since many of the learners will be working during the day. However, the school changed after independence and started offering formal education from Form 1 to Form 4. The school is in a poverty-stricken area and families struggle to send their children to school. Those who manage to come to school take it seriously because this can be their only gateway out of poverty. The teachers were very passionate with their work.

Two teachers in the Religious Education Department of the school had volunteered to teach FRS despite not being trained because there was no one else to teach it. The teachers had worked together to gather material to use in class from the internet using their own resources. The classes were lively and participation from the learners was impressive. Despite the surrounding poverty, the teachers were working very hard to make a difference in the lives of the learners. There was strong determination in the school.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the theoretical framework used to examine the data collected for this thesis. It has used Grimmit's models to identify the different approaches of teaching religious education being used in the schools in the country. The following chapter discusses the procedures used to collect data for the research and analysis it.

CHAPTER 5: REACTION AND RESPONSES TO THE FRS

Introduction

This chapter discusses reactions and responses of teachers to the teaching of the 2015 FRS in secondary schools in Zimbabwe. Grimmit's models are identified in the responses of the twelve teachers interviewed. From the data received, the teachers' responses were grouped according to the *Teaching Religion, Teaching about Religion and Teaching from Religion* approaches. Each of the teachers' responses were categorized according to these approaches. However, they were some shortcomings with these categories because they were some other factors which were affecting them. For instance, the approaches being used by the teachers were affected by other factors like financial viabilities, improper training, and lack of support from both parents and the government. Many of the teachers who rejected teaching religion were doing so because they felt not involved in the process of developing the subject. Grimmit's models helped in offering general approaches being used by the teachers but did not offer further information on the factors behind the approaches as explored in this chapter.

Procedure in Data Collecting.

In my research, I picked twelve teachers from four different schools in and around Harare. I chose Harare because it was easy for me to access and get permissions since I had worked in that Province before. From each of the schools, I chose three teachers who were teaching RE in the schools. However, I had difficulties in some of the schools to get the required teachers because some of the schools had not enough RE teachers and some teachers did not come for work the days I went for the interviews because they could not afford to come. I had prepared a list of twelve questions which I had to ask the teachers for me to get my information. The questions were open ended, and this created room for the teachers to wonder away from my area of interest in their answers. As a result, I ended up getting too much information of which

most of it was not useful. Some of the teachers also took up this opportunity to vent out their frustrations which they were having in their schools. I also had a voice recorder to capture what the teachers were saying during the interviews. After the recordings, I would go and transcribe all the data I had received from the interviews. I would record the data according to the three Grimmit's models of teaching religious education.

Reactions and Responses

As discussed earlier, many attempts had been made by the post-independence government to change how religious education was being taught in response to pluralism from 1980. Despite these attempts, nothing much had changed in the classroom. It remained Christian centred and confessional in nature. Many schools remained using Grimmit's first model of *Teaching Religion*. This model had been in use during the pre-independence era as Missionary used it to evangelise and convert the indigenous people. Mr Enright, a teacher from ST Georges who had been teaching religious education in different schools in Zimbabwe from 1974, confirmed that RE for him had been teaching largely Catholic Doctrine and values to his learners. He had become a teacher of RE because he wanted to teach Christianity to the young people. Despite the attempts by the government for a multi-faith approach in teaching religious education, he insisted on teaching Christianity only in his classes. He was responsible for evangelisation in the schools he taught, and he used RE classes to teach the Christian faith. He used the Catholic Catechism in his classes. This teaching model was not unique to him only as other schools also were following the same model especially those which were faith based. In their bid to safeguard their faith amidst the growing pluralism, these schools ended up teaching exclusively their faith as a way of protecting it. The teachers of these schools were not only educators but promoters of the school's faith to the learners. This was common with private schools being run by religious communities. For example, the Islamic and Hindu private schools in Harare were exclusively for their followers. They did not accept those from other religious

backgrounds and their private school status protected them from religious discrimination. Whilst this safeguarded the respective religious identity, it further widened the gap between religious groups as they separated themselves from the rest of the society. This could also lead to religious fundamentalism, conflicts and non-toleration of those who are different.

The introduction of the FRS syllabus in 2015, encouraged different learners from different religious backgrounds to learn together and tolerate each other. Some of the formerly religious exclusive schools were also moving towards opening themselves to the syllabus and other religious groups. As narrated by Mr Enright from ST Georges:

> My first encounter with the attempts to open up RE in my class to different religions was in the early 2000s when the school encouraged me to have a section about world and human relations. It was quite interesting for me to do that because I had grown up in a multi-cultural society in London and I understood the complexities surrounding different cultures. However, there was a gradual change in my teaching from a rigid Catholic based RE to a more open and inclusive RE. I now appreciate this change as it made the subject more relevant to the changing modern times.

Mr Enright remarks shows that religious education in some schools was developing from the *Teaching Religion* model. The FRS syllabus ultimately moved religious education from the *Teaching Religion* model. By incorporating Judaism, Islam and Indigenous religions into the syllabus, it opened RE in Zimbabwean schools to pluralism. Despite the earlier attempts to respond to pluralism, the post-independence government had not officially introduced other religions in the RE syllabus. Christianity had remained the only exclusive religion in the syllabus. However, this move came with many challenges and it attracted great criticisms from different stakeholders.

The FRS syllabus was supposed to be implemented in all secondary schools in the country, but it was rejected by many schools. Most of the teachers in those schools that had adopted the

syllabus, they were teaching it grudgingly as they did not support it. In schools which were exclusively teaching Christianity as RE prior to the introduction of FRS, felt targeted by the government so they withdrew the subject in their curricula. According to Bekithemba Dube and Cias Tsotetsi (2019), this withdrawal of the subject was unreasonable, and it showed how schools were refusing to share their religious space with other people of different religious backgrounds. Dube and Tsotetsi (2019) call this the 'accommodation resistance'. However, those schools which accepted the syllabus consequently adopted Grimmit's second model of Teaching about Religions. Through this model, teachers began exposing learners to different beliefs, teachings and practises of other religions. RE ceased to be confessional and allowed learners to become agents of change in their lives. They could use what they learnt in class to improve their day to day living.

Despite the benefits to the learners which came with the introduction of FRS, many teachers remained unmoved by the changes. This was not because they were against the Grimmit's model, but they had other problems. Grimmit's model of *Teaching About Religion* was widely popular amongst teachers. There were other many problems outside the model in the classroom. For instance, some of the teachers argued that adopting the new syllabus meant that they had to reconsider their teaching methods and styles, and many were not ready for it. As a result, many teachers preferred to shelve the syllabus as expressed by Ms Fukisa from Makumbi Mission:

> Despite bringing up diversity in the studying religions in class, I feel that the syllabus came at a wrong time. Many things were supposed to be put in place first before it was implemented. As a result, I am not in support of it and it would be better if we revert to the old syllabus to such a time when teachers are ready to implement it.

Despite the claims by the Ministry that the review was a result of extensive consultation with the teachers of Religious Education, many of them denied this. The teachers argued that they

were not consulted in its implementation and they distanced themselves from it. None of the twelve teachers I interviewed expressed knowledge or involvement in the reviewing process of the curriculum. They argued that it probably engaged experts from outside the country who were ignorant of the real concerns and issues of the local people. The late President Robert Mugabe had created the Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training (CIET) which influenced the 2015 curriculum review. This commission was accused for galivanting abroad canvassing views on ways to improve the educational system of Zimbabwe instead of listening to the local people who were on the ground. Therefore, the teachers argued that if the Commission had consulted and engaged its own teachers in the country, it was going to come out with better recommendations that spoke to the concerns and wishes of Zimbabweans. Mr Rondo who was the head of RE department at Mbare Secondary School had this to say:

> We felt that the syllabus was imposed on us and we were ignored in its implementation process. As teachers we had no say whatsoever about its content and structure and this was a mistake by the government because no one else understands the dynamics of teaching religious education in Zimbabwe more than the teachers themselves.

However, some teachers appreciated the syllabus and saw it as a breath of fresh air in Religious Education. The previous syllabus had limited itself by focusing on Christianity and this was not good for the learners. In addition, it was insensitive to those learners who were not Christians and it condemned them to learn about a faith which they could not relate to. Mr Mlambo from Parirehwa Secondary felt that the previous syllabus was unjust, and this needed to be changed. A multifaith approach to religious education was inevitable in Zimbabwe as it was increasingly become plural in nature. The Family and Religious Studies syllabus was a positive response to pluralism. It was a good way for preparing the learners for the diversity in the world. Mr Mlambo concludes by saying:

> I find the new FRS syllabus relevant today and I highly support it. It has widened the scope of religious education to the learners thereby opening them up to the doors of religious pluralism and diversity in the world.

Interestingly, four out of the twelve teachers were not satisfied with the inclusion of only four religions in the new syllabus. They questioned why the Ministry had limited the religions to only those four. They felt that it would have been better if the Ministry had left it open and allow the teachers to choose the relevant religions to be studied depending on local needs, concerns and context. Ms Gwiza from Makumbi Mission argued that limiting the syllabus to four religions frustrated the whole purpose of a multifaith approach. There are many religions in Zimbabwe which include Hinduism, Buddhism and Rastafarianism and a truly multifaith approach had to open up to these religions too. The teachers believed that it was through this kind of openness in religious education that would help youths to become more sensitive, understanding and tolerant to those who are different within the society. Thus, they concluded that the syllabus was limited in its relevancy and further work needed to be done on it.

Teachers highlighted that some objections against the syllabus came from suspicious parents. Since they were not informed about it before its implementation, they thought that the Ministry was probably hiding something to them. They believed that it was their primary responsibility to choose the religion to be taught to their children and not the Ministry's. They did not want their children to be exposed to other religions except Christianity in schools. They were doing this to safeguard their children from being converted to other religions. Their biggest fear was with teaching about Islam to learners which they saw as a way of trying to get converts to it and destabilize the Christian population. According to one teacher, the suspicion behind the syllabus was aggravated by the fact that the man behind its implementation, Dr Lazarus Dokora who was the Minister of Education at the time, was thought to be a Muslim. This strengthened the view amongst many that the syllabus was indeed an instrument to promote Islam in the country. Consequently, the Minister was deposed in December 2017 after many demonstrations against him throughout the country. Dr Dokora denied the accusations that he

was Muslim, and that he wanted to promote Islam among the learners through the new syllabus. Nevertheless, he was replaced by his Deputy Dr Paul Mavima who was a Christian.

The debates about which religions to teach in class led some teachers to argue that religious education should be left to families and religious groups. Since it was going to be impractical to teach every religion in the country in the limited time allocated in the syllabus, it would be better to remove it from the school curriculum. Five of the twelve teachers advocated for the separation of religious education from the education system. They believed that secularizing education was the best way to handle pluralism in the classroom. If Religious Education was removed from schools, no religion would be excluded or undermined. Only values which undercut all the religions should be taught in the schools. It was argued by some teachers that some schools in United Kingdom and United States of America had already adopted this approach. As a result, the subject had been renamed from Religious Education to Civic or Moral Studies to enhance its secular characteristic. Religious issues were then left to respective religious communities to be taught through their madrasas or Sunday schools.

In contrast, Mr Evidence from Makumbi Mission school was strongly against the removal of religion in schools as he argued that this was detrimental to the integral development of the learners. Adopting Grimmit's model of *Learning from Religion*, he argued that Religious Education helped in grooming and inspiring the learners to become better people. In addition, it offered role models to the learners that could motivate them like Jesus, Abraham and Muhammad. To illustrate this point further, Mr Evidence gave an example of what had happened at his school. In one year, the school had withdrawn Religious Education from one class whilst other classes continued to offer it. However, the class which was not doing it became notoriously mischievous. Many teachers found the class difficult to teach and they were not disciplined. Mr Evidence concluded that this was mainly because the learners probably lacked the transformative effect of Religious Education.

When asked how their personal perceptions and religious backgrounds affected their teaching of the religious education in the class in the light of pluralism, the teachers' responses were divided into two. Since all of them were coming from Christian backgrounds, most of them said that this affected their teaching. They taught the same Christian values and stories to their learners which they had been taught themselves. In addition, they had difficulties in teaching other religions in class because they had been shaped to think that there is only one true religion which is Christianity. So, in their teaching, they were biased towards their Christian background. Ms Chingambe from Mbare Secondary school said:

> I teach in class mainly what I learnt from my religious background and from my school days. My Roman Catholic background influences me very much when I teach because this is who I am. I find it difficult to speak about other religions because I do not know about them and they have never been part of my life.

The other group was made up of five teachers and they strongly argued that their religious background and opinions had no role in their work. They insisted on following their professional ethics in the classroom. They just followed what was required by the syllabus and they had no problems in teaching about other religions. They simply put aside their personal feelings and opinions and do what their profession requires them to do. Mr Mlambo from Parirehwa school illustrated this as he said:

> As a teacher, I am not influenced by my personal religious background. My personal faith does not allow me to speak about other religions, but this is exactly what I do in class. As a professional teacher, I am guided by the ethics of my job and not by my personal feelings nor religious background. In class, I am guided by the syllabus and I try to be objective as much as possible. I put my personal opinions and biases aside.

However, one teacher from St Georges College argued that it was not easy for him to remove his opinions when teaching religious education despite how much he wanted to do so. At the end of any religious discussion with his learners, the learners would always want to know what he personally thinks as a teacher. He illustrated this as he said:

> I am a role model in the classroom and the learners always want to know my personal position at the end of the day. So, I give them all the facts they have to know and then end by giving them my own opinions. I don't impose myself on them, but I allow them to arrive at their own informed positions from our discussions. From there, the learners will have to come up with their own informed positions.

Religious education at the school was not about the learners acquiring knowledge but also about inspiring them to make the right choices in life. Thus, the teacher of religious education in the school plays another role of a counsellor in the lives of the learners. The teacher is there not only to facilitate knowledge but to guide learners to navigate the waters of their lives. This approach to religious education was unique to St. Georges College and not to the other schools I investigated because of its Private school status. This gave it room to create its own religious education curriculum which suited its orientation. The three other schools I investigated were using the curriculum stipulated by the Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council (ZIMSEC). This curriculum was largely exam oriented and the teachers had no freedom to adapt it to their context. It focussed on preparing the learners to pass the examinations which came at the end of the course. In addition, as highlighted by some of the teachers, the syllabus of religious education was very dense and with a lot of material to be covered over a short period of time. As a result, teachers had not enough time to help the learners to grasp and appreciate what they would be learning in class. Teachers rushed through the subject so that the learners could sit for the examination and this meant that the subject in these schools had little to offer in motivating the learners in making the right choices in their everyday living.

Amongst the four schools investigated, St Georges was the only school with teachers and learners from religious backgrounds other than Christianity. As a result, its Religious Education accommodated all religious backgrounds in the school. Unlike in the other schools, Religious Education at St Georges was named Ignatian Ethos after the values of the founding father of the institution, Ignatius of Loyola (1491 – 1556). These values were believed to cut across all the major religious traditions and did not give preference to any of them. This subject was not

examinable, and it was meant to inculcate values into the learners which they could use in their lives. The syllabus of the subject was constantly updated every two years by teachers of the subject, together with the school's responsible authorities and the parents of the learners. The syllabus was a result of wide consultation, but the teachers of the subject remained the main agents in implementing it. It focussed on issues of justice and service to humanity which were relevant to all the religions. These issues touched the lives of the learners who were then inspired to make a difference in the world they were living in. The teachers at the school felt supported in their work and were highly motivated. Religious education was not limited to the classrooms only, but it extended to all other activities within the school. The learners were taught to be always at their best behaviours even outside the classrooms. The school also exposed the learners to the real world by offering them voluntary service programs where they could be immersed in various organisations for the disabled and less privileged. The school provided a different conception of religious education which focussed on values and not mere facts about religions.

One of the challenges mentioned by the teachers about the development of the religious education was the lack of trained personnel in the schools. Out of the twelve teachers I interviewed, only four had been trained to teach Religious Education. The rest taught it because there was no one else qualified to teach it. Miss Chingambe from Mbare Secondary school had this to say:

> I am a holder of a Master's Degree in Computer Science and IT from University of Zimbabwe. I did not do any professional training in Religious Education. The school headmistress came into my office one day and told me that since she could not find someone else in the school to teach the FRS class, and I had done Divinity at A Level, I was to take up the class. So, I took it up despite not being trained in that area and this is my second year teaching it.

From the time of missionary schools Religious Education was taught by church Pastors and Ministers as it was used for evangelisation purposes. Despite the changes, teaching of Religious

Education is still today associated with Pastors and Church Ministers. Four of the teachers I interviewed were Church Ministers and they had become teachers of Religious Education because of their call to evangelise. However, not many teachers today are interested in evangelising so the number of teachers of religion in schools is going down. Another reason why there are few teachers of Religious Education in Zimbabwe is careerism. The subject is viewed as not having a lot of career opportunities so many tend to choose other subjects with better opportunities. Even among the learners this is a problem and Mr Evidence from Makumbi Mission observed that:

> It is unfortunate that FRS is taken as a peripheral subject at my school. It is not taken seriously like other subjects. It is optional and many learners choose not to do it. Many choose to do sciences and commercials because they probably feel that they are more marketable in the world. The school is not doing much also to encourage and motivate the learners to do FRS.

This shows that the number of people in schools interested in Religious Education is going down in Zimbabwe and this is because the subject is thought not to offer better opportunities in life.

Another challenge with the new syllabus was that there was no in-house training for those who were teaching it. The teachers had been trained to teach Christianity and many of them had never encountered any other religion. They were finding it difficult to teach because they lacked the content. The teachers' frustrations were worsened by the absence of teaching aides. The Ministry had not provided them with materials to use during teaching. As a result, the teachers relied on their creativity and imagination. Some of the teachers had studied World Religions at university, so they simply used the notes they had received there to teach in class. But as Ms Gwiza said, some of these teachers were finding it difficult to adapt her university notes to the level of learners and this was frustrating to both herself and the learners. Those who had access to internet went and collected their own materials to use. However, one teacher

remarked that since the material was new for her and there were no guidelines, it was not easy for her to select the internet materials she needed.

The financial constraints in most schools made it difficult for the teachers to fully implement the syllabus. According to the syllabus, the learners were supposed to visit different places of worship as a way of exposing them to pluralism. However, only one of the four schools had managed to do so. Many of the schools were struggling to survive the economic hardship the country was going through, and school budgets were being strained. However, in many of the schools, Religious Education departments were not being prioritised. The limited financial resources were being channelled to other departments in the schools as they were regarded as more important. Religious education teachers also could not afford to invite religious practitioners from other religions to come and speak to their learners as encouraged by the syllabus. So, they complained that the lack of financial support constrained them from effectively implementing the syllabus.

In addition to the financial constraints in the schools, the teachers were badly affected by the economic hardships the country was going through. They were receiving very low remuneration, and this was affecting the quality of their work. At the time of the research, teachers were receiving an average salary of Z$580 which was less than US$80 per month. Many of the teachers were not too happy with the salary and many had left the country seeking greener pastures in neighbouring countries. Those who had remained teaching in the country were finding it difficult to come to work every day and this meant that the learners were missing classes regularly. During my research, I failed to meet teachers to interview a couple of times as they could not afford transport money to come to work. Teachers' unions had tried to engage the government to improve the salaries through mass actions, but all this was fruitless. As a result, in some schools, parents had moved in to give some incentives to the teachers so that

they could continue teaching their children. After being asked about the future of religious education in her school, one of the teachers from Mbare Secondary School remarked that:

> The future of education in government supported schools is bleak. It is increasingly becoming difficult to come for work these days because our salaries as teachers is no longer enough. It has been eroded by the hyper-inflation our country is going through and it is becoming more difficult for us to come to work every day. But I am grateful that the parents in our school have moved in to help us with some incentives. Despite being little, it has given us some motivation especially that the parents are seeing our struggles. If this economic hardship continues, I cannot imagine a better future for our education in Zimbabwe. But as a mother, I will continue giving my best to my learners because they deserve a better future.

Whilst teachers in government supported schools were generally struggling in performing their duties due to the prevailing economic hardships, those in private schools seemed not as much affected. Teachers at St Georges were doing well, and their remuneration relatively better. This was mainly due to the stable school fees being paid by the parents of their learners. The fees were high in comparison to the government supported schools and some of the private schools were charging in United States dollars thereby mitigating against hyper-inflation. As a result, the teachers were well taken care of and motivated in doing their job. Because of the financial support, private schools could afford to get the best teachers for their learners. In addition, they could afford to do inhouse training of their teachers thereby making them more effective in their work. The Head of the Religious Education Department at ST Georges College had this to say:

> We take seriously our teachers as they are very important in our school. As a result, we have regular inhouse training programs for the teachers so that they continue upgrading themselves and remain effective in teaching of our youngsters. Being a private school, we pay our teachers' salaries and it is our responsibilities to keep them happy and motivated in their work amidst the harsh economic environment we are in.

In his response to the question about the future of religious education in the school, the same Head of the Department remarked that he was very optimistic that the school was going to

continue to grow and provide the best education in the country. Unfortunately, this education was going to be available to the rich minority who could afford to pay the high school fees.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the data collected. It has shown that despite its attempt to be sensitive to religious pluralism, the new Family and Religious Studies syllabus of 2015 was received with mixed reactions. Many teachers felt that they were not involved in the consultative processes leading to its implementation and their contributions were ignored. As a result, they distanced themselves from it. But the majority of the teachers felt that the syllabus was heading towards making Religious Education more sensitive to the pluralism which was now long overdue in the country. However, the syllabus needed further development so that it would address the challenges the teachers were going through in trying to implement it in the classroom. However, there is need for the Government to change this perspective and make the subject more appealing. Religious Education has to be seen not only in offering job opportunities but in the way it prepares the learners for the religious diversity in the world.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION.

Introduction

As Enzo Pace and Alberto Da Silva Moreira (2018) assert, societies cannot afford to remain the same today amidst the increasing awareness of religious diversity. There is growing need for people to learn how to live together despite their religious differences. Religious exclusivism in schools is becoming difficult today in the light of human rights and religious freedom. This study has explored how religious education has developed in response to religious pluralism. It has started by exploring how religious education developed in United Kingdom which is the cradle of religious education for South Africa and Zimbabwe. For many centuries, religious education in United Kingdom was synonymous with Christian instruction. The Church and the State had a symbiotic relationship and they supported each other. However, the relationship was strained with the coming of Enlightenment era. According to T. Winther-Jensen (2009), from this era, education became a big enterprise and it was seen as an activity independent to the Church and it was meant to serve the society based on rationality, science, democracy and human rights. This was the beginning of secularization of United Kingdom which threatened to silence religion in the public sphere. Moreover, the influx of immigrants eighteenth and nineteenth centuries increased diversity within the society. This pressured schools to change their religious education approaches so that they could accommodate secularization and diversity.

Religious education as Learning Religion (Grimmit) was imposed in South Africa and Zimbabwe through British imperialism. In South Africa, Christianity played a very important role in the structuring of the nation. It was used unfortunately to divide the nation according to race and religions. It was the foundation of white supremacy and apartheid which characterised the nation for many decades. However, this segregation came to an end with the election of the

first black government in 1994. As highlighted by Chidester (2008), despite the efforts by the new government to enact policies that sought to correct the racial and religious discrimination in the country, there was need to further develop religious education in schools so that it reflects the mosaic nature of the country. Zimbabwe has gone through similar changes as South Africa. The role of Missionaries in the development of religious education in Zimbabwe cannot be overestimated. Missionaries influenced policies which structured education in Zimbabwe. Just like in Britain, religious education in Zimbabwe was synonymous with Christian instruction, and missionaries were the first teachers of the subject in the country. Christianity was used to pacify the local people thereby making them more malleable to British imperialism. It took a fifteen-year-old guerrilla warfare which started in July 1964 and ended in December 1979 for the Zimbabweans to liberate themselves from the Rhodesian white minority-led government of Ian Smith.

Soon after independence in 1980, the newly elected black government led by Robert Mugabe did not take long before initiating some reforms in religious education. They were concerned that British-oriented curriculum which they had inherited would continue transmitting foreign values and beliefs. So, they had to localise it as soon as possible before it continued to alienate the learners from their culture and religion. According to Ndlovu (2009), 266 attempts were made in the first 24 years of independence to design and implement religious education curriculum in line with Zimbabwe values, beliefs and culture. Despite these attempts, religious education still remained predominantly Christian and exclusive in nature.

Another major attempt in Religious Education in Zimbabwe has been the implementation of Family and Religious Studies (FRS) syllabus in 2015 in schools. This was the first syllabus in Zimbabwe to categorically recognise four different religions to be studied in the class. This was the truly an overt way of accepting religious pluralism in schools. However, despite the inclusion of other religions in the syllabus, little had changed in the classroom. The main reason

for this was that teachers of Religious Education had never been considered in the development of the subject in the country. From the interviews and observations with the teachers received the following findings:

i) Lack of consultation: Despite the claims by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education that it went around the country gathering views from different views from the stakeholders about the new religious education syllabus, many teachers expressed ignorance about this. They were not aware of any consultation before the implementation of the syllabus and they were taken by surprise to hear about it at the time of the implementation. The teachers also expressed that even the members of other religions included in the syllabus like the Muslims and Jews were not consulted.

ii) Negative attitude towards RE: The subjects was generally not liked in schools. It was not offered in some schools because it was perceived as a useless subject which was not marketable for employment purposes. In those schools that did offer it, it was left optional and not many learners were interested in it. It was also regarded as an easy subject in schools where learners were streamlined according to their abilities. It was given to weaker learners so that they could at least record an easy pass in their final exams.

iii) Lack of qualified teachers: because of the general negative attitude towards the subject, very few teachers were interested in teaching RE. Those who were teaching it were stereotyped and nicknamed as Pastors. This resulted in very few teachers opting to specialise in teaching it. Most of the teachers interviewed were not trained RE teachers. As a result, they felt inadequate to teach it. They were only teaching it because there was no one else to take up the classes and this compromised the quality of the RE being taught in the classes.

iv) Lack of funding: since the subject was not prioritised in most schools, it was given little financial support from both the schools and the government. Monies were put in subjects which were highly regarded like Mathematics and other science subjects. The new FRS 2015 syllabus had given provisions to the teachers to organize academic visits for learners to places of worship or to invite difference religious practitioners. However, all this required money which many schools could not afford.

v) Lack of ongoing training: Most of the teachers of RE had been trained in the previous syllabi which were Christocentric and confessional in nature. They were not trained to deal with the new multi-faith syllabus' content, objectives and methods. Most of them were not trained to handle religions other than Christianity and they did not know much about Islam and Judaism. As a result, they were not equipped to teach the new syllabus.

vi) Lack of reading resources and material: the changes in the syllabus came before the availability of reading resources and materials and the teachers were finding it difficult to teach. There were no textbooks to use in the classrooms and most of the teachers relied on information they got from the internet. Others were using materials they had used themselves in universities which were too advanced for the classes they were teaching.

vii) Lack of a shared vision: not all the teachers accepted pluralism, and they were teaching it grudgingly. They were not convinced that all religions were equal. Despite their call to professionalism when teaching, they were still influenced by their religious background and perceptions. Many still held that Christianity was the only legitimate religion and all the learners were supposed to that only religion. Thus, they found it difficult to teach about Islam, Judaism and Indigenous religion.

viii) Harsh Economic Environment: teachers in Zimbabwe are the worst affected civil servants by the prevailing economic hardships in the country. They are struggling to provide basic needs to their families, and this has seriously impacted their performances in schools. Most of them were struggling to afford transport to travel to work every day resulting in them missing classes on some days. Many of them were not happy with the government as they felt that they were being taken for granted. As a result, they were talks of a mass action for teachers being planned when I was doing my research.

ix) Unsupportive parents: some teachers felt that some parents were strongly influencing their children not to actively participate in the classes especially when other religions other than Christianity was being taught. They were doing this because they thought that their children were being converted to other religions at the expense of the family religion. Other parents felt that the subject was a waste of time for their children, so they encouraged them to withdraw from it. They wanted their children to pursue subjects which they thought were more marketable and could offer them lucrative job opportunities like Business Studies and Commerce.

Recommendations

The study recommends that a more effective development of religious education which responds to pluralism should be based on the following:

i) Broad consultation: many of the shortcomings in the development of RE in Zimbabwe was mainly because of the lack of consultation especially of the RE teachers who were responsible of teaching it. This resulted in the teachers disowning the whole process as they claim that they were never part of it. Engaging them makes the teachers feel that they are part of the development and they can

support it. This also stirs enthusiasm in them when teaching it. In addition, the development process has to engage also the views and opinions of other religious practitioners so that they may feel included and ready to support it.

ii) Qualified RE teachers: the more qualified teachers of RE, the more effective the teaching of the subject would be. Many schools have insufficient teachers of the RE and this has compromised the quality of the subject. Qualified teachers of RE may know how best to teach the subject thereby attracting more learners to the subject.

iii) In house training of the teachers: those teachers who had been teaching the subject for many years before the introduction of the new syllabus need training so that they may remain abreast with the changing developments. This may also boost their confidence when teaching since they would have been trained.

iv) Availability of literature and other resources: there is need by the government to supply sufficient books and resources to aid the teachers in their work.

v) Need to redesign the subject: Not many people including both the teachers and the learners are interested in the subject because it is regarded as a boring subject with little job opportunities to offer. Thus, the Ministry of Education has a task to make the subject more appealing. It can start by redesigning the subject so that it is taught not just for acquiring religious knowledge but for human development. RE should be taught as a tool for moulding and guiding learners towards adulthood. It should be taught to prepare the learners for the reality of religious pluralism, with an open mindset that avoids dangers of religious intolerance, disrespect and fundamentalism which is the root cause of religious conflicts (A.F. Mavheneke 1999).

Conclusion

This study has outlined the development of RE in Zimbabwe. Whilst the study was limited to Harare Province, for the reasons pointed out at the beginning, it gives a general overview of the character of RE around the whole country. The study started by investigating the development of RE in United Kingdom where Zimbabwe inherited its own tradition. South Africa contributed to the development of RE in Zimbabwe mainly because of its proximity and common colonial history. However, in Zimbabwe, RE has been greatly influenced by Missionaries who saw the indigenous people as *tabula rasa* and took it upon themselves to educate them with the European Educational System. This system was Christocentric and very exclusive. However, it was only after independence in 1980 that the new government decided to open up RE to other religions. RE discussions started including other religions such as Islam, Judaism and African Traditional Religion. Despite these multi-faith attempts, RE syllabi in schools remained Christocentric. The main reason for this was that the attempts had focussed on the aims of RE and not the content of the subject. Whilst the aims of the subject insisted on a multi-faith approach, paradoxically the content was dominantly Christian. Teachers of RE also felt ignored in the developmental processes of the subject and they had remained uncommitted to the government attempts to make RE more pluralistic in nature. In addition, RE as a subject had increasingly become unpopular because it was felt that it was a subject for the weak and that it had limited job opportunities. Many schools abandoned the subject and for those who continued teaching it, made it optional. As a result, the subject risked becoming irrelevant in the post-independence era.

However, the introduction of the Family and Religious Studies (FRS) in schools in 2015 gave a new life to religious education in Zimbabwe. It took twenty-five years after independence for the government to introduce formally four different religions in the religious education syllabus

to be studied in the class. Despite being a positive movement towards pluralism in the society, the introduction of FRS was received with mixed feelings. Some readily accepted it whilst others rejected it. Nonetheless, religious education has remained a subject of great controversy. Teachers who are the main agents in the delivery of the subject have remained indifferent to the new FRS syllabus mainly because they were ignored in the development of the subject. Their concerns, fears, religious backgrounds and training were not taken into consideration. As a result, religious education in Zimbabwe is still struggling to respond fully to the religious pluralism. Thus, this study has argued that engagement of religious education teachers is crucial in the development of religious education in schools in Zimbabwe in the light of religious pluralism.

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