DEVELOPING A NORMATIVE THEORY OF RELIGION EDUCATION BASED UPON THE INTERFACE BETWEEN AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS AND CHRISTIANITY AND A POLICY OPTION FOR TEACHING RELIGION IN EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE SCHOOLS

BY

GILLIAN GRACE WILLIAMS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN THE FULFILLMENT

OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF EDUCATION

IN THE DEPARTMENT OF FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION

OF THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION

IN THE UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE

SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR J N DREYER

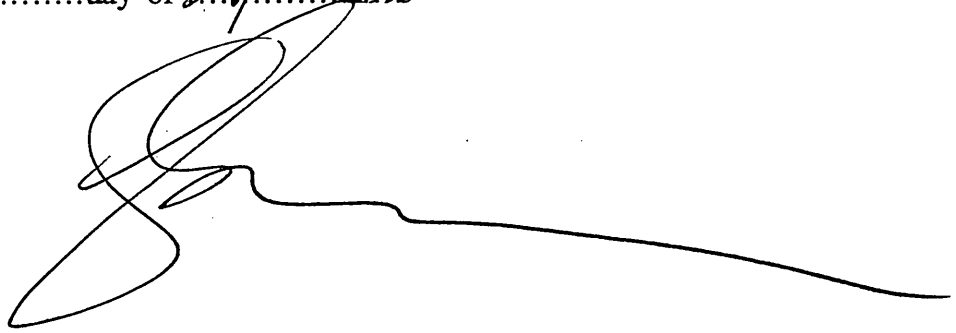
APRIL 1995

DECLARATION

I, Gillian Grace Williams, do hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is entirely my own work with the exception of such quotations or references which have been attributed to their authors or sources.

Dated at. Fort Beaufort

this. 27th day of April 1995



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my thanks to the following:

To my supervisor, Professor J N Dreyer, for his careful consideration of all my work and his challenges which have stimulated and helped to refine my thinking.

To Dr S. Morrow who kindly guided my preparation of the historical chapter and to Professor P G R de Villiers of Rhodes University for reading the theological chapter and making helpful suggestions.

To the Human Sciences Research Council for their financial grant. The views expressed in this dissertation are my own and do not express the official views of the Human Sciences Research Council.

To my husband, Dr D T Williams, and to my family for their ongoing encouragement. They have enabled me to continue to work over the past 4 years.

ABSTRACT

Research submitted by Kili in 1988 and by Mxekezo in 1991 for their respective degrees in Master of Education identified problems relating to the teaching of Religious Education in the area then known as Ciskei. I have sought to give a critical evaluation of their studies and then to collate the problems they identified.

I then note the conditions existing in the Eastern Cape region in the nineteenth century and how they were affected by colonialism and the advent of missionaries. I compare the expectation of the Xhosa and the Europeans and the resulting conflicts, particularly in the religious realm. I thus seek to show that the roots of many of the current problems in the teaching of Religious Education are to be found in history.

I look at what kind of education would be desirable in schools and what sort of things should be happening in school education. I consider the characteristics of educative schooling, in particular:- quality, involvement, choice, understanding, freedom, lack of indoctrination, an interest in truth, suitability of curriculum and practical religious experience. I try to show that religious education is able to make a positive contribution and ought therefore to be part of the school curriculum although in a very different form from its current one. I first consider issues from a critical perspective and then look at the reasons which are often given for teaching religion in schools.

Next I examine the problems from a religious perspective. I consider the relationship between African Traditional Religions and Christianity with particular reference to the claims made by Christians in the light of cultural differences. I conclude that there are many areas where there is agreement, so that if one is the truth in regard to those matters, so is the other. Further I have tried to show that in some areas, where there appears to be a variance of opinion, this is caused not by the fact that the inner intentions of the devotees are different but because a different cultural grid causes them to express truths differently. Sometimes they are expressing the same truths but because of differing interests, they focus on different aspects. There are marked differences but the concepts are not fundamentally incompatible. However, I conclude that it has to be admitted that there is, in some matters, conflict which will not go away and can only be

denied if the devotees of the various religions compromise the truth in which they claim to believe.

I return to the problems identified, and in the light of the difficulties resulting from historical events and the educational and theological considerations, discuss each one, noting ideas which I hope will be of assistance in formulating future policy. Not all the ideas are necessarily compatible as many decisions will still have to be made. I trust that the perspectives which I have considered will enhance the desirability of teaching religion in the Eastern Cape Province schools and that my discussion of many of the issues will assist those who are charged with the responsibility of making and implementing decisions.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Topic

Developing a normative theory of Religion Education based upon the interface between African Traditional Religions and Christianity and a policy option for teaching religion in Eastern Cape Province Schools.

1.2 The problem

The educative teaching of religion in Eastern Cape Province schools is adversely affected by a number of problems identified by previous inquiries.

1.3 The hypothesis

Clarifying these problems conceptually and putting them into perspective will enhance the desirability of teaching religion in Eastern Cape Province schools.

1.4 The aims of this research

N.N. Kili in 1988 and A.M. Mxekezo in 1990 submitted for their respective Masters dissertations survey material which sought to clarify why there were perceived problems in Ciskeian schools in the teaching of the subject known as Religious Education. I aim to analyse and to contextualize these problems and put them into perspective to assist in forming future policies regarding the desirability of teaching Religion in Eastern Cape Province schools.

1.5 The methods used in this research

Synthesis: Chapter 2 attempts to collate the problems identified by Kili and Mxekezo.

Historical evaluation: Chapter 3 considers the possible historical roots of the current problems.

Juxtaposition and conceptualisation: Chapter 4 seeks to conceptualise 'good education' by considering the various possible models and examining them critically to discover which are logically acceptable and plausible.

Theological evaluation: Chapter 5 examines various religious perspectives relevant to the Eastern Cape Region; in particular I analyse and compare Christianity and African Traditional Religions.

Critical-rational analysis: Chapter 6 seeks to combine all the insights gained in previous chapters.

1.5.1 The reasons for using these methods. As neither Kili nor Mxekezo attempted to analyse at any depth the causes of the problems they cited, nor to provide a theoretical basis upon which to base any changes, I attempted to synthesise the problems identified by Kili and Mxekezo so that I would have a clearer notion of the problems which need to be addressed and so be able to examine them systematically.

As my academic training lies in the three areas of study which underlie the problems, namely the historical, educational and theological I was interested to combine these areas of expertise to reflect on the issues raised. In my final chapter I attempted to put these together and so make suggestions from my combined perspectives.

The historical perspective, although of necessity sketchy in my dissertation, helps to understand the past in such a way as to yield insight into the problems encountered now, in particular, why the encounter between Christianity and African Traditional Religions has led to stresses among many Xhosa and why Christianity is sometimes equated with 'white' suppression. The history of education in South Africa also highlights why current practices developed, in particular, formal Pedagogics and the resulting damage for which Pedagogics has largely been responsible.

Juxtaposition enabled me to consider the merits and demerits of various possible systems and opinions. I considered some historical practices, some solutions utilised in other

countries, some insights gained from reading various authors and some theoretical possibilities to argue my way towards a conceptualisation of good religious education. From that basis I sought to state what valid reasons there are for the inclusion of religious teaching in Eastern Cape Province schools and to show which possibilities are unacceptable because they fail to meet the criteria of good education or valid reasoning.

Theological considerations were considered in some depth because of the various current perspectives in the country. In particular I attempted to answer some of the hard questions which Kili and Mxekezo raised. I sought to subject the possible solutions to critical and logical analysis to demonstrate that although some of them sound attractive they are not valid in the light of the claims made by the various religions.

Critical-rational analysis was used throughout the study, but especially in the final chapter when I sought to combine the perspectives of each discipline and to remain true to the insights gained from each.

1.6 The importance of this research

The studies noted above and reviewed in Chapter 2, claim to have documented some of the facts about the existence and nature of problems in Religious Education in the Ciskei but they did not attempt a theoretical analysis of these problems nor did they provide a philosophical basis from which to construct a new curriculum as I have attempted to do. My research is also of importance because it will seek to establish a framework which could be described as truly educational.

The situation should not be allowed to continue since the present policies are largely being ignored. Either the fact that Religious Education is rarely being given, although officially required, should be recognised and the subject, at least as a compulsory one, officially dropped from the school curriculum or to be more positive, if it is shown that Religious Education really ought to be taught, then I hope to suggest how this could be acceptably done.

Theology and Education have in common the fact that many people dabble in both and

considers themselves to have some expertise in both disciplines, as indeed they might; but this has led, too often, to asking the relatively uninformed what they want, and a failure, on the part of those who should be responsible, to take the time to give adequate informed thought before changes are suggested.

It is not the purpose of this investigation to address issues from any political bias but to seek after truth. That the Eastern Cape Province does have some specific problems will be shown by the brief historical survey, but much of what will be discussed will have a broader application to the future of education in the geographic 'New South Africa'. Schools will become increasingly multi-racial and any prospective policy will have to be broad enough to accommodate all the needs of every school. However, due to the demographics of the area investigated by Kili and Mxekezo, Ciskei, it seem highly probable that most schools will continue to be overwhelmingly populated by Xhosa speakers and so it is specifically their needs that will be considered. At the same time I agree with Edward Hulmes' reminder that if:

> every child in this country is to be educated according to the special requirements of culturally diverse interests, the result might well be the gradual disintegration of society, for want of common educational goals (Hulmes, 1989:viii).

Therefore, I hope that my thinking will be broad enough to bind the youth of the future Southern Africa together and not such that divisions will be exacerbated.

1.7 Clarification of terms

1.7.1 Education. Education transforms persons. It is an active, liberating, life-long process, occurring as people explore the ever-widening field of which they are the centre. People being educated experience changes in character, desires and perceptions and are characterised by features such as understanding and responsibility (Morrow, 1989:77).

1.7.2 Training. This is understood to be a process whereby a person is taught exactly what is required and is asked to perform according to the given patterns.

1.7.3 Schooling. This is taken to be the formal guidance which is given to children in an institution known as a school. It can be either education, training, a mixture of both

or, in reality, neither.

1.7.4 Religious Education. This is the name of the compulsory religious school subject in South Africa. It is in practice specifically Christian in content, aiming to influence children to endorse Christianity.

1.7.5 Biblical Studies. This is an elective subject available in some schools in South Africa which specifically studies the Bible. It studies Biblical content, as literature, historically, culturally and contextually. It does not, according to its stated aim, seek to change pupils' religious affiliations but to give information.

1.7.6 Religious Studies. This is a subject increasingly offered at Universities in Africa which studies the world wide phenomena of religion and seeks to give some insight into the main current world religions. It aims to give information, not to suggest that any particular religion is superior to any other.

1.7.7 Religious Instruction. This term is often used in other countries, such as Britain, to refer to the school subject. It does not usually have the proselytising aims such as stated in the syllabi of South Africa but in historically Christian countries it often has a Christian bias whilst not ignoring other religions which are often studied phenomenologically.

1.7.8 Scripture. This term is frequently used in literature, other than South African, to refer to school lessons which are Bible-based. The distinction currently used in South African Education departments between Religious Eduction and Biblical Studies is not used elsewhere. The terms cited in literature are often used interchangeably, even by South Africans. For example, in Britain, some schools timetable Scripture, others Religious Education and others Religious Instruction without implying any difference in content.

1.7.9 African Traditional Religions. In recent academic studies this term is generally in the plural. African Traditional Religions have 'an informal character' (Ter Haar, 1990:12) which makes it difficult to describe them in detail. They are the religious

beliefs and practices which were common to African communities before the intervention of Western and Eastern religions. They generally encompass a rich philosophy which explains life and events in personal idioms (Ter Haar, 1990:121). They have a knowledge of a god who was the cause of creation but who is generally inactive in the world. Rather than being concerned with the worship of god, African Traditional Religions deal mainly with the interaction between the ancestors and the living. They affect all aspects of life and not just the area which Westerners would describe as religious.

2 PROBLEMS CURRENTLY ENCOUNTERED IN TEACHING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The following is a brief summary of the main problems claimed to exist and documented by surveys carried out by N.N. Kili and A.M. Mxekezo. These problems are cited in the context of the interface between traditional Xhosa beliefs and Christianity. There are other religions present in the Eastern Cape Province but only to a very limited extent. These were not the concern of the documented surveys and do not cause difficulties in the area formerly known as Ciskei. The existence of other religions is noted in this work and occasionally referred to but they are not explicitly considered although the suggestions made are such that they can be accommodated.

2.1 Review of "A Critical/Comparative Study of the Biblical Studies and Religious Syllabi in Ciskeian Secondary Schools with Special Reference to Teacher Training in these Subjects" by N.N.Kili

Kili does not state an hypothesis but says in her summary that she became aware of problems in these subjects during teaching practice and conducted her investigation to establish reasons and so to offer suggestions towards 'a possible solution' particularly with teacher training in view. In the section which gives her reasons for undertaking her study she says that she decided to investigate certain aspects of the problem but does not clarify exactly what they are. Under 'Delimitation of the study' she says that she will limit herself to three aspects, firstly, analysing the aims and roles of Biblical studies and Religious Education. She does this in her fourth chapter. Secondly, she intends to give an overview of traditional Xhosa living and beliefs which is found in chapter 3 and thirdly, to apply questionnaires to gather information required for the study. She explains why the questionnaire method is suitable for her purposes but does not clarify exactly what her purposes are as related to the questions which she has in her questionnaires. She does explain why the questionnaires were administered to particular groups of people.

As her hypotheses are not clearly stated the questionnaires cannot be evaluated as clearly relating to her goals and her conclusions appear to be rather random. The

recommendations are therefore also general impressions rather than specifically proved by questions directed to those matters. The document lacks logical rigour and therefore cannot produce valid conclusions. For example, she concludes of Religious Education that 'there is nothing wrong with its aims' (Kili, 1988:162). Neither Survey A nor Survey C had any questions related to this issue. She alleges that in Survey B questions 5-8 deal with the aims of teaching Religious instruction (Kili, 1988:112). In fact question 5 asks only if the respondents are acquainted with the aims and she found that only 31.4% of them were. Questions 6, 7 nor 8 actually refer to aims at all and in her analysis of results (1988:114) question 7 is completely absent. The 'main tendencies' reflected in survey B are discussed on page 138 and aims are not mentioned at all. Surveys D and E only asked students if any of the staff at the schools where they did their practice teaching drew their attention to the aims (1988:198). It would seem therefore that her conclusion about aims being acceptable was not based on any evidence which she gathered.

Kili's work does not appear to be, as her title claims, a critical/comparative study of syllabi. She surveyed 'Related Studies' (1988:ii) in chapter 2 but only considered syllabi briefly in chapter 4, between pages 57 and 64. Likewise her claim to make special reference to 'teacher training' seems a little odd as it only receives attention between pages 65 and 69 and is hardly mentioned even there except as being inadequate. She supposes more help is needed for teachers who confront the problems in the classroom and suggests a change in training although not specifically what this should be. She returned briefly to the topic on page 77/78, less than a page in total. She states that her aim in chapter 4 was to be:

> giving a survey of the methods, aims and role of Religious Education and Biblical Studies in the curriculum of Ciskei Secondary Schools on a scale which might help the country to reach at least parity with the rest of the educational world in this regard (1988:52).

I have to admit that this aim leaves me completely mystified and neither do I see how it relates to the title of the dissertation which would appear to be very important as chapter 4 is in fact the only chapter that appears to address these issues at all. As there was no clear statement of topic nor hypothesis it is not surprising that the structure of the work lacks direction.

Kili's work actually bases itself on her surveys which take up chapters 5, 6, and 7 of her work. The surveys examined not the syllabi, as her title suggests, so much as the current state of the teaching of these subjects in schools and attitudes to Christianity and to Traditional Xhosa Religion and their relationship. She utilised structured questionnaires as her main instrument and she claims (1988:96) some unstructured interviews although only one appears to have been documented (1988:204).

She surveyed, firstly, Fort Hare students in 'HED, PED 1 and 2' with respect to their attitude to Christianity and traditional Xhosa religion (1988:100). It is interesting and of concern, since she claims to have investigated attitudes in Ciskei, that only 29,7% of her respondents were actually from Ciskei (1988:101). This is probably due to the diverse ethnic composition of Fort Hare students overall. However, it is of interest if it reflects the fact that the attitudes of Ciskeians and the resultant problems are also experienced throughout the whole of South Africa.

Teachers of Religious Education in Junior and Senior Secondary schools, 26 in all, in each district of Ciskei were allegedly included in survey B (1988:112) and she recorded that 51,4% of them were ignorant 'of the purpose of Religious teaching' (1988:117). These teachers were predominately female (1988:138) and one wonders why, and what the attitudes of male teachers would be. (Some imbalance will possibly be due to the fact that primary teachers are predominately female.)

Survey C, in Xhosa, was distributed to senior pupils in some schools in Ciskei but we are not informed which ones. She had 212 questionnaires returned. Survey D recorded 200 responses by student teachers from L. L. Sebe College, Zwelitsha, from W. B. Rubsana, Mdantsane and also Masibulele, Hewu (1988:125). 94% of these student teachers record having method training for Religious Education in their respective colleges so that it appears that those surveyed were participants in the subject and therefore possibly biased in favour of it.

Finally she distributed questionnaire E to students taking Biblical Studies method at Fort Hare. As she admits, these are very limited samples, and it must be noted that respondents are drawn almost exclusively from those who have opted to continue to be

involved in Biblical Studies and/or Religious Education. There was very little research into attitudes of people who have rejected, for what-ever reason, continuing involvement in Biblical subjects. It seems highly probable that their rejection would indicate that they were even less happy with the state of affairs than their fellows who continued despite widespread discontent.

Her conclusion suggested that Biblical Studies continues to be taught as a separate 'scientific study' of the Biblical material and that 'certain adjustments' (1988:2) were essential in the case of 'Religious Studies' (1988:2). I do not want to discuss further her conclusion regarding Biblical Studies but to consider her remarks as to the other subject which she ought to have called Religious Education, since that is the subject currently being taught in schools. She recommends, inter alia, that the acceptance of Christianity should not necessitate the renouncing of traditional religious values (1988:166). This requires consideration from both the Christians and the Traditionalists perspectives and dialogue between the two since by no means all accept her simplistic conclusion. I have sought to consider the issues from the former point of departure. There are other aspects such as the redesigning of 'teacher training' by a competent team of educationalists (1988:167) which I have only addressed from a very theoretical basis.

She sees some form of religious education as necessary, with the other accepted subjects, listed as languages, sciences, physical education and arts, to satisfy 'all the principles of curriculum construction' (1988:56) and to develop the 'individual as a totality' (1988:54). Her conclusions rest largely on a Pedagogical approach to schooling which seeks to lead the children to become what their teachers, or more accurately since they were 'moulded' by the system themselves, the curriculum constructors, desired. Kili found that in any case this was not happening as the subject was either not taught at all or if it was, then largely by teachers who did 'not feel properly qualified for the task' (1988:66) resulting in apathy and an authoritarian approach.

In her final comments on the survey analyses in chapter 6 she states:

> Religious Education should be taught during the early hours of the day, preferably during the first period in the morning because most of the subjects are based on Religious Education (1988:133).

This seems a very strange conclusion to draw since again no questions of any relevance to this issue were investigated.

I further observe that Kili's work is inconsistent in style in places. For example her heading of :-

'7.7 **GENERAL OVERVIEW** (1988:143).'

is inconsistent with her subsequent point:-

'7.8 **Some more deep-seated reasons** ' (1988:145) whilst point 7.8.2 returns to a bold capitalised, underlined heading. Some paragraphs are inset for no apparent reason, for example, compare paragraphs 3 and 4 on page 147. A further example of inadequate style can be found on page 45 where there are unacknowledged quotations in points ii) and iii) whilst on pages 46 and 47 the names of Dwane, Lungu and Katiya suddenly appear in capital letters. On page 50 Kili claims that a film was made in 1945 which documents the development of Lovedale up to the early 1950's!

2.2 Review of "Religious Education in Ciskeian Secondary Schools at the Cross-Roads: A Critical / Comparative Analysis of the Present Situation and Suggestions for Future Consideration" by A.M. Mxekezo

Mxekezo was concerned about the problems encountered in the teaching of Religious Education because he had been for the past six years, in 1991, the advisor for that subject, and Biblical Studies, in Ciskeian schools. He has 6 clear problem statements. He claims to have encountered indifference and ignorance amongst teachers and a dualistic confusion among pupils as well as a severe lack of basic resources, e.g. Bibles, illustrations. On the other hand he found it totally unacceptable (1991:17) that teaching by Christian teachers sometimes approached indoctrination (1991:4-6). Mxekezo gives clear reasons as to why his study was undertaken and his aims but has no specific statement of hypothesis. Mxekezo says that he aimed to study the problems and make suggestions including organisational and didactical aspects with reference to inner-group relations (1991:11). His concluding statements do not say much about organisation or didactics and there is no mention of inner-group relations. Despite his title and statement that he will suggest a few steps to eliminate the identified problems (1991:17) Mxekezo states:

> It is quite clear: The researcher feels himself totally unable to suggest a "tailor-made" solution to the present dilemma as far as R.E. in Ciskei Secondary schools is concerned (1991:174).

In fact his recommendations are only those mentioned above plus the suggestion that the syllabus be changed, the compulsory nature of Religious Education be reconsidered, more visual aids be available and teachers be trained for future requirements. The lack of clarity in drawing logically valid conclusions to assist in formulating future policies is a direct result of the lack of rigour in defining topic, problem and formulating an hypothesis.

Mxekezo gives the opinions of 'Ruperdi 1975' (1991:12) (or should it be Ruperti (1976) as in the Bibliography?), Katiya and Graves (authors completely absent from the Bibliography) in order to clarify what he means by 'education'. All three authors perceive education as transmitting culture and preserving the status quo which cannot be accepted as educative but rather as indoctrination and training. There is, it would seem, behind Mxekezo's thinking the pedagogical assumption that the child should be moulded (1991:12). It is not therefore surprising that he concludes that the 'subject should be taught by Blacks for the time being' (1991:172), although there was no research directed at investigating this issue. He goes on to say these should be 'Black Teachers who should know what is good, what is true, what is real' (1991:173). If the child is encouraged to think and formulate his own opinions as I have discussed in 4.3.3.4,then the culture of the teacher would be of less concern and the question which was also raised, as to how the necessity for 'Black' teachers could be accommodated in the less racially defined, new South Africa, would be unnecessary. We certainly do not want 'bad' teachers influencing our children but the criteria which he sets up would be impossible to meet, even if we could evaluate teachers on his criteria. Of particular interest in this regard is that he goes on to recommend that Religious Education be a compulsory subject in all Colleges of Education so that all students will 'be properly groomed in this subject' (1991:173) which would seem to militate against his demands for teachers with particular characteristics. Maybe they are to be 'trained' to know what is good, true and real by their lecturers which raises very serious problems, both relating to the fact that this sounds very much like indoctrination and also because it sets these lecturers up as arbitrators of what these categories constitute.

Mxekezo takes Anderson's remarks about 'mission' and the 'Church's unfinished task' as the basis for his study (1991:2/3). He therefore confronts the problems primarily from a Christian evangelistic perspective and states that the current aims of Religious Education cannot be faulted (1991:168). Mxekezo believes that Religious Education should rightly be called Christian Education (1991:15) which would be a more honest approach based on the current syllabi. However, later he suggests that the name be changed to Religious Studies and include other religions (1991:176) and also that students who wish to study from a Christian perspective be allowed to do so (1991:177) although he does not mention giving this choice preference to those of other religious persuasions. Mxekezo is inconsistent in that, having accepted the current exclusively Christian aims, he then suggests (1991:176) that with the change of name there should also come the inclusion of other religions. He follows Kili and lists the main tenets of Biblical Christianity and concludes that:

> ...each and every of these tenets is more or less in direct opposition to traditional points of departure (1991:164).

Nevertheless, still in line with current aims, he believes that Religious Education should:

> ...guide the pupil to see his life-situation from a biblical point of view (1991:165).

There are a few practical problems with Mxekezo's thesis some of which I shall mention. Chapter 2 is a survey of related literature but the authors do not appear in his Bibliography. On page 61 the date of Shepherd is given as 1908 but in the Bibliography Mxekezo states 'no date'. There is also a date discrepancy between Makhubu, page 80, and the Bibliography. On page 62 there is a mention of Hartshorne, 1963 but the Bibliography knows only Hartshore, 1953. Benton, 1944, quoted on page 75, Gunter, page 13, and Dwane, 1989, page 82, are also absent from the Bibliography. Mxekezo asserts in his heading that 2.6 is a survey of Penny's dissertation but in fact it is discussing Kili's work. Section 2.7 also claims to survey Penny's work (having the same title as 2.6) which in fact it does.

Mxekezo's work is however of value in that it supports the findings of Kili as to the 'true state of affairs' (1991:19) and underlines the problems which have to be faced. These are identified by questionnaires and structured interviews which appear to have been

conducted in Ciskei, sampling the opinions of a wider, more representative constituency than that canvassed by Kili. He also gives a useful summary of the current (1991) state of affairs in Ciskei in respect to Religious Education.

2.3 Summary of problems identified by Kili and Mxekezo

The following is a brief summary of the main problems which N.N. Kili and A.M. Mxekezo claimed to exist and which they documented in their work.

2.3.1 The intolerance of Christianity. Kili's investigation claims that:

> Xhosa people, deliberately or not, apparently developed a broad minded attitude towards the new faith. They certainly displayed greater tolerance in respect of the Christian message and way of life than the missionaries showed towards the Xhosa's original culture (Kili, 1988:123).

2.3.2 The poor teaching of Religious Education. Kili claims that the reason for her investigations was because she believed that:

> ...the quality of Religious Education in our schools has been, and in many schools continues to be, very much inferior to that of other subjects in the curriculum (Kili, 1988:133).

It is worth noting that this is by no means a new problem. In the Inspector's report of 1935 for Lovedale, Alice, we read:

> A lesson in Scripture given to Form 3 by the teacher in charge of Xhosa was not effective, and raises the question whether the subject is in the best hands (Superintendent General of Education, 7th April 1932).

Kili claims, and Penny agrees, that Religious Education is not regarded as highly as most other subjects. Both ascribe it, in part, to the lack of external examinations in the subject, so that it is seen as of little academic value to the students. Because Religious Education is not highly regarded the periods assigned to it are often used by teachers for other subjects, viewed as more important because they are examined.

2.3.3 The goals of education. Kili (1988:54) states that in her opinion, 'The goals of society must be the goals of the school.' This needs much greater clarification. There is no reason, logically, why this must be so although there may be an argument that it is desirable. Questions arise as to whether society has a unified set of goals and if so, whether they include the teaching of Religious Education in schools. Today, when many Africans claim to be adherents of Christianity, it could possibly be so but certainly when the colonials and missionaries introduced the current type of Religious Education it was

in contradistinction to the beliefs Africans held. Julius Nyerere, speaking of Tanzania, found a similar problem to Kili and expressed his objection thus:

> Colonial education in this country was therefore not transmitting the values and knowledge of Tanzanian society...itwas a deliberate attempt to change those values and to replace traditional knowledge from a different society (Taryor, 1985:88).

Similarly, Kwame Nkrumah stated that the goals of society were not considered by Westerners since:

> The educational system brought by westerners was designed with the intention to brain-wash the African and keep him from knowing himself (cited in Taryor, 1985:89).

In Southern Africa, where we have many more than one societal sub-group, it is questionable whether the goals which society currently has are adequate to cope with the rapid change which the society currently faces, or whether they are too fragmented. Education prepares children for the future and so the goals of education should look further, in terms of distance as well as time, than its own immediate concerns. Further, as Mxekezo (1991:159) claims, the Xhosa are no longer as deeply religious as they were, a tendency reflected in many societies.

2.3.4 The shortage of Religious Education teachers. A further problem documented by Kili is the shortage of teachers who have been 'trained' in teacher training colleges or universities to teach the school subjects 'Religious Education' and 'Biblical Studies'. She writes:

> The few schools teaching Biblical Studies show how few R.E. [sic] teachers are available in the Ciskei (Kili, 1988:60).

If this is so it would indicate that where Religious Education is given at all it is probably being given by teachers who have been coerced into doing so against their better judgement, or possibly by teachers who have a private interest in the subject rather than an academic education in it. It also seems to be the case that teachers who have some academic background in the subjects have been trained to pass on specific information rather than being educated to teach the subjects.

Kili believes that one of the differences between the two subjects and one of the reasons

why the teaching of Biblical Studies produces fewer problems is that:

> A comparative examination of the nature and purpose of the two subjects shows Biblical Studies to be a more objective study and less personal study than R.E. [sic] (Kili, 1988:62).

Penny (1970:111) noted that in the Cape only 9% of all teachers of religion in the Cape schools had theological qualifications. Currently it is assumed that 'training' to teach Biblical Studies prepares teachers to teach Religious Education. This does not necessarily follow as the aims, scope and content of the two subjects are different.

Mxekezo pointed out a further problem relating to the fact that 'Black' teachers can become alienated from their own society. Quoting Notwala, he says:

> The Black teacher must be integrated as an active agent in the process of the development of the Black community. He must learn not to feel above his community with a consequent desire to become integrated into the life of the European community (cited in Mxekezo 1991:87).

2.3.5 The diversity of religious belief among the Xhosa. There is a variety of problems arising from the fact that the Xhosa people are no longer in agreement regarding religious matters. When Kili surveyed the Education students at Fort Hare University she found that only 1.8% still regarded themselves as having had Traditionalist upbringing whereas 41.1% saw themselves as having had a mixture of Christian and African Religious training and 57.1% had been given a Christian upbringing. It should be noted that students probably don't constitute a representative sample of Africans and possibly come from less traditional homes than the very rural people with less education.

Mxekezo (1991:159ff) observed that there are a number of widely accepted traditional concepts which are out of line with Christian Biblical teaching. He notes examples such as the resurrection, prayer, marriage and ethical norms. The fact that over half of the respondents had received a Christian upbringing would suggest that parents would approve of Religious Education being Christian and a very few, less than 2%, would not want any Christian teaching. Christianity is now part of Xhosa history and belongs to the Xhosa as much as to any other people. As Brother Owusa remarks:

> Christianity is now already part of Africa's History. You cannot go back (cited in Taryor, 1985:88).

The fact that such a high proportion of Xhosa claim at least some adherence to Christianity probably indicates that using Religious Education to propagate Traditional African belief would also be unacceptable. In fact Kili found that 69.9% did not want Religious Education restricted to teaching traditional religions (Kili, 1988:107). Mxekezo believes that:

> Religious Education must include the whole milieu of ideas available to the parent, teacher and pupil in the present day South Africa (1991:32).

There is however a lot of conflict. It was expressed in this way at one point:

> ...the researcher...found herself in an embarrassing situation at times when certain aspects of the Christian philosophy and the traditional Xhosa points of departure were not in agreement (Kili, 1988:2/3).

She goes on to say that Mrwetyana sees this as creating an 'untenable dualism in the mental frame of mind' (cited in Kili, 1988:3), and states that the 'Xhosa's balanced personal development is impaired in this way' (Kili, 1988:3). Mxekezo (1991:78) noted that there are conflicts resulting from different social and family structures and that Christianity does not have anything to say about the value of nuclear families as opposed to extended ones, although the latter could be argued to be superior from the evidence of the Old Testament. He also raises the allied question of the veneration of the ancestors. Mxekezo observes:

> As an educationist one is aware that things outside the classroom matter much more than inside. The beliefs held by parents on topics like magic, healing, understanding of God and many others affect the immature pupils who grasp the reality of life from the lesson presented at school, while at home the opposite is presented,

and he adds later:

> Things are worsened by the fact that these topics are shelved, avoided and pushed aside due to the teacher being not sure of these himself (1991:83).

This dualism is further underlined by the fact that despite the problems, 80% of Ciskeians belong to churches of the main denominations. Kili concludes that the problems are not understood by the Xhosa people. She suggests (1988:5) that some kind of reconciliation be brought about, if possible, and concludes that:

> ...it is educationally unjustifiable to perpetuate a situation where a child is exposed to two points of departure (Kili, 1988:7).

55.7% of surveyed Fort Hare Education students felt that children could be confused by divergent schools of thought (Kili, 1988:107). This dualism is also a problem for the teachers.

> Teachers should not have to teach or at least give obscured assent to what they believed not to be true (Elvin, 1977:63).

A teacher has to be comfortable with the goals of the subject which is to be taught. The teacher must be able to identify with them.

2.3.6 The question of responsibility for Religious Education. The matter of who is responsible for the Religious Education of children was also raised in these studies. There would seem to be three possibilities; the parents, the school or the church. This is not a new problem. When it was raised in England in 1870, Charles Kingsley, a churchman, said secular teaching belongs in schools and the clergy should teach about God. He believed that:

> The point would be made strongly that schools belong to all of us and the children of all of us, and must be neutral in this matter, in common fairness (cited in Elvin, 1977:62).

The South African government supported the view that religious teaching was not the state's responsibility but the churche's, as far back as 1955. In the Tomlinson report it was stated:

> It is the duty of the Church to look to the spiritual needs of the people (Tomlinson, 1955:156).

The report then confused the matter by advocating that the school should be used to attain this end and so for many years, ever since it took over the mission/church schools, the governments of Southern Africa have used education to propagate the Christian faith. The argument has been that this is right because the Republic of South Africa is a Christian country (according to the view of the ruling party of many years past). Ciskei still uses the type of syllabus designed by the South African government. Religious Education has remained as it began, tied to mission endeavour. There has been a very close relationship between the Dutch Reformed Church and the Nationalist Government for very many years so that in practice it has often been difficult to distinguish between them on questions such as which of them is in control of Religious Education in schools.

The question of parents being responsible for the religious upbringing of their children has not been seriously considered by many educationalists possibly because of the problems involved with the rapid raising of educational standards with each succeeding

generation.

If it is argued that government should be responsible for educational policies it must not be forgotten that education is, in most countries and especially in Southern Africa, a battle field for politicians. Religious Education is a particularly contentious subject.

> The selective organization, transmission and evaluation of knowledge is intrinsically bound up with patterns of authority and control. The battle over curricula is also a conflict between different conceptions of social order and is therefore fundamentally moral (Bernstein, 1975:81).

Taryor says that Lerone Bennett wrote:

> The question of education for black people...is a question of life and death. It is a political question. A question of power (Taryor, 1985:84).

Education, as it exists now is fundamentally a European system but it is wanted by African society and should be modified by that society and for that society. Taryor goes on to say:

> One of the basic concerns about education in Africa today is how to adapt the variety of European educational systems to the particular requirements of the continent (Taryor, 1985:84).

Dwane expresses the problem thus:

> We have been made not only to look European in outward appearance, but more seriously to think, speak, and behave European. But we are beginning to realize that we are in captivity, and that we need to be liberated in order that we may be ourselves, the people whom God made and wants us to be. We are learning this process of re-orienting and re-educating ourselves how to become African, and what it is that makes an African. And as we decolonise ourselves, we are discovering that there are riches in our own heritage, and learning to appreciate them. These riches have been by passed in previous attempts to bring the gospel to Africa but they are still available and ready to welcome it, and give it a home and a character (Dwane, 1989b:29).

Mxekezo notes that he was:

> ... aware of the assumption by the Ciskei Government that being a Christian country, all policies should reflect this stance (1991:88):

and he goes on to say that he believes that:

> The Christian based religious undertone of the country can therefore not be questioned (1991:88).

If progress is to made there ought not to be anything which cannot be questioned. In

fact all assumptions should be questioned to see if there are adequate bases for these assumptions.

2.3.7 The out-datedness of the Religious Education syllabi. With respect to the teaching of Religious Education in the Cape schools, Penny claimed in 1970 that:

> Our policy regarding Religious Instruction has distinct British characteristics of twenty years ago (Penny, 1970:43).

The conclusion to be drawn is that the Ciskei syllabus is some 40 years behind the times.

2.3.8 The use of Religious Education as moral instruction. One of the reasons often given for the inclusion of Religious Education in the school timetable is that of moral instruction. Penny, Kili and Mxekezo support this reasoning. Kili quotes Tabas' contention that moral and religious education are a valuable means of transmitting culture. Kili concludes that a rejection of Christianity may lead to a rejection of morality. She notes that the result may be, quoting Taba:

> ... a dangerous pseudo-neutrality toward moral issues...decisions are governed by blind emotional reaction, prejudices and taboos (cited in Kili, 1988:63).

This may not be so as, in fact, it is clear that one does not have to be a Christian or accept a Biblical basis for life in order to lead a moral life. Quite the opposite on occasions, as Christianity has been accused of causing people to live unethically. Taryor says that:

> ... in Ghana mission education resulted in young men stealing, lying, bribing, cheating, and murdering. Missions taught that these were wrong but that there was easy forgiveness preached by both Roman Catholics and Protestants (Taryor, 1985:88).

This is, of course, the old problem of antinomianism discussed in Romans 3 verses 20 to 31 and James 2 verses 17 and 18. It draws attention to the fact that a parallel should not be too quickly seen between the results of teaching religion, in particular Christianity, and the level of morality amongst the pupils. It is possibly true that a rejection of Religious Education might well lead to a rejection of its morality resulting in a further deterioration of ethical standards unless provision is made to give moral teaching in some other context.

2.3.9 The confusion resulting from denominational differences. As well as the confusion

caused by the relationship of Christianity and African Traditional Religions there is further confusion caused by the fact that many different denominations have been at work in the Eastern Cape Province with the result that the churches do not always speak with one voice. This should not however be over-emphasised as it has been shown that African Traditional Religions have considerable variations in beliefs and practices from group to group and so they are now commonly referred to in the plural by researchers.

3 THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE TEACHING OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE REGION

It is difficult to establish exactly what conditions were like, in what is now known as Eastern Cape Province, before the Europeans arrived. The history of the region has been passed down by word of mouth and indicates that the Iron Age Bantu people probably arrived from the north. The Xhosa inhabited the area when the European colonists began to arrive: first Boer farmers, and then British settlers and missionaries, each with their own agendas. Xhosa society, like all other societies, was in a state of flux, but the instability was aggravated by the new challenges faced.

From its birth Christianity has been a missionary religion aiming to plant and establish the Church, and to propagate the Kingdom of Christ among non-Christians. Missionary expansion coincided with the colonisation of what was, to Europeans, the new world. This was because the exploration and thirst for new lands and resources, arising from the Renaissance, made the people of Europe aware, in a new way, that there were other different people in the world. This influence began in the sixteenth century but a new impetus re-energised the expansionist trends in the eighteenth century when industrialisation accelerated and was largely dependent on raw materials from countries outside of Europe. This, combined with a series of great religious movements rooted in the Reformation, such as the Pietist Movement in Germany and The Great Awakening in England, called many Christians to missionary work in far-off lands.

The first group of mission societies to establish themselves in England were started between 1792 when the Baptist Missionary Society was formed and 1799 when the Anglicans started The Church Missionary Society. The first missionary to the Xhosa people was Van Der Kemp who reached Gaika's Kraal, on the Tyhumie River, in September 1799. He immediately faced the problem that continuously dogged mission enterprise in the Eastern Cape: Gaika was at war with the colonial authorities. He was therefore viewed with suspicion by the Xhosa. He stayed slightly more than a year before having to leave, with nothing apparently accomplished (Du Plessis, 1965:122).

In 1816 Joseph Williams settled among Gaika's people, near present day Fort Beaufort, but died after two years with little progress made towards establishing a church. Lord Charles Somerset, Governor of the Cape, decided to make the most of the good relationships which Williams had formed and determined to get another missionary established in the region. Brownlee accepted the appointment as missionary and government representative and settled in the Tyhumie valley in 1820. By 1823 there were four missionaries there and two were also government agents. Thus the pattern of using missionaries for political purposes, which brought all missionary endeavour under suspicion, was established. Christianity's pronouncements of the 'brotherhood of man' and the 'fatherhood of God' were perverted to justify the 'white races' claim to superiority over the coloured people (Taryor, 1985:90). The emissaries were sent not just to give, but also to take.

An example of a government official who used missionaries was Harry Smith. His unrestrained arbitrary behaviour towards the Xhosa did much to damage relationships. He aimed at flooding the country with missionaries to hasten, what he called, the final triumph of 'European Civilization'. He had a programme to 'civilise and promote Christianity by extending British authority over Kaffirland' (Williams, 1958:148) and so:

> Missionaries were offered facilities to resume their labours. Burnt missions were rebuilt and new ones and schools founded, fifteen in all (Fihla 1962:6).

He demanded that the Xhosa chiefs kissed his feet and required that in commerce and social encounters English be spoken and European custom observed. His policies were not very effective in commerce and education but were in respect to land and labour. Peires notes that:

> For the Xhosa, British Kaffraria was a monster which swallowed them up, tore them from their children, and squeezed them off their land onto the labour market (1981:169).

By the end of the nineteenth century the kind of thinking typical of Smith had developed into a High Imperialism. It was:

> A proud ideology of national idealism. Imperialism now meant, in the words of Kipling's most famous poem of 1899, the willing assumption of 'the white man's burden' to conquer and civilize 'the dark peoples of the world' for their own good (Stanley, 1990:36).

This overwhelming arrogance was often viewed as benevolence by the colonialists but it was obviously destined to leave a very deep grudge in the hearts of those colonised and make them determined to stand against this domination.

The Xhosa, when confronted with differing peoples with new philosophies, accommodated and adapted to ideas because the Xhosa world view allowed experimentation and hypothesis. They readily tried cosmologies of others with whom they came into contact to see which was the more effective. The Xhosa were therefore eager to use the Christian prayer for, say, rain, to see if the missionaries' way was more effective than their own (Peires, 1981:62). The missionary idea of converting the Xhosas' world view to that of their own did not allow for this type of selective absorption. The Xhosa were therefore more tolerant towards Christianity than vice versa.

The view which the Xhosa accepted was likely to be a pragmatic choice and not one based on either complete acceptance or rejection of Christianity. For example, when Read, of the London Missionary Society, preached the Christian message that the dead did not really die but would rise up again the message was received with, what Peires calls, 'joyful misunderstanding' (1981:68). Xhosa expansion did not displace other societies so much as absorb them, with their full rights intact. Peires (1981:16,53) maintains that the Xhosa, whose influence by the time of van Riebeeck extended all the way to the Cape Peninsula, saw no reason why the European should not also merge with them into a single society. This, of course, was not the way in which colonial powers viewed their new found subjects, or neighbours, and it was certainly alien to the Victorian missionary societies' view of their 'mission to the heathen'.

Some European settlers, not having understood the Xhosa's way of incorporating other clans, have used the argument that in displacing the Xhosa they were justified as the Xhosa had previously displaced the former inhabitants of the area.

The Xhosa were subsistence farmers, with cattle as their economic base, and they also kept sheep. Essentially they stayed in one location but had a system of transhumance for seasonal grazing, when they disregarded tribal boundaries as well as, later, Colonial ones. Peires (1981:8) says that when rain failed, at least one year in ten, people roamed

widely searching for famine foods. Individual responsibilities were well defined, division of labour being based on age and sex, with men being responsible for cattle, housing and heavy work and the women for gardens, meals and housework. Crafts were a shared pursuit. A system of mutual assistance often applied, especially where there were ties of kinship. Some were specialists, such as the miners of iron ore and ochre, and the smiths who smelted the ore and worked it to produce blades (Saunders, 1988:63). The Europeans unintentionally upset this division of labour by inducing men to do agricultural work for material reward.

The Xhosas' cattle-based trade, initially advantageous to them, was taken over and controlled by colonials, often ones of bad character, and sometimes missionaries became involved. There were disputes, but more seriously, the Xhosa became dependent on the colony for items such as blankets and pots. There was also a shift from bartering to the use of colonial money. Not surprisingly, the 1834-5 frontier war was characterised by the killing of traders.

The tribal system was the basis of Xhosa society and the chiefs played an important role in the system of democratic government. There were chiefs for each community whose responsibility it was to see that goods were distributed for the benefit of the community. The chiefs were also responsible for religious observance when the whole community shared concerns, for example: harvest, rain or defence. Ordinarily the head of each group was also the religious head. The religion of the people was centred upon the ancestors and involved spirit veneration. There was a system of sacrifices and offerings which undergirded the whole fabric of life. Peires (1981:64) notes that there is an absence among the Xhosa of the type of elaborate religious ritual found elsewhere in Africa in which historical elements have been embedded. Religious practice varies from group to group. The Christian notion of orthodoxy is not familiar in Xhosa thought.

Diviners were important in Xhosa society but their word was not accepted unreservedly. They were expected to enter into dialogue with their clients.

> The course of action prescribed by the former was circumscribed by what the latter was prepared to accept (Peires, 1981:68).

This may explain why the Xhosa fully embraced certain aspects of Christianity and

completely disregarded others.

Nxele worked out a typically Xhosa response to Christianity. He attempted an early synthesis of traditional religious practices and Christianity. He saw the world as a battle ground between uThixo, the God of the 'whites' who had expelled them from their land for killing His son, and uMdalidiphu, the god of the 'black' people, who would be shown to be more powerful when he pushed back the 'whites'. This led, in May 1819, to Nxele's disastrous attack on Grahamstown in broad daylight resulting in his imprisonment on Robben Island and an early death by drowning when he sought to escape. His death was not accepted by the Xhosa who expected him to return, which they alleged he did, in dreams and visions.

Later Ntsikana, influenced by Joseph Williams, of the London Missionary Society, rejected Nxele's ideas and developed a counter theology. His dominant ideas were those of submission and peace which, like Nxele, he adapted within the traditional Xhosa framework to formulate a new world view capable of comprehending the irruption of the Europeans (Peires, 1981:73).

> By the turn of the century 'Kukuza kuka Nxele' (the return of Nxele) was the by word for a vain hope. At the same time the seed Ntsikana planted had flourished, through the efforts of men like Tiyo Soga, son of one of Ntsikana's converts, and Christianity was well and truly planted among the Xhosa as an African religion brought not by missionaries but by Ntsikana. Today the wheel has turned full circle as young Xhosa turn towards the nationalism of Nxele rather than the humility of Ntsikana (Peires, 1981:74).

The missionary message was perceived by many Xhosa as good, harmless, but irrelevant. Xhosa religion was, and is, so bound up with all life that it can not simply be replaced by Christianity. Christianity did not appear to deal with some important facets of Xhosa experience, for example, how to celebrate puberty, and yet the missionaries condemned the answers the Xhosa had as they perceived their whole system as pagan and in conflict with the Gospel. Since the religious system of the Xhosa did not function in an identical manner to that of Christianity and because the early missionaries could not be expected to have had an anthropological approach to other societies, some were forced, such as Kotze, to the erroneous conclusion that the:

> ...natives had no religion, no priest, nor temple, nor any form of religious worship to oppose Christianity (cited in Kili, 1988:47).

Mqhayi was one Christian Xhosa (1875-1945) who tried to grapple with such missionary misconceptions of traditional African ways in 'Ityala lamaWele'; arguing that witchcraft and divination, as well as circumcision, were important features of the Old Testament and therefore not incompatible with Christianity.

Religious observance was essential for a successful community and if it could attract new people the power of the chief was strengthened but the opposite was also true, so that if Christianity alienated some from their group, the chief lost power. The extended family was the basic social unit and kinship ties were very important. Clans were socially ranked. Marriage between relatives was not allowed but commonly occurred within the clan. Christianity sometimes had a negative effect on the close-knit social structures because Xhosa who accepted Christianity would tend to behave in ways which upset the social system, particularly in matters relating to marriage. For example, a polygamous husband might be encouraged by the missionaries to leave wives subsequent to the first one or a young person might refuse to marry according to the families' wishes because of wanting to take a Christian partner. Such disruption might also occur when a convert refused to participate in religious rituals to appease the ancestors. Any disruption to the solidarity of the Xhosa family group and its ancestors was serious and was often seen as being responsible for ills which subsequently befell it. Further, Christianity was sometimes seen as a religion of low status because it attracted social outcasts looking for a new place to belong. Mission stations therefore had a tendency to become sub-groups, unattractive to socially accepted Xhosa families.

Education was inseparable from life and rarely institutionalised. Initiation schools were the most formal aspect of education when the young people were taught how adults in their society were expected to live. Katiya says that:

> ... this was a complete, unifying experience producing fitness for life, establishing social orientation, and instilling values (Katiya, 1977:82).

Missionaries preached against initiation ceremonies of which these schools were a part. This upset the way in which the Xhosa transmitted their culture.

On the other hand the missionaries set up schools of a European type, initially because they wanted the people to be able to read the Bible. At first Khoi teachers were employed, hampering accurate communication, but by 1826 Robert Balfour was conducting services and had school lessons organised at Tyhumie. By 1841 Lovedale Seminary had opened to provide any Xhosa who was willing with elementary schooling. From its very inception education in the Eastern Cape was, for better or worse, tied to the missionary enterprise.

Although initially the missionaries had tended to attract social outcasts, influential people, such as the chiefs, were quick to realise the advantages of acquiring an education which could help them to communicate, understand and work more easily with the colonists and their systems of trade and government. The more influential Xhosa men therefore became eager to send their sons to schools. This new education then produced a Xhosa elite who were raised above their fellows because of their ability to participate in European matters. Many of these newly educated people were from chiefly families but others were not and they upset the traditional power bases.

Some Xhosa begrudgingly accepted Christianity to obtain education. The older Xhosa often experienced this as missionaries setting the youth against their parents because the young people with European education did not want to listen to those whom they perceived as the old and ignorant, and the wisdom of the elders was then sometimes displaced. Some less scrupulous missionaries were also able to use such perceived advantages as education and medicine to gain converts who could not be persuaded by religious considerations. When missionaries were accepted it was very often for secular reasons. The Xhosa had a detailed knowledge of remedies for many diseases but were pleased to accept the European's medical expertise, particularly for imported diseases such as the disastrous smallpox epidemic. The Xhosa have come, in many cases, to resent the fact that European knowledge often displaced Xhosa wisdom.

The Xhosa were also confused by the fact that many of the Europeans with whom they had contact did not apparently live up to the standards of their own religion. Many politicians and government officials, although ostensibly Christian, were, in fact, not committed Christians and did not attempt to live as such. Tshatshu, a Christian chief,

asked why missionaries did not go first and convert their own people before preaching to the Xhosa (Peires, 1981:77). Some Europeans' behaviour was disgraceful and not all Xhosa could be expected to differentiate between them and the genuine Christians. The Xhosa were therefore unlikely to be impressed by a religion which apparently did not work. Even the missionaries themselves, who should have been exemplary, were sometimes dismal failures faltering in their personal lives and sometimes becoming embroiled in underhanded political manoeuvers. They were chosen by well-meaning members of selection committees in Europe, very few of whom had any personal experience of the demands of missionary work in Africa nor training which equipped them to select suitable recruits. Williams (1958:41) noted that the importance of a reasonable educational background was underestimated and a number of missionaries who eventually found their way to Kaffraria were lacking the necessary understanding of people, of the Gospel and of their jobs. This was a basic weakness for it prevented them from functioning as successfully as they might have done, for the most efficient administration, and plentiful financial resources could not undo the harm brought about by an inadequate missionary.

The total number of missionaries was small in view of the areas assigned to them, and there would have been even fewer of them if the sending councils had been more rigorous in their selection procedures. Halbeck, a Moravian, visited the Cape in December 1818 and observed concerning the Scottish, Wesleyan and London Missionary Society missionaries that:

> All three societies had a basic flaw in their missionary organisation with regard to Christianizing the Kaffirs. This was the fact that they did not concentrate enough men on one station in order to thoroughly and continuously preach the Gospel and inculcate civilisation and the dignity of labour. To keep the people steadily under instruction was the ideal, and this was not achieved (Williams, 1958:137).

The London Missionary Society did try to tighten up and get suitable people but the more intelligent missionaries were sometimes unfortunately sidetracked into spending time in public debate with the colonists and administration, or worse, bickering among themselves. For example, in September 1834, when peace was concluded after one of the frontier wars, the Xhosa maintained that it was under false pretences because

unofficially, but nevertheless fully authorised, some Wesleyan missionaries gave them to understand, with Governor D'Urban's concurrence, that he would be generous to them; which he was not. In 1839, Shaw, of the Wesleyans, and Philip, of the London Missionary Society, went public concerning their quarrel about the Wesleyan's alleged support of Somerset's Commandos. There were also rivalries concerning influence among converts which contributed to the instability of missionary work in the area. In June 1840 Read complained to Philip that:

> ...those Wesleyans will use every means of preventing us getting among the other chiefs (Williams, 1958:142).

More enlightened missionaries who were not content to be puppets in the hands of the colonial government, still had to contend with the stigma attached to missionaries because of those who were government agents. Some did not integrate with the colonists or comply with the government and so the civil authorities were unsympathetic, even violent, towards them at times. One such was Stormont of Lovedale who decided to pray in his church liturgy for the Chief Dalindyebo, instead of the Queen of England (Dwane, 1989b:85).

Missionaries often had very difficult, lonely situations, suffered ill health in the unfamiliar climate and longed for home. Their efficiency was frequently hampered because there was a lack of money for even simple needs and access to what money there was complicated. It had to come from mission headquarters overseas, even when collected from the settlers in the Cape Colony (Williams, 1958:54-56). Finances were also complicated by the splitting of the Church of Scotland in 1843 and then there was a crisis because of a decline in philanthropic giving in England as the country became less prosperous.

One of the priorities of the missionaries was to give at least elementary schooling to their people so that they would be able to read the Bible. The quality of this schooling and its declared goal of converting (still part of the current syllabi), rather than educating per se, account for some of the present day dissatisfaction.

The language itself was a problem as none of the early missionaries spoke Xhosa

fluently. Initial communication was therefore very weak and liable to much misunderstanding. The missionaries had to preach in Dutch with what help they could get from the Khoi who interpreted for them. Communication improved to some extent as missionary children became bilingual and some of them grew to be missionaries themselves, but the important initial communication problems often remained.

The missionaries also had to deal with the very specialised task of reducing the Xhosa language to writing, although they lacked linguistic training, before they could embark on translating the Bible. Whenever a body of knowledge is taken to a new language translation problems arise. The host language does not have words which are equivalent to all the concepts which the communicator wishes to bring to the people. A number of far reaching decisions have to be made. For example, is a Xhosa word for 'god' to be applied to the God about whom the Christians are speaking? If so which word, as a variety are available? The advantage of using a known word is that it is readily understood in the general sense. The disadvantage is that the word carries with it certain overtones possibly inconsistent with the meanings intended by the missionaries and of which they may not be aware. The characteristics attributed to the Xhosa god will then be attributed to the Christian God, although in fact, there are distinct differences between the two. This latter course was adopted leaving a legacy of misunderstanding causing theological problems as discussed in chapter 5.

Thus, I believe the root causes of the problems documented by Kili and Mxekezo are to be found in the nineteenth century. These have, of course, been compounded by the problems through which education has passed in the twentieth century.

In 1909, clause 85 of the South African Act gave the responsibility and power to provide education to the provincial governments, under the Union Government (Behr, 1971:8). The Nationalist Party came to power in 1948 and in the years that followed all schools were brought under state control. Schools were segregated according to the 'racial origin' of the people. The government had a distinctly missionary policy.

> Reformed theologians and educators sought to bring every sphere of life under the rule of Christ (Institute, 1992:105).

However, there have been a few deviations from this norm.

> For example, "Indian" schools in Natal, initially allowed to teach Hinduism, Islam or Christianity, were switched in 1966 to a "Syllabus for Right Living" (Institute, 1992:105).

'Bantu' education was formulated and enacted in 1953 under the Department of Native Affairs (Behr, 1978:168) with the aim of ensuring that Africans acquired only basic skills as required for manual labour so that:

> ...the content of black education was aimed at producing subservience ... it was based overtly on religious and moral training exposing values of cleanliness, punctuality, honesty, respect, courtesy (Truscott, 1993:5,6).

Many schools were privately owned by the churches until the government took over most of them. The churches were assured in the Tomlinson Report of 1955 that the Christian emphasis would continue (1955:155). This however tended to identify Christianity with the ideology of apartheid and this could only serve to widen the rift between Africans and Europeans. Little wonder that many of the Xhosa of the Eastern Cape region came to deeply resent Religious Education in schools since it appeared to have become part of the rod of oppression. The teaching of Religious Education had become a political as well as a religious issue. Behr notes that:

> All the Education Ordinances in South Africa clearly set out that religious instruction will be not only a subject in the curriculum of all schools, primary and secondary, but an important one. The basis of provincial education is fundamentally religious, and in particular, Christian, but not denominational (Behr, 1971:57).

It was not however until 1967 that The National Education Policy Act (No 39 of 1967) (Behr, 1971:19) actually made Religious Education compulsory. In the early 1970's Religious Education was renamed Bible Education except in the Department of Education and Training, but the syllabus was basically the same (Institute, 1992:105).

The resentments felt by groups, other than the privileged Europeans, were heightened by the fact that very little funding was available for educational needs, particularly in schools which were designated as for 'blacks'. In 1975 only 15,3% of the education budget was spent on 'black' education whilst 70,5% was allocated to 'white' schools (Truscott, 1993:7,8). Further, Behr tells us that about this time the South African government was only spending 4,1% of its Gross National Product on education as opposed to, by comparison, Britain which allocated 6,2% for this purpose (Behr,

1978:365). Equipment shortages became critical and it is also alleged that there were inefficient supply procedures, corruption, budget restrictions and poor control of books in schools (Truscott, 1993:18).

In 1976 the 'Bantu' Education Department became the Department of Education and Training and students became increasingly politicised (Truscott, 1993:8). Boycotts and other forms of protest spread from the Western Cape to the Eastern Cape accompanied by a demand for an end to compulsory homelands citizenship and in 1980 the government asked the Human Sciences Research Council to set up the De Lange Commission to do a detailed enquiry into all facets of education amongst population groups of South Africa. There was an appreciation of the fact that 'non-whites' needed to have a meaningful say in their education. Although the Nationalist Government partially accepted recommendations of the De Lange report:

> It was not yet prepared to jettison the ideological approach of Christian National Education in favour of the more 'technicist' approach of De Lange (Truscott, 1993:9).

Education In the 'black' schools progressively disintegrated between 1984 and 1986 since:

> The education system appeared almost irrelevant as it could offer neither reasonable prospects of getting certificates or skills which would lead to employment (Truscott, 1993:14).

This led directly to the forming of the National Education Crisis Committee because parents and teachers wanted to salvage something of the education system. They wanted an education which was democratic and which liberated people to be critical thinkers, in control of their own destinies.

The Religious Education syllabus set up in 1967 has continued to be the one officially in use in all parts of South Africa until this time. Venda did stop teaching Religious Education completely before its re-incorporation into South Africa. Recently a few experiments have been carried out in 'Indian' and 'Coloured' schools, particularly in the Western Cape.

> The current curriculum is based on the principles of Christian National Education, which means that particular religious principles are explicitly and implicitly taught. Christian, Bible-based, Religious Education is compulsory in schools except those under the House of Delegates, where

> "right living" is taught instead. This policy does not recognise religious diversity nor the democratic right of students to be free from religious coercion (National Education Policy Committee, 1993:74).

A variety of committees have looked into the needs of education for the new South Africa. For example in 1986 the Cape Education Department established a review committee (Institute, 1992:107). In 1992 the South African Teachers Association appointed a sub-committee to draft guidelines to deal with the problems in religious teaching (Institute, 1992:109). It is expected that within this year some curriculum suggestions will be circulated. However, the Eastern Cape Provincial Government White Paper, currently under discussion, does not specifically mention religion in schools.

Although the schooling provided was often inferior there was obviously much to be gained by the Xhosa in their encounter with the Europeans' education and technology, and for the many who have endorsed the Christian faith, also in religious matters. As Fihla says of St Matthew's Mission Station it was:

> One of the chief contributors towards intellectual, moral, social, economic and political advancement of the Bantu (1962: preface)

and she describes Fort Hare University as:

> the crowning glory of the combined efforts of the missionaries, the Colonial Government and the Bantu towards the provision of higher education facilities (1962:preface).

Despite all these problems, or perhaps because of them, Kili concludes in her investigation into the problems of Religious Education in Ciskei:

> It is not likely that the Christian message per se has in itself divided the Xhosa people. The point is that the message has been transmitted by human beings and in their religious fervour they sometimes apparently did more harm than good (1988:52).

If this is correct the time has come to try to redress the harm and to examine how best the religious education of the peoples of the Eastern Cape Province could and should proceed.

4 RATIONALE FOR TEACHING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

4.1 Introduction

In this section I shall look at what kind of education is needed in schools and what sort of things should be happening in school education and in so doing try to show that Religious Education is able to make a positive contribution and ought therefore to be part of the school curriculum although in a very different form from its current one. I will first consider issues from a critical perspective and then look at the reasons which are often given for teaching Religious Education in Schools.

4.2 The function of educative schooling

If it is agreed that schooling is needed in the Eastern Cape Province then the next question would ask what the main function of this schooling should be and therefore which aspects need to be included to produce the desired results. I agree with Barrow's argument that:

> If there is a case for schooling at all, it must rest on the broad argument that there are certain things we want children to acquire, or to be provided with, which cannot reliably be, or cannot as well be provided at home or by the social environment generally (Barrow, 1981:34).

Any argument for the inclusion of Religious Education in the curriculum should also provide at least some of these 'certain things' which the community considers it wants and needs from its educational system. The community, of course, is made up of individuals and it is certain that they will not all agree about everything. Some people have exalted democracy to the position of ultimate arbitrator in all cases so that 'What the community wants' should then be decided by a simple majority vote; but this is too simplistic although everyone in the community should feel that the schools are theirs. Since some people are more involved in education than others, by virtue of having experienced it more or studied it more, or by being those who administer it or present it, it would seem reasonable that they would have some valuable input when decisions about schooling are being made. Their contribution to the debates should be more informed and possibly therefore be accorded greater weight than that of those who have

not experienced much education nor studied it.

As consumers of school education are, by definition, at least initially, uneducated in the formal sense and therefore unaware of the possible content of education and untrained as yet in critical thought, it would not seem reasonable to give too much weight to what they consider education should include in their early years, but by the time they are advanced in the educational process they should have insight into the value of what they are receiving and be able to give some informed direction to planners. Their parents are also important and need to be kept informed and to be consulted as often as possible. Teachers' opinions are very important as they ultimately determine what is happening in schools, regardless of what curriculum planners suggest and education departments prescribe in syllabi. The academics in education faculties of universities and government ministers and civil servants in educational office are those charged with the responsibility of assessing needs, evaluating trends in education and, above all, of taking the time to think through issues in an unbiased logical way. There is, therefore, need for all these members of the community to establish good communication and listen to each other. For any system to be effective it must be acceptable to all concerned and any change jointly seen as a desirable improvement. Possible changes need to be discussed and evaluated by all concerned. As much information as possible should be given to communities and their reactions and contributions be taken into account. Educative schooling, of whatever kind, should not be imposed from the top without extended consultations between government officials and those at grass roots level. In fact government officials would do well to view themselves as civil servants, as the English title for their position implies.

A possible source of deciding what the community believes it wants and needs is to ask the representative government. Waterink reminds us that:

> If we say that among other aims, education has a national end, then our definition of the goal of education will have to take account, and will be determined by the structure of that national life (Waterink, 1954:41).

However, Waterink may also be implying that national ends may need to take priority over individuals' needs and if this were so it could lead, as it has done in the past to an imposed system, or worse, to totalitarianism. There are problems if the government, for

what ever reason, is not really representative of the community. No government can represent the views of all the multifaceted needs of so many diverse communities as are represented in Southern Africa and yet each little subgroup of people has its schools. Problems may arise because the government is concerned with a very wide canvas and does not necessarily choose to make policies only for the good of education. A particular government may have political or other reasons for wishing school curricula to include or exclude certain things. Nor can we assume that a particular government is necessarily well informed about the latest educational thinking of all the concerned parties. There have been many accusations of 'hidden agendas' which are doubtless justified and no matter what government is in power there will always be similar accusations from opposing parties.

Barrow (1981:83) argues that, 'It is a matter for government to referee the game,' that is the 'game' of deciding what is to be included or excluded in schooling. This is a weaker statement than the autocratic stance that governments in Southern Africa have traditionally taken. A less assertive approach could help to democratise education and restore it to the people as it implies that the government listens and supervises decision making rather than imposing policies in an authoritarian manner.

It does not seem adequate that the government defends its educational policies merely on the grounds of majority. Education is too important. All people in the community need to feel it belongs to them whether or not they support the ruling party. In Southern Africa education has been given a very high profile in politics and has suffered accordingly. It has been argued that education can never be completely apolitical but it seems that the level of political interference could be greatly reduced and control be experienced as not coming from government or political agencies but from those who need and those who care about education because they are directly involved with it.

It has historically been the case that when government was not controlling education policy then the churches were. They also had their own agendas which were not necessarily determined by educational consideration. Currently about 80% of Ciskeians claim to be Christian (cited by Kili, 1988:156). (The 1991 census asked for religious

affiliation but it did not include the National States. It found 94.5% of those completing their forms belonged to the Christian church in South Africa.) This does not, however, have to mean that there should be any form of church control in schools although it does indicate that where choices have to be made in terms of religious syllabus content Christianity would have a higher profile than another religion not reflected in the beliefs of the community.

The suggestion has been made that in order to accommodate communities, other than those claiming to be Christian there could be a multiple single-tradition approach. This would mean that there are different programmes, separate but parallel, as required by the dominant religion of the community. This type of programme seemed appropriate to the now defunct Houses of Representatives and Delegates. It is a product of, and a further perpetration of the concept of apartheid. It would be a new, modified form of government control. It does not consider the fate of children who come from homes with a different religious tradition to that of the majority in their community.

> Furthermore, the problem of religious coercion might only be multiplied in a parallel approach to religious education (Institute,1992:15).

Another problem which arises, if the government alone decides on the content of school programmes, is that it could be overly influenced by financial considerations of a pragmatic nature and so wish to limit what occurs in schools to save money. There are those who believe that the function of schooling is to train pupils for their future life; to the extent that children should only learn at school what they need to function in adult life in their jobs. This is pragmatically reasonable but denies children opportunities to develop their potential to as full an extent as possible which is the essence of true education as opposed to training. A broad education might well be considered a luxury that the country should not afford and any form of religious education would then be excluded. It cannot be conveniently forgotten by educational decision makers that the education system is an elaborate, expensive superstructure which must be held accountable for its stewardship in its use of national funds. But according to the Lima Declaration:

> Every State should guarantee the right to education without discrimination

> of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic condition, birth or other status. Every State should make available an adequate proportion of its national income to ensure in practice the full realisation of the right to education (Lima Declaration, 1988:2).

I note that acceptance of this document gives a child a right to education and as complete a self-authenticating experience as possible and not merely the right to be trained.

Decisions will have to be made as to the relative importance of a child learning one thing rather than another. Not all learning which is theoretically within the grasp of a child can be included in the curriculum. There are no absolute criteria available to use to make such decisions and this calls for a degree of flexibility which is why, of course, many schools like to offer options. It is interesting that one of the aims of the new National Curriculum in Britain, introduced in 1988, was to keep the field as open as possible for as long as possible. John Dewey had a similar interest in broadening education; he believed that traditional education exposed children to too few experiences (Fowler, 1987:61). There is also a need for continuity and the opportunity for interaction between the child's educational experiences and encounters with reality.

In Southern Africa there are, among some politicians and some educationalists, those who subscribe to Pedagogics, and so view the function of schooling as training for adulthood, which although useful in many respects, smacks of control over individuals, may limit their options in later life and also may preclude them from acquiring the breadth of thought that we associate with people who are really well educated. It does, however, give due weight to the felt need of the young to be able to find jobs when they leave school. Schooling is of little value unless it helps children to cope with real life in the often hard, adult world into which they will be thrust when their schooling ends. Indeed, the fact that the adults in children's lives are not unanimous about what the content of education should be is also part of their encounter with real life. Education does have to include content although:

> The aim in education then should not be the mere furnishing of the mind with what Whitehead called "inert ideas"- "the learning of many things", said Heraclitus long ago, "does not develop one's understanding" - but the

> development of the ability to recognise the demands of reason in its various forms and to fulfil them. It is obvious then that this aim can be achieved only through an introduction into the established content and methodology of the various forms of knowledge and understanding. As the young acquire knowledge they learn what it means to pursue truth (Kazepides, 1982:156).

The community will never have a common ethos. It is as well if we acknowledge from the outset of our endeavour to find the best, most suitable education we can for our children, that it is not possible to please all of the people all the time. A flexible approach to drawing up syllabi will enable schools to exercise autonomy in some matters which will help to reassure communities and to accommodate their felt needs.

African education has one fundamental problem which will not go away and cannot be changed, namely, that the school system was developed in Europe as part of those particular societies and reflected the demands of those societies. School education in the Eastern Cape arrived as a radical intervention from outside and did not reflect Xhosa culture but a modified European one. At no point does this become more obvious than in the current Religious Education class where religion has been, ever since formal education was introduced into the area, always interpreted to mean the Christian religion, which was not the traditional religion.

The home, if it is functioning in a healthy manner, will be the prime source of influence upon the child and only after that the community. Waterink maintains that:

> The parent-child relationship will be fundamentally different when the ties between parents and children are primarily regarded as religious in nature (Waterink, 1954:14),

as indeed they are in African Traditional Religions.

Do the parents then need schools? Could they not provide the child with all the education which is needed? The fact that often poor parents are willing to do without basic necessities, on occasion, to pay for schooling indicates that parents do very definitely want schools for their children and value them very highly although often they may not be able to articulate why. Parents are unable to give their children what schools offer for a variety of reasons, inter alia, many of the parents have little schooling

themselves and hope that their children will reach to higher educational standards than they were able to do. Those parents who have more schooling are usually economically active, some away from home, often involved in committees and community activities and do not have the enormous amount of time needed to give to their children's schooling, nor the expertise, in many cases, to know how to go about the teaching. Also they do not usually have access to books and equipment which are needed to enhance the learning experiences of their children.

In the community, by more traditional attitudes, it is not polite for a child to question an older person and this is an asset to socialisation but a hindrance to real education. Kazepides (1982:160/1) draws a clear and useful distinction between socialisation which transmits accepted values of a society with the clear intent that the child accepts these standards, and true education which has an opposite function because it encourages the questioning of all that is transmitted, subjecting ideas to the demands of reason, with a view to rejecting what may be false and forming ideas more proximate to truth. It seems to me that parents should be able to 'socialise' a child very adequately, taking Kazepides' distinction, but only a few will be equipped to educate their children.

4.3 The 'things' children need to acquire

There would seem to be a need to educate the community, the parents, leaders and the youth to value schooling which is truly educative schooling rather than just training. There has been a history of schooling which the community has readily seen as 'bad', that is, not of much benefit to themselves but rather as intended by the government to mould them according to the government's requirements. There is a danger of continuing to think in the same categories and so to replace one set of mistakes with a new set, no doubt different from those against which the complaints are being made, but as prescriptive as ever. A new pedagogy is in danger of being born and could so easily replace the earlier discredited one without solving any of the fundamental problems.

4.3.1 Benefits from the process of education. One attitude which causes a lot of muddled thinking is to value anything in school only because it will assist the pupil in

passing an exam and gaining a qualification. There is often little or no perceived value in the process, only the result. Pupils and their parents have a tendency to feel time is being wasted if the teacher is not delivering information which can be regurgitated in the exams. In part the answer to this problem will have to be sought in deciding what kind of testing will qualify the pupil to receive his 'piece of paper' but more than that, the parents' and pupils' perceptions of what constitutes being educated need attention. A new value system will have to be developed, and justified, which appreciates logical discriminative, original thinking more than the mere reproduction of old things. It will have to be understood that there is little value in retaining long lists of facts which could be read out of reference books but great value in being able to find appropriate facts, think about them and use them wisely to solve problems and to enrich ones life at work and in leisure time.

4.3.2 Community values. Community values usually include items such as wanting to be happy, healthy, wealthy and wanting prestige especially as demonstrated by the kind of job in which one is employed and the items one owns. These are no doubt laudable for what they are, and important since they govern so many peoples lives, but education needs to look beyond these pragmatic value systems and not allow itself to be reduced to the lowest common denominator.

> The issue of authenticity is on a quite different level to issues concerning some other potentialities of 'human nature' such as, for example, sexuality, aggression, recognition-seeking, happiness-seeking, etc., which, while no doubt pervasive, are ,arguably, open to evaluation with regard to the desirability of realising their potential (Bonnett, 1978:60).

These values tend to be at heart selfish ones, of benefit to individuals rather than to society or the nation, or for that matter the world and its entire future. It is the pursuit of these selfish goals which have brought the world to the brink of ecological disaster.

> When mankind assumes that the rest of reality is of no consequence except in so far as that reality serves its own interests, the ecosystem is in danger (Nürnberger, 1987:45).

Further such individualistic goals may be being achieved by the few at the expense of the many. It would seem that to be called 'good', education would have to be such that it helps society as a whole and as many individuals as possible without prejudice.

Education cannot however be viewed as needing to include only things which are useful to society.

> The doctrine of pragmatism in the United States, the essential character of which is expressed by the statement that the only good education is the one which is useful, and that the only useful thing is for a man to make himself useful in society, both to himself and the community, also fails to recognise a normative educational principle (Waterink, 1954:11).

Communities can be helped by educators to enlarge their visions of education beyond that of mere usefulness, what Peters (1969:27) describes as 'utilitarian education', that is to provide people with jobs and life skills. Education should emphasise the intrinsic value of persons and their growing, developing self-hood not just their usefulness as a cog in the wheel of society. Smart said of South Africa:

> I have a vision of a new era of religious education - where young people can be nurtured by their families and communities to prize the glories of their traditions...And when they go to school they can grasp the complexity and multifaceted glory of the human heritage, and learn not just the facts of world values but also the meanings which rule various human lives. I see an education which deepens each person's heritage but gives her or him respect for other people (Institute, 1992:21).

Education cannot be truly educative if it looks only back and confirms a society. Education proceeds on the assumption that a change, a development, is to be effected in the persons being educated which is good and will enable them to find meaning and to live a more fulfilling lives. The children's thinking should be modified and encouraged so that they can best approach and cope with the problems of life. They should experience a transformation in their persons which will enable them to operate better. Therefore it is educationally inadequate to argue that where people are is where they should be after receiving education. Further there is absolutely no point in the government spending large amounts of public funds supporting an expensive system which does not help those who are allegedly benefitting from it. Education has to concern itself with what it hopes will be. Education should look forward and move individuals, and thence the society, on to new discoveries, new challenges and a better life. Education should never become a servant of stagnation.

> Education shall be an instrument of positive social change. As such, it should be relevant to the social, economic, political and cultural situation of any given country, contribute to the transformation of the status quo

> towards the full attainment of all rights and freedoms, and be subject to permanent evaluation (Lima Declaration, 1988:2).

If no attempt is made to help people to appreciate education and to move the thinking of the community onwards it can very easily happen that the society begins to see education, especially if it is progressive, as a contender for the loyalties of the child and eventually as an enemy. The design of any new curricula will have to navigate this sensitive area between respect for the old and the introduction of the new. Education should beware of not reflecting the communities' wishes but it must also be aware of the danger of stagnating in the past.

4.3.3 Genuine education: schooling should be educative. Those involved in schooling, especially teachers who are at the cutting edge of the classroom process, should be of help in opening up the discussion and helping the government and the community to think about issues such as the aims, content, processes and desirable results of schooling. Unfortunately teachers have often felt threatened by changes and felt inadequate to cope with them because they have not been included in the decision making processes but dictated to. Further many teachers currently in schools were themselves trained rather than educated and do not appreciate the difference nor the value of developing a new type of schooling which is more educative.

When teachers lack confidence in themselves, as was claimed by Kili as a result of surveys which she conducted, the pupils may well reflect this and lack confidence in the teachers. Particularly teachers do seem to lack confidence in their ability to teach Religious Education in the former Ciskei region. There is also a feeling amongst teachers that they are not respected as much as they used to be.

> Effective learning requires a basic amount of respect for the teacher or facilitator. Teaching is often viewed as 'women's work' and is relatively under-paid. Teachers need to regain motivation and respect; the state, the community, and the church can play significant roles in bringing teachers back into their rightful place (Bot, 1991:111).

Teachers are also suffering from the fact that they are not given the freedom that is normally accorded to professionals. The Lima Declaration on Academic Freedom and Autonomy of Institutions of Higher Education produced in December 1988 to mark the 40th anniversary of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights argues that:

> ...the right to education can only be fully enjoyed in an atmosphere of academic freedom and autonomy (Lima Declaration, 1988:1).

This document has pointed out the dangers in higher education if the government or community representatives restrict the freedom of teachers and that this interference can be dangerous even at lower school levels. The current Religious Education syllabi are very dictatorial and teachers feel bound, rather than free. Because we are speaking of education it logically follows that the content of syllabi should be educative: but what does this mean? Educative is an illusive concept which is used in many and various ways.

If the purpose of schooling was just to provide children with facts about issues then the only necessary role of the school would be to teach the children how to appropriate the contents of various subjects. Therefore reading, or possibly learning to operate a tape recorder, would suffice. Proceeding to learn subjects with content would be unnecessary as pupils could leave school and use their appropriation skills as they or the community wished to access needed facts. They could be self taught and the discussion as to the inclusion, or otherwise, of Religious Education could be closed.

4.3.3.1 Quality more than quantity. In the past Ciskeian Religious Education, like Biblical Studies, has tended to be content-orientated. It has, of course, interpreted 'Religious' to mean exclusively Christian and would have been more accurately named Christian Education. There has been a concern with quantity which has manifested itself in Religious Instruction in the desire to cover, during the child's school life, the main contents of almost the whole Bible. Even from the perspective of many Christians, who accept the Bible as of fundamental importance, there is little to be said for knowing large parts of it unless it has affected the person. I would argue that it would be better to know, understand and be able to apply a limited amount of the content than to merely know, in the sense of remember, the major part. It could well be asked if there is any point at all in treating it as a book of special importance, as of religious significance, if it does not affect its readers spiritually. It should not be forgotten that:

> What is important is that the Bible is not taught as an end in itself. Its place in education is to confirm and interpret experience. It is not to superimpose an experience or become a substitute for experience (Hubery,

1965:99).

Christian religious education should be more than the teaching of the scriptures. It should include faith and practice with their demands and promises and bearing on personal and social problems, together with some general knowledge about the origins and teachings of other religions.

The volume of content in the current syllabus mitigates against the teacher having time for discussions and dealing with the religious issues as opposed to Biblical content, per se. The detailed nature of the syllabus and the thorough covering of lesser known materials, for example, the teaching about the prophets in Standard 6, would seem to be more appropriate to the teaching of Biblical Studies and raises the question of whether, in fact, there should be both subjects in the curriculum at all if the function of Biblical Studies is to be taken over by Religious Education. Penny suggests that:

> Instead of asking the young to begin by mastering large quantities of Biblical material which they then try to apply to contemporary situations and issues we shall start from the questions which are already matters of concern to them, and then turn to the Biblical insights to see what light they throw upon them (Penny, 1970:106).

On the other hand there ought to be familiarisation with sufficient content to be able to discuss and evaluate issues from a Biblical perspective. To educate involves, in the cognitive sphere at least, teaching the pupil some basic facts worth knowing. What is worth knowing must as a matter of logic, be true rather than false. (This matter of teaching truth is one to which I shall return.) Goldman points out as regards content, that many people believe that:

> If stories are encountered often enough, well taught, something of the meaning of them will rub off on the child even though the details will be forgotten (Goldman, 1965:6).

In this theory understanding is not so important, it is the power of the narrative that will leave its mark. This would seem to be educationally acceptable, providing we do not overlook the facts that Religious Education should be informative about religions, and through the process, the children should be able to sift and assimilate what they find of value. This theory shows one of the reasons why content is important without the problem associated with insisting that it has to be remembered, parrot fashion, to be reproduced to order. But this is not educationally acceptable if this 'rubbing off' means

that a kind of religious conditioning or indoctrination is occurring, so:

> ...that knowledge of the Bible will in an undefined and mystic way have a beneficial effect on the pupil and produce in him faith and moral character (Cox cited in Penny, 1970:80).

4.3.3.2 A sense of involvement in their education. Merely assimilating content does not make a person educated and neither will content make children Christian. We are concerned in education with what the children will become. The children needs help in a world of rapid social change to grow in personal maturity. We hope to be able to say in the future that they are educated people. This becoming something which they previously were not has occurred during the process of education. It has had a modifying effect on the children, and presumably for the better, since it is not normal to refer to a person as educated who has merely become skilled in anti-social behaviours and or anti-intellectual skills such as mindless rote learning. Because I am referring to a people becoming something better, being more in touch with their own authentic beings than they would otherwise have been without education, I am inferring that persons have willingly become involved in the education process. That is, that they have not only been through the process as if it were a mere initiation rite into adulthood, something having been 'done' to the children, such as pedagogics has required in the past, but that they have also experienced their schooling as of benefit to himself and so wanted to participate in it. They must have cooperated and taken at least some interest in the part they played and so have developed their inner selves before they can be said to be in any sense educated.

Hubery (1965:74) puts it a little differently with the idea that the child is like the centre of the circle around which education develops. Children do not start at point 'A' and move to point 'B' by being educated, rather, education causes them to explore the ever widening field of which they are the centre. To be educative Religious Education should extend the children's awareness of the forms of religion with which they will come into contact in their environments, so that, they can better interact with others and also be free to make choices as to their own religious affiliations.

This involvement best occurs, not from reading books or being told facts, but in the

experiences of practical encounters. Empiricism, which claimed that knowledge can only originate in experience, is the basis for the type of education pioneered by Froebel and Montessori.

> The kind of emphasis they gave ought not to be limited to nurseries or kindergartens, to primary schools or beginners. They are valid for all ages. Of course the nature of the experience changes with different age ranges but the principles can be applied throughout (Hubery, 1965:53).

This view has its validity but cannot be used uncritically in dealing with religious issues as many of them are unverifiable by the method of observation, and religious experiences often lie outside the possibility of observation by other people. They are not however meaningless to those involved in them as the logical-positivists would have us believe (Hick, 1963:94-95). Although religious experience is an important area of development it seems doubtful that the school is the place where we should practise it. Further religious experience involves a commitment by the participant in the religion and it is therefore not possible to have this kind of relationship with more than one religion, nor, of course, do we expect that scholars will necessarily have any religious commitments. Religious experience more rightly belongs in the religious communities of believers. However, in school, it may be possible for children to share their particular religious experiences with others by relating them and helping their classmates to enter into their interpretations of those experiences.

Religious Education will have to take very seriously the need for a more practical approach to the subject. Mxekezo noted in his motivation for his investigation that, in the Ciskei, the subject has been taught almost exclusively by the methods of Bible reading and story telling while the pupils sit passively. Methods are needed which involve pupils with the syllabus materials which they can be helped to relate to their every-day lives. Experience-based education should not just be a return to subjectivism as that advocated by some of Schleiermacher's followers (Lewis, 1965:89) because the children are living in a world with which they constantly need to interact. They will be better able to do this if they have a relationship with the world and a continuously increasing understanding of the world, even the many parts of it outside of their immediate experiences. Children also needs to be aware not only of how they view the world but also of how the world views them; so that they will be able to fulfil the roles

expected of them. Leslie Smith spoke of:

> ...the absolute necessity of seeing that our talk about God is firmly rooted in our pupil's "natural" experience of the world and other people (cited in Hubery, 1965:56).

I do not think that we should understand 'natural' as merely those experiences which happen automatically, nor would I advocate a return to the naturalistic fallacies of Rousseau; rather I would wish to interpret 'natural' as being the opposite of supernatural. In other words religious experience should not be something which the child experiences as removed from normal life, like a trip into the unreal world of Alice in Wonderland. Our talk about religions should relate to the needs, problems, puzzles, thrills, joys and sorrows of relationship which humanity faces and with which the children will have to grapple throughout their lives as they search for meaningful relationships and discovers their consequences for action.

Further our talk about religion should be open to any and all questions which are of concern to the children at their stage of development. There should not be 'no go' areas which the teacher refuses to discuss since all are on a journey of discovery and teachers, just as much as their children, should experience an educational transformation in the classroom. There are decisions to be made about the kind of experiences to which children should be exposed in Religious Education. Fowler (1987:121-4), writing specifically about Christian education, lists five experiences that have educative value for school children. He notes:-

1. Insight into creational law.
2. Maximum opportunity for the children to control creation.
3. Experiencing themselves in relation to the community.
4. Enlarging their experience of the world.
5. Being enlightened by the Word of God.

This would seem to be some guide as to how children, especially the younger ones, could be involved in Religious Education classes. A teacher must try to develop in pupils as genuine as possible an encounter with the real world by exposing them to the widest possible range of experiences. These experiences stimulate a varied vocabulary and will provide the children with words and symbols with which to evaluate and, if desired, participate in religious experience.

The criterion for an experience to be educative is certainly not quantity or even quality of content, but quality of involvement with the subject by the pupils in discovering themselves in relation to the world around them and in better understanding the world and its relationship to them.

4.3.3.3 Freedom to choose their own religious affiliation. I have never heard of an objection to children becoming educated since that is presumably one, at least, of the reasons why they are sent to school by their parents and one of the aims of state education; but the other kind of becoming referred to in the current syllabi, that of becoming a Christian, is not in the same category, since not all parents would agree that this change is, for their child, desirable. They do not all send their children to school to have them made Christian, although some parents may. It cannot be denied that many parents do want the school to evangelise their children. For example, Herman Bavinck, speaking of the goals of education says:

> ... the child must be formed to become 'the man of God, furnished completely unto every good work' (cited in Waterink, 1954:37).

In such a case there would be an argument for the provision of Christian education when it is requested, but not for it being given to all children by the state, nor for it aiming to convert children. There seems to be a degree of confusion between socialisation and true education. Socialisation:

> ... used by the guardians of the socio-political status quo in order to preserve their policies, programmes and practices and to ward off unwanted criticisms and evaluations of them (Kazepides, 1982:160),

and true education. Socialisation is, I believe, an appropriate task for parents. It would seem to be an inappropriate task for a state to involve itself in as it leads the state to:

> ...authoritarian structures, fear of open dialogue, questionable beliefs and false doctrines, blind commitment to beliefs, institutions and policies, misology, and an assortment of educationally illegitimate methods (Kazepides, 1982:161).

I cannot therefore agree with Rushdooney that:

> The function of education is thus to school persons in the ultimate values of a culture. This is inescapably a religious task. Education has always been a religious function of society and closely linked to religion (Rushdooney, 1981:3).

The goal of making a person Christian should not be confused with the goal of providing

education. Kazepides tries to argue that there can be no place for religious teaching in schools because it belongs to the area of learning called socialisation. He would be correct if we viewed, as has been done in the past, the task of religious education as essentially one of indoctrination. I believe his argument is invalid if in schools we seek to educate children, that is we help them to understand various religious perspectives and to subject them to reason.

There is especially a case to be argued that Religious Education (meaning Christian Education) when the community is predominately Christian, should have a place in all schools. This would seem to be valid since even if the children came from a home which does not wish to be Christian, the children still need to understand something about the religion which dominates the majority of their community. Education should not ignore all the spiritual possibilities of people. As Fowler reminds us, good:

> Education includes all that enables the human person to achieve fullness of humanity, expressed in fruitful relationships with God, neighbour and environment (Fowler, 1987:13).

The pupils, within the limits of their understanding, should have the opportunity to be involved in any, or all of these relationships. The possibilities of these relationships should be opened up for them so that they are given the freedom to make, as far as they are able, intelligent and independent decisions, without being manipulated by the authoritative and therefore powerful, teacher.

Some parents may wish to ask the school to provide education and encourage their children to become Christians. This would be possible, providing that the children's own measure of autonomy was not treated contemptuously. There seems no reason to suppose that parents, any more than anyone else, should have the right to brainwash their children. The children should be introduced to facts and shown how to use them to make, wherever possible, informed decisions. Young children should learn to explore and to judge and not just to accept one source of information as the only truth, right from the beginning of their educative schooling, before any system can subjugate their minds. Learning should not only aim at taking the children somewhere, it should also equip them and free them to go further later.

There are many popular schools in Southern Africa which have a Christian foundation and are available for parents who wish for this emphasis although, being private, many of them are very expensive. In practical terms, the choice of their children participating in these schools is removed from many parents. This means that, since the state presumably ought to give equal rights to all citizens, with choices which are equally accessible to all, there should be the provision of Christian schools in the state system. (For that matter schools with other religious emphasis which are significantly represented in the community should be available for those who wish to use them.) Some parents would agree with Waterink who said that if he were asked to give a single sentence definition of education it would be:

> The forming of man into an independent personality serving God according to His word, able and willing to employ all his God given talents to the honour of God and for the well being of his fellow-creatures, in every area of life in which man is placed by God (Waterink, 1954:41).

The private Christian schools, for example Kwasizabantu, Kingswood, Treverton, Epworth inter alia do not restrict their entrants to those coming from Christian families but they do aim to ensure that:

> Those being educated will be made aware of the connection between the Christian faith and the education programme in which they are involved (Fowler, 1987:10).

In other words, if the school is really Christian in ethos, it will not seek to brainwash the children as this is not morally justifiable from any perspective and certainly antithetical to the perspective of Christian ethics, but it will aim to make them aware of their perceived value of the Christian option. Christians believe that all people are created in God's image and are therefore deserving of uniquely caring relationships between themselves and others. Truly Christian education will therefore seek to uphold the autonomy of the child and encourage authentic expressions of self. It is not so much what is said, but the attitudes of teachers and the loving care given to the children which will be the Christian influence in these schools. It is not the policy but the teachers:

> ...who may decide whether tomorrow's citizens will be Christian or pagan (Hubery, 1965:16).

There is a difference between open evangelism and proselytising from a position of authority and power. In a school which is openly Christian, evangelism would seem to be acceptable when issues are clarified and pressures are minimal but proselytising would

not. (In fact the compulsory Religious Education of the past, has in many cases, been counterproductive to its stated evangelistic aims because it has been imposed by a repressive government and therefore encouraged the rejection of Christianity by the very act of seeking to enforce it.) For parents who wish for a Christian school education for their children the school would then be an extension of the Christian home. In the Judaeo-Christian tradition the home is expected to nurture the young in the faith and it was, according to Taylor:

> Western man's neglect of this which led to the shift of responsibility to the schools (Taylor, 1960:143).

It makes good educational sense if the school is an extension of the home in its religious orientation because the child is not then going to be subjected to opposing agendas but it is surely the responsibility of the home and the church, or community equivalent, to look after faith issues, not the school. The school has no right to undermine the teaching of the home unless the people of the society subscribe to the view that the people are for the benefit of the state and not that the state is there for the benefit of the people. True education has as its focus the individual, but it is the individual in society, not the individual as tyrant. Traditionally in Southern Africa, and today in the political statements of the majority of parties, it is clear that the cry is for democracy and the establishment of a government for the good of the people.

4.3.3.4 An education which encourages understanding. The role of the Religious Education teacher is to help the pupils to understand what it is that people of different religions profess and believe so that pupils will be in a position to make informed choices.

> Education principles were drawn from the Greek philosophers since they were regarded as the leaders of thought in the realm of nature... This led to a heavy emphasis on intellectual development in education... In their view it is the intellect that alone can lead us to an understanding of the world and to answers for living in the world (Fowler, 1987:181).

Education, it seems to me, ought to be concerning itself with breadth and depth of understanding and how to encourage this intellectual development in all pupils. Religious Education is the subject which should concern itself with the underlying principles of life and which therefore ought to be discussing the world and the answers

to living in it.

> An open, plural, crosscultural, and interdisciplinary study of religion in public schools is consistent with international developments in religion education... This approach engages religion in generic terms as an important human activity, like politics, economics, or literature, that students should know about if they are to be educated...It is a programme for studying about religion, in all its many forms, as an important dimension of human experience and a significant subject field in the school curriculum (Institute, 1992:15).

That being so, Religious Education should not be ignored in schools. It can provide the pupils with tools to understand the basis and philosophy, not only of its own subject matter, but also of other subjects. This is because a study of religions, rightly conducted, does not just accept things at face value but constantly asks for reasons 'why?'. This is a very different evaluation of the purpose of Religious Education from the quite opposite function in which it has been imprisoned in the past where it was used to indoctrinate children with ready made answers which could not be questioned. An example of this autocratic, doctrinaire approach occurred in 1992 at the Cape College. It came to light when the Religious Education students questioned the marking of their exam papers by their lecturer. One example of a question in dispute was that they had been asked when the birthday of the church was. Their answers had expressed various opinions, such as, the resurrection and the crucifixion which can be, and have been, argued to be the birthday of the church by theologians. Their answers were marked incorrect because the textbook for Religious Education stated that the day of Pentecost was the birthday of the church. The lecturer was unwilling to accept any other possibilities.

A broad educational approach will be of value to all pupils. Although those with more aptitude will probably question further than their less able classmates, the quality of learning which will occur should be of benefit to all. Further, the subject will not be experienced as a threat by those who do not wish to be committed to a religious view of life and certainly there will be space for a variety of views which can be discussed as equal partners, not on the presupposition that one view is right and the one which the other child is expressing is automatically wrong. This quality education will largely be determined by the ways in which the teaching is handled and so is fundamentally dependent on teachers who are themselves educated and wish to educate.

Education cannot be tied down to a specific competency. The type of learning needed consists of:

> ...learning initially, not a skill but a general idea, which can then be used as a basis of recognising subsequent problems as special cases of the idea originally mastered (Bruner, cited in Russell, 1967:30).

Russell goes on to explain that such learning involves intuitive thinking and stresses interest in the material as the main source of learning motivation. It is, for example, possible to give Bible centred teaching which presents facts but does not communicate inner truth and this should be avoided. It is to be hoped that as many children as possible should progress from the 'general idea' to grasping the underlying principles and then to developing the ability to use those principles in an intelligent, independent, discriminating and sensible way when faced with the complexities of life and so obtain new insights into life.

> For a man to be educated it is insufficient that he should posses a mere know-how or knack. He must also have some body of knowledge and some kind of conceptual scheme to raise this above the level of a collection of disjointed facts. We would not call a man who was merely well informed an educated man. He must also have some understanding of the 'reason why' of things (Peters, 1969:30).

The sort of religious teaching in schools in the past which has angered many people in Southern Africa is that which appears to prescribe, dictate and limit freedom of thought: which is Pedagogical in character, seeking to lead the children to become what the adults, in this case, the government, has decided they ought to be. Morrow suggests that:

> A central feature of orthodox Pedagogical thought is the contention that the attainment of adulthood provides the overarching goal of education (Morrow, 1989:76).

This attainment of adulthood was to be characterised by a conforming to norms. It was the sort of 'education', so called, where the children were not encouraged to develop and think for themselves but one where they were being moulded, not even with reference to their own communities, but as dictated by rulers of, for the majority of people, another culture. The cause of Christianity has been done enormous harm because it has been, quite wrongly, equated by many with Afrikaans culture.

4.3.3.5 Freedom. The idea of freedom is important in education. Freedom, to be good, will always have limits. It must be a freedom with restraints such that it does not infringe on one's own rights or the rights of others. My neighbours, because of their humanity, would claim the freedom to live and society supports that freedom because it is made up of individuals who also want the freedom to live. If my freedom seeks to impinge on that right of my neighbours, society will dictate that their freedom to live has priority over my freedom to kill them. The liberty to have a free conscience, like the right to life, has long been accepted as an inalienable right of persons and education would lose its necessary goodness if it infringed on this right. Freedom and liberty are closely related to personal power. A person is not free when prevented by others from using personal initiative, nor free when told what to think. Education should be such that it encourages freedom of thought together with sufficient understanding of life and the demands of social interaction and survival to regulate that thought such that it does not lead to antisocial actions. Education therefore should increase persons' range of freedoms; that is, it should open up new ways of being in the world and help people to become authentically themselves by the exercise of personal autonomy.

> Underlying the whole notion of autonomy is an idea of being true to oneself, that one's thoughts and actions are in some sense an expression of one's true self (Bonnett, 1978:55).

Education should enhance the degree and volume of possibilities open to the pupils but at the same time it should make them aware of values and norms so that they can use their freedom wisely and for the common good in a manner which society, as a whole, deems desirable. They should develop a conscience and a sense of responsibility and so Bonnett is able to speak of children making 'informed choices' and notes that in order for the pupils to do this they will have to be required to:

> ...participate in all those activities which, it is held, cannot be adequately understood ...without participation (Bonnett, 1978:51).

In the classroom there will be a tension between the teacher's authority and the pupils' freedom. The teacher exerts norms but the pupils can choose.

> A normal school will not be a situation where the teacher teaches while the pupils simply receive what is taught, but neither will it be a situation where the teacher does no more than remove obstacles in the way of the spontaneous learning of the child. Each participates actively according to the special office he has (Fowler, 1987:100).

Fowler continues by stating:

> The teacher then, must not see it as his role to give the child detailed direction so that all he needs to do is follow instructions. From his earliest days in school the child should be encouraged, even required to take initiatives and make decisions (Fowler, 1987:101).

An educative approach to teaching occurs when the teacher is seen as facilitator, consultant on the fringe of maximum activity, which occurs where the pupils are. The pupils should not be 'psychologically overwhelmed' (Bonnett, 1978:58). This approach throws the emphasis onto the pupils' need to develop their own methods of working and acquiring knowledge and skills; they become active learners. They will become self-aware and able to say 'I care and I think...'

The Institute for Comparative Religion in Southern Africa states that when the school study of religions allows for a free exploration of diversity in beliefs then:

> A programme in religion education is consistent with constitutional guarantees of human and civil rights to freedom of religion, thought and conscience (Institute, 1992:17).

4.3.3.6 Not indoctrination. What should be considered carefully if religion is to have a place in educative schooling is the difference between presenting religion as possibly leading to faith, and indoctrination. A fear which is often expressed is that religious teaching easily becomes indoctrination. There could be a case for making a distinction between preaching, which has often occurred in the classroom, and genuine teaching. Preaching is inclined to be authoritarian and dogmatic. This is generally felt not to be educationally acceptable as it removes freedom. The important point is that there should be critical openness. 'Freedom of Religion' and 'Freedom of Association' are essential in any truly educative system. The freedom to participate and the freedom to withdraw from any religious persuasion or practice is essential. Elvin says indoctrination is:

> ...a persistent and explicit endeavour to make someone accept a belief as true without fair consideration of alternatives (Elvin, 1977:68).

If children are going to be able to give fair consideration to alternatives they will have to be aware of possibilities and so freedom does not mean the freedom to withdraw from learning about any aspects of life as objective facts and seeking to evaluate them.

Indoctrination seeks to make everyone think in the same way. Christians view people as individuals of intrinsic value to God and endowed by God with the ability and freedom to think for themselves. Further, Christians believe that it is the work of the Holy Spirit, not other Christians to convince people of the truths about Christ. Speaking of Christian teachers in England, Hubery writes:

> Most teachers in this country shrink from the idea that they should assist in propaganda and indoctrination. They feel that Christ's link between truth and freedom is sacred and they cannot accept a philosophy of education which trains children above all to be good Communists, for example, or good Fascists.... Teaching... which brings pressure to bear upon other persons offends against true respect for personality and is in fact evidence of a lack of faith in the proper function of the Holy Spirit (Hubery, 1965:50).

It is unfortunately the case that not all, so-called, Christian teachers in Southern Africa in the past have appreciated the importance of this principle. Christian and educational principles agree that people should be encouraged to think for themselves. From the Christian perspective it is believed that people were created in God's own image and granted personal autonomy.

This does not however mean that it makes sense for individuals to think exactly what they like and remain reasonable. People may, and do, have their own, sometimes bizarre, thoughts but we would not accept them as educated opinions unless they are thoughts supported by coherent, informed, reasoning. There are boundaries and it is the job of education to guide the children to establish reasonable boundaries for themselves as they come to discover and appreciate the options. There are certain commonly accepted facts which the children need to take cognisance of before adopting a particular stance on any particular subject. For example, it is not reasonable to believe that the moon is made of green cheese since it is established that it is not, by the collecting of rock samples from there. We must not however confuse what is known by the scientific method with the value realm of knowledge where there are propositions which are not empirically verifiable. This is where the question of what is reasonable belief, in the realm of religion, becomes a difficult, but not necessarily impossible, one. There are those who would argue that one kind of impossible belief would be when the person holds two beliefs which are mutually exclusive from a logical perspective. This would

bother a person with a Western philosophical outlook much more perhaps than those from other philosophical contexts. There are a variety of beliefs which, although not verifiable empirically, can be deduced as reasonable because of other factors. These would fall into a category like that of loving where the way one person treats another furnishes enough evidence to accept that their claim to love is reasonable. Similarly Christians claim that true Christian faith should produce observably Christian behaviour, giving evidence of faith. These are complex issues but they are pertinent to the way in which teachers present 'facts' to the children.

Indoctrination, therefore, has aims and practices which are at odds with those of education. Green (1971:32) maintains that indoctrination and instruction, which he equates with teaching, have differing success criteria; the former seeking to produce belief without interaction with appropriate evidence whilst he believes instruction means knowledge which is introduced to the child and which the child is encouraged to evaluate. Green does say however that the two overlap being:

> ...alike in formation of knowledge and belief (Green, 1971:32).

Green's assessment that they overlap raises suspicions that in fact they are, although not exactly the same thing, far too closely related for instruction to be considered as educative teaching. Educative teaching would, I believe, avoid actually instructing a child since instructing is conceptually part of indoctrination. Scheffler says:

> To teach, in the standard sense, is at some point, at least, to submit oneself to the understanding and independent judgement of the pupil, to his demand for reasons, to his sense of what constitutes an adequate explanation. To teach someone that such and such is the case is not merely to try to get him to believe it, teaching involves further that we try also to get him to believe it for reasons, that within his capacity to grasp, are our reasons. Teaching in this way requires us to reveal our reasons to the student, and by so doing to submit them to his evaluation and criticism (Scheffler, cited in Green, 1971:29).

Religious belief is a very personal thing and must remain the intelligent choice of the individual concerned.

> Good teaching is hostile to hostility, it is closed to a closed mentality, it is prejudiced against prejudice, it is against narrowness, it is opposed to indifference, it is in dialogue with the real world from which young people spring. The problem after all is not the problem of what the teacher believes, it is not this problem of belief, it is the problem of insight. It is

therefore important that the teacher should be reflective (Smart, 1966:15).

Even in the case of bad teaching, despite doctrinaire methods it is fortunate that, as recent history has shown, no teacher can at the end of the day guarantee to control a pupil's religious affiliations or lack of them.

> No one can give us religion, manufacture our belief or change our behaviour for us. Fundamentally we must grow as persons towards God, and although many things external to us can help or impede our development our religious growth is an individual and personal encounter with the divine (Goldman, 1965:11).

4.3.3.7 An interest in knowing what is true. There is probably a qualitative difference between indoctrinating what is believed to be true and what is known to be false. People are unfortunately tempted to use doctrinaire methods when they believe that they are 'doing good' but the end does not justify the means because it commits, en route, an action which is not good when it fails to respect the integrity of the individual. I have tried to establish that there is no place for deliberate indoctrination in education and certainly not in Christian education, even if the teacher is convinced of the truth of what is being advocated.

> ... 'neutrality' is a fiction now exposed as impossible and , indeed, unwanted. Talk about 'procedural neutrality' and 'neutral chairpersons' will continue, and there is a fresh welcome emphasis on professionalism in the classroom. But being Christian, and being known to be Christian, is no longer written off as indoctrinatory, except by those too old to change the views they got in the 60's (Martin, 1989:147).

It is clear that even the most careful of teachers will most likely have an influence on their pupils. It is very important that, as far as possible, the teacher should be coherent, consistent, truthful, accurate and precise but not dogmatic. Even then it cannot be presumed that what the teacher is teaching is the truth. The teacher may be profoundly mistaken and sincerely wrong. Education is a pursuit in which teacher and pupils seek after truth.

Although it is a fact that we have no criterion of truth at our disposal, by which we can evaluate anything, or everything, the idea that truth is totally indescribable is self defeating. Teachers should be aware, always on the watch for error and fallacy, and

always ready to think further, read more and discuss with others anything which strikes them as incoherent or incongruous as these may be pointers to untruths. Teachers ought not to be satisfied with hasty generalisations, false analogies and slanted arguments. Care needs to be taken not to use words with double or shifting meanings. To be a good teacher a person must have an interest in truth. To play a role in the formation of a love for truth in pupils the teacher will have to be a thinking, deciding person who has developed valid personal opinions which can be supported with accurate facts whilst at the same time not forcing personal conclusions on others. There is an enormous overlap between the various value systems in differing religions and these truths must be shown to be just that, namely agreed truth.

Religious language does deal with a lot of issues which are not susceptible to being verified or for that matter falsified, but this does not make them meaningless. Although these do not even get to the stage of being true or false they must be taken seriously. All hope of teaching anything to do with religion will have to be abandoned if we adopt a position of philosophical 'scientism'. This view would insist that religion cannot in principle be right because it has to do with God and God lies beyond scientific enquiry so the pursuit of the topic has no meaning. Positivism would have us accept that religion, being value-based has no meaning. There is no reason why science should be acclaimed as a substitute for God in being the final word on all questions. Cohen (1980:25) notes the dehumanising effect of the application of the scientific method to social sciences. He says that it depersonalizes human acts when we try to quantify them or objectify them by the scientific method. It was this 'illusion of objectivity' from which Kierkegaard, in his existential approach, wanted to set people free.

Educationists have to recognise that religion is part of many people's lives and has meaning to them. It is part of many children's relationship to life and the truth of what is believed is perceived as critical, both in living and in dying, and cannot therefore be conveniently abandoned on philosophical grounds. It is inadequate to leave the young without a set of possible symbols by which to express and conceptualize their own sense of reality merely because there are problems involved which cannot be neatly answered. Rushdooney says that:

> Herman Dooyeweerd has amply demonstrated that all theoretical thought rests on basically and essentially religious presuppositions which provide the framework for theoretical thinking. Theoretical thought is thus the product of pre-theoretical religious assumptions (Rushdooney, 1981:4).

The simple solution to the teacher's dilemma is of course that the teacher states a personal opinion of what is right and what is wrong about the religions which are being taught. This was often the course taken in the past, the Bible being offered as infallible proof. More recently Liberal Theology tried to discard the idea of the Bible and Church tradition as proof and looked to propositions of an ethical kind but this only served to substitute one set of propositions for another. No set of propositions can be used as infallible proof of anything unless the individual is first convinced of the veracity of the claim of the source of the propositions to be absolute. It does not of course follow that because individuals are convinced of the truth of their suppositions, although they are entitled to their opinions and their suppositions may lie within what is reasonable, that they can claim to have absolute truth, although, having evaluated all the avenues open to them, if they are convinced of the veracity of their sources, they must proceed on their assumptions. If we deny this possibility they will never be able to move at all since they will have no ground upon which to stand. It is, however, unacceptable for a teacher to be inflexibly dogmatic and judgmental. A teacher should respect others with differing opinions and also be open to thinking through over and over and over again any issues which are raised but the teacher does need to form personal opinions. The teacher could adopt a completely relativist philosophy and give the impression that all views are one and have the same epistemological basis and, therefore, what is believed is of no importance. The pupils would then be justified in wondering why they were bothering to consider the issues at all.

There is a third option open to teachers which is to describe what the differing opinions of truth are without offering personal value judgments. The teacher will have to be bothered about the children being free to discuss what is false for them to be truly interested in discovering truth. There are occasions when the teacher must referee while the pupils discuss issues from possibly opposing positions. This is not to say that the teacher will abandon all interest in what constitutes truth but will have to be very careful

to help the pupils to evaluate issues. If truth, as a theoretical possibility, is denied, then all ideas are equally valid and equally false, their status lies in their utility and instrumentality, nothing more. Adler warns us about such subjective truth when he said:

> The Nazi argument for killing Jews was a position that could not be refuted in a world of relative morality and ethics. Who would condemn Hitler for murdering six million Jews if their extinction was 'his truth'. To argue that he was wrong, if you are a relativist, is fallacious because your own definition of truth entitles Hitler as much right to his view as you to yours (Adler, cited in Martin, 1989:104).

It is important that teachers be equipped to set forth arguments to support the historical reliability of sources upon which their opinions rest. Smart reminds us:

> That religion brings with it doubt and perplexity, both intellectual and moral, which is perhaps after all no bad thing. It makes possible the deepening of insight, it reflects the nature of the divine encounter, it safeguards the free creativity of man (Smart, 1966:180).

Absolute proof of absolute truth is not possible. As human beings we have to be content with approaching the truth as closely as possible from the considered perceptions which we have and be content with approximations.

> It would thus appear that knowledge of the truth, in the sense of something that is what it is by itself and through itself and cannot be otherwise, is inaccessible to human understanding. Man knows only truth perspectives that are methodologically constituted from various types of his contingent experience (Rauche, 1990:5).

Rauche goes on to add that:

> Scientific knowledge is methodologically constituted by the mind from a specific type of human experience in the same way that ... religious knowledge is constituted.... Belief in Maths as true is not verifiable but provides a basis and a hypothesis on which logic proceeds. African Traditional Religion and Christianity both assume truth and so build different superstructures (Rauche, 1990:7&14).

Religious Education must not fall into the trap of teaching total relativism, so that no truth exists except that people are, and that they realise themselves in and through society. The end result of this position is humanism and a denial of the validity of any religion in which case teaching Religious Education would be a complete waste of time. John Dewey followed this path and ended with the conclusion that orthodox Christianity, with its belief in truth and error, is irreconcilable with a democratic society. This kind of humanistic relativism is as far removed from African Traditional Religious belief as

it is from Christianity and therefore probably unacceptable to most Xhosa.

4.3.3.8 A suitable curriculum. The type of curriculum current in Southern Africa arose because the state took over church schools. The Tomlinson report records that the majority of churches were in favour of this, especially as the report goes on to reassure the churches '...that religious education should be accorded its full rights in the schools' (1955:155). This was to reassure the churches who were being compelled, by legislation, to hand over the work of many years and not a decision which was justified by educational criteria. The Tomlinson report (1955:155) goes on to explain that the church will continue to have responsibilities for the teaching of Religious Education; that it will have to see that Bible instruction in schools is carried out properly and says that Church and State will have to launch a joint effort. The report did not recognise that the church is not:

> ...the God-ordained institution responsible for the education of children in the first instance (Perks, 1992:119).

The report notes that there are a large number of the 'Bantu' who are still unconverted and also mentions the particular need for adult education. This would seem to be a better argument for the church to continue its missionary activities than for the retention of Religious Education in schools. Thus although it is not clear from the educational perspective why Religious Education should have specific rights history does help to explain why Religious Education is in a class of its own and therefore producing unique problems. Many of the problems documented by Kili and Mxekezo result from the thinking that the school can function in an area relating to faith which ought to be the responsibility of the church. Furthermore faith is personal and therefore should be participated in on a voluntary basis and not forced onto children in a compulsory school system. The recommendations of the De Lange report ask schools to perform functions which seem to me to be outside of those which are acceptable in a school situation since they relate to developing faith more than to cognitive development. The De Lange Report on Education states that one of the aims of institutionalized education is:

> Formative religious education, i.e. to give the person taught an opportunity to experience formative religious education in accordance with his own convictions (1981:118).

(I have dealt with the issue of personal convictions under 4.3.3.3)

According to the current syllabi this is to be done in two ways, in the School Assemblies and in the Religious Education lessons. These should be, if possible, conducted in the mother tongue. There should be three periods a week given to this study. The syllabi envisage that the teachers are Christians under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, fulfilling a specific missionary calling in the classroom and refers to them as:

> ...those who are enabled to do so by this same Holy Spirit and who are constantly under His guidance ... the teachers must consider themselves as fellow workers with the Holy Spirit (St 6 Syllabus).

The contents of the Syllabi cover a wide area in some considerable detail under a general heading for the year, for example:

Sub	A	The fact that God loves.
	B	The effect that love brings in people.
St	1	Ways in which God's love is revealed.
	2	Fulfilment of love in the lives of people.
	3	God's love in Jesus Christ, the preparation in the O.T. for the N.T..
	4	God's love uses people: Israel in the O.T., Church in the N.T.
	5	Aim of God's love in individuals, nations, and in Church for the work of redemption.
	6	Requirements of love for God and fellow human beings.

It is envisaged that practical religious exercises such as praying, Bible reading and hymn singing should form part of the lessons as well as being included in Assemblies. The:

> ...stress in Religious Education falls upon the meeting between God and man (Subject Policy, 15).

There is to be an atmosphere created by these which is then conducive to the teaching of the Christian faith. There is a disregard for the possibility that a teacher might be antagonistic to Christianity and totally unable to engage in activities such as prayer. Tests are advocated at the end of each section, and exams midyear, and at the end of the year. There is a suggestion that discussion, dramatisation and visual aids are used. The tests are dependent on the content laid down which is Bible content. The St 6 syllabus states its first aim as 'The primary purpose is to lead the pupil through teaching and example to meet, to know and to love God' (St 6 Aim p.1). It goes on to say 'The

secondary purpose is to educate the child to live a truly devout life' and concludes by stating 'The true test whether the love of God is shed in the heart of man is laid down in the Scripture' and goes on to quote the keeping of commandments and love of other people. This is educationally unacceptable, if for no other reason, than that the aims do not coincide with what is to be tested.

All the recommendations of the De Lange report and the current Religious Education syllabi are messages from the churches, predominately, the Dutch Reformed Church, and not educationally justifiable with the possible exception noted above in 4.3.3.3,namely for those parents who request Christian education. Furthermore it is totally unrealistic. It presumes, mistakenly, that all the teachers giving Religious Education lessons will be convinced, committed Christians and sets up criteria for success which cannot be tested in a school.

If schools are to have some form of religious education some principles should be established which could be applied when constructing a syllabus. Penny, quoting Dale states:

> What we need is a syllabus which never loses sight of children and young people and their teachers... takes into account all we have learned about the needs of young people, firmly based on their needs and set in the world in which they live and dealing with the questions they ask (Penny, 1970:88).

A syllabus has to be educationally justifiable and have an acceptable philosophical basis for its community context. Penny suggests certain needs that the syllabus ought to meet:-

1) To explain life, its purpose and meaning in a scientific age.
2) The need to evaluate truth.
3) How to deal with human values and the fact of their collapse in this age.
4) To give knowledge of being a citizen, locally and in a world context.
5) To take into account the vast amount of discovered knowledge that relates to the Bible, for example archaeology and palaeontology.
6) To see the Christian faith as a small period compared to the age of the world.
7) Always to keep the children in view.

Goldman, a disciple of Piaget, has the constant request that the child's readiness is considered. He believes that when the child enters school the teacher needs to start with the familiar things; where the child is: there are family, friends and the world around as well as some idea that the child is a particular person.

> This latter becomes a starting point for most of the important religious concepts he will need in order to understand the Christian faith (Goldman, 1965:45).

In this way the Christian faith will come to the child, related to him, and not as an imposition from outside.

A general aim in education is usually given along the lines that children should be prepared to become independent, self-reliant adults who fit into their social group responsibly and acceptably. If this is accepted as reasonable, then it follows that any aims for religious education will have to be in agreement with this very general aim of the school. Van der Stoep and Louw (1984:226) suggest that there are three criteria which should be applied to select the content of what is taught in any subject namely:-

1) It must ensure that a series of objectives is within reach of the learner.
2) The nature of the content must be such that it integrates with other areas of knowledge.
3) The content must contribute to the overall curriculum and have a general orientating value.

Religious education was made compulsory in England in the 1944 Education Act and it was to be basically Christian in character although individual areas were able to draw up syllabi. The Inner London syllabus of 1968 says:

> It (R.E.) is concerned with the whole person and it involves helping children grow into mature and responsible people (Penny, 1970:32).

As Britain became increasingly religiously diverse various important aspects were researched and changes made so that a religious education programme suitable for a multi-faith society was developed, but still predominantly Christian since that is a true reflection of British religious life. These new ideas are reflected in the 1988 Education Act. Children's religious education should not, for example, alienate them from their culture which is what has been the case for many in the past. The syllabus needs to be

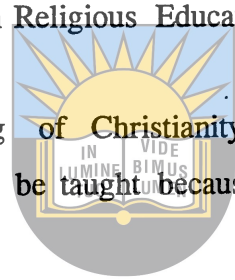
practical for teachers to use and be acceptable to them and the children, and others with a vested interest.

> This calls for a much more indirect method of religious education in which the wonder of God's world in nature, animals, the sky, and all experiences which come naturally to him can be surrounded by the assumption, often unspoken by the teacher, that all this is part of the divine creation (Goldman, 1965:47).

Much has been written on the topic since:

> Religion, of course, is not just a matter of religious doctrines, it involves moral injunctions, rituals of worship and institutions (Dearden, 1971:300).

Put succinctly, it combines creed, code, cult and community. Little wonder then that a wide variety of aims can be found in Religious Education syllabi.



Goldman, advocating the teaching of Christianity, gives the following reasons (1965:58/59). He says that it should be taught because:

1) it is true,

2) it answers the deepest needs of human nature,

3) without it men and women will live impoverished lives.

Goldman gives as the aims of Religious Education the following list:-

1) Moral Training, because the relationship with God, found in Jesus Christ, gives the power to implement right living. He points out that Christianity does not have a command for every eventuality, in that sense it is not just moral training, rather it gives moral freedom.

2) Cultural Appreciation. As society is indebted to the Judaeo-Christian heritage there is a need to know about it.

3) A Missionary Purpose, that is, to convince the child to become a Christian. A child has to know what a Christian is before being able to decide to be one, or not, and the school may be the best, or only, opportunity to hear the 'facts' and make an informed decision.

4) To enable the child to interpret all experiences, physical, emotional and intellectual and to find self-fulfilment at the deepest level of human existence, to be able to have freedom to develop, to find a personal identity, integrity, and be able to choose values

without acquiring a morbid sense of sin. The possibility is then that God will be found to be an authority on which to lean, a source of moral standards, and a reason for living.

Penny has a similar analysis. He says of Religious Education, quoting Matthews:

> We must see religious education as an integral part of the study of life and experience as a whole and not mainly as a separate lesson period (cited in Penny, 1970:32).

He also notes the importance of worship which is for participation, not for learning about. He gives the moral aim but notes the problem that Christianity is more than a moral system and should not be used just to get morals right because this ignores the question of truth and also has the danger that a rejection of Christianity is automatically a rejection of a moral life style. He notes too that in fact it is a fallacy to suggest that the Bible has clear moral directives on all issues since Christian morality is based, not on law keeping, but on a relationship.

Penny also discusses the Missionary/Evangelical aim and makes the point that only some aspects of religion can be taught. In referring to the Missionary aim he also thinks the chance for all to hear the gospel is important but cautions against an authoritarian approach. He believes children should be introduced to a religious view of life and then allowed to make up their own minds. Speaking of the social/cultural aim he says:

> No boy or girl can be counted as properly educated unless he or she has been made aware of the fact of a religious interpretation of life (1956 C.E.D.Syllabus cited in Penny, 1970:77).

This contrasts with the aim given in the Ciskeian Syllabus which states:

> In this subject, with love as the theme, the main goal is not what we have taught the pupil to know; nor is the main goal what we have taught the pupil to do. It is what the pupil has learnt to be, the knowledge to become a person who has genuine love (Standard 6 Religious Education, 1).

The syllabus goes on to divide the aim into a primary and a secondary purpose:

> The primary purpose is to lead the pupil through teaching and example to meet, to know and to love God

and:

> The secondary purpose is to educate the child to live a truly devout life.

The primary aim is therefore in the category given above as the Missionary aim and the secondary aim is close to being in the category of a moral purpose. Neither is exactly

acceptable as an educational aim.

The Zimbabwe Religious Education programme has aimed at the Cambridge Overseas exam as its final academic goal. It was believed that it was important that the Christianity taught was acceptable to the main core of church belief. The Syllabus states (page 2):

> The Aims of the syllabus are to provide an opportunity for students to:-
> 1. understand themselves, their hopes, desires and struggles in the light of a faith in God;
> 2. appreciate the views of those whose faith differs from their own and grow in ability to relate to them;
> 3. study key events in the Biblical story and be able to make a reasoned comment on the texts studied; and see how God leads people through life to salvation;
> 4. grow in the ability to make and carry out responsible choices concerning attitudes, values and behaviour in religious and moral matters.

In the methodology section there are 4 steps given:-

> Step 1. Explore with the student an experience of his own life.
> Step 2. Help him broaden his understanding of this experience by studying similar experiences of other people.
> Step 3. Help him to interpret these insights in the light of God's revelation.
> Step 4. Help the student to evaluate his experience and live accordingly.

Since 1986 a group of people from the University of Zimbabwe have been working to produce a resource book for Religious Education containing an African Traditional Religious component to be used within a multi-faith Religious Education curriculum. The idea is to continue to teach Christianity as it is the predominant world faith in Zimbabwe but in dialogue with African Traditional Religion with which the majority of Zimbabwians are, to a greater or lesser extent, still involved.

In Britain religious education became compulsory in the 1944 Education Act and areas had the power to determine their syllabi within the framework of Christianity. The Syllabus of Bromley, South London ([sa]:1), commences with a heading, 'General Aims' in which it states:

> The aims of R.E. embody the aims of education as a whole:- to enable the

> pupil to recognise and develop his personal attitudes and talents; to relate different bodies of knowledge to each other; to consider some of the deeper aspects of the human situation. It involves "initiating people into various modes of thought and activity in such a way that they are helped to become better informed, more understanding and more reasonable in the sphere of religion" (John Wilson).

The syllabus goes on to say the subject is not just facts to be learned. It looks at the Judaeo-Christian and other religious beliefs to encourage children to reflect, seek answers to ultimate questions and if they wish, to commit themselves to any specific religion, but this is not an indication that the tuition has succeeded. Separate, more detailed aims are given for each year. In the Secondary School, Year 1 is groundwork, Year 2 and Year 3 deal with the historical side whilst Year 4 and Year 5 take a broad view, encompassing most aspects of life.

Gradually, however, as the country became more diverse religiously there was the need to reflect and adapt policies. The English Education Reform Act of 1988 adopted the stance that Religious Education should be broadly Christian but takes other religions into account and handles them, without prejudice, as comparative religions.

Zambia has a multi-faith, thematic approach drawing on several different religions for each theme but it was stated at a Zambian course for teachers that:

> The Religious Education syllabus does NOT teach world religion. Nor does it select from different religions to compare them with the other. It is NOT a threat to anyone's belief. It does not undermine the work of any religious body which runs a school. Such schools have their own ethos, that is based on their beliefs (Institute, 1992:69).

The new Namibian syllabus is said to be contributing to the positive transformation of the society. There is a strong connection between morality and religion. It claims to study religions but in fact since:

> It is well known that most Namibians are Christians...the Bible will feature as the primary point of departure throughout the syllabus (Namibian syllabus, cited in Institute, 1992:81).

The Institute for Comparative Religion in Southern Africa has produced some considerations as a result of consultations held in Cape Town. The booklet produced

in 1992 is entitled Religion in Public Education: Policy Options For a New South Africa. It suggests that the curriculum should be based on an educational, developmental exploration of religion.

> For example, students at junior primary level could begin a study of religious diversity found in churches, mosques, synagogues, temples, and other material forms of religious life. At primary level, students could begin studying the basic component phenomena of religion, such as stories, songs, sacred places, founders, rituals, festivals, and so on, with illustrations drawn from various religious traditions in South Africa and the world (Institute, 1992:16).

The report goes on to make further suggestions, developed from this foundation, for children in higher standards. The suggestion is that primary school children can learn by exploring things which can be touched, heard or seen, for example, holy days and places. These categories are easily applicable to Christianity, Islam and Hinduism but rather more difficult to use as suggestions for the study of African Traditional Religions. It is said that senior primary pupils can start thinking about the historical traditions and actual religious systems and then finally in secondary school they will try to study the religions as living, personal experiences of those who adhere to them (Institute, 1992:41,42).

The report (Institute, 1992:39-41) lists ways in which Religion education can be viewed:-

- as the study of the component phenomena of religion.
- as the study of religious systems.
- as the study of the history of religious traditions.
- as the study of religious experience.
- as the study of the interface between religion and society.

These suggestions would seem to fit well into the framework which I have sought to develop in this and the previous chapter although a problem which is pointed out by this report is that it is often difficult, or even impossible, to get persons of the various religious persuasions to accept a common syllabus (Institutes, 1992:61).

What, therefore, would be reasonable educational arguments to use to determine the curriculum which would be best for religious teaching in the schools of the Eastern Cape Province? I will discuss the broad content of the subject in the following chapter but at

this point it is necessary to clarify that I do not intend to equate Religious Education with Christianity as has been done in the past. However no educational system can be completely value-free although some are more value-centred than others which have a more open-ended approach. As Ciskeians claimed for the most part an adherence to Christianity, as noted under 4.2, it would seem reasonable to adopt a curriculum similar to that suggested for Zimbabwe with the same kind of philosophy as that advocated by the English Education Reform Act.

An option which the National Education Policy investigation (1992:72) suggests is that school studies become more integrated and move away from a discipline-based curriculum. It is pointed out that theme teaching and a multidisciplinary approach allows for:

> ... an emphasis on conceptual skills and a more task oriented and participatory learning process. Introducing integrated social studies may also be the basis for a more open-ended and flexible curriculum, for regional variations in curriculum development, and for school-based curriculum development (National Education Policy Investigation, 1992:72).

Integrated studies have been increasingly tried, often unofficially, in primary schools in South Africa.

In England there has been a considerable shift to this kind of teaching over the past twenty years, at first in primary education and more lately in secondary schools although the current National Curriculum (1988) delineates separate disciplines for purposes of examination in secondary schools. The British Inspectors were conducting courses for teachers and visiting primary schools to promote this type of teaching when I was last teaching there (1989). Theme teaching in primary schools has been greatly assisted by the excellent theme-based television programmes put out by the B.B.C. which often continue with one theme for several weeks. Whilst I am well aware that many traditionally 'black' schools do not have electricity, let alone access to a television, it is still true that with a relatively small expenditure by the community on a television set and the promised arrival of electricity, even in rural areas of the new South Africa, very high quality teaching could be brought to schools who are not fortunate enough to have well educated teachers. Such programmes are not only very helpful in broadening the

teachers horizons they are also very popular with pupils and encourage a culture of interested learning.

This kind of teaching could well be a helpful approach in dealing with the resentment felt towards Religious Education by many in South Africa. As part of social studies the teaching of religion would no longer be able to masquerade as a special, separate, privileged subject. It could not be so easily beleaguered by hidden agendas and would have to have educational aims and not ones associated with persuasion and indoctrination. Religion, studied phenomenologically, would fit well into general sociological studies. Further this would assist in ensuring that the subject was not left aside because it was considered as of less importance than other subjects. On the other hand care must be taken that religion is not just reduced to being a sociological phenomenon.

4.3.3.9 Practical experience of religious practices. The Tomlinson and the De Lange reports held that not only should Religious teaching be given in schools but there should also be opportunity to participate in religious experience. Goldman also noted that worship cannot be learnt about, it has to be participated in. This was to be provided in school assemblies which were expected to resemble small church services. There was also an expectation that prayer would have a place in the classroom in religious lessons. Further it was accepted that ministers of religion could have access to schools and religious societies could meet as extra mural activities and be attended by pupils and staff on a voluntary basis. There was always the option for parents to withdraw children from these activities if they held contrary views.

As was noted earlier (4.3.3.3)the concept of it being possible to give education according to the parents' 'own convictions' should be upheld if it is practical within a given community. Further when there is support for religious societies amongst the pupils it would seem reasonable that they should continue on a voluntary basis, on the school premises, but operating outside of the school curriculum, providing behaviour is socially acceptable.

The question of the relationship between school assemblies and religious teaching given as well as the exact form that assemblies should take is a bigger problem. In England there has been a move to try to have assemblies which acknowledge God in the general sense and provide worship but which are not specifically Christian. The children are left to interpret them from their own perspective, which presuming they are not atheists, would seem to be possible. I have experience of a similar situation in Sandton in a school which was predominately Jewish. With the rise of Marxist economic theory among some Xhosa, such as espoused by the South African Communist Party, it is probable that there are a few atheists among the Xhosa but they seem to be very few as almost all of them claim to adhere to either African Traditional Religions or Christianity according to Kili (4.2). There does not seem to be at this stage a need to accommodate them in the curriculum although the possibility of withdrawal should be left open. It is important that there are times when the whole school population should come together in some joint activity. This does not mean that there has to be a religious component to the meeting. Although in the past such matters have always been decided by legislation there does not seem to be any reason why that has to be the case. A possible way forward in this respect would seem to be to leave it open for individual schools, in consultation with the various interested bodies, to decide for themselves if assemblies should have a religious component and if so, what exactly it should be. This would mean that nothing is imposed. Schools could still be free to invite ministers in to take assemblies providing that there was no compulsion and providing that this was the will of the school and supporting community.

It was emphasised earlier that children need a first hand experience of religion but it seems very doubtful that the school is the place to provide it. This must be the prerogative of those outside of school. Children can be encouraged to discover what practical religious observance is like by attending churches or other religious ceremonies as their parents permit. As was noted at the beginning of this chapter the school is to provide:

> ...certain things... which cannot reliably be, or cannot as well be provided at home or by the social environment generally (Barrow, 1981:34).

It is obvious that religious gatherings are being provided in the communities. As Kili's

survey notes, most Ciskeians belonged to Churches and those who want to be are also involved in the practices of African Traditional Religions. As these opportunities are adequately provided for there is no reason why they should form part of the school curriculum. What is not provided in the community is access to intellectual information about the religions from an open perspective.

I have discussed the aspects which a good religious education should be addressing. I want to turn now more specifically to reasons for having Religious Education in the school curriculum.

4.4 Reasons for including Religious Education in the curriculum

4.4.1 Religion is part of life. Fowler goes further than this when he writes:

> Religion is not a part, even a most important part, of life, but it is the whole of life (Fowler, 1987:169).

Jeffreys says:

> Religious truth is normal experience understood at full depth; what makes truth religious is not that it relates to some abnormal field of thought and feeling but that it goes to the roots of the experience which it interprets (cited in Goldman, 1965:xiii).

This being the case it would seem that religion has a place in a curriculum which is built for life in the real world. Religion needs a place in a curriculum because it:

> ...is surely an important element in understanding our situation in the world (Dearden, 1971:300).

Goldman maintains that not only is religious experience normal, it is also central to a child's life. Barrow states that it is a socializing agent and that it is too risky to leave religious education to chance when the child will be faced with a barrage of often contradictory demands.

A child is interested in religious matters and therefore if well taught, one would expect that the subject would be more popular in schools than it often appears to be. One of the problems which can cause the child to become disinterested is that the teacher is unable or unwilling to deal with the issues which concern the child.

The child's questions foreshadow and express problems which recur at a

> more sophisticated level and teenage religious questions are often those which the teacher once asked, but forgot to answer. It is then that the shoe pinches. Clarity about ones own position then is vital (Smart, 1966:16).

It does not follow from this point that the religion taught must be Christianity. Adolescents in particular are concerned about themselves and truth and open therefore to religions. The materials must be appropriate to meet these needs, not outdated, authoritarian, culturally irrelevant but open to exploring diverse ideas and beliefs.

> Religious growth is not something separate from the rest of a child's development. It is an interpretation of all his experiences which he relates to what he believes to be the nature of the divine. In a sense, religious growth is dependent upon all other growth since unless a child has a fairly wide range of experiences to draw upon he cannot begin to interpret and relate them to a theological world view (Goldman, 1965:26).

Children's use of words usually develop faster then their understanding of them. The same is true of religious language in many cases. Children need to have and understand experiences which are religious in order to understand religious words. Goldman therefore reminds us that children's intellectual growth which is limited at any stage, will determine the level of religious interpretation and comprehension. Infants for example, he maintains, in line with Piaget's analytical theory, are egocentric, unable to relate facts accurately or deal with more than one fact at a time, often sidetracked by irrelevancies, do not revise their thinking to check for mistakes and are therefore not able to deal with the kind of religious teaching which adults often err by giving them too early. Goldman concludes that it is therefore nonsense to learn by rote, religious language which is too advanced for the children, as has happened in some classrooms.

On the other hand language is a good example of something which is learnt by constant repetition, initially without understanding, but which comes to be understood when the children become aware of the repeated attachment of particular words to specific functions. It might therefore be useful for children to become aware of some religious words so that as particular religious experiences are encountered they will be able to express themselves and be able to manipulate, and therefore increasingly, as they develop, evaluate religious concepts, albeit initially at a very simple level. Nevertheless excessive use of long, unknown words would hinder rather than assist children's language

learning, so to it seems probable that an excessive amount of difficult religious terminology, learnt by rote, would be counterproductive.

4.4.2 Religion is part of the cultural heritage of the people. Another reason given for teaching Religious Education is that Christianity is part of the peoples cultural heritage. This is now as true of the Xhosa heritage as of the European one. It can be argued that Christianity is one of the most important subjects to be taught in school because it is not only one of the most important world religions but it has also deeply influenced the history of the Eastern Cape. Equally, in the case of the Xhosa, this historical argument would imply that knowledge of the old traditional ways should also be included. To take the argument further, if we look beyond the segmentation of the society of Southern Africa there is a rich cultural heritage and some understanding of all the main religions represented by its people would seem desirable. Orr points out that:

> The study of religious beliefs and other ideological commitments helps explain both cultural continuity and cultural conflict (Orr, 1991:3).

4.4.3 Literary references to Biblical themes. It is also pointed out that the Bible is of literary importance, not just in its own right, but as a background to understanding a great many literary references which are scripturally based, as well as understanding the world's great works of Art and Music. It is, for historical reasons, predominately European based cultural works which are common in Southern Africa.

> It is difficult to imagine how intelligible European History, Literature, Music and Art would be to anyone who is wholly ignorant of the Christian religion (Hulmes, 1989:11).

4.4.4 General education. Peoples' education aims to make them at home in the realm of material things, other people, social matters and all areas of life which they encounter. The teaching of religions is informative because it tells about aspects of peoples' lives. People have spiritual needs which ought not to be neglected. These spiritual needs cannot however be locked away as a separate part of life, they permeate all life. School subjects have, for convenience, been delineated, but much of life lies outside of these subject labels whilst in other respects much of life is integrated into more than one subject. One of the values of teaching religion in school would seem to be its cross-

disciplinary content. Problems faced by our youth which have escaped being classified as Biology or Maths or Geography or whatever can find their way into discussions about life and its ultimate questions which surface, when allowed to do so, very easily in a Religious Education lesson. (This is another reason for Religious Education being somewhat loosely structured as regards content.) Religious Education can have an integrative function in respect to all other subjects and assist the child to think eclectically and to move away from stereotypes. This attitude to Religious Education lesson content will also ensure that the pupils are interested since their interests will, to a considerable extent, determine the course of the lessons. All human beings love to discuss and discover more about topics which interest and are of importance to them. Motivation will then, hopefully, come from the pupils' interest and not have to be generated externally by threats of examinations. In discussions and debates pupils will also be able to enrich each other.

4.4.5 Moral training. If, like Rousseau, I regard children as good by nature then there will be no need to be concerned to teach them ethical norms. Much educational psychology has proceeded on this assumption that the child is always right and so all the teacher has to do is find the right way of teaching and all will be well.

> The criticism of so much educational theory, and the strength of the theological position, lies in the fact that children themselves are sometimes to blame.... (Christian) Theology affirms that everyone is to some extent to blame, and this must surely more nearly correspond to life as we know it...The conception of 'original sin' is not that little children are guilty of sin and will be punished. It is quite simply that they are born so that they find it easier to make wrong choices than right... Children and young people can learn the important lesson that there is something at the heart of their nature which prevents them from being what they ought to be, and what in many cases they would really like to be (Hubery, 1965:36-38).

Christianity, and most other religions, support this view and therefore they have norms which the adherents of those religions are encouraged to adopt as their own to assist them to become more acceptable members of the community than they would otherwise be.

> Authentic knowing depends on the adoption of authentic norms (Fowler, 1989:33).

The traditional view of moral education assumes that morality is a form of knowledge and therefore has to be learnt. This is the basis for the views noted earlier of Goldman and Penny who claim the importance of Religious Education for moral training. They maintain further that:

> All moral specifics are by-products of religious faith (Goldman, 1965:76).

Mxekezo agrees with them in his thesis concerning Religious Education in Ciskei and notes that Jones sees the Bible as the source book of Christian belief and that beliefs give rise to actions. If this is so it is very important that children believe the 'right' things so that they will behave in the 'right' ways. Jones goes as far as to suggest that:

> The ultimate solution of the problem of Juvenile Delinquency and Adult Delinquency, lies in the re-establishment of a code of morals which, for the right reasons, the mass of people want to obey. Such a code ...is precisely what the Bible contains (Jones, 1963:17).

Mxekezo wants children to have Christian beliefs so that they will behave decently. I question the necessary connection between good behaviour and Christian belief in 6.2.8. Nevertheless, it would seem that at some point, not necessarily in a religious context:

> It is better that pupils should be encouraged to think rationally about their behaviour, to learn about decision making and social pressure, than to assume they will pick it up somewhere along the line, or behave like everyone else (Martin, 1989:169).

4.4.6 Forms of knowledge. Fowler maintains that there are three ways of knowing:

> ...religious knowing, concrete knowing and analytical knowing. Religious knowing is the knowing of God by his self-revelation through faith. Concrete knowing is knowing the created world by our own immediate experience of that world... Analytical knowing is knowing the created world by thinking about that world so that we distinguish the various aspects of our experience that appear together in one concrete whole in our concrete knowing. This way of knowing is sometimes called "theoretical" knowing or "scientific" knowing (Fowler 1987:21).

Hirst (in Barrow, 1981:39) believes that there are 'different forms of knowledge'. He says that there are seven which are logically unique structurally. One of these is religion which has to be examined in its own unique way. Whether or not we agree with his analysis it would certainly make no sense to try to analyse mathematical concepts in the same way as religious propositions. Or to put it another way, supposing we ask the question 'What happens when a person prays?' There is more than one answer to this

question depending on the form of knowledge being used to consider the issue. The philosophical answer to the problem is not the same as the answer that would be given by a psychologist and neither of them would answer as a theologian would. If children are to be educated they need to have experience of considering issues from as many perspectives as possible. They should be shown that experiences can be evaluated in a variety of different ways.

4.4.7 Ideological awareness. Christianity is in some respects not only a religion, it is also an ideology. There is a battle for minds going on in Southern Africa between various ideologies. Often the pupils and teachers are being pulled by these whilst remaining unaware of them. This may account for some of the uncertainties about the place of Religious Education in the system. These present a formidable array when listed:- Capitalism, Liberalism, Afrikaner Nationalism, Black Consciousness, Black Ethnic Regrouping, Socialism, Marxism, Communism, Democracy, Anarchism, Christian Theology (Leath et al, 1986). These should not be seen as exclusive categories, there is much overlapping. For example, Marxism is not just an economic system but it has its own metaphysics which go beyond science. Any individual may well subscribe to more than one in the list. When seeking to adjust school programmes a person should be aware of these as their presuppositions may well account for some of the prejudices encountered even although they are not articulated.

Often these ideologies can be identified in clusters, as part of political policies and therefore particular to a certain political party. The African National Congress had several documents which elaborated its position on education before it was elected to govern South Africa. For example, in 1991 a discussion paper said:

> ...education policies must be part of a package of policies which deal with economic development, the political system and social policies as a whole (Truscott, 1993:37).

This would seem to make good sense providing that educational considerations are not lost in a hidden political agenda, nor considered solely in terms of economics, although of course economics cannot be ignored.

In May 1992 the African National Congress stated that it supported:

> ...a national core curriculum which reflects the norms and values of a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society and which is relevant to both the needs of the individual as well as the social and economic needs of society (Truscott, 1993:38).

Also in 1992 the National Education Policy Investigation booklets were produced by the National Education Co-ordinating Committee. The one titled 'Curriculum' considers various options. There could be a highly centralised system, a decentralised system or a combined system with a core determined by the central authority and the peripheral part of the curriculum determined by the provincial governments or other local school groupings. (see 4.2) One problem the report noted was that should the system be decentralised, in whole or in part:

> There would need to be care that the non-core offerings did not run counter to equity goals. For example, there should be no differentiation in terms of gender, race or region, except for specific redress measures. Differentiation which favoured specific 'cultural' (read 'racial') groups would also need to be guarded against (National Educational Policy Investigation, 1992:69).

It is often very difficult to discern the line between privilege and legitimate differentiation. If the option of parallel programmes for different groups is adopted the lack of 'sameness', which would seem ideal as communities differ a lot, would have to be such that no accusations of privilege could be justified, nor coercion. (see 4.3.2) This type of parallel programme has been adopted, for example, in Northern Ireland where there has been provision for separate Catholic and Protestant schools (Institute, 1992:61). Such programmes have been criticised because it is believed that they perpetuate conflict.

Older pupils should be made aware of forces which are competeing for their allegiance. Every pupil and every teacher has some form of commitment, explicit or implicit and needs to become self aware. Even a seemingly simple decision about which skill to introduce first in Mathematics has a philosophical basis.

There is a body of thought in the world today, resulting from the prestige of science with its intellectual and technological success, which says that religion is out of date or even meaningless. This is not generally a problem among African communities where there has been an attempt to rediscover the past resulting in a new awareness of African Traditional Religions. Dyasi goes as far as to say:

> No Bantu parents would send their children to a school that did not have a religious bias because citing W.C.Willoughby, 'Bantu life is essentially religious. The relation of the individual to the family, the clan and the tribe, politics, ethics, law, war, status, social amenities, festivals, all that is good and much that is bad in Bantu life is grounded in Bantu Religion' (Dyasi, 1960:115).

If the educational system of the new South Africa is to be common to all then these objections stemming from the 'God is Dead' thinking should be noted. Many intellectuals have become alienated from traditional forms of religion but in recent years there has been an upsurge of interest in many areas of religious thinking, particularly the Eastern philosophies and associated physical activities such as Yoga and Karate. Mind-controlling drugs have introduced our youth to heights of awareness of the metaphysical which has challenged the solid empirical scientific philosophy of life. The New Age Movement has broadened many peoples' boundaries of religious awareness and there has been an increasing interest in Satanism. These issues are of very deep concern to many parents and many of the youth of South Africa and should receive urgent attention in school.

5 THEOLOGICAL PROBLEMS WHICH INFLUENCE THE TEACHING OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE SCHOOLS

5.1 What constitutes religion?

Religion, stated simply, is peoples' attempted answers to ultimate questions. It is more than just a philosophy of life, since most, but not all, religions posit some kind of supernatural being, greater than humanity, who potentially can do things to or for people. This being, or god, who may be personal or merely a force, may be involved in the world or have left it to its own devices. For some people the cause of their being is unknown and unknowable; others believe they can enter into a relationship with their god. Peoples' beliefs, dependent on their understanding of these ultimate concerns, undergird their philosophies of life.

Kili, quoting Lessa Williams, says religion is:

> ...made up of those aspects of the life situation to which man cannot remain indifferent, which he cannot in the long run evade, but which he cannot control or adjust to through the ordinary techniques and attitudes of practical, utilitarian life (Kili, 1988:48),

and she further describes religion as:

> A set of beliefs, practices and institutions which men have evolved in various societies, so far as they are understood as responses to those aspects of their life situation which are believed, not in the empirical instrumental sense, to be rationally understandable and/or controllable, and to which they attach a significance which includes some kind of reference to the relevant actions and events, to man's conception of the existence of a "supernatural" order which is conceived and felt to have a fundamental bearing on man's values which give meaning to his fate as an individual and his relations to his fellows (Kili, 1988:49).

Kili acknowledges that it is not clear what counts as religion and what does not. Theologians and anthropologists often do not agree, having widely different, often vague, starting points. Jean Holm makes the fairly specific suggestion that:

> Religion offers answers to ultimate questions, for instance to the question man asks about the meaning of his existence, questions like Who am I? Who is my neighbour? What is man? Is there any meaning in life? Is death the end? How do I come to terms with evil and suffering? (Kili, 1988:150).

The opposite of religious is often taken to be secular, but:

> The secular occupies the neutral corner. The religious is analogous to the floodlights which illuminate the two contestants, "sacred" and "profane"... The sacred is generally taken to be "holy","set apart" and sometimes even dangerous or defiled, to be approached with special precautions and purifications, often only with the help of specialists of one kind or another. The "profane" is the opposite of the "sacred". It is safe. It is everyday. If the world becomes secularised both the sacred and the profane concepts cease to be. All life becomes neutral... Considerable confusion has been generated in recent decades by the imprecise use of these various concepts (Verryn, 1981:38-9).

These do have valid perspectives but for my purposes I would like to view a religion simply as a set of common beliefs concerning sacred reality which a group of people hold. In their quest for meaning, people express their religion in forms of rites, worship, veneration, ethics, social structures and customs.

Verryn speaks of Islam but interestingly what he says could also be said of African Traditional Religions:

> It is true that Islamic life is entirely religious and a unity. It is so because the polarity of sacred and profane is carefully maintained within a single field. No item of life or conduct falls outside that field (Verryn, 1988:39).

This explains why it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to determine what counts as religion and what does not for the traditional African believer; religion is an all-inclusive category. Dwane explains that Africans have a zest for life which they approach holistically, not as spiritual or material. They find it nonsensical to speak of a spirituality which says time-bound things are not important and there should be a concentration on 'other world' values. As Hodgson says:

> African life is monistic, with no clear division between secular and sacred (cited in Williams 1991:4).

This tends to de-emphasize the sacred. God is experienced as separate from creation and yet intimately present in it through blessings of fertility, life and all good gifts. There is no dichotomy between sacred and secular, the whole world is a sacred entity watched over by the sun and the moon and lesser beings as dictated in the creation ordinance. In, so called, nature religions:

> ...there are prescribed relationships with kith and kin, with the objects of nature, with the recent dead, the ancestors, and there are rights of passage throughout life and beyond. This is a behaviour pattern, one that is related to the world around, not something one does apart from the rest

> of life within the religious sphere only. Whatever the form of symbols chosen the end point is a symbolized sense of reality (Cumpsty, 1982:5).

Dwane (1989a:125) describes the African's religion as a total response to all the challenges of life and Dyasi says:

> Religion so pervades the life of the people that it regulates their doings and governs their leisure to an extent that it is hard for Europeans to imagine (Dyasi, 1960:115).

Westerners tend to see life in distinct compartments, one of which is religion; although Christians would argue that one's spiritual life ought to effect a change in daily living. There is therefore a fundamental problem of differing meanings being attached to the same word. Many Christians do not even like to put Christianity into the category of 'religion' at all because they believe it was God-given and not a human attempt to reach God; so much so that Job writes:

> Hesitance today in using the word "religion" either of the content of the Christian faith or of its expression in worship and service, is due to a conviction that Christianity differs from all other religions in that its content has been revealed by God and its outward expression by believers is not an attempt to secure salvation but a thank-offering (cited in Douglas, 1962:1083).

5.2 The relationship between African Traditional Religions and Christianity

There are a variety of possible relationships between Christianity and African Traditional Religions. The first is confrontational and takes the stance that Christianity is right and every other religion wrong; end of discussion. It would serve no useful purpose to introduce the study of African Traditional Religions into the classroom merely to condemn them. The second possible attitude speaks of African Traditional Religions as an introduction to Christianity. The third idea is close to that, namely that the two religions complement each other. A fourth possibility is to present Christianity as superior to African Traditional Religions or a fifth is to advocate syncretism and mutual tolerance.

5.2.1 The differing natures of Christianity and African Traditional Religions.

Christianity does not belong to any one people although because of the way the Xhosa think about religion, and because of European attitudes, many Xhosa have interpreted

Christianity as belonging to the Europeans.

> The institutions of Christianity have themselves been subtly penetrated by certain cultural assumptions. Christianity has too easily identified itself with a certain type of society. It has too readily been an ideology for the European, rather than a gospel for the whole world. The result of this tendency has been to identify missionary activity with the spread of Europe: it has been to assume tacitly that the Asian or African Christian will become a coloured white men (Smart, 1966:118).

Europeans have tended to identify God with their prejudices, and so come to believe that God fights their wars and carries their burdens. As discussed in Chapter 3, many of the early 'white' missionaries in the Eastern Cape saw themselves as a religious elite, arriving in Africa to bring civilisation, patronizingly, to the African 'child'. The eighteenth century European missionary church did not usually consider that other cultures might have religious insights. Smart speaks very harshly of the arrogance of European Christianity. He says:

> The superiority of the European, his too hasty and contemptuous dismissal of the achievements of other faiths, the arrogance of the invader and the destructive energy of the merchant and ...The adoration of the pale-faced Galilean could be a self-worship (Smart, 1966:117).

European Christians easily forgot that they, like all other people, had to appropriate Christianity, weave it into the fabric of their society and leave their pagan roots. When:

> Christian and African religious traditions came into a living relation to each other... initially missionaries felt that African religion was dying out and dismissed it as merely primitive and backwards (Kirwen, 1987:xiv).

In many cases religion and culture have developed as one but in the case of adopted religions traits develop after the type of the society in which they are practised. World religions must, however, maintain certain distinctive essentials otherwise they cease to be that religion at all and become something new.

The Religious Education Syllabus as given for the Ciskei schools intends the word 'Religion' to mean Christianity, completely discounting traditional beliefs. This well-established view was expressed in 1955 when the Tomlinson report presumed Africans would embrace Christianity and leave their traditional ways:

> The ideal is that by the time the Bantu have complete autonomy in connection with their own affairs, they will also be completely converted to Christianity (Tomlinson, 1955:159).

The Tomlinson report did note the:

> ...necessity for a characteristic Bantu culture and a characteristic form of vital expression within the Christian religion (Tomlinson, 1955:159).

It was difficult for the early African converts to Christianity who required great sincerity of belief:

> ... to act against established tradition and in opposition to kinsmen, in order to embrace the new faith and an unaccustomed way of living (Hunter, cited in Fihla, 1962:110).

The problem is further complicated by the nature of religious commitment; an African Traditional believer is born into his religion but a Christian makes a personal commitment or a group may decide together to make commitments. A person may be born into a Christian family, and in the thinking of some churches, to be initially covered by 'covenant theology', but eventually will have to decide, individually, to embrace the faith. The problem, in part, revolves around what is meant by faith:

> ...'faith' is a universal human construct and is different from 'religion' and 'belief'. Religion is the cumulative tradition of people expressing their faith experience. Belief is the codification of that experience. Behind both stands faith, the relationship of trust in and loyalty to the transcendental, involving an alignment of the heart or will, a commitment of loyalty or trust (Fowler, cited in McCoy, 1987:39).

Faith can also be described as a journey of discovery. It is expressed along the way by its adherents' response in worship, prayer, sacramental participation and adherence to ethical and social norms. This helps to explain why there seems to be, in many cases, some confusion over who is and who is not a Christian. Many claim to be Christian because they subscribe to the religion, and to a certain extent, accept its beliefs, at least as long as they are not questioned too specifically, and they may even join in the outward expressions of that faith, but they are not involved in the Christian faith experience for themselves.

> Christianity, where it seems to have been accepted would appear in many cases to be accepted only with the "top of the mind"; it has not become the fundamental dynamic affecting the whole of the personality. In times of suffering and sorrow, under pressure from temptation and sin, when there is a set back and disappointment, what vestiges of faith there were seem to be swept easily on one side (Hubery, 1965:19).

In the case of those Xhosa surveyed, this is demonstrated by their reverting to traditional religious practices in times of stress. This is also because deep within they belong to

their people.

> Central to any understanding of an individual's religion is what one might call the 'felt sense of reality'. In each person there somehow develops a sense of what is real, or better, a sense of the nature of reality. It is not for the most part conscious... the judgement is not primarily a cognitive one but rather a matter of feeling (Cumpsty, 1982:3).

Kili records that the Rev 'C' expressed the belief that although 80% of Ciskeians are in churches, it is because of their parents, not that they are all committed Christians. He felt there is a:

> ...shallow understanding of the Biblical message and theology by members of the Christian Churches in the Black communities, who blame the missionaries, ministers and ultimately the theological colleges and Bible schools (Kili, 1988:156).

The same kind of problem pertains currently to school teachers who give Religious Education in Ciskei. According to Kili:

> Indifference to Christian teaching in either Religious Education or Biblical Studies stems rather from a superficial understanding of both backgrounds, and from an indifferent outlook rather than from a deep insight into religious issues, whatever their origin (Kili, 1988:157).

5.2.2 Opposition. Most early missionaries adopted the confrontational approach and current school syllabi have been interpreted by most teachers to mean that they should continue to do so. The claims of orthodox Christianity are quite different from the claims of African Traditional Religions. Orthodox Christianity claims to be an exclusive system which cannot absorb contradictory features from other religions. African Traditional Religions tended to absorb what was experienced as helpful from other religions which were contacted. Christianity is a world religion which, like Islam, claims to be 'The Truth'. (This is not true of the Hindu religion which, although classified as a world religion, is an open system and able to accept ideas from other religions, for example, it is no problem to include Jesus as one of the gods.)

Christianity has always adopted new modes of thought when expressed in new cultures. For example, in New Testament days, John took the concept of the logos and used it to describe Jesus (Westcott, 1958: xvff). Christianity is not static but it does claim to be exclusively the way to God and failure to recognise this fundamental claim can only lead to confusion.

> Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me' (John 14 v6).

It will be impossible to find acceptable solutions to the problems of teaching Religious Education in the classroom unless this is faced.

> The 'truth' in all religions does not obscure conflicting truth-claims ...it is not only a question of 'All have run, and all shall have prizes' - a view of all religions being equally valid which infuriates true adherents of Islam and Christianity, and makes only limited sense in Hinduism and Sikhism. Nor is it a question of 'They're all the same really'- because diversity is celebrated (Martin, 1989:147).

Christianity's exclusive claim does not mean that there are no areas of agreement between Christianity and African Traditional Religions. There is a need to find the unique way in which the gospel belongs to the Xhosa people, thoroughly African, but not outside of established Christian orthodoxy. Xhosas will then be able to experience Christianity as their own and not feel that they have to deny themselves as Xhosas to be a Christians. In the Eastern Cape:

> It is remembered that Christianity and its principles cut across established traditional practices and customs of the Bantu. Furthermore, Christianity and ancestor cult were incompatible elements at many points. Since professing Christians were forbidden to participate in certain important tribal ceremonies and rituals, they soon became estranged from or ostracized by their kinsmen (Fihla, 1962:110).

It cannot be forgotten that:

> ...the Bible has one message only and cannot be geared to different group interests (van Niekerk, cited in Kili, 1988:168).

5.2.3 The syncretistic approach. Many Africans, for example, in the Independent Churches, have tried to solve their dilemma by integrating and adapting the two religions. The emerging African Independent Churches are growing rapidly. They are now twice as big as the Dutch Reformed Churches. The largest of the African Independent Churches is The Zion Christian Church which has tripled its membership in the past 10 years (Kritzinger in Evangelens, 1994:12). Their theology is variable but most represent practices and beliefs derived from Christianity and African Traditional Religions. This can be worked out either by seeing African Traditional Religion as an introduction to Christianity or by viewing them as synchronous and complementary and insisting that they are mutually completely tolerant.

Adaptability is a striking feature of the modern religious scene in Africa

> in which most believers have expanded their traditional religion with an imported religion, or have integrated major portions of new religions into it, or practise several religions serially if some seem better equipped to meet their needs of the moment than others (ter Haar et al, 1992:26).

Smith (cited in Dwane, 1989b:29) urges that Christianity should come to the African, not in a spirit of antagonism, but as a fulfilment of their aspiration. He has the idea that there should be a sublimation of all that is of value from African customs in Christianity. He adds that he is not advocating paganising Christianity to make it easier for Africans to accept but rather Christianising everything valuable in the African's past experience. This rests on a theology which sees Christianity as the fulfilment of African Traditional Religions. Followers of African Traditional Religions do not usually want their religion valued merely as an introduction to Christianity and this smacks of the old colonial arrogance. Syncretism sounds easy and attractive but is problematic because syncretism tends to weaken one or both of the religions involved and some essentials are lost (Williams, 1991:1). Where meaningful integration is possible it:

> ...depends upon a mutual recognition of cultural diversity and of common objectives (Hulmes, 1989:2).

Decisions of policy will have to be made clearly and explicitly by those whose responsibility it is (see 4.2) and ought not to be left to the whims of individual teachers.

5.3 Culture and religion

The term 'culture' is variously used to refer to the development of individuals, groups or whole societies but in fact, they are all mutually dependent. It is the culture of the society, the way that a group of people live and interact, their form of civilisation, to which I shall refer. Hoebel says culture is:

> ... the integrated system of learned behaviour patterns which are characteristic of the members of a society and which are not the result of biological inheritance (cited in Kraft, 1980:46).

Education is one of the cardinal ways in which culture is transferred to each new generation, to give a basis for their lives and help them benefit from past collective experiences.

> A system of education is the laid-down principles and practices regarding the upbringing of the children and the young adults of a society according to their culture. Culture is the coded interplay of man's reactions to his environment and social organisation which makes for stability and not

progress in society (Majasan, cited in ter Haar et al, 1992:34).

If culture is transferred too automatically, too much change, which destabilises a society and produces trauma in its people, will be avoided but the price of stability will be a lack of progress. The world is not stable, it moves on and any community which stagnates will find its people ill-equipped to interact with the rest of the world. For education:

> ...to merely reproduce what has gone before is folly. It must capture the fundamentals and link them to the results of acquired experience and then build (Hubery, 1965:76).

Integrating Christianity into a new context is very difficult because it will affect many aspects of culture, even ones not viewed by Europeans as directly religious. Customs do not stand individually, they have an inner logic so that if one part is changed the whole system is challenged. From their pre-understanding, based on presuppositions formed as part of their cultural heritage, people assimilate new information which modifies their thinking and permits them to reflect on the validity of their original perceptions and as necessary adopt new positions, hopefully, more informed and more educated. The pupils' opportunities to engage in this critical evaluation are weakened if the teacher adopts an authoritarian approach. Without understanding of this dialectic process, there will never be an Africanisation of Christianity or the creation of an African Christian Church self-designated on the level of culture (Kirwen, 1987:130).

Although Christianity is not all life, as African Traditional Religions are, it wants to sanctify all life. Some aspects of African Traditional Religions which will contradict Christianity so that they cannot honestly coexist. There are other issues where European Christian practice will differ from African Christian practice because the matter is one of custom, but not of religion. The questions which are so difficult to answer, because African thought does not make the separation that European thinking accepts, are which things are simple questions of custom without being religious questions. This does not imply that Christianity has nothing to say to non-religious cultural practices, some of which may contradict Christian norms and therefore need modifying. Africans were, and still are, told by many missionaries and often by other Africans too, that as Christian they must be radically severed from all of their indigenous culture. This has resulted in them suffering from what Bishop Tutu described as a "form of 'schizophrenia'" (ter Haar et al,

1992:44). All, African and European, need to become much more analytically aware of which aspects of belief are actually Biblical and truly Christian and which are only cultural interpretations and additions. The problems can cause confusion in two ways.

> Receptors may convert to the missionaries' cultural understanding as a part of becoming a Christian. They may be genuinely Christian but become foreign to their own people or they may convert culturally without becoming a Christian at all, particularly if they have a high view of the missionaries' culture and feel ambivalent or negatively towards their own (Kraft, 1980:146).

Speaking as a European Christian, Kaufman notes that:

> At best we Christians, like all others, have available to ourselves the insights and understanding of our forebears. But these were, in all cases, their own imaginative constructions, formed under the influence of their own experience and of the problems they faced in their time, and thus finite, limited and relative (Kaufman, 1987:13).

Anthropological training was not available in the eighteenth century and so a simplistic approach to other cultures and religions was taken which has left a deeply confusing legacy. Most missionaries tended to equate conversion to Christianity with adopting European culture. Dwane judges missionaries in Southern Africa quite harshly when he states:

> The general assumption was that Africans were 'savages' and thorough 'infidels' who had to be persuaded to abandon their own way of life and adopt Christianity, with all its Western trimmings, lock, stock and barrel. The outcome of this is that when African Christians look at themselves, they realize that they are dressed up in borrowed robes (Dwane, 1989b:29).

For example, when a Xhosa man made a commitment to Christianity he was often encouraged to wear trousers, instead of traditional dress, as if one were more sanctified than the other. To this day many Xhosa men feel they cannot attend church without a suit when missionary culture has moved on and many Europeans in the English community now quite happily attend in shorts and shirt sleeves. This is not without its amusing aspect as many missionaries will not attend their mission churches without their suits lest they offend their African brothers! In 1972 I was present when a senior missionary in Swaziland stated unequivocally that the new missionaries must dress properly for church services: men in suits, with jackets, and ladies with arms covered and

wearing hats. This still applies in the African Evangelical Churches. It was not recognised that:

> ... in comparing one civilisation with another... that no one society... realises all the values of civilisation. Not all of these values may be compatible with each other: what is at least as certain is that in realising some we lose the appreciation of others (Eliot, cited in Hulmes, 1989:viii).

Many of the European missionaries of the past interpreted Christianity such that they often obscured issues and confused many of the African people especially when they look for themselves into the Bible and come up with differing interpretations. This is further complicated by the fact that there is a tendency amongst some Africans, like those of other groups, to look back with rose coloured spectacles to the days before the missionaries came and to try to rediscover their culture as if it was some monumental fixed entity. In fact, cultures are never fixed, they are always in a process of change, always being influenced by their contacts with other peoples and there is never one homogenous entity. It can never be said 'This is the Xhosa culture' and delineate a closed system.

Church attitudes are unclear, opinions divided, some agree that:

> Much of the Christian Church has come to recognise that its nineteenth century attitude to other religious communities was wrong (Smith, 1987:54),

whilst others see little change and echo Kirwen's assessment that:

> By and large, missionary evangelization in Africa frowned upon any and all expressions of Traditional African religiosity and spirituality. In the main it officially continues to do so (Kirwen, 1987:vii).

Yet Kili's surveys, and even a cursory glance at the current situation, demonstrates that all African religiosity and spirituality has not been left behind by African Christians. Some African converts:

> ...have tried to discard their prebaptisimal world of religious beliefs and embrace the missionary Christian one in its entirety. But these are very few in number and the success to which their endeavour has led them is, if put to scrutiny, open to debate. The preponderance of empirical evidence shows, on the contrary, that among the people who have accepted baptism in black Africa, the great majority have neither wanted to abandon nor succeeded in abandoning completely many aspects of their traditional religious outlook (Kirwen, 1987:vii).

This has caused concern among some but not all missionaries. Few appreciate that it is not possible to draw simple parallels between customs and practices in one culture with those of another. Unfortunately decisions for or against particular African customs are very often made without adequate research or dialogue. It must not be naïvely assumed that all African Christians agree with each other against Europeans. Some Africans have progressive Christian ideas and others are conservative; likewise Europeans. Unfortunately:

> If missionaries are more open they tend to be removed and replaced by someone who accepts the judgments of the sending country (Kirwen, 1987:xix).

Sending countries are not necessarily well informed. Kaufman encourages us not to give up.

> Acknowledgement that our religious activity is our own imaginative and intellectual individual and communal activity - not an unmediated expression of our reflection on divine revelation - can only be salutary in forcing us to do our work as well as we can, even while we are as open as possible to insights and understanding from other quite different religious and secular perspectives (Kaufman, 1987:14).

Kraft advocates the use of 'dialogical hermeneutics' to assist in attempting to solve these problems since it:

> ...draws its concern for context from the Bible itself. And it recognizes in the multi-leveled character of biblical context the multi-leveled character of context in the process of understanding itself....A process of this kind can be liberating as the man of God wrestles with biblical context, his own, and those to whom he speaks and before whom he lives. Charles Taber writes that such an appeal to Scripture "can free indigenous theology from the bondage of Western categories and methodologies" (Kraft, 1980:146).

5.4 Translation

Everyone is influenced by his own environment, history and cultural patterns but the theology of the incarnation, God become human, opens up the possibility to every culture that Christ will be with them in a unique way so as to enable each person to interact with Christ Jesus. The challenge is to translate Christianity into the new culture.

> The hermeneutical concern is for "extracting" or decoding from biblical texts the meanings that their authors encoded in those texts (Kraft, 1980:134).

Christianity claims to be truth, but when expressed in another language, in a different

culture, although understood well by the communicator, it may be received erroneously because the context has changed. There are self-contained 'forms of thought' which do not intersect and cannot be translated (Almond, 1988:124). In the past African Traditional Religions functioned in a pre-literate society flourishing within a certain thought frame.

> In oral societies, multi-stranded thought is the dominant mode of thought. As it serves most, if not nearly all, of the needs of most small societies well, no need is felt to develop specialized ways of thinking. In all human societies, those of traditional Africa included, multi-stranded thought has two major characteristics. It is synthetic and deferential. By 'synthetic' is meant that it consists of ideas, feelings, norms and symbolic representations which have been formed in past interaction processes into complex patterns. Functions, aims and criteria are interwoven into them, in intricate ways. By 'deferential' is meant these complex, pre-reflective, inner mechanisms which rule and shape the ways in which the members of a society think and act (ter Haar, et al 1992:20).

Today the Xhosa are in a transition phase because a significant number have some 'European type' education; but Moyo of Zambia believes that:

> ...despite the dawn of the modern era with its technological advancement and the movement towards secularisation, African perceptions of reality remain thoroughly religious (cited in ter Haar, et al 1992:42).

Christian theology developed in North African and European philosophical systems, much of it coloured by a Greek world view which has very different symbolic systems from those of African peoples. It is very important to translate the Bible, rituals and beliefs, not word for word, but in dynamically equivalent ways. (This, incidentally, is not just an enterprise between differing groups of people but it also applies to each succeeding generation of any one people as their culture changes and is never complete.) An interesting example of this difference in consciousness can be noted in John Mbiti's very African response to Descartes' famous statement 'I think, therefore I am' which was 'I belong, therefore I am' since for him a person is because other people are (Dwane, 1989a:65). Dwane demonstrates this African cultural frame of reference when he speaks of quiet times of meditation as:

> ...opportunities to strengthen human ties and to renew through those ties, ones friendship with God. Those precious moments should be seen as times to gaze at one's navel, one's roots, and be reminded that one is because other people are, and that God's Spirit is the tough fibres which keep the bundle of life together. Solitude will thus be seen as putting the

> spotlight, not on the individual, but, on the community, and the things which make fellowship possible (Dwane, 1989a:68).

African cosmology is fundamentally different from European cosmology; what is written in the Bible or said about Christianity is therefore interpreted differently by Europeans and Africans, and therefore misunderstandings sometimes arise. Western culture has caused European Christians to lay emphasis on certain aspects of the truth whereas African culture has caused them to lay emphases elsewhere. Each has their own 'convenient' canon of scripture. In this respect it is often noted that the African Indigenous Churches are happier reading the Old Testament with its Hebrew cosmology which is closer to the African ways, than the Greek based New Testament preferred by most Europeans.

Words develop in any language dependent on the world view of the people speaking that language. Therefore words in Greek and Hebrew will not be able to be equated exactly with words in other languages. Translating the Bible with existing words has often led to confusion e.g. in the Luo language the word, 'Jachien', used for the shadow of the dead, was used for the Devil as it was the nearest possibility, giving rise to the commonly held idea that the Devil is a dead ancestor (Kirwen, 1987:35).

Very few early missionaries were as visionary as to attempt to make dynamic equivalent translations of Christianity into African culture although there were a few in Africa, particularly among the German missionaries in Tanzania. For example Anna von Waldow provided a full scale alternative to the 'wali' custom by which girls were secluded from the first day of menstruation to the day of marriage. She tried to retain the basic features of the custom but in a Christian spirit, replacing doubtful elements with ones she considered better. She built a house in which the girls lived for two years and gave them education, assisted by other missionaries and African church members. The school was a success according to Fiedler who writes that:

> Waldow's example shows that cultural conservatism can have a valid concept of change (1994:14).

An example of a British missionary attempting this kind of indigenisation was the Rev Lucas, at work in Tanzania (1883-1946), who used the ideas behind traditional ceremonies of initiation and Christian confirmation. He tried to bring them together in

his Masai Jando seclusion periods during school holidays by including Christian teaching and traditional values and skills such as bush craft. He became:

> ...fascinated by the possibility of leading Africans into an understanding of the Gospel by an extension of the theme and symbols of their own religious beliefs (Sicard, 1988:47).

Lucas claimed that his experiment was highly successful but after recent investigations Fiedler, in a recent conversation with the author, was less than enthusiastic.

There is today a new awareness of the need to contextualize the Gospel in every unique culture where people respond to the call of Christ. Daneel, from UNISA, is currently experimenting in a Zimbabwean tree-planting project, integrating traditional prayers and Christian teaching. He claims that:

> In the new struggle ecclesiastical structures are changing, new perceptions of ecological responsibility are emerging and innovative liturgical procedures, to integrate the environmental ethic with the heartbeat of church praxis, is being introduced (Daneel, 1993:52, 53).

Father Kuckertz, Lumko Missiology Institute, Transkei says:

> The challenge is clear.... On the one hand it is necessary to pursue a biblical theology and avoid the trap of a theology that dispenses with revelation as found in the Scripture. On the other hand the focus must be the African point of view and the idiom of speech the African idiom (cited in ter Haar, et al 1992:90).

Concerted efforts to do this have resulted, in many cases, in the rise of the independent churches. Many of the children in our schools will be aware of, or involved in, these attempts at contextualisation and need help in understanding and evaluating the processes. Paul Makhubu says that:

> ...the independent Churches are in a sense an expression of the desire to worship in freedom (Makhubu, 1983:19).

The traditional churches need to get into dialogue with Africans and continue to work to find expressions of Christianity which are authentically African but not so far outside of orthodox Christianity so as to be unrecognisable. There is a need for theologians, both African and European, to be equipped as cross-cultural theologians. It is an encouraging fact that some Zionist pastors have been seeking entrance to established theological Christian colleges. Mutual cosmological filtering of the Christian message is needed and these Zionists can be of some considerable assistance in this important task which will hopefully lead to a new synthesis where the best and most authentic

elements from African culture can coexist with truly Christian traditions. The missionaries need an enriched African perspective and indigenous African theologies need specifically Christian, not European perspectives.

> Theologians have a responsibility to the church in as far as their God-talk enterprise has to reflect the central affirmation of the Gospel as received, interpreted and taught by the whole church down the centuries. The task of theologians is to receive, rediscover and to re-interpret what has been entrusted to the church, but not to invent new ideas for which we can find no basis either in Scripture, or in the overall tradition of the church (Dwane, 1989b:7).

Theology concerns God's dealings with people and can never be authentic if it ignores the people's needs, concern with context is axiomatic. The Gospel has no relevance unless transmitted cross-culturally. It is not God's plan to alienate people from their culture since Christians affirm that culture, like man, is part of God's idea. Likewise, no real education will aim to alienate people from their culture. Elementary theology belongs in schools because there pupils struggle to face life. Paul Tillich refers to theology as 'answering discourse' because:

> It attempts to bring revelation face to face with the human situation, as at the incarnation. It is therefore futile to try to do theological reflection away from the arena in which the struggles of life take place (in Dwane, 1989b:18).

Some ideas in African culture are relevant to Christian teaching. One such African concept, 'ubuntu', the idea that peoples' humanity must be taken seriously, is also a recurring Biblical idea, for example in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

> The Xhosa say 'unyawo alunampumlo' - tomorrow you might be a stranger and find yourself dependent upon someone else's mercies; so take care how you treat the people you encounter (Dwane, 1989b:107).

So far, so good, but it should be noted that ancestral spirits are the custodians of 'ubuntu' so that if the principle is violated a breach occurs between this world and the next with resulting calamities which need to be offset by sacrifice. This necessitate careful consideration of the Christian perspective on the causes of calamity and the relevance of sacrifice. There has to be a two-way traffic so that the Gospel is understood and interpreted accurately.

> There will always be a to and fro between Christianity and African Traditional Religion until African Christians are allowed to bring in their

> tribal baggage with them and given time to sort out for themselves, the redundant from the enduring items (Dwane, 1989a:68).

What is more this cannot be done just by theologians, it must be a group activity. Africans are not, as Westerners, rank individualists, and unless things are decided collectively they will be of little significance. This insight is of importance to the fact that I am advocating that teachers and children, although not professional theologians, have the right and responsibility of talking about these issues in school. It is not possible, or desirable, to construct a syllabus which provides all the answers. Many have not yet been found. It is, now, at this point in history, that the opportunity presents itself for all to contribute to this dialectical process.

Ogburn has a theory of 'Cultural Lag', suggesting that when a group is confronted with a new religion it adopts first the aspects which are attractive and visible and only later takes the more complex inner realities (cited in Verryn, 1981:25). If this is so, it would help to explain why the Xhosa are essentially, by their own claim, a Christian people but still experience difficulties expressing their beliefs. This idea was accepted by early Christian missionaries such as St. Augustine, sent to evangelise the English by Pope Gregory (AD 590-604), and advised to take over paganism. When he arrived in England he used pagan temples, removed the image of the goddess and replaced her with the Virgin Mary; he sprinkled the building with holy water and then proclaimed the temple to be a Christian Church. Christianity was able to be present simply, avoiding negativism and giving people the time needed for their beliefs to grow.

Often Christianity is seen by traditional believers as of little pragmatic use since it fails to answer felt needs. These could well be areas where some of Dwane's 'cultural baggage' might be essential. Discussions and a new approach to hermeneutics may also bring to light the fact that although there may not be direct parallels, nevertheless Christianity and African Traditional Religions do answer some of the same needs but in different ways. It is important to distinguish between form and function when considering any custom since practices which appear similar may have diverse functions, and others, which are apparently quite different, may actually have similar functions. People are prone to note form but not be aware of function and therefore if there is no obvious parallel form they tend to conclude that the other religion has no answer to a

particular need and do not realise another form could fulfil the needed function. If the Xhosa embrace Christianity they will want to be satisfied that the Gospel can do for them in the future what tribal religion did for their ancestors: for example, the referral of those who are sick, for healing by the spiritual leader. Christianity is challenged to meet such needs more clearly and by an awareness of their beliefs, to approach traditional believers in a more relevant and appropriate way (Williams, 1991:1). If this is better understood then there will be less of the schizophrenic attitudes which currently confuse so many. The gospel will be received and expressed in an African way.

5.5 Similarities and differences of belief between Christianity and African Traditional Religions

5.5.1 Proselytisation. Christianity is very different from African Traditional Religions in two fundamental ways. Firstly, Christianity was, from its very inception, a missionary religion. Jesus commanded his disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel and make new disciples. True Christianity is a pan-cultural phenomenon whereas the African religion belongs to its adherents who are part of a close-knit related group and it is culturally bound. It would make no sense for the group to try to get outsiders to become part of their religious scene unless, of course, the outsider wished to be totally absorbed into that community, that is, to become one of themselves. Secondly, flowing from this missionary characteristic, Christianity is a teaching religion. It has a book to which it anchors orthodoxy and it aims to instruct converts, and those interested, in the contents of this book, the Bible.

5.5.2 Historical aspects. Christianity's authority is grounded in history, it claims an historical Jesus and God's dealings with people in recorded history as its basis for religious thought. African Traditional Religion rests on customs passed down from antiquity which are validated by the people they belong to and by the experience of those people in living by them. Driver says:

> As for religions, the main differences between them are not rites and symbols, striking as such differences appear. Nor are the differences principally doctrinal or philosophical, although differences of that order are real and important. The main differences among religions are

historical. A religion, like a person or a nation, is what it has become in history and carries that history within itself, even if many of its devotees know little about the past (Driver, 1987:210).

5.5.3 Themes of interest. Williams suggests that there are both significant similarities and differences between Christian theology and traditional beliefs and notes that relevance to the Xhosa is a key idea. As Tutu observed:

> Christianity has produced answers, and often splendid answers, to questions that were not asked (cited in Williams, 1991:2).

Themes of interest must be selected from both Christianity and African Traditional Religions. The agenda must not be decided by one religion more than the other as the adherents have differing perspectives and as a result often disparate concerns. Mxekezo regrets the fact that in the past in schools Religious Education has ignored themes such as the extended family, which is of importance to Xhosa. Mxekezo thinks this is because Christianity does not have much to say about it. Certainly the syllabus does not. This would include questions like what is to be done when relationships are broken, or when sickness or death visits the family and how puberty is to be marked.

The themes selected for teaching in Zimbabwian schools include Ancestors, Spirit Possession and Healing. Williams (1992) considers various areas where questions do arise and there are distinct similarities between traditional beliefs and Christianity. He discusses:-

a. Transcendence and Community
b. The communion of the Saints
c. Sin and Forgiveness
d. The person of Christ
e. Human life and death
f. Eschatology

Some of the areas noted in this list are not simply naïvely complementary ideas. No problems will be solved if areas of conflict are not brought out into the open. Teachers will continue to feel uncomfortable in their classrooms if they are not free to discuss religions openly. One of the problems in Ciskeian Religious Education in the past has been that teachers, according to Kili, have been either unwilling or unable to discuss such matters. They have been left to shelve these conflict areas which are too complex

for them since they cannot produce answers and are not equipped to tackle them alone. They need help from as many concerned parties as possible. One such apparently contradictory aspect is sacrifice of which Dwane writes:

> The propitiatory aspect of sacrifice is one that Christianity is going to find difficult to be reconciled to (Dwane, 1989b:112).

On a more positive note Dwane does point out that the values associated with sacrifice, namely upholding and strengthening community relationships, provide a bridge between Xhosa tradition and the Christian concept of koinonia, fellowship.

Zimbabwe has produced some case studies to help teachers cope with some of the difficult issues. There is a comparison of attitudes in the African Traditional Religion, the Independent Churches and the mainline Churches. For example it is noted that:

> There will be conflict - eg Did a deceased brother's spirit really cause trouble or was the Western Dr right in saying not, it is a virus? Were Zionists correct in using propitiatory rites? (ter Haar, et al 1992:60).

Another matter, from the category of Human Life, which has caused much heart break in the past and should be clarified is that of polygamy. A common Christian attitude in the main denominations was that expressed by the Lambeth Conference in 1888 affirming that neither church usage nor Christ's law would allow any man to be baptised who was polygamous even if the marriages were contracted before his conversion. The conference made concessions to wives of polygamous husbands, but excluded any married by Christian rites if their husbands subsequently took wives by native custom, despite the fact that the Africans could see for themselves that God's blessing rested on Old Testament figures who were polygamous. Dwane remarks that:

> This premature judgement of customs which people have taken little trouble to understand, is what has bedeviled the history of the Christian Church on this continent (Dwane, 1989b:118).

The fact that there are areas of agreement sometimes confuse issues even more than the matters which seem to contradict each other. For example, if Christians talk of a 'creating' God the Africans will respond that they knew that, but the fact that this is already known may convince the participants in the conversation that they are talking about the same character when in fact the triune God of Christianity is a very different person from the god of African Traditional belief. The two can only come together

when lengthy debate and discussion has produced a major shift in religious consciousness.

Colonialists, and especially missionaries, challenged the values of the African which have damaged the morale of the people, particularly when claims of superiority were accompanied by technological wonders with which the African could not compete. The African needs reaffirming, according to Dwane, and certainly European arrogance needs African forgiveness. There needs to be a building together with mutual self-respect and, among Christians, an emphasis on oneness and not diversity.

5.5.4 The Christian claim to being 'The Truth'. There are many who have tried to under-rate this claim but a study of scripture can produce many instances where this claim is made. The claim of Christianity to be exclusive does not mean that Christians have everything right and people of other religions have everything wrong. Christians are also human and subject to error. The treasure is in 'earthen vessels' (2 Corinthians 4 v7). Christian absolutism, wrongly used, has perpetrated many evils, political, economic, social and religious. The Christians' claim that their religion is uniquely the truth rests on the doctrine of particular or special revelation as opposed to general revelation which is available to everyone and is encountered in the creating and sustaining work of God and is the source of 'man-made religions'. Paul, the apostle, assumed that because of general revelation the Gentiles already knew about God (Romans 1 v19, 20). As Bruce states in his commentary:

> ...on contemplating God's works, man can grasp enough of His nature (Bruce, 1967:84).

On the other hand they needed to be told, specifically, what could only be known because of special revelation, that:

> The grace of God which "justifies" those who believe has been actively manifested in the redemptive work of Christ (Romans 3 v23, 24) (Bruce, 1967:104).

A conservative theologian's view of special revelation is that:

> All religions represent awful man's confused and misdirected efforts to reach God on his own terms. As such they are idolatrous and constitute the worst hindrances to the true faith which comes only through Jesus Christ the incarnate Word of God and the only revelation of God. There is no knowledge of God or possibility of it anywhere else or any other way. As Karl Barth, the most famous representative of this view states, 'The Christian message is... not one truth among others, it is the truth. In thinking of God we have from the beginning to think of the name of Jesus'

(Kibicho, 1981:31).

Christians believe that special revelation comes directly from God who has spoken to people, in history, supremely in Jesus, and specifically told them what God wants them to know so that there is no longer any reason to speculate.

Since people's experience of God is an objective one there must be truths which can be known and are irreducible; but it is the objective truths which are absolute, not the Christians' understanding of them which will always be limited. Archbishop William Temple expressed it thus:

> There is no such thing as revealed truth. There are truths of revelation, that is to say, propositions which express the result of correct thinking concerning revelation; but they are not themselves directly revealed (cited in Dwane, 1989a:8).

Humans can only ever know in part; God alone knows the whole.

> Man's rational insight cannot but be critical and self critical, his answers to the questions of truth being controversial, so that the critical argument about truth continues as historical conditions change (Rauche, 1990:21).

In 'The Times' of London, 31st August 1992, Jennings discussed the problem of Christianity's claim to be a revealed religion. He notes that the centrality of this claim is being quietly eroded by liberals within the Church and cultures outside of it. He points out that this revelation is definitive and not susceptible to modification although it should be explored and meditated upon. This means that revelation produced dogma and lays upon Christians the necessity to accept that truth, identify with historic Christianity, lay aside relativism, and not make private judgments. However as all people are limited it also lays upon them the responsibility of humility. A knowledge of divine revelation does not make anyone infallible. Nevertheless, as Richard Niebuhr maintains, theology will have to begin, not with truths and doctrines, but with the revelation of the living God, an encounter between God and people in the man, Christ Jesus (Dwane, 1989a:8). Revelation is rooted in the incarnation, something that happened in time, once and for all, but it also happens again when the Holy Spirit is at work opening up the path to Jesus himself, making it possible for a person to know God in a direct relationship; this is true Christianity, not an assent to propositional statements as found in creed or Bible. There has been, in any case, in recent days, a revolt against 'patterns of words' in creeds, political manifestos and philosophical statements as assent to them

has come to be associated with processes of indoctrination and brain-washing. Dwane believes:

> If general revelation is the offer of fellowship and friendship with God, then special revelation in Jesus Christ is the offer of sonship and inheritance of the Kingdom of God.... He is the door, that is to say, the only rightful entry into the kingdom.... To reject the Christ is in the final analysis to reject God Himself and His offer of Salvation. And this assertion, difficult as it is to make, seems to be nearer to the teaching of the New Testament than the view that non-Christians are anonymous or implicit Christians. Non-Christian religions should, like John the Baptist, efface themselves when Christ appears, or else they become enemies of Him (Dwane, 1989a:45,47).

For the Christian, the Bible is the canon or measure by which Christian truth is to be judged and down the ages attempts have been made to produce statements, or creeds, which encapsulate succinctly the main tenets of the faith and attempt to articulate the Church's experience of revelation. They rely on Scripture as their starting point. The earliest known creed is the so-called 'Apostles creed', a very simple statement of only the most fundamental elements of the Christian faith but it is a product of its time as are all subsequent creeds. It is illusory to suppose that any creed has succeeded completely in expressing absolute truth. They are common statements of faith not tests of truth: they provide useful starting points. When African Traditional Religious belief or practice is in clear conflict with these propositions dialogue and reassessment of credal statements will have to be taken very seriously. The eventual result of the ensuing discussion and reflection will hopefully lead to a deeper understanding of the issues.

One problem which needs thought and clarification if there is to be dialogue between Christianity and African Traditional belief is who the spokespeople for traditional beliefs will be. Some suggestions were made by the Secretariat for Non-Christians at the Pastoral Institute of Eastern Africa. They are

1. Priests, Diviners and Doctors.
2. Oral tradition as given by experts.
3. Christians experiencing duality within.
4. Members of independent neo-traditional movements.
5. Persons with submerged traditional values and attitudes (ter Haar, et al 1992:36).

Some members of these groups are certainly to be found among both teachers and pupils in Eastern Cape Province schools. This indicates that these issues do have a rightful place in the discussions in classrooms. One of two things will happen as each issue is reviewed, either it will be confirmed that the two religious ideas are incompatible, or a new understanding of truth will be discovered and new insight gained which will make it possible to accept the combined wisdom of the two religions. In the case of incompatibility the true Christian will of course want to remain faithful to the Christian perspective and the traditional believer will maintain his integrity by remaining loyal to his insight; a rare possibility in schools of the past, hence the schizophrenia lamented by Bishop Tutu. It is important that the current confused situation is cleared up.

5.5.5 The interfaith movement. There is agreement among most theologians that salvation is to be found in Christ but there are differing interpretations as to the meaning of this seemingly simple statement. Some people hold that all religions lead up the same hill, only from different starting points, and others quite the opposite. Three basic positions are possible:-

1. There is salvation in Christ alone.
2. There is salvation in other religions because of Christ's work. Although they do not know it the adherents are anonymous Christians.
3. Each religion has independent validity.

The orthodox view which the church has traditionally held, 'extra ecclesiam nulla salus', stated as the first option above, is the one discussed in the previous section.

Those who agree broadly with the position outlined above in the second proposition argue that God's work is not confined to the church. As was discussed above, Romans 1 argues that general revelation, shown in nature, reveals God to all people. This being true, it would be reasonable to expect that some vestigial traits of truth about the God of the Bible would be found in most religions. Just as was argued above that there are mistaken ideas in orthodox Christianity so there will be correct ideas in non-Christian religions. It is therefore said that these religions can point to Christ.

> Everyman should therefore seek God within his own religion until he is confronted existentially with the revelation of Jesus Christ (Dwane,1989a:25).

Further, if God gave general revelation to all, is there not perhaps a way to salvation for them outside of Biblical Christianity? The Christian, speaking from a Biblical perspective would have to admit that although the possibility cannot be ruled out it is not known. Hans Küng says these religions do show a primitive original communication by God to people but concludes that even that knowledge passes judgement on paganism because they have set themselves against God by seeking to be religious in their own ways when in fact nobody can come to God except in Christ. However, the people accepting this position hold that:

> ...those who seek God in non-Christian religions are in a sense already committed to God in Christ. They are implicit or anonymous Christians (Dwane, 1989a:16).

This is the position adopted by Vatican II in their 'Decree on Missions'. It sees the profound insights of other religions as evidence of enlightenment and deduces the secret presence of God, although, of course, the adherents of these religions can never knowingly live out the life of Christ; they will be saved. The extension of salvation in Christ to the whole world was reiterated in the encyclical, 'Redemptor Hominis' (1979), of Pope John Paul II which stated that:

> ...man - everyman without exception whatever, - has been redeemed by Christ... because with man - with each man without any exception whatever - Christ is in a way united, even when man is unaware of it (Hick, 1987:21).

One major problem with this view of benevolent inclusion is that it arrogantly removes all personal opinion from all members of all religions which are not Christian and declares them, without reference to them, Christians, albeit anonymous ones. It makes little common sense to call people Christians, that is, followers of Christ, if they have never even heard of him. Most of these people would of course vociferously deny that they are Christian, some of them are even actively anti-Christian.

The third option is the one Schuon supports when he says:

> There is a mystical core in each religion, a core that can be grasped by intellect and articulated in a philosophy of absolutism (Gilkey, 1987:43).

This so-called philosophy of 'pluralism' is not a universal point of view but a product of liberal, Western, religious thought, trying to make some kind of sense of the fact that the first world is not the only part of the world, nor even the norm for the whole world. It is, in this respect, an intellectual revolt against colonialist bigotry. It is the result,

according to Max Weber, of the process of rationalization whereby each scholarly discipline, each realm of discourse, is able to achieve autonomy and proceed on its own inner logic without reference to the views of others. Surin says:

> Without the intellectual legacy of modernity... the notion of 'religious pluralism' would lack historical grounding in any kind of socially supportable code or public discourse (Driver, 1987:206).

Pluralism suffers from the same problem as the 'Anonymous Christian' concept, popularised by Karl Rahner, in that it advocates pluralism as the best for everyone and then claims its global application just as arrogantly as those who claim the world as Christian.

The document produced by the Institute for Comparative Religion in Southern Africa (1992:19) notes the problems of pluralism and rejects it but asks that students be encouraged to adopt:

> ...a toleration that is based on mutual understanding and respect within the framework of a common humanity and a new national unity in South Africa (Institute, 1992:19).

When CODESA 1 was planned it was decided to commence with prayer which instead of being of one faith, should have a diversity such that all would feel represented and comfortable. Sachs stated that:

> ...the proposal actually produced extreme discomfort (Sachs, 1992:4).

When CODESA II was planned a problem arose as it was difficult to go back on the statement of oneness of faiths from the previous concept. Eventually prayer was divided into two sections, opening with a Jewish/Christian prayer and closing with the others. The new parliament has resorted to silent private prayer to avoid the problems. There are however some aspects of our religious heritage which are pretty well universally accepted. One example would be 'Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrica' ('God Bless Africa') which has been used as a unifying hymn without being associated with a particular religious belief.

Gilkey, pointing out further problems of pluralism, writes:

> The rough parity of religions, by removing the absolute starting point of each, seems to drain each of whatever it has to say and give to us, and so to leave us empty - and incapable of moving to some other more solid ground. Ecumenical tolerance represents an impressive moral and

> religious gain, a step towards love and understanding. But it has its own deep risks, and one of these is this spectre of relativity, this loss of any place to stand, this elimination of the very heart of the religious as ultimate concern (Gilkey, 1987:44).

Gilkey also points out that in some religions there are forms which seem to be intolerable because they are demonic, such as religious cannibalism, ritual murders, caste systems etc. These contradict ultimate values as held by others, but plurality would demand that such behaviours be accepted. He concludes that:

> Praxis demands that we stand somewhere (Gilkey, 1987:44).

Aldous Huxley used 'Perennial Philosophy' to mean that:

> ...all religious truth or experiences are one and the same. This philosophy proposes that even though the externals of the various religions may differ, the essence or core truth is the same in each (Martin, 1989:132).

The attempts resulting from this philosophical presupposition to find out what constitutes this 'inner core' of reality, search for commonalities and are very casual about any apparent discrepancies which can be put down to accident and ignored. Such an attitude is frighteningly superficial. For example, Muslim doctrine denies reincarnation and Hinduism affirms it. It is not possible to have it both ways. Even if a person manages to think in paradoxes sooner or later the truth will out because when death comes either a person will or will not be reborn. It is difficult to see how conflict can be avoided.

Further in the differing 'salvation histories', so called, God has different names and differing attributes, a different nature, if it can be said that the god has a nature at all, in for example, Buddhist thought.

> In pluralist perspective it is not simply that God has one nature variously expressed by different religious traditions; it is that there are real and genuine difference within the Godhead itself, owing to the manifold involvements that God has undertaken with the great variety of human communities (Driver, 1987:212).

It seems not unreasonable to conclude with Pannikkar that:

> ...pluralism belongs also to the order of Myth (cited in Driver, 1987:213).

Religions are not based on lists of disconnected beliefs, they are systems. If we are going to compare two religions we will have to compare them as unities and not just concentrate on convenient isolated facts which appear to concur although in fact, even if they appear to be similar, they may function in quite different ways in their own systems. The suggestion has been made that the problem can be solved by positing a

theory of multi-leveled truths. Doctrines are said to function at different levels of religious truth. It is assumed that conflicts can be eradicated by a given scheme of levels of truth. This presents no workable logical way of proceeding to deal with specific problems and ignores the fact that the theory of levels of truth may not be acceptable to the religious traditions it is, so called, investigating.

Furthermore, to accept religious pluralism demands a total, radical re-interpretation of the Christian idea of revelation, in fact so radical as to deny many of the main tenets of traditional Christian belief itself so that what is left would not qualify as Christianity at all. This would bring us no further forward in our quest to define the relationship between Christianity and other religions because at the end of the day we would be left with all other religions, subsumed in pluralism, on the one hand and on the other Christians who do not accept these theories still wondering how to relate to the other religions.

In September 1992, at the end of a ministers conference, held at Kwasizabantu, a statement was issued which said:

> We unanimously rejected recent attempts to reduce Christ to the level of human religions. We studied and rejected the whole concept of the INTERFAITH movement in general and the DRAFT DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF RELIGIOUS PEOPLE (produced by the WCC linked, World Conference on Religion and Peace, South Africa) in particular.

Some Theologians of this interfaith persuasion hold tolerance as a virtue but they want everyone to accept their eclectic approach and are often quite hostile to those who do not embrace their tolerant approach. Other Theologians who are involved with the interfaith movement in South Africa do not want religious toleration to mean that people should accept a stance which suggests that all religions are equivalent paths. They want to encourage personal integrity and loyalty to the religion of choice as well as a tolerant acceptance of another persons right to a different choice. Interestingly the World Evangelical Fellowship identified 'The Uniqueness of Christ and Religious Pluralism' as the theme for its 1992 consultation and named it as the major theological issue for the coming decade.

5.6 Conclusions

> Dialogue with people of other religions, and the need for a common engagement with them on the socio-economic and political front, calls for a greater sensitivity and generosity, as well as for the faithful witness to the gospel. The one requires an acknowledgement of the fact that the church is not itself the kingdom, but only a provisional manifestation of the presence of God's rule on earth, while the other compels Christians to bear witness to Christ the light, and to invite non-Christians to participate more fully in the accomplished work of Christ (Dwane, 1989b:80).

As Kili claimed, the question of whether Christianity and African Traditional Religions are compatible has to be answered by the Church. The simple answer, because of the claim of Christianity to be the exclusive truth, is that it is not wholely compatible with any other religions.

Early on in its history Christianity came into conflict with Roman religion because Christians felt unable to take the oath of allegiance to Caesar since it involved crediting him with being divine. They also found problems with eating food offered to idols, although interestingly, this bothered some of them and not others, depending on whether they felt the idols had intrinsic validity. Decisions on such issues have always been difficult.

There are many areas where there is agreement, so that if Christianity is the truth in regard to those matters, so is African Traditional Religion. Further I have tried to show that in some areas, where there appears to be a variance of opinion, this is caused not by the fact that the inner intentions of the devotees are different but because a different cultural grid causes them to express truths differently. Sometimes they are expressing the same truths but sometimes, because of differing interests, they focus on different truths. There are marked differences but the concepts are not fundamentally incompatible. In the end it has to be admitted that there is, in some matters, conflict which will not go away and can only be denied if the devotees of the various religions compromise the truth in which they claim to believe.

6 A REASSESSMENT OF THE PROBLEMS DELINEATED IN CHAPTER 2

6.1 Statement of purpose

In this section I shall return to the problems I cited in chapter 2, based on the surveys conducted by Kili and Mxekezo, and with reference to the difficulties resulting from historical mistakes, as shown in chapter 3, and the educational and theological considerations raised in chapters 4 and 5, discuss ideas which I hope will be of assistance in formulating future policy. Not all the ideas will necessarily be compatible as many decisions will still have to be made. I trust that my discussion of many of the issues will assist those who are charged with the responsibility of making and implementing decisions.

6.2. The problems associated with religious teaching in Ciskei

There is currently antagonism towards Religious Education and it seems probable that this will continue if the subject continues to be taught. A change of direction alone will probably not be appreciated by the public and I suggest therefore that it is important to abolish the school subject, Religious Education, and thus let it be seen that a clean break with the past has been made. A new subject could then be introduced with a new name, indicative of a completely new approach. Religious Studies would be a reasonable possibility as it is wider in its reference than to any one religion and is also in use in an increasing number of African Universities, for example, those of Cape Town, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Malawi. Since this is accepted as an academic pursuit it would also be possible for it to become an examination subject and take its place as an equal amongst others in the curriculum. Religious Studies is a preferable name to Religious Instruction, such as often used overseas, since the latter suggests that the children are going to be told what they ought to think; they will be instructed. This is against the whole ethos of the studies I am advocating.

6.2.1 Intolerant attitudes. The traditional African believer's attitude towards Christianity is apparently tolerant, compared to the intolerance of European, and some African, Christians towards African Traditional Religions. This difference in attitudes,

seems to have arisen for at least three reasons.

Firstly, African Traditional Religions are not exclusive systems with fixed authoritative bases but have developed and assimilated various aspects from contact with other religions as they have travelled down through history. This can be demonstrated by comparing the variations of belief among the different African'people groups'. African Traditional Religions are part of the peoples' culture and therefore adapt to changing situations from generation to generation. They are the peoples' answers to questions about life but they have no claim to being the only truth nor do they have any missionary impetus. They will not therefore have any reason for being antagonistic towards any other religion.

Conversely, the attitude of Christians has not been tolerant because Christianity is a world religion and claims to have ultimate answers for all people. Christianity is not tied to any one particular culture and has an established orthodoxy which is passed down through history and from culture to culture and believed to be based on the truth revealed to people, by God and therefore not susceptible to any form of fundamental change although it is, or should be, re-contextualised by each new generation and as it confronts new cultures. Christianity cannot change fundamentally without denying itself, although people are free to accept or reject the claims of Christianity to be the truth, and no Christian has any excuse for not respecting the autonomy of individuals.

Changes can be made which should help relationships. The Christian religion will have to maintain its integrity as a system and may be antagonistic to other religious beliefs but that does not mean that its adherents can have intolerant attitudes to the people involved in other religions. True Christianity advocates love of all people, regardless of their beliefs. Europeans and Africans both need to shake themselves free of colonial attitudes. The Africans will need to forgive the Europeans. The Europeans need to humbly leave their old paternal and superior attitudes for ever and accept that there is no basis for their assumption of superiority.

As was discussed (5.2.5) there are those who have tried to adopt a completely accepting attitude towards all religions. This philosophy was put into practice, for example, in

February 1991 in Canberra, Australia, when the WCC met and the opening procession passed through the smoke of burning gum leaves, according to Aboriginal Traditional Religion, and it was claimed that as this was of cleansing significance it could also represent the refining fire of the Holy Spirit. Most orthodox Christians would find this unacceptable and echo the sentiments of Peter Beyerhaus of Tübingen that this was 'naked blasphemy'.

Secondly, because Christianity came to the Xhosa as part of a mighty and powerful colonial movement which overran the Xhosa, they were left powerless to resist it if they wished to participate in the benefits of modern life, for example, education. Without these benefits the Xhosa had no hope of advancement in the European system of life which was imposed upon them, so tolerant acceptance was the pragmatic response, born of the necessity to survive. Rousseau pointed out that as life becomes more complex, people surrender some of their freedoms in order to survive and to fit into a community. In the case of the Xhosa this meant having to fit into, at least in part, the European community.

European Christians have to come to terms with the Biblical perception that God does not favour one nation above another as the apostle Peter discovered when God gave him a vision on the roof of Simon's house in Joppa (Acts 10 v35). Many Christians will have to learn to accept those who differ from themselves as persons. At the same time they will have to be aware of thoughtlessly accepting, without possibility of integration into their own world views, the ideas held by these people who do not want to be Christians. This will involve some fundamental changes in thinking for many people. Teaching Religious Studies in schools can help all children to understand how the bad attitudes have arisen and help them to move to better ones where necessary.

Thirdly, and closely associated with this problem, the whole issue of the relationship of church and state arises. In Southern Africa the two have been very much as one under the Nationalist Government, resulting in the churches' agenda being policy in school. Church and state are not synonymous and each needs to confine itself to its own agenda and give each other the space it needs to function efficiently in its own role. That is not to say that any religion can put itself above the law. Should any group choose, for

religious reasons, to behave in a manner detrimental to the well-being of the community as a whole the state would have to exercise its responsibility to maintain the best possible situation for the care of all members of the community.

Rousseau suggested that if the people agree that the state should provide education then it becomes legitimate for the government to assume that responsibility because it derives its authority from the so-called 'social contract'. This would not seem to answer the case in an area such as Southern Africa since there are a variety of very different cultures and a need therefore for at least some community autonomy and not the imposition of the majority will upon all. Also, any group of people in a democratic society, Christian, Hindu or other, for religious or secular reasons, has the right to address the government if they feel that the government is acting wrongly.

The agenda of the church includes its responsibility to minister to its own adherents and the right to proselytise but without undue pressure, or malice, slander or denigration of other people's religion or family origin. The Church, like any religious group, should be able to train its own leaders and produce and distribute literature as well as have proportional access to public media. It should be free to hold meetings for its members and for the public and to practise its ceremonies in relation to family rites of passage, such as birth, marriage and death, within the provisions of civil law. The freedom to follow this type of agenda belongs to all religions represented in the country. Each person ought to be free to choose his religion and not be discriminated against because of that choice. Parents should have the right to bring up their own children as they wish providing they do not harm them. Parents should behave towards their children according to reasonable standards as accepted in the community.

The essential function of a state is to protect all of its citizens by maintaining law and order, and if necessary to punish infringements of the law appropriately, according to agreed procedures. Antisocial behaviour, such as exploitation and repression of others must be restrained so as to create an environment in which good can flourish. The state ought to promote tolerance and justice and create conditions of freedom, such that, inter alia, the religious bodies can fulfil their functions. If religious bodies and the state fulfil their own functions well education will reap many benefits. These conditions should

include the provision, for all people, of those services which are necessary for a good life. A good education for all should be part of this provision. The secular state should not propagate any particular religion, and should not therefore, have national symbols which are particular to any one religion. Since religious ideas permeate so many aspects of life and are central to the lives of many people, the state should give children an opportunity, as part of their education, to come to an understanding of the religions found in their communities. There seems every reason to suppose, from current political discussions, that the state will not impose any religious system on the people but confine itself to secular matters whilst granting freedom of conscience and practice to all.

6.2.2 The inferior quality of Religious Education. Kili compared Religious Education with other school subjects and concluded that it was perceived as inferior (Kili, 1988:133). The reasons she gives for this should be given consideration. They can be listed as follow:-

1. No parents, teachers or pupils considered it worthwhile.
2. It is not an examination subject and therefore does not qualify one for anything and is therefore perceived to be a waste of time.
3. The actual teaching process is not of a high standard.

Firstly, it is alleged by Kili that the lack of regard for the subject exists because it seems that none of the groups involved in the education process see the current Religious Education as fulfilling their needs. Not only do children feel that it is not contributing positively towards their education but they, and many other people, are also suspicious that the subject has a hidden agenda and is manipulating them. The subject has been, they feel, taught for the benefit of the Nationalist Government and the Dutch Reformed Church, inter alia, rather than having been put into the curriculum for the good of the community and, in particular, the child.

The teachers who are not Christians, and also many who are, are uncomfortable teaching Religious Education when the stated aim is to convert the children. The parents do not want to send their children to school to be made what the government wants them to be. What was noted in the Tomlinson report, namely that the government was of the opinion that the 'Bantu' should be converted for the good of the government because they would

be less troublesome, is unacceptable.

The answer to these problems would seem to lie in having a syllabus, not in any way doctrinaire, which does answer the needs of families and will be appreciated by them. Hopefully the teachers might be happier, comfortable and feel freer with the subject and find it interesting and rewarding and not just, as often, an unwanted responsibility dropped on them.

Secondly, and partly responsible for the lack of enthusiasm for Religious Education, is the current lack of examinations. Maybe Religious Studies should become an examination subject and take its place with the other school subjects. There is no reason why not, especially if the aims of the subject are changed to ones which are educationally justifiable and academically testable, unlike the current stated aim of inculcating spiritual growth. If the aim of the subject is, inter alia, to acquire facts about all local religions then facts can be tested. Furthermore, there is every reason why Religious Studies could be one of the options in academic examinations in schools if it is given a respectable academic base as in university courses and it will be needed by students who in their turn will become teachers in schools of the future. The subject should not however merely be taught as a self-perpetuating cycle but because it can assist children to understand various religious and philosophical ideas and to develop life skills in community relationships. Religious Studies teachers who are genuinely interested in their pupils, their level of understanding, hopes, fears, confusions and aspirations, who are caring, sympathetic, and willing to listen would often have unique pastoral/counselling opportunities.

There is every reason to suppose that many children who will become professionally involved in counselling others, for example, in helping professions such as, Doctors, Nurses, Psychologists, Ministers of Religion, Educationists and also Personnel Managers, Politicians and local government officials, would all be able to function better if they had a deeper appreciation of the religious thinking which motivates and influences the people with whom they work.

There are educative reasons for pursuing a course, even if there are no examinations,

which do not seem to be appreciated, probably because the current syllabi have little to commend them from an educative perspective. An improvement in subject content should help to solve this problem. If a course is truly educative it should have intrinsic motivation. It can never be that one subject inspires everyone but there are things in school which the pupils would continue to do if they did not have to. What those things are would vary from pupil to pupil. One of the advantages of not being an examination subject could be that the teacher would be freer to give the children time to talk about the challenges of life which concern them especially since religion involves life issues. Many schools have voluntary, extra-curricular debating societies which show that the children do consider talk about life issues worth while.

Thirdly, what is happening in the classrooms, if anything at all, is not inspiring. Mxekezo noted that very few schools were doing a reasonable job. One reason for this is a lack of equipment, such as having no Bibles when trying to teach Religious Education (current Christian syllabus). Truscott (1993:18) attributes this shortage to inefficiency, poor control and corruption, as well as to budget restrictions. As always there are financial problems but the problem is probably very closely allied to the discussion above, namely that what little money there is will not be spent on a seemingly useless subject. If there is good motivation for including Religious Studies in school education the shortage of basic necessities may well be alleviated.

For too long it has been assumed that the only requirement is for the teacher to be simple enough in his choice of words and narrative and religious truth will easily communicate itself. The younger the children, the less likelihood there is of them learning any religious truths abstractly. There are, of course, many interesting ways of presenting lessons: debating, using many kinds of electric media, visits to religious buildings or festivals, interviews, relevant novels, travel books, to name some. If nothing else there is an urgent need for a resource book which deals with religions and life issues. Since there is no history in this area of teaching African Traditional Religions and others alongside the Christian religion there is no material to fall back on. During 1992 the Institute for Comparative Religion in Southern Africa did establish a computerized data base of resources to enable the religions of the area to be studied.

Provision of teachers is a big problem since currently many are not specialists in Religious Education and do not wish to be involved in teaching religion in schools at all. Often they have been timetabled to 'fill in' and so are all too easily persuaded to teach the subject they like and know, and for which they doubtless need more time, than to spend an irritating half hour battling against unreasonable odds. Even many of those supposedly qualified, under current regulations, to teach Religious Education, are not, since the subject they studied at universities, such as Fort Hare, was Biblical Studies which did not equip them to deal with inter-faith issues which apparently, according to Mxekezo and Kili, concern pupils. Many teachers are themselves confused about where they stand in religious matters and so unable to be of help to the children in their search for truth. As Kili discovered, they have been unable to find satisfactory answers to the matter of the relationship between African Traditional Religions and Christianity. Mxekezo (1991:51) quotes an article by Nicolson who has become so despondent he ended up doubting if it was even possible to teach Religious Education in school. He was probably right in so far as that he was referring to the current syllabus. As far as the new proposed subject, Religious Studies, is concerned, teachers would, very definitely, be unable to teach it from the basis of their current university qualification in Biblical Studies and teachers who studied in Training Colleges, to give formulated answers relevant to the current syllabi and their aims, would also not be equipped to give educative religious lessons.

The pupils are also unhappy. They do not want to be indoctrinated, many Africans are experiencing what Tutu called 'schizophrenia' (ter Haar, et al 1992:44) because of the differences between home and school. Sanda (cited in ter Haar, 1992:34) says that Western education is experienced by Africans as an instrument of alienation as well as being exploitative, culturally imperialistic and aiming to de-Africanize them. They do not experience the subject as free. There is a lack of critical openness and also as discussed above, they are completely unmotivated and bored. It is not however desirable to have an education system where what the child wants is the only norm, rather these problems can be addressed by having better teachers and materials. The teachers are also there to learn and share and possibly show ways forward, not to dominate. The teachers need to have better, and a greater variety of, teaching methods, using as many of the children's senses as possible so that they are able to relate to the materials. Most

of all an interesting syllabus is needed, perceived by parents, pupils and teachers as designed to educate the pupils.

Harold Loukes (1961:99) suggests that the secondary school should be the place where children are helped to examine religious concepts so that they can shed infantile forms and accept adult ones. To do this well the pupils need to be encouraged to be articulate which will help to release the tensions. Hubery says it this way:

> ...the experiential approach to teaching involves teaching from experience, to experience and through experience (Hubery, 1965:66).

6.2.3 The convergent goal of society and the school. When schooling is experienced as a deliberate attempt to shape the society into something it does not wish to become it is doomed. It will be experienced at least as threatening and at worst as rampant indoctrination. In this respect education, to be relevant, needs to follow the agenda of society but that may be a larger society, as in the diversity of South Africa, than merely the immediate community. If education becomes too parochial then there will be accusations stemming from the feeling that all children are not being given 'equal opportunities'. Further, children should be given as wide and diverse an education as possible although there may well be a place for shifts in emphasis from one community to another and there is no reason why legislation should not be loose enough to allow parents and management committees to choose particular emphases, but not to entirely exclude religions other than the preferred one. For example, it may be appropriate for a school, where most of the children come from Hindu homes, to apportion more time to that religion and less to others but the basic opportunities for learning in a country ought to be of equal worth. It is unrealistic to suppose that all schools will be the same but things should not be organised so as to create inequality, that is, where some are deliberately favoured above others. In large schools it may be possible to 'stream' children according to the dominant religious interest of their homes but if the children live together as one community it is arguably better that they should confront their divergent opinions in the classroom and, in a spirit of tolerance, come to a deeper understanding of how each feels. Where feasible, it would be an excellent idea to have joint debates and activities with other schools with different religious emphases.

The main consideration is to try to write a new syllabus which is as acceptable as possible to all concerned. If religion is to be part of the school curriculum people need to feel comfortable with it. Sachs (1992:6) points out that if people are comfortable it helps to soften attitudes and encourage flexibility.

The following are some considerations:-

Firstly, no education can be entirely impartial, value free, but it would seem best to strive for something as balanced as possible. Even a simple scientific experiment can only proceed when it accepts as a basic world view that the results will be meaningful because they will be verifiable by repeating the experiment. One problem that Religious Studies has to confront is that there are those who have a tendency to regard an indifferent attitude to religion as more scientific than one of accepting some religious basis for life. This sort of bias should not be permitted to influence decisions about teaching Religion in schools any more than the bias which currently pertains.

For most people in Southern Africa, according to the statistics quoted by Kili and others (Kili, 1988:156), People are not viewed as a mere random collection of atoms, a sophisticated product of evolution, but as being uniquely created and able to respond to their creator spiritually. Vocational or training models of schooling, that is, ones which are only concerned to train children to do specific jobs in their working lives, could be argued to be economically desirable but people are not just machines and inside a healthy body there should be a healthy mind and spirit or else the person will not function well in his work. It would be particularly out of place in African society, where religion is so integrated with all of life, to have a curriculum founded only on humanistic principles. A sensitive humanism will involve a certain sympathy for religion because it has played an important part in the pursuit of human wellbeing. Children, themselves, will bring doubts resulting from encounters with multiple philosophies and these need to be treated as sympathetically as commitments expressed by some other children.

Education should be the harmonious development of physical, mental and spiritual powers (Fihla, 1962:120). It is not realistic to speak of multi-cultural education because cultures approach knowledge in different ways and we will have to accept that the teachers' cultures as well as their religious affiliations, will influence their approaches.

Secondly, I have argued for a great deal of freedom in planning the content of the subject but there will have to be some structures and guidelines. The usual way to plan is to ask what the aim should be, using the analogy of archery. There is a target which should be aimed at and hopefully, hit. I would like to base the syllabi for Religious Studies, as I would prefer to call it, on a broader basis and think more about the journey and less about the target. To change the analogy, thinking of soccer, rugby, hockey, there is an aim, namely to get a goal, but the goal posts are such that they allow for a degree of latitude as to where one is aiming and when measuring whether one has succeeded. Furthermore, whereas in archery one just looks to see if the arrow has hit the target, in these games, under normal circumstances, the enjoyment of the game counts, possibly even more than watching the goal being scored although this will always remain the highlight. Nobody would want to watch a match where nothing happened except goal scoring. Of course, the goals are very important to measure the success of the playing. So the Religious Studies lessons would be planned with an aim but an important part of the aim would be the freedom to move around en route to the goal and success measured, not only by the facts learned, but also, by the discussions and mutual respect and understanding achieved along the way, and also the enjoyment found in being able to talk about things which really matter to the children.

To ensure that teaching is educative, teachers should not be given too much freedom to select the contents of their lessons. Matters need to be agreed on by government departments, communities, parents, teachers and educationists but it is not necessary to legislate in minute detail. Local communities could be free, within clearly defined limits, to include what is important to them and teachers should be free to let the pupils influence the agenda at least some of the time. An interesting experiment was tried in 1929 in Tanzania when an attempt was made to integrate rural schools more into the life of each society. About six school elders were appointed in each community and they were asked to care for the mother tongue, tribal culture and values and to base all discipline on the comradeship principle (Fiedler, 1994:24/25). Fiedler judged that:

> ...although cultural conservatism and the aspirations of the educated elite were poles apart, full cooperation in educational matters was possible, although somewhat uneasy group - and sometimes personal relationships remained (1994:25).

If the discovery method is used, it is in any case not so controllable, as to results, in the

Religious Studies class as it should be in the science class. I have also argued, although not specifically, for a syllabus which is related to life issues, more theological and philosophical, and with less focus on facts. In the case of Christianity, this would mean not merely learning Bible stories.

This basic concept ought not be allowed to make us forget that children are at differing stages and small children cannot usually think abstractly. The work of Goldman, based on Piaget's developmental theories, are of considerable help in determining at what approximate stage children are able to cope with more abstract ideas as long as it is remembered that children vary a good deal at any given age. At all stages children will learn better if they are learning through concrete experiences, they have had or can be given or at least of which they are aware and may encounter in the future.

Some considerable assistance may be available in organising such a course as others have moved in this direction. In 1975, the Birmingham (U.K.) Local Education Authority produced, what was probably the first experiment in organising a multi-faith programme, with their handbook "Living Together". We have already noted some areas of particular importance in African society under 5.2.3. Writers such as Loukes (1961:103-4) have produced useful suggestions as to topics of interest. He notes for example, as suitable for pupils of approximately 14 years,

Problems of personal relations:

1. Authority
2. Friendship
3. Sex and Marriage
4. Snobbery

Problems of personal responsibility:

5. Money
6. Work
7. Leisure
8. Prayer

Problems of meaning

9. Suffering
10. Death

11.Learning

and he notes that these tie up with 'developmental tasks' as in Havinghurst's list, rearranged to show a broad correspondence to his own.

Personal Relations.

1. Achieving emotional independence of parents and other adults.
2. Achieving new relationships with age-mates.
3. Achieving a masculine or feminine social role.
4. Preparing for an occupation.
5. Desiring and achieving socially responsible behaviour.

Personal Responsibility.

6. Achieving assurance of economic independency.
7. Selecting and preparing for an occupation.
8. Accepting one's physique and using the body effectively.

Problems of meaning.

9. Developing intellectual skills and concepts necessary for civic competence.
10. Acquiring a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to behaviour.

As regards to the Christian component of the syllabi I should like to discuss briefly the use of the Bible. It would seem desirable to have an acquaintance with the main stories, for example, creation, the nativity, the crucifixion and the founding of the church. Also it is important for the children to actually handle a Bible and have an overall view of how it fits together and in which parts various kinds of materials can be found. It is not a contemporary book, nor one derived from a Southern African context and so help is needed if pupils are to be able to understand it. There will also be a need to give a little of the historical background in order to make sense of it and to be able to use it wisely. In this respect the Bible can be confronted as a text book but primarily the Bible is not and was never intended to be used as a text book. It is a resource book which speaks, from a religious perspective, into the situations of peoples' lives; it does give a lot of ethical guidance, but it is not intended to be a list of religious do's and don'ts. It does help to solve problems. It gives case studies rather than commandments, for the most part. From a Christian perspective the Bible is used to listen to what God is saying and to encounter God, and this needs to be understood, although, of course, non-Christians will not want it to address them in this way. Nevertheless when discussing life issues, as

mentioned above, the Bible can present, what is understood by the Christian to be, God's point of view.

If several religious affiliations are represented in the class then it may be possible, depending on the developmental level of the children, to give representatives of each group the chance to present to the class the perspective of their religious community on the question under discussion. With older pupils, as second best, it may be possible for some pupils to interview adherents of other religions, or as third best to research other religions and attempt to write from the other perspectives.

There are various skills used in curriculum planning and one which could be of help in looking at the religious syllabi is that of 'Scenario Writing'. A group of writers presume syllabi of various kinds, or for that matter the abolition of any religious education in schools, and then try to describe what conditions are likely to result from that particular action. A good syllabus would have to be one which achieved what I have argued as desirable outcomes in 4.3, more than other options, especially as related to all the issues raised where I discussed what children should acquire, and as related to the overall goals of the school. These would be aspects like cognitive development, ability to function in the world as it is, respect, a desire to continue to learn and the ability to get work.

6.2.4 <u>The shortage of qualified teachers.</u> This is a problem which will have to be confronted very seriously before Religious Studies can be brought into the schools. Currently it is considered that a teacher who completed Biblical Studies courses is the one qualified to teach Religious Education. The teaching of Biblical Studies is a matter of Bible content and background and it may, or may not, continue as an optional school subject. This is largely what is taught in the Biblical Studies department of the Fort Hare University and does not constitute a problem for teachers trained in that subject. It is of course a fact that where Religious Education is taught at all in Eastern Cape Province schools it was found by Kili and Mxekezo to be taught frequently by teachers who do not have qualifications in Biblical Studies. However, as the aims of Religious Studies, of the type which I am advocating, are very different from the old concept, it would seem that these courses are in any case not adequate preparation for such teachers. Certainly commitment and enthusiasm, which have in the past been excuses

to fob the subject off onto certain staff, is not enough, and if by commitment we mean, as was usually the case, Christian commitment, then it definitely is not necessary. Enthusiasm and sympathy with ones fellow humans will make a worthwhile contribution, but academic help for the teacher is essential.

At University level and in Teacher Training Colleges there is need for a new appropriate course in Religious Studies which will be recognised for teaching purposes. Many Universities in Southern Africa are beginning to offer something of this nature as Religious Studies or Comparative Studies. Hopefully there will be students who are interested and will want to become involved in teaching this new demanding subject and will project their enthusiasm to the pupils. 'Inservice training' will have to be considered for those already qualified teachers who will be interested in teaching the Religious Studies, as proposed, in the future. For convenience I refer to 'training', as the term normally used, but the teachers will not need training but educating so that they can think about religious issues from a variety of religious perspectives. To function, in the way I am proposing, the teacher must be an educated, not a trained, person.

A book has been produced for use in Zimbabwe as a resource book for teachers. It is entitled 'African Traditional Religions in Religious Education' and is produced by the University of Utrecht, 1992. Its purpose is to provide suitable background material so that the teacher can feel confident in the classroom to discuss Christianity alongside the issues arising from African Traditional Religions. I would envisage that something of this sort should be provided for the Eastern Cape Province and, indeed, all of South Africa, as there are many teachers who, according to the surveys, felt unable to handle students' questions, especially when relating to the relationship between Christianity and African Traditional Religions. The teachers should be encouraged to feel free to be themselves and speak honestly, admitting, as appropriate, doubts and problems which they also face whilst at the same time leaving the pupils free to form their own reasoned opinions.

The teachers need to be, as far as possible, provisionally, authorities, experts in their subject, aware of a wide range of possibilities and not merely passing on to their pupils what they have learned from their teachers without thought, question, or critical understanding. The teachers are there to help pupils free themselves from stereotypes

and encourage them to question and evaluate all they hear. The teachers must first experience this freedom before they can hope to help their pupils to do so. Teachers do not need to know all the answers but need to have enough knowledge to discuss and make informed judgments and then to question further. Teachers need then to help their pupils to provide answers from their own experiences, which may be different from the teachers answers. The process is one of learning together. Teachers will always, knowingly or otherwise, teach from a perspective of their own. They should be understanding but critical, never judgmental, of the differing philosophical religious presuppositions of their pupils. In fact, teaching will not be effective if the teachers are confused in their own minds. Acquiring a point of view, even for an agnostic, requires reflection. The teachers need to evolve their own points of view, to effectively engage in dialogue, preferably as they are taught to teach, but this will never be a final closed position. Teachers, like pupils, are on a journey of discovery.

Fortunately, during their school careers children will normally be exposed to more than one teacher. In planning Religious Studies lessons maybe it would be desirable for principals to arrange the timetable such that from year to year the children are deliberately exposed to a variety of teachers in this subject, in contrast to, say, Mathematics, where it is usually felt to be beneficial to retain the same teacher for the class. The teachers do have the responsibility of giving the children the right sort of facts and helping them to select or discard them and to value worthwhile things in a socially acceptable way. The teachers will actually do this to some extent whether they intend to or not. This is a difficult issue as there is a very fine line between controlling the children's filtering capabilities and indoctrination. Teachers who have been operating under the old regime of pedagogics may have difficulty making the necessary paradigm shift.

6.2.5 <u>The heterogenous composition of Xhosa society in religious matters.</u> The Xhosa community is close-knit and not as individualistic as the European communities and so many Xhosa would like to continue to experience the oneness of religious and cultural belief which characterised the pre-colonial era. Kili (1988:2,3) records experiencing embarrassment because of religious differences and claims that there is a dualism, not understood by the people. It is hoped that the more open approach to what is taught, plus the experience of multi-faith learning, will help everyone to feel more comfortable,

both with what they believe, and comfortable enough to give others space to differ with them without feeling threatened.

Mxekezo (1991:32) suggests that the lessons be open to the whole milieu of ideas available to the parents, teacher and pupils. This seems a tall order but it should certainly be open to all ideas which concern them. However desirable unanimity of belief may be, those days are gone beyond recall, if they ever existed. Even if they could be recovered the realities of life have changed and people live in a wider society than just their own ethnic group. Even Christians are confused among themselves, since the 80% claiming Christian allegiance belong to dozens of differing denominations. Children can be confused by divergent schools of thought, especially if they are subjected to each one serially telling them that it is right. This is exactly the kind of reason why I am contending that there is a need for Religious Studies in school and why it needs, at least until well into High School, to be a compulsory subject. The opportunity to know about spiritual matters is too important to be missed out on. The United Nations 1959 Declaration of the Rights of the Child, principle 2, states:

> The child shall enjoy special protection, and shall be given opportunities and facilities, by law and by other means, to enable him to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity. In the enactment of laws for this purpose the best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration (cited in McCoy, 1987:43).

All children need to be given the help and opportunities to encounter spiritual issues which confront them. The school, which will be compulsory for all children, is the place where this can best be done for all.

6.2.6 <u>The responsibility for a child's religious education.</u> I have discussed this at some length above when thinking of government and community responsibility. To summarise, I believe that the parents are responsible for their children and should have the right to choose for them, until they are old enough to choose for themselves, without interference from the state or their local community, providing that their choice does not endanger the child. This is problematic when the parents themselves are uneducated but even this problem does not, I believe, give the state the right to take away the parents' rights. This means that parents should have the right to withdraw their children from any activities

which are sectarian, for example, if by majority decision the school decides to invite a Christian minister to address the school assembly the children would have the right to be absent if their parents so wished. It does not mean that the parents would have the right to withdraw their children from Religious Studies since the subject aims to give information about all religions studied, not to propagate any one in particular. This is information of importance to every child, and in this sense, the responsibility for religious education belongs to the school, which responsibility is derived from the government and the community.

The responsibility for confirming children, instructing children, influencing the children to believe and act according to a particular religion belongs to the religious community of which they are, by the volition of their parents, voluntary members. This means that Christian parents should look to the church, not as in the past to the school, for this aspect of religious education. There could be an exception if parents choose to send their children to private schools which are overtly Christian. They should help the children to make sense of the knowledge they acquire in school by participating in religious activities with their own believing communities. This will be real and meaningful, unlike so much of what has happened in schools in the past, for example, assemblies masquerading as worship. In the religious communities the pupils can make their own considered responses. The way in which the children will be able to respond will be determined, not only by their education and their experience in religious activities but also by the ability of the children to make a reasoned decision.

It must not be forgotten however that:

> What guides conduct is often a model, real or ideal, factual or fictional, which one would like to imitate (Allen 1987:22).

Being in contact regularly with a religious group will greatly influence the way that the children respond to what they learn at school. Parents of all persuasions are responsible to see that their children are part of religious activities in their chosen group, for example, in participating in traditional African religious rituals or in the Mosque, whatever is appropriate. When young people leave school they should be ready to take responsibility for their own commitments with understanding and appreciation of what their commitments will involve and what the alternatives are should they wish to change

direction from their parental upbringing.

6.2.7 The out-datedness of the syllabi. There is little doubt that the whole of Southern Africa has an outdated policy and syllabus for Religious Education. The current one belongs to the old South Africa. Urgent attention is being given, not to updating it, but to replacing it with an entirely new concept, which I suggest be called Religious Studies. Whilst I have been writing this document much work has been going on. Mention should be made of the National Education Crisis committee and the reports published by the National Educational Policy Investigation in their booklet 'Curriculum' 1992. There is also the substantial work published in 1992 by the Institute for Comparative Religion in Southern Africa entitled 'Religion in Public Education: Policy Options for a New South Africa'. It is envisaged that a new proposed syllabus will be published during 1995. In the Eastern Cape Province there is currently a Draft Provincial White Paper (1994), said to be the first of a series, which states that it is intended to be a frank and informative analysis of the state of education in the province. It does not discuss any curriculum suggestions but suggests that a Provincial Institute for Curriculum Development be established which will feed suggestions, suited to the local context, from stakeholders to the National Institute for Curriculum Development (2.6.1.1). It concerns itself with principles of equality of opportunity in schools (2.3.3) and community involvement (2.3.5 & 2.5.5.1

6.2.8 The need to teach morality. Norms are derived from societies and their commonly accepted beliefs as to what is acceptable behaviour. If a society had no agreed model of ethical behaviour life would be insupportable. In part, Southern Africa and many other parts of the world, must lay the blame for social chaos on the fact that there has been a departure from the culturally accepted ethical codes. For example, at Fort Hare discussions have been held about the high incidence of rape on the campus and several academics expressed the firm opinion that this was not acceptable in their Xhosa culture although some of the students involved had tried to argue that it was. People have begun to do 'what is right in their own eyes', thinking selfishly, instead of with regard to the community. Urgent attention needs to be given to this question. Law is not enough to keep order, there is a need for people to internalise the values which are good and then, hopefully, they will be more inclined to live by them. People need

to be helped to transcend their current extreme subjectivism. Philosophy values truth and goodness for their own sake. I do not wish to discuss here what is good and of value, just to note that in most societies the original basis for such decisions had religious connotations. However, most of the time, the problem does not lie in deciding what should be accepted as desirable behaviour but in convincing people to live their values. Although the problem is urgent it does not follow that there is a necessary link between attempting to solve it and arguing that religion should be taught in schools. The Institute for Comparative Religion in Southern Africa notes this problem and remarks that:

> ... in human history, religion has played an important role in shaping systems of morality, ethical values, and personality development. To study religion, therefore, is also to study morals, values and personal development. The degree to which the moral aspect of religion education is emphasised remains a matter for discussion, negotiation and innovation (Institute, 1992:20).

It is however interesting to note that the new 1991 Namibian Syllabus is called 'Religious and Moral Education'. It takes the Christian Bible as a basis but includes other religious perspectives as well. It specifies its learning objectives as:

> ... the development of moral "values and life-related skills" (Institute, 1992:9).

Moral training and education, it seems to me, and in line with the distinctions Kazepides (1982:155-65) makes, should be dealt with in the socialisation of children which is not primarily a function of the school. Schools should, however, support, not contradict or criticise, the social standards of the communities they serve although there should be opportunity for children to discuss moral issues in open debate and so reason and appreciate why the community holds certain moral norms. Particularly in primary schools, there is a need to restate these traditional values clearly as a school continues the socialising process. Pupils should be encouraged to adopt the norms which belong to the religious and social group in which they wish to live their lives. It may be that the children will reject the community beliefs but if this is so they should come to that decision themselves and not because the school has imposed an authoritative alternative norm upon them.

Education should particularly promote values common to most communities such as mutual respect, love for each other, honesty, positive tolerance, truth, perseverance and sexually acceptable behaviours. The school itself, as a community, should uphold certain moral standards quite apart from its involvement or otherwise in Religious Studies. The agreed values should be clearly stated by schools and influence their entire programmes and ethos. There is little point encouraging certain values in the Religious Studies classes, if that is what should be decided, and then not upholding them in the daily life of the school. They should be incorporated into the school rules and then carefully enforced. The way a school is run and the behaviour of the staff, particularly towards the children, is very influential in the life of the whole community. In the end values are communicated by life style and the most teaching can do is to reveal what is already there.

The meeting held in Nairobi in 1981 to discuss these matters advocated teaching morality in the religious education classes (ter Haar, et al 1992:40). It seems to me that using a religion to impose a hidden agenda, albeit the worthwhile one of teaching morality, smacks of the old pedagogical regime which trained children to become what the adults involved desired. There is no necessary connection between religion and morality. Moral education has an independent rationale and can be taught independent of religion. Nyerere had moral education taught in Tanzanian schools to promote national values (Institute, 1992:91). It is perfectly possible for a person to live a moral life without any religious commitment. I would like to argue rather that cultures have ethical norms which are usually encoded and validated in their religious beliefs but which are observed for practical reasons by people in that culture regardless of their level of commitment to the religion. Even a committed Christian may live a moral life for reasons which are based neither on his religion nor, for that matter, on a desire to uphold moral standards. Although a Christian may say 'God says, "Do not steal", and so I don't', and even go further and say that God says this because stealing is wrong, yet the person may refrain from stealing merely because it is anti-social, rather than for the stated religious or moral reasons. People may refrain from stealing on pragmatic grounds since it would be disastrous if everyone in society stole at any time. The ownership of any property would be totally unfeasible and the viability of society, as we know it, severely threatened.

There is therefore a utilitarian basis for not stealing as well as a religious and a moral one. A problem arises because it appears that many people find that no matter how realistic they are, utilitarian arguments do not have enough force to govern their behaviour. Social sanctions have also apparently, in many cases, lost their ability to regulate behaviour. Many people would, therefore, support Cunningham who thinks that:

> ...since religion is the only adequate basis of morality, to attempt to teach morality without religion can be but fraught with failure (cited in Dyasis, 1960:82).

They would then argue that these moral norms can best be examined, compared and appropriated in the course of Religious Studies. This does not necessarily follow since, even if we agree that morality is best taught in the context of religion, it still does not follow that this has to be done in schools. It could be argued that the religious communities, churches or what ever group is appropriate for the particular religion, should be the context for moral instruction. This would seem to me to be more appropriate if we agree that morality usually has a basis in the religious teachings of a society and also more appropriate as the religious communities usually have rules and sanctions which can be enforced to deal with offenders against the religious communities' norms.

In school it could be argued that it would then be appropriate, probably, but not necessarily, in Religious Studies, to suggest that certain behaviours should be followed because the religion says so but also to show that a variety of religions would agree to this because there are good utilitarian reasons why. This would include aspects such as caring for ones' neighbours. The limits of utilitarianism could also be discussed. If there is disagreement between religions this could also be helpfully pointed out and it could stimulate discussion. For example whether it is wrong to steal from anyone or only wrong to steal from ones' own group.

The end result of this reasoning is still, for many, that religious education should be in school because it includes moral teaching, although because of the educative theory I have given earlier it would be inconsistent to suggest it right to attempt moral training. It is to be hoped that awareness of religious commitments and the norms accompanying

those commitments will motivate right living but unless there is personal commitment by pupils I see no reason why the religious teaching in schools will motivate them to live more moral lives. Since I have argued at length that religious commitment is not the area of concern in which school education should operate I have grave doubts about the validity of the argument that religion should be taught in schools because of the need to teach morality.

6.2.9 Denominational differences. As well as all the problems stemming from different religions being in the sub-continent there is the problem that Christianity is not in itself homogenous. It is said that there are over one hundred recognised Christian church bodies in South Africa (Institute, 1992:32). For that matter other religions, such as Islam, also have their sectarian divisions. There are a host of denominations at work in Southern Africa as well as a very large number of independent groups, all claiming to be Christian. In the Eastern Cape Province adherents of particular Church denominations are more likely to belong to them because a mission station or church was established in their area and so supported by their forefathers, than for theological reasons. Little wonder that many are confused. There is a lot the school can do to help pupils sort out these problems. Part of the syllabus could teach the history of the division of the church and explain what the cardinal differences and agreements are. Local clergy could be invited to give talks and pupils be encouraged to ask questions.

Inter-denominational relationships are, on the whole, very much better than in the past. The World Council of Churches has become very influential. In South Africa there has been an increase in the number of interdenominational services as well as the establishing of United Churches and Union Churches. (United Churches are those, as for example, St Johns, Parkmore, where several denominations share a building and take it in turns to officiate at worship services. Union Churches are those where Christians of a variety of denominations choose to worship together, retain their integrity as far as their beliefs go, but prefer not to emphasise these and constitute a non-denominational church where they can share.) It may therefore be quite possible to organise more than one church to be represented at a time to debate specific issues of interest to the pupils. Suitability of the ministers to relate to school children meaningfully should be carefully considered. It may be possible for various members of staff with differing commitments

to join in debates as well as informed pupils. Care must be taken not to favour one group above another.

6.3 Conclusion

There is an extremely strong case for historical, educational, cultural, social and religious reasons for including Religious Studies in the school curriculum. Speaking of his proposal for a broad religious studies programme in South Africa Smart says:

> ...if South Africa can achieve this out of the ruins of the apartheid system it may come to lead the world in peaceful coexistence and in imaginative creativity... The new religious studies may be the most profound offering which universities have to offer the wider world (cited in Institute, 1992:22).

I have attempted to give an indication of the kinds of things that pupils would gain from such a course. I hope that this study will stimulate thinking and be of assistance when further discussions are held to decide, democratically, what the future of Religious Education in schools should be.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adeney, M 1984. God's Foreign Policy. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Allen, R T 1987. 'Because I say so!' Some Limitations Upon the Rationalisation of Authority. Journal of Philosophy of Education 21(1) 15-24.

Almond, B 1988. Philosophy. London: Penguin.

Badenhorst, D C 1992. The Limitations and Possibilities of the South African Education System in the Inculcation of Values. Scriptura 41 1-12.

Barrow, R 1981. The Philosophy of Schooling. Brighton: Wheatsheaf.

Behr, A L 1971. Education in South Africa. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Behr, A L 1978. New Perspectives in South African Education: a Blueprint for the Twentieth Century. Durban: Butterworth.

Beidelman, T O 1982. Colonial Evangelism. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Bernstein, B 1975. Class Codes and Control Vol 13. Towards A Theory of Educational Transmissions. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Beyerhaus, P 1992. Towards One World Religion. Kwasizabantu.

Bonnett, M 1978. Authenticity and Education. Journal of Philosophy of Education 12 51-61.

Bosch, D J et al 1980. Missiology and Science of Religion. Pretoria: UNISA (B.Th Study Guide).

Bot, M 1991. Where to from here? in Cosser, E (Ed) Education for Life: The Challenge of Schooling for All. Johannesburg: CREID.

Bromley, South London [sa]. Religious Education Syllabus. London: Bromley Local Education Authority.

Brown, C 1969. Philosophy and the Christian Faith. London: Tyndale.

Bruce, F F 1967. The Epistle of Paul to the Romans: An Introduction and Commentary. London: Tyndale.

Burnett, D 1990. Clash of Worlds. Eastbourne, UK: Marc.

Cohen, L & Lawrence, M 1985. Research Methods in Education. London: Croom Helm.

Comaroff, J & J 1991. Of Revelation and Revolution. Vol 1. Chicago: University of Chicago.

Cumpsty, J S 1982. The Formation and Expression of the Sense of Reality. Journal of Theology for Southern Africa. 38 3-9.

Daneel, M L 1993. Paper given at a conference on The Role of Christianity in Development, Peace and Reconstruction at St Peter's Major Seminary, Zomba, Malawi.

Dearden, R F 1971. The Aesthetic Form of Understanding, in Smith, R A (Ed) Aesthetics and Problems of Education. Illinois: University Press.

Dippenaar, M C 1992. Response to Mitchell. Scriptura 41 51-4.

Douglas, J D 1962. Introduction, in Douglas, J D (Ed) The New Bible Dictionary. London: Inter-Varsity Fellowship.

Downey, M & Kelly, A V 1987. Theory and Practice of Education, An Introduction. London: Paul Chapman.

Driver, T F 1987, The Case for Pluralism, in Hick & Knitter (1987: 203-218).

Du Plessis, J 1965. A History of Christian Missions in South Africa. Cape Town: Struik.

Dwane, S 1989a. God, Religion and Culture. Alice: Lovedale.

Dwane, S 1989b. Issues in the South African Theological Debate. Johannesburg: Skotaville.

Dyasi, H M 1960. The History and the Problems of Bantu Urban Secondary Education in the Eastern Cape. 1937-54 (Ciskei Region). Grahamstown: Rhodes University.

Elvin, L 1977. The Place of Common Sense in Educational Thought. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Engelbrecht, B 1980. The Kingdom of God and its implications for all Education. Journal of Theology for Southern Africa 33 7-15.

Evangelens, 1994. Recent Trends in South African Religious Pluralism. Evangelens 18(4) 12-3.

Fiedler, K 1994. Christianity and African Culture: Conservative Ferment. Protestant Missionaries in Tanzania, 1900 - 1940. Bonn: VKW / Leiden: Brill.

Fihla, P 1962. The Development of Bantu Education at the St Matthew's Mission Station Keiskama Hoek 1853 - 1959. Unpublished M.Ed. Pretoria: UNISA.

Fowler, S 1987. Christian Educational Distinctives. Potchefstroom: Potchefstroom University.

Fowler, S, Van Brummelen, H W & Van Dyk, J 1990. Christian Schooling: Education for Freedom. Potchefstroom: Potchefstroom University.

Gilkey, L 1987. Plurality and its Theological Implications, in Hick & Knitter (1987: 3-15).

Goldman, R 1965. Readiness For Religion. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Green, T F 1971. The Activities of Teaching. Tokyo: McGraw-Hill.

Hebdon Taylor, E L 1969. The Christian Philosophy of Law, Politics and the State. New Jersey: Craig.

Hick, J 1963. Philosophy of Religion. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Hick, J & Knitter, P (Eds) 1987. The Myth of Christian Uniqueness. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis.

Hick, J 1987. The Non-Absoluteness of Christianity, in Hick & Knitter (1987:17-36).

Hubery, D S 1965. Teaching the Christian Faith Today. Redhill: Robert Denholm House.

Hughes, F 1989. Christian Education Under Review. Spectrum 21(2) 121-9.

Hulmes, E 1989. Education and Cultural Diversity. London: Londman.

Institute for Comparative Religion in Southern Africa, 1992. Religion in Public Education: Policy Options for a New South Africa. Cape Town: Institute for Comparative Religion in Southern Africa.

Jonas, P J 1992. Black Perceptions of White Education. Pretoria: UNISA (unpublished.)

Jones, C M 1963. Teaching the Bible Today. London: S.C.M.

Kazepides, T 1982. Educating, Socialising and Indoctrinating. Journal of Philosophy of Education 16(2) 155-65.

Katiya, N 1977. Analytical Study of the development of Higher Education for the Bantu of the Republic of The Republic of South Africa. Unpublished D.Ed Thesis. Alice: University of Fort Hare.

Kaufman, G D 1987. Religious Diversity, Historical Consciousness, and Christian Theology, in Hick & Knitter (1987:3-15).

Kibicho, S G 1981. The Christian Attitude to the teaching of African Religion in our Schools and Colleges. African Theological Journal 10(3) 29-37.

Kili, N N 1988. A Critical Comparative Study of the Biblical Studies and Religious Education Syllabi in Ciskeian Secondary Schools with Special Reference to Teacher Training in these Subjects. Unpublished M.Ed Dissertation. Alice: Fort Hare University.

Kirwen, M C 1987. The Missionary and the Diviner. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis.

Kitshoff, M C & Van Wyk, W B 1983. Method of Religious Education and Biblical Studies. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.

Kraft, C H 1980. Christianity in Culture. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis.

Kriel, J R 1992. Response to Badenhorst. Scriptura 41 13-8.

Leath, J & Kneifel, T & Nürnberger, K (Eds) 1986. Contending Ideologies in South Africa. Cape Town: David Philip.

Lewis, H D 1965. Philosophy of Religion. London: English Universities Press.

Lima Declaration. 1988. Geneva: World University Service.

Loukes, H 1961. Teenage Religion. London: S.C.M.

Makhubu, P 1983. Who are the Independent Churches? Johannesburg: Blackshaws.

Malherbe, E G 1925. Education in South Africa 1652-1922. Cape Town: Juta.

Marfleet, A G R 1989. Editorial. Spectrum. 21(2) 103-4.

Martin, C 1989. How Plural Can You Get? Spectrum. 21(2) 145-72.

Martin, W 1989. The New Age Cult. Minnesota: Bethany House.

McCoy, M 1987. The Child in our Midst. Johannesburg: C.P.S.A.

McGurk, N J & Kriel, J R 1986. Education for Reconciliation: Towards a Theology of Education, in Vorster, W S (Ed) Reconciliation and Construction. Pretoria: UNISA. 134-49.

McNeil, J D 1990. Curriculum. A Comprehensive Survey. U.S.A.: Harper Collins.

Mead, J 1989. Is Religious Education Possible Without Providing Pupils with some Opportunity of Worship? Spectrum 21(2) 111-9.

Mitchel, G 1992. Religion and Values: What Went Wrong. Scriptura 41 42-50.

Morrow, W 1989. Chains of Thought. Philosophical Essays in South African Education. Johannesburg: Southern.

Mxekezo, A M 1991. Religious Education in Ciskeian Secondary Schools at the Cross-Roads. A Critical/Comparative Analysis of the Present Situation and Suggestions for Future Consideration. Unpublished M.Ed dissertation. Alice: University of Fort Hare.

National Educational Policy Investigation, 1992. Curriculum. Cape Town: Oxford University Press/National Education Co-ordinating Committee.

Nürnberger, K 1987. Ecology and Christian Ethics in a Semi-industrialised and Polarised Society, in Vorster, W S (Ed) Are We Killing God's Earth? Ecology and Theology. Pretoria: UNISA

Nürnberger, K 1988. Power and Beliefs in South Africa. Pretoria: UNISA.

Orchard, S 1991. What was Wrong with Religious Education? An Analysis of H.M.I. Reports 1985-88. British Journal of Religious Education 14(1) 15-21.

Orr, J 1991. Califoria's Textbook Controversy: Religious Studies in the Public Schools. Religious Studies News. 6(3) 3-4.

Peires, J 1981. The House of Phalo. Johannesburg: Ravan.

Penny, A J 1970. An investigation into Religious Instruction in State High Schools in the Cape Province. Unpublished M.Ed. Dissertation. Grahamstown: Rhodes University.

Perks, S C 1992. The Christian Philosophy of Education explained. Whitby: Avant Books.

Peters, R S 1969. Ethics and Education. London: George Allen and Unwin.

Quince, P 1962. The Place of Commonsense in Educational Thought in The Teacher. 7th Dec 1962. London: H.M.S.O.

Rauche, G A 1990. Knowledge and Experience. Alice: University of Fort Hare.

Russell, L M 1967. Christian Education in Mission. Philadelphia: Westminster.

Sachs, A 1992. Religion, Education, and Constitutional Law. Cape Town: Institute for Comparative Religion in Southern Africa.

Saunders, C 1988. Illustrated History of South Africa: the Real Story. Cape Town: Reader's Digest.

Sebothoma, W 1992. What went Wrong with our System of Values? Scriptura 41 19-38.

Smart, N 1966. The Teacher and Christian Belief. London: James Clarke.

Smith, W C 1987. Idolatry, in Hick and Knitter (1987: 3-15).

Stanley, B 1990. The Bible and the Flag. Leicester: I.V.P. (Apollos).

Superintendent General of Education. 1932/1935 Lovedale Secondary School. Unpublished.

Taylor, M J (Ed.) 1960. Religious Education: A Comprehensive Survey. Nashville: Abingdon.

Taryor, N K 1985. Impact of the African Tradition on African Christianity. Chicago: Strugglers Community Press.

Ter Haar, G 1990. Faith of Our Fathers: Studies on Religious Education in Sub-Saharan Africa. Utrecht: Universiteit Utrecht.

Ter Haar, G, Moyo, A & Nondo, S J 1992. African Traditional Religions in Religious Education: A Resource Book with Special Reference to Zimbabwe. Utrecht: Universiteit Utrecht.

Tomlinson 1955. Commission For the Socio-economic Development of the Bantu areas within the Union of South Africa. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Truscott, K 1993. Youth Education and Work. The Need for an Integrated Policy and Action Approach. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand/National Education Co-ordinating Committee.

Van der Stoep, F & Louw, W J 1984. Didactics. Pretoria: Academic.

Van Schalkwyk, O J 1988. The Education System. Pretoria: Alkanto.

Verryn, T D 1981. Science Of Religion 1. Pretoria: UNISA.

Ward, J 1989. Impartiality is Biased. Spectrum 21(2) 105-9.

Waterink, J 1954. Basic Concepts in Christian Pedagogy. Chicago: Eerdmans.

Westcott, B F 1958. The Gospel According to St. John. London: James Clarke.

White Paper, 1994. Draft Provincial White Paper. Bisho: Provincial Ministry of Education and Culture.

Williams, D 1958. The Missionaries on the Eastern Frontier of the Cape Colony, 1799-1853. Unpublished. D.Phil. Thesis Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand.

Williams, D T 1992. Towards an African Christian Theology. Fort Hare Papers. 11 99-124.