

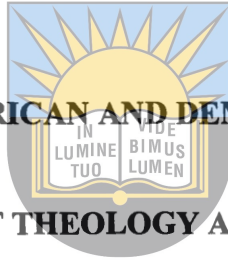
**CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN KENYAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS:  
AN APPRAISAL.**

**BY**

**KIRAITHE, JK (BEd)**

**MINI-DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF**

**MASTERS IN THEOLOGY (BIBLICAL STUDIES)**



**FACULTY OF AFRICAN AND DEMOCRACY STUDIES**

**SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGION**

**University of Fort Hare**  
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**AT**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE**

**SUPERVISOR: J BOHNEN**

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## ***DECLARATION***

I, the undersigned hereby declare that this mini dissertation is the result of my own original research and that the conclusions therein are my own.



Kiraithe, JK



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## ***ACKNOWLEDGEMENT***

My appreciation firstly goes to the Ministry of Education for granting me study leave at a time when policy was unclear as regards study leaves in my area of study. Thanks so much.

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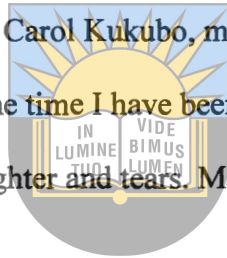
To all the principals of the schools I visited, I say thank you very much. You were so kind and understanding; in spite of the short notice of my visit, you allowed me to conduct the research in your institutions. To the teachers and students, I am very grateful for your cooperation. The blessing of the Lord God be with you all.

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Last but not least, to you my friend Carol Kukubo, my most heartfelt gratitude. You have been my sister and my family for the time I have been in this institution. You were always there for me in times of laughter and tears. May the Almighty God bless you with his choicest blessings.



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To all the friends I have made while doing my study, you made my life worthwhile. God bless you all.

## ***DEDICATION***

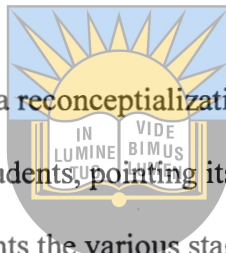
I dedicate this work to my kid-brother Kariuki, A and my niece Hope, K and their age groups .May you grow to be people of integrity, honoring God, yourselves and your neighbours.



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## Abstract

This research examines the attitudes and opinions regarding the study of Christian Religious Education in Kenyan Secondary Schools among the immediate stakeholders, that is, the students/learners, teachers and principals. This is chiefly because there has been a noticeable decline of interest in the study due to government's emphasis on science and technological oriented subjects that are needed in the job market. In the wake of this lackadaisical attitude, there have been many riots in secondary schools and general moral decadence.



The research attempts to promote a reconceptualization of Christian religious education as a vital study area in the lives of students, pointing its transformative effect on an individual's worldview. It highlights the various stages at which Christian Religious Education as a discipline was established and perpetuated in the Kenyan school curriculum. That is, the various education policies, and cites when the turn of events came about. It also examines the relationship between Christianity and sciences, and between Christianity and African traditional religion in a bid to show that they accommodate and indeed require each other. It points out the importance of re-evaluating the curriculum and to some extent the teaching approach to that which matches the contemporally challenges. It tries briefly to describe some learning/teaching environments outside Kenya in order to provide a grid for assessing the Kenyan situation/trend and makes recommendations on aspects that need attention so as to give the Christian religious education discipline the credit it deserves.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

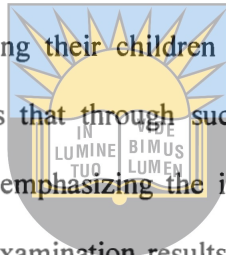
#### EDUCATION BACKGROUND IN KENYA

##### 1.1 Formal Education in Kenya

Africanmecca (2003) informs us that Dr. Krapf of the CMS missionary opened the first school in Kenya in 1847 at Rabai. The school at Rabai mission station made very slow progress and Kraft's attempts to persuade parents to send their children to school were generally unfruitful observe Sifuna and Otiende (1994:157). Africanmecca (2003) further notes that the Holy Ghost Fathers started another school much later, around 1891, in Mombasa for freed slaves and then moved to Taita Hills to work there. Saint Austin's of Nairobi began in 1898. It was here that the first coffee trees were grown on the mission grounds from where they found their way all over Kenya to enrich it as black gold. When Ainsworth was Provincial Commissioner in Nyanza, he helped the CMS start the school at Maseno to educate sons of chiefs, but it soon closed down. Mission schools provided the best means for educating Africans. According to Unicef, (July 2003) the school's primary purpose was to promote evangelism but as education developed it became an instrument to produce skilled labour for the settlers' farms and clerical staff for colonial administration. Anderson (1970:10) observes that on establishing the mission settlements in Africa, the possibility of using education as an agent of "controlled change" was quickly recognized.

Sheffield (1973:8) notes that missionaries were active in what is now Kenya some 50 years before the British government assumed responsibility for the territory. Thus the missionaries played a major role in the development of education in Kenya.

Anderson (1970:1) however reveals that the Europeans did not bring the idea of formal education to Africa; in many ways, he said, this had been established long before their arrival. For instance, story-telling time was a moment when growing children were taught about the customs of their people, societal values and inculcation of virtues, not to mention initiation schools. Here the initiates who formed age groups would be taught various aspects of societal expectations. Kenyatta (1938:99) claims that education among the Kikuyu [as in most African societies] began at the time of birth and ended at death. The child had to pass through various stages of age-grouping with a system of education defined for every status of life. The parent bore the responsibility of educating their children until they reached the stage of tribal education. Anderson (1970) notes that through such practices as grouping children into classes for regular daily lessons, emphasizing the importance of reading and writing and showing particular concern over examination results and certificates, Europeans have done much to shape Africa's more modern understanding of school [education?].



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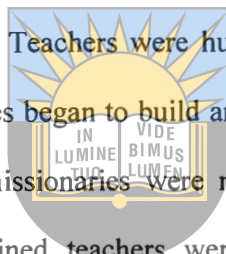
The school became the key to both economic and political progress. Hence it was valued both by the colonialists and the Africans (Kenyans) but for differing reasons. The colonialist's particular interest was the possibilities it held for a better skilled work force, and for inculcating within the 'native populations' a proper respect for the European interpretation of 'law and order', while Africans on the other hand sought the opportunities to learn the intricacies of European knowledge and material success. For a brief period, observes Anderson, this apparent coincidence of interest between the two groups allowed the early European educators to establish their conception of the formal school relatively smoothly amongst many African communities. As the divergence of interest between the two groups became increasingly apparent, both sought to gain control of the educational institutions, and

as rivalry intensified, there ensued in many colonial territories, alongside the more obvious contests for political and economic control, an equally determined “ ‘struggle for the school’ .”

Anderson (1970:4) observes that, initially, the authorities took little interest in planning the details of school development. Overall frames were laid down, but among the teachers, who were nearly always missionaries, there was great freedom to interpret their roles as educational instigators as they wished. Sifuna and Otiende (1994:157) note that as the Africans grew enthusiastic about school, the missionaries took advantage of the opportunity by exploiting it to the maximum. Teachers were hurriedly trained and sent to the “bush” schools which African communities began to build around the mission centres. They further observe that a majority of the missionaries were not generally prepared for educational training. Money was scarce, trained teachers were in limited supply and no suitable curriculum was available. Missionaries who had no educational training were expected to train “bush” school teachers. They themselves varied in background; some were graduates but other had little education beyond their missionary training. The training they gave was very superficial and included a heavy emphasis on rote learning aimed primarily at religious teaching and simple literacy.

Sheffield (1973:17) notes that against the background of political agitation, education during the interwar years was shaped by increased government involvement, primarily through its support of mission schools.

Sifuna and Otiende (1994:172) state that World War 1, fought between 1914 and 1918, marked an important turning point in the history of the tropical African territories. Before the war, there had been little overall policy. They mention that having been locked for four years



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in internecine combat, the colonial powers were less arrogantly self-confident of the natural superiority of Europeans. In the metropolitan countries, it began to be felt that colonialism needed a good and justifying philosophy. In education, the Phelps-Stokes commission on education in Africa saw important informed changes take place.

Anderson (1970:5) further informs us that as the 'native education policies' of the twenties began to take shape, Africans became increasingly critical. They noted the differences between the subjects they were taught and those Europeans emphasized for themselves, and were perceptive enough to follow the line of colonial logic that saw technical education developing a better skilled labour force. The natives began to realize the subtle blending of gradualism and practical training achieved in many of the rural development schemes [the subtle oppressive gradualism].

It was with this realization that the Africans rejected the type of education given to them and started agitating for quality education – the expansion of the school, and higher academic standards. This later became a central theme in the nationalistic movement.



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According to Sheffield (1973:12), in educating the African, the missionaries failed to differentiate Christian ethics from the European moral way of life. To them, becoming a Christian meant a negation of the traditional African way of life. In the same vein, Sifuna and Otiende (1994:157) remark that the missionaries demanded that their pupils do away with some of their traditional activities and customs and accept a new way of life. Their idea was that Christian Africans could only be 'civilised' out of their 'pagan' environment. This created tension especially over the issue of female circumcision among the Kikuyu particularly, which consequently, sparked the formation of independent schools opposed, not to Christianity per se, but to the westernization of Christianity. The missionaries' perception that Christianity must be linked with a cultural transference led ultimately to confrontations

in the Kikuyu areas, remarks Kenyatta (1938). There was increasing pressure from the missionaries with the consent of the colonial regime to force the Kikuyu to give up their traditions such as polygamy and female circumcision among others but to no avail. The issue of female circumcision was the straw that broke the camel's back; Kenyatta notes that Kikuyus in large numbers boycotted the mission schools and churches. They then set up their own schools in the spirit known as Harambee<sup>1</sup>.

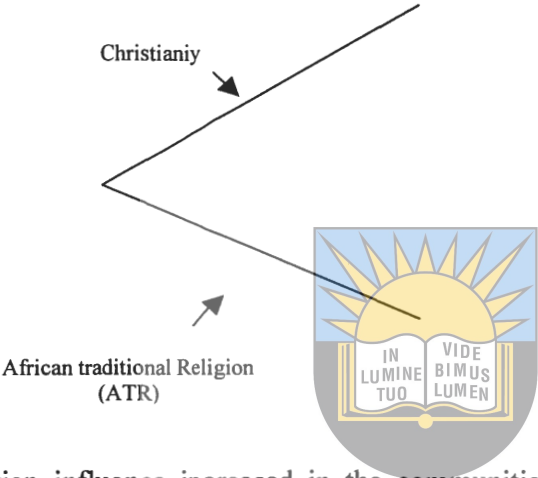
There were two groups of independent organizations- the Kikuyu Independent Schools Association (KISA) and the Karinga<sup>2</sup> –the Kikuyu Karinga Education Association (KKEA). Members of the latter group wanted to maintain their cultural traditions, identity and beliefs, but they also wanted Christianity in its purest form. The established missions were much opposed to these schools and tried to pressure the government to close them down, but they were allowed to continue and flourish. At this time schools in general were church sponsored. Therefore, once the Kikuyu had abandoned the mission churches they had no schools. The organization of the Karinga schools provided for the educational needs of their children, but they were without church affiliation. Between 1935 and 1937 the KISA and KKEA were drawn closer in their efforts. Anderson (1970:128) and Kenyatta (1938) note that in October 1952, both organizations were charged with subversion and their schools were closed. Later the government offered to open the schools but under the direct supervision of the government or the missionaries. A few of the KISA schools did opt to re-open but none of the KKEA ones did. Consequently the education of Kenyans was largely in the hands of the missionaries, who as noted above aimed at converting their audience, in this case the pupil, - more than academically equipping them in matters of God. Sheffield (1973:12) observes that missionary teaching devalued most of the African culture, which was branded evil, thus the

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<sup>1</sup> Literally means 'pulling together. A Kenyan motto meaning to work in togetherness.

<sup>2</sup> A Kikuyu word meaning 'orthodox' or 'pure'

adherents of the new faith had to quit involvement in the African traditions. Thus, they became victims of alienation both from their culture and into a foreign culture. In essence, the following diagram illustrates what happened.



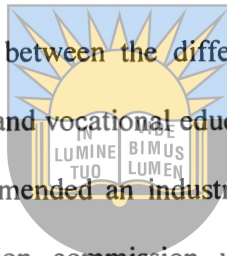
As Christian influence increased in the communities, the African traditional way of life diminished. Some beliefs and rituals were quickly being undermined or completely replaced by the Christian way of life. The table below illustrates the rate at which Christianity had taken root among different Kenyan communities by the 1990s (bluegecko 2003).

Communities	% of Christians	% of Traditionalists	% of Muslims	year
Meru	45	54	1	1996
Gusii	82	39	1	1996
Kikuyu	73	18	-	1996
Kamba	60	39	1	1989
Kuria	59	41	-	1996
Maasai	25	75	-	1996
Taita	67	28	5	1996

Worthy of note is the fact that these communities were 100% African traditional oriented communities before the coming of the other faiths (i.e. Christianity & Islam).

Unicef (July 2003) notes that education in the colonial period was rapidly stratified along racial lines. There were separate schools and curricula (and much superior resources) for the Europeans. The Asian and Arab systems came next, while the African system was determined by the dominant role of the missionaries in building and supervising the few schools. The missionaries also established training colleges for teachers and provided the funds for most of the recurrent costs, with only a small subsidy from the government in the form of grants.

Upon independence there were, therefore, great disparities in educational opportunities not only between the races but also between the different regions. In the colonial period, emphasis was placed on technical and vocational education for the Africans. From the Fraser Report of 1909, which first recommended an industrial curriculum as the basis of African education, through 1919 education commission under Archdeacon (later Archbishop) Leonard Beecher, the objective always was to enhance their suitability as labourers on settler farms. Anderson (1970:19 –21) notes that the government's support for missions and its effort to establish its own schools were limited, so that a very unequal and sketchy system of education faced the visiting Phelps-Stokes commission in 1924. Whilst the Phelps-Stokes report focused on the African as a community member, it badly neglected her aspiration for individual and political advancement. According to Anderson (1970), the publication of the report and the formation of the Advisory Committee for education in tropical Africa by the British colonial office during the years 1923-25 marked important developments in African education in Kenya. The commission had stressed that education should aim at character building and should respect African culture. It was of little use to make Africans sing British patriotic songs and despise African music. Consensus amongst the missionaries had been finally reached on the need for community-oriented education. In 1924, the government



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passed a new Education Ordinance and created an Advisory committee on African education, which included colonial officials and settlers, but gave the majority of the seats to the missionaries. At the same time the government officially accepted responsibility for the major portion of the cost of education.

As a result of this spirit of co-operation and the proposal of the Phelps-Stokes commission the Jeannes Training school was established in 1925, (Anderson 1970, Sheffield 1973:23). The first Jeannes school in Africa was started at Kabete. The essence of the Jeannes movement was the realization that formal education could reach only a small segment of the African society and that grass-roots efforts at the village level were required to reach the mass of the population.



According to Otiende and Sifuna (1994:194), the Beecher report remained the basis for government policy in education throughout the 1950s. During the Mau Mau Emergency and the period of uncertainty that followed there was no serious attempt to formulate an education policy. There was also the problem of a lack of funds and the ambivalence of the European controlled legislative council towards African development. These authors observe that, the sessional paper of 1957 stated that, the purpose of the development programme of 1957-1960 was to maintain European standards, raise Asian standards, and to create African standards as a way of reducing the imbalances. This declaration was, however, not translated into action, for the allocation of funds revealed that the European community (1% of the population) would get 19% of the budget, the Asian community (3% of the population) would receive 28%, and the African community would receive 53% of the funds available for education. Otiende and Sifuna (1994) note that, in spite of these severe financial drawbacks, the African's demand for more educational opportunities intensified so much that by 1960, the

number of African primary schools had doubled in relation to Beecher's forecast while there were three times as many intermediate and secondary schools.

By the time of independence, the colonial educational legacy posed many problems of quantity, quality and relevance. Since that time, the government and people of Kenya have developed their own manpower for a new nation. According to Kivuva (undated) the years of independence from Britain brought with them great hope for Kenyans. Africans had suffered discrimination economically, politically, socially and academically during colonial rule, and it was time to live free from all these. Education was one of the areas where a lot of changes had to be made since colonial education was along racial lines, with the Africans getting the least advantage from the system.



Sheffield (1973:86-97) notes that in 1964, the Ominde commission was set up to make changes in the educational system. This commission was mainly concerned with national identity and unity. The Ominde commission, whose main focus was secondary education, saw the need to reform the education system so that it became a way of changing people's attitudes and a means of establishing social equality. Secondly education was seen as a gateway to training the highly skilled staff that Kenya needed. The organization of education, therefore, was closely linked to the management of human resources and the labour market.

Kivuva (Undated) indicates that the Gachathi report of 1976 emphasized the provision of free primary education. The report also noted that there was a need to integrate secondary education with the non-formal sector in order to take care of school dropouts. This called for the introduction of more technical subjects in secondary schools. The last grade in higher

secondary education (form 6) was to be a major recruiting stage, since only a few students could be absorbed by Kenya's only university.

Due to pressure from the World Bank and IMF, the Kamunge Education commission was set up in 1988 to review Kenya's education with the view to instituting changes in the next decade 1990-1999 and beyond (see, Kamunge Report, 1988). One of the most controversial but memorable recommendations of this commission was the cost-sharing (parent and government contribution) policy in education. The idea of cost sharing was not new, as it had been in effect since independence. Nevertheless, the most remembered of Kamunge's recommendations was the need for massive withdrawal by the government from education funding. It succinctly stated that beneficiaries of education should incur most of its cost. The Kamunge commission report was accepted by parliament and used to prepare and implement the session paper number 6, 1988. It is notable that the need to reform education is apparently dictated by the times. Kivuva analyses the historical overview of education in Kenya and shows certain, almost definite trends and concerns in education reforms during different times/periods. After independence there was a need for the following: first, national consciousness; second, filling of positions left vacant by expatriates; third, relevance and quality expansion, and access.

The early 1970s saw the need change to the following: the curbing of unemployment, and the enhancement of the quality of education. Still, between 1975 and 1985, the need shifted to the era of revisions, proposals and new decisions. In the late 1980s, there were more revisions, reviewing of curriculum, and educational quality enhancement. However, in the 1990s, two main issues were of concern: issues related to access and equity in education; issues related to quality of education.

It is important here to give a sketch of the curriculum. The three compulsory subjects include: English, Kiswahili, and Mathematics, and then an option of two science subjects. In addition, one humanities subject from, geography, history and government, Christian Religious Education, Islamic religious education, Hindu Religious Education, or Social Education and Ethics as well as agriculture, and home science.

### 1.1.1 Policy of Education System in Kenya

The Ominde Report of 1963, published in 1964, was the very first commission set to assess the Educational policy of the country immediately after independence in 1963. This report spelt out the six national goals that Kenyan Education should attempt to achieve. In a nutshell these include;

1. National Unity
2. National Development
3. Individual development and self-fulfilment
4. Social equality
5. Respect and development of cultural heritage
6. International consciousness



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Goal (3) stipulates that education should contribute to the development of the whole person. It should provide the opportunity for the students to develop their personal talent and potential. Particularly, it should build the values that are necessary for people to become self-assured, and confident about their contribution to the society. This commission consequently gave the following recommendations:

1. All subjects on the school curriculum should contribute to the six national goals

2.Christian Religious Education does contribute to the six national goals, and therefore it should remain in the curriculum.


3.If Christian Religious Education is going to remain in the curriculum, it should be treated as a full professional subject.

4.There should be no racial or religious discrimination in education.

5.Churches should transfer their schools to the government. In turn, they should be allowed to act as sponsors.

6.The churches should continue to be involved in the teaching of Christian Religious Education through their rights and responsibilities as sponsors.

In 1976, another National Committee on Education Objective and Policy Report, popularly known as the Gachathi Report, was formed. Some of the recommendations of this report are;

- 
- a. Education should be orientated towards self-reliance.
- b. Christian Religious Education should utilize Traditional African Religion.
- c. Christian Religious Education should offer a code of ethics to students.
- d. Christian Religious Education should create a positive attitude to manual skills.

In 1981, another commission was set dealing with the second university in Kenya, a report popularly known as ‘the Mackay report’, which spelt out some of its recommendations as follows;

- a. The advanced level secondary component should be abolished, and an 8.4.4 system of schooling should be implemented.
- b. A restructured certificate of examination taken at the end of primary schooling.

- c. An examination-centred system of education should be replaced by a continuous assessment test system.
- d. Greater emphasis should be put on technical education, and schooling should be employment oriented.

Seemingly, this report subsequently led to the situation in which we find Christian Religious Education today and humanities in general i.e. of less value as they are not marketable. Caught in the dilemma of 'marketability i.e. employment orientation and the promotion of moral/spiritual aspect of Christian Religious Education as spelt out in the Ominde and Gachathi reports, the Ministry of Education is not in a position to do away with Christian Religious Education. Thus as a corollary, many schools resolved to make Christian Religious Education compulsory in form one and two (as it is already clustered by the ministry), and optional in form three and four. The student may therefore choose between History and government, Geography, Social Education and Ethics and Christian Religious Education, Islamic religious education, Hindu religious education. However, in an interview with the Catholic secretariat (2002), the researcher learnt that Christian Religious Education has been made compulsory from form one to form four in all the Catholic sponsored schools.

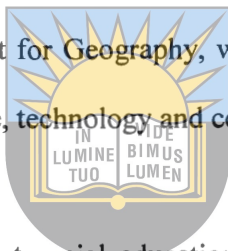
### **1.1.2 The Current Situation of Christian Religious Education in Secondary Schools in Kenya**

Presently the Christian Religious Education syllabus comprises of the following main areas of study:

- a) The New Testament, The Old Testament,
- b) African Religious Heritage

- c) Christian Witness
- d) The Church in Kenya
- e) Contemporary Christian living

In forms 3 and 4, Christian Religious Education is optional together with Hindu Religious Education, Islamic Religious Education, Social Education and Ethics, History and government and Geography. A student is supposed to choose a maximum of two subjects and a minimum of one. Placing the religious/ social / humanity subjects in the same group has adversely affected all other subjects in the cluster but Geography. Pure science, that is, Chemistry, Physics and Biology is emphasised in most of our National and Provincial schools which have the facilities. They opt for Geography, which completes the choice of subjects. The job market emphasizes science, technology and computer studies.



There is also a general feeling that social education and ethics seems to be closer to the student, (that is, it is more practical) and quite a number who would have done Christian Religious Education opt for it. The fundamental question is, does this call for a review of the syllabus and the teaching of Christian Religious Education?

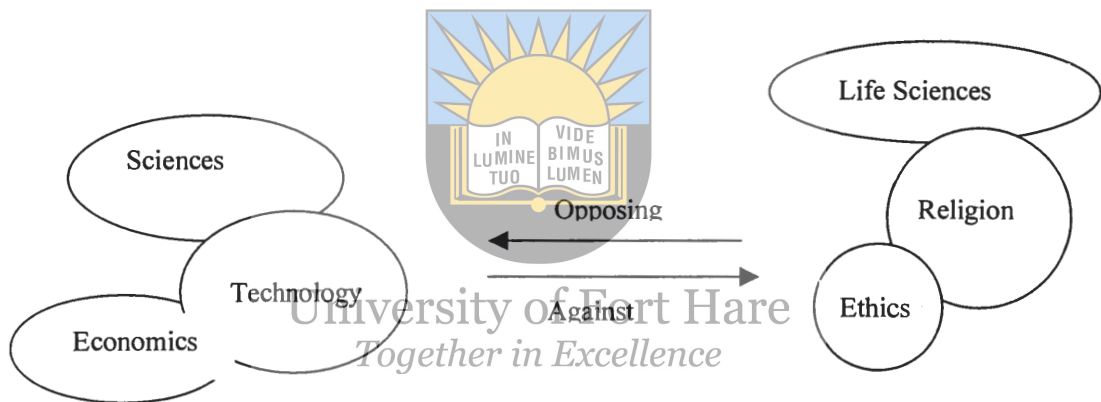
On the other hand, the university entrance requirements have not included Christian religious education as a needed subject. Therefore the courses offered do not include it. This deters most students from studying Christian Religious Education.

Schools such as Nairobi School, Alliance Girls High School, Alliance Boys High Schools, Mangu High School, Moi High School Kabarak & Sacho High School are among the best schools in Kenya, but have either no candidates or very few opting for Christian Religious Education. The irony of it all is that most of these schools are Church sponsored schools, some of which even have chaplains. This attitude or behaviour tends to play down the value of religious education as a soft option for weaker brains, because less prestigious schools and

especially the local ones tend to have more students taking the subject as opposed to their counterparts in national and provincial schools.

Sciences are highly esteemed and as mentioned above Social Education & Ethics, in a sense devalues Christian Religious Education. The bone of contention is whether sciences, technology & economics are superior to ethics, religion and life sciences or whether the two categories enrich and empower each other.

**Illustration:**



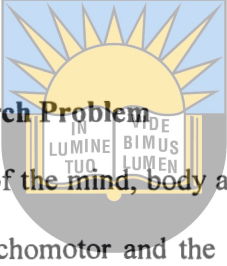
The million-dollar question is, is contemporary society actually faced with two mutually incomprehensible forms of understanding? The perception that science and humanities are at odds is questionable. As Leftwich (2003) notes, “if the interdependence of sciences and humanities were more generally understood, men would be more likely to become masters of their technology and not its unthinking servants”.

The problem is that Christian Religious Education’s popularity and relevance seem to be dwindling in schools. As already mentioned, the job market does not require it - there are very few employers if any that require Christian Religious Education as a qualification for employment. Universities too do not encourage the study. What happens is that the teachers are left very frustrated, as the students, do not put much value in it, even those who do take it.

The government also discourage teachers by not allowing them to pursue further studies in this discipline. If Christian Religious Education teachers wish to further their studies in this area, they either do not get study leave and therefore are expected to quit or at best take study leave without pay as opposed to their counterparts in the sciences and technology who get support from the government to further their studies. This plunges the teachers into a very bleak situation.

The general thesis of this paper is therefore a re-conceptualisation and sensitizing for Christian Religious Education.

## 1.2 Background to the Research Problem

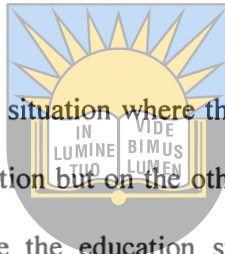


Education comprises the training of the mind, body and soul. In psychology, they would say it encompasses the cognitive, psychomotor and the affective domains. For education to be worth it's salt therefore, it is imperative that it caters for the whole person (body mind and soul). In Mbiti's view (1975:27), religion is a way of life to an African, thus, he says that, "Africans are notoriously religious." As Africans therefore, it is vital that we continue observing this ideal. We should not separate religion and education.

In an attempt to Christianize Kenya, formal education was introduced as well as a general western perspective on life. Life was dichotomised into the secular and the religious, such that life issues are compartmentalized into packages isolated from one another, consequently making it possible for religion to be divorced from societal lifestyle and vice versa. This has consequently bred hostility between that which is deemed secular and that which is deemed religious (spiritual). It is in the light of this background that religious education in schools has

become a bone of contention from some sectors as it is regarded as a divisive rather than a unifying factor in the society.

While different countries have dealt with this problem in various ways such as outlawing the study of religious education in public schools, others have reoriented their approach from a spiritual to a philosophical-historical approach (e.g. USA), a multi-faith approach Boyle & Sheen (1997:85-6) (e.g. Zimbabwe), while others have given one religion/denomination Boyle & Sheen (1997:118-9) (e.g. Costa Rica) the mandate to oversee the curriculum development and instruction of religious education in their countries.



Kenya seemingly is caught up in a situation where the ministry of education downplays the study of Christian Religious Education but on the other hand does not want to categorically outlaw it. This is chiefly because the education system is geared towards ‘outputting’ personnel for the job market in the country. Thus, the argument goes that Christian Religious Education lacks marketability, consequently losing its worth in the education system.


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### **1.3 Statement of the Research Problem**

The moral fibre of the contemporary generation has evidently loosened. The generation seems to have no values in life at all. Their ethical behaviour is appalling. In the 90s for instance we have witnessed very shocking events taking place in our schools, like the St. Kizito incident where the boys invaded the girls’ dormitory because they declined to take part in a strike and raped them. In the stampede to escape for their lives, a number of girls lost their lives. This initiated a move towards separate schooling system. The Nyeri incident is another: displeased with the prefect body, the boys resolved to burn the so deemed betrayers. The escalating

number of riots in our secondary schools is further evidence. To crown it all the very fresh and very chilling incident of the Kyanguli arson where over 60 innocent boys lost their lives in an inferno lit by discontented fellow schoolmates.

The Population Reference Bureau (2001:13) has demonstrated clearly what is happening among the youth today. Like never before, many adolescents between the ages 14 to 19 are very sexually active. For instance, between 1994 & 1998, 53% of youths were found to have engaged in sexual intercourse. This early sexual activity poses health risks for young women and men.



The 1997 data collection Youth (2001:18) showed a 22% of girls and 4% of boys between the ages of 14 to 19 in Kisumu as being HIV/AIDS victims. This situation has since worsened. It is worrying that against this background, the Ministry of Education has continued to downplay the study of religious education in our secondary schools. One is left to wonder whether Christian Religious Education has not lost the positive influence it once had, or where the real 'malady' is. It is worthy noting here that there are many other factors that can be said to contribute to the loosening of the moral fibre among the youth today. For instance, the influence of the mass media, cultural decadence due to western influence and urbanization to mention but a few.

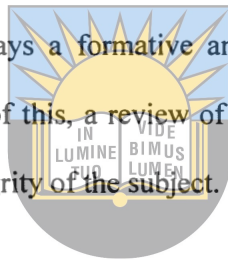
#### **1.4 Rationale of the Study**

The findings of this study will help to give Christian Religious Education the credit it deserves. It will also help to sensitise policy makers on the importance of Christian Religious Education from the grass root information gathered, so that they may revert to promoting it as opposed to the current trend of downplaying it. It is also hoped that the comparative outlook

of the study will help in strengthening the weak ends in the curriculum development and teaching/instructional approach. The findings of the study might have highlighted the possible contributory factor to the problem of unrest in schools and thereby imply possible solutions towards curbing these unrests. It has also highlighted areas in which the ministry of education may mount constant in-service training of Christian Religious Education teachers, and also sensitise the Ministry of Education on the importance of supporting Christian Religious Education teachers in their pursuance of further studies like their counterparts in science and technical subjects.

### **1.5 Hypothesis**

Christian Religious Education plays a formative and transformative role in learners' life world and ideology. In the light of this, a review of the current government policy towards the discipline could boost the integrity of the subject.



### **1.6 Purpose**

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This study examines and re-conceptualises the value of Christian Religious Education in school and within a broader epistemological framework in Kenya. It has highlighted the plight of the discipline and also stipulated what could be done to give Christian Religious Education the credit it deserves.

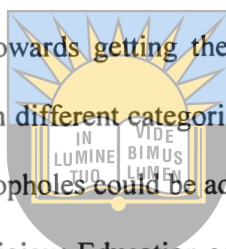
### **1.7 Methodology**

The researcher used a comparative study of literature on the state of Christian Religious education in sampled countries, which included: South Africa, U.S.A and Britain among others. This provided a grid or framework from where to assess the trend in Kenya.

The researcher also employed the questionnaire method. The questionnaire comprised of both structured and unstructured open and closed questions. This method is apt for the study because as (Moore 1982; 15-23) notes, the questions were easy, flexible and facilitated the gathering of as much data as possible.

They were also impersonal and had very little scope for bias to be introduced by different researchers. The open questions were desirable because they helped obtain additional and relevant information. The unstructured questions helped in obtaining the views of the relevant 'other' not within the school set up.

The questionnaire was tailored towards getting the general attitude and opinion towards Christian Religious Education from different categories of people e.g., teachers, students and school principals etc, so that the loopholes could be addressed and to suggestions made on the in which the study of Christian Religious Education could be made more germane.



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### **1.8 Scope and Limitations of the Study**

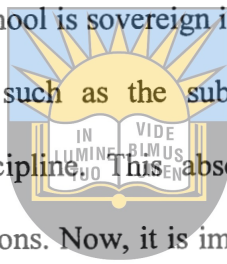
The study was confined to sampled secondary schools in Nairobi & the Eastern provinces. In secondary schools, we encounter students at their conventional stage-13 years and above. At this stage of life, two things happen-they are socialized and they empathize. They are no longer egocentric. They can therefore sacrifice their joy for the sake of their friends (others). In a dilemma, they assess the intention of an action before passing judgment. They are people who would choose either to be religious or irreligious with reasons, that is, rationally.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Literature Review

#### 2.1 Introduction

To be able to appreciate the study of religion in our secondary schools, it is imperative that we define what a school is. Machimana (2000) quotes Schoeman's(1986:84) definition of a school as an educational institution where education and upbringing is provided. He observes that the education given at school is different from that given at home. Education given at school is directly connected with the intellectual development of the student. Besides, the school is sovereign in respect of the didactic sphere. It has the right to decide on matters such as the subject matter presented, the methods of presentation and school discipline. This absolute right of the school as noted by Machimana begs many questions. Now, it is imperative that we explore Freire's outlook of education



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Freire (1970:57-74) looks at the general practice of education with a 'cynical' eye. He observes that a careful analysis of the teacher-student relationship at any level, inside or outside school, reveals its fundamental narrative character. Education, he says, is suffering from a narration problem. The outstanding characteristic of this narrative education, then, is the sonority of words, not their transforming power. This he refers to as the 'banking model of education'. Under this model, teachers are depositors and students are simply depositories-they store the information until it is called upon, or withdrawn as in a bank. Freire proposes a 'problem posing' educational model instead. He writes that the student and teacher should engage in dialectic, a dialogue where the

teacher poses a question or idea, antithesis, creating a thesis where they find once again another thesis.

It is of cardinal importance that the teacher appreciates that the student is not an empty vessel nor is (s)he an alien in this world. The researcher therefore sees eye to eye with Cook-Sather's (2003) critical comparison of the two models of education as stipulated by Freire. Cook-Sather notes that while the banking model tends to dehumanize and subdue the self, the "problem-posing" education model actively involves the learner/student. The student constructs meaning in the natural world within the classroom. The aim of this model is to both learn and question the tradition and accepted knowledge, information, values and approaches to learning and develop more democratic diverse critically thinking members of the society. On the contrary, the 'banking model' of education prepares students for their prescribed place in the society. Freire (1970:58) says, "Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits that students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat."

In matters of upbringing a morally upright society, the school, the home and the church (other religions) should work hand in hand, for their roles, although very similar, are also very different in mission and vision, yet they are very crucial. None should leave it to the other if the job is to be well done.

The researcher would hereby remind us that, more of our young life is spent in school, than at home or at church. This is a time when the nurture aspect of “programming” an individual leading into maturity takes place. Therefore the output the society gets at post-conventional age is a 65% school nurtured and 35% church+ home product. This may not be authenticated mathematically but it communicates the significance of the argument for the centrality of Christian Religious Education discipline in our schools.

## **2.2 Education before independence - the root of the problem**

Formal education as we know it today was brought to Kenya by the Church (missionaries) and the colonial government. Before that period there was little formal instruction in religion. Rather than being a specific subject, religion was part of the whole culture that a young person absorbed. Formal education quickly replaced the non-formal in importance. African values were scarified and disregarded within this system (Anderson 1970, Kenyatta (1938), Sheffield (1973). From an interview with Waruta (2002), the researcher gathered that, the missionaries chiefly took the class as a tool to evangelize their faith. Some values were inculcated no doubt, but that was a side effect. The curriculum in schools was Reading, Writing and Arithmetic up to the First World War. This was primarily so designed to equip Kenyans for the service to the colonial government but not for their own personal well being. This went on throughout the colonial era. Consequently, there emerged a group of élites- very committed first generation Christians who in turn evangelized with great zeal. However, this did not last for long because it created a psychological backlash with the second generation group-the children of the first generation Christians. This second generation comprised of those

who became the policy makers thereafter, and therefore did not perceive Christian Religious Education as an essential subject. Their values were secular, thus Christianity secularized more than spiritualized. This is evident in some of the textbooks that have been used in course work, especially in the current 8.4.4\* system of education. It is worth noting that, we are what we consume and the way we consume dictates who we become. The key questions that come into play at this juncture are: what material is taught in Christian Religious Education? and, how is this material passed on?

This outlook of the second generation thus created a very ambiguous attitude towards Christian Religious Education with regard to the teaching of this discipline. Consequently, the teaching of Social Education and Ethics was voted in at Kenyatta University in the late 70's, and by the beginning of 80's, it became a subject option besides Christian Religious Education.



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Those students who opted for Social education and ethics passed with flying colours hence insidiously or deliberately discouraging those who sat for the Christian Religious Education examination. Seemingly, the Christian Religious Education examination became tougher as time went by, thus a majority of students and schools chose to study Social education and ethics instead of Christian Religious Education. In an education system which is an examination oriented one, this was a wise move.

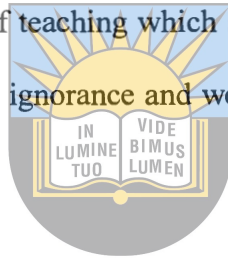
As observed above, there has been a general feeling that Social education and ethics directly addresses the learners' real life issues as opposed to Christian Religious

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\* Kenyan education system comprising of 8 years primary school education, 4 years secondary school education and 4 years university education

Education, which is more abstract than practical. This is also echoed by Otiende (1982). Comparatively speaking, Social education and ethics is a subject without texts, that is, it has no tradition that undergirds its ethics-it lacks a reference. On the other hand, Christian Religious Education refers to Jesus and the entire Bible as its text, while Islam refers to the Quran as its text and Hinduism refers to Bhagavad Gita. Social education and ethics is “floating” to date. It is left to look in the world and mainly in philosophy for its text.

This anti-Christian Religious Education attitude however is not new and can be directly tied to the missionary style of teaching which sought to indoctrinate the learners, taking advantage of their innocence, ignorance and weakness hence the bitterness in the second generation.



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Unlike their fathers who to some extent could be said to have made their ‘uninformed’ choices, their offspring were expected to adhere to the Christian ideals ‘automatically’. However, faced with the general cultural environment, some choose not the Christian ideals but the traditional or a mixture of the two philosophies. Wamue. (2001:32-3) tells how the famous Ngonywa wa Gakonya, founder of “the Tent of God” and the corollary outlawed “Mungiki<sup>3</sup>” movement, started questioning the Christian faith that his parents held way back in 1960. He immediately engaged in a search for the religious truth in

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<sup>3</sup> Mungiki movement is an anti-Christian movement in nature. Some learners come from these families and hence are not supposed to be taught Christian Religious Education as Christianity is viewed as the chief enemy by the sect. (It is currently outlawed by the Government of Kenya.)

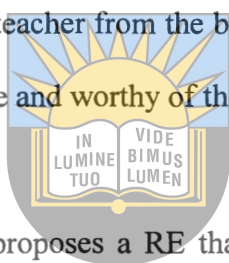
African religious heritage from the old people. On completing his education he started sensitizing people on African Religious beliefs eventually starting his own religious movement.

### **2.3 Christian Religious Education- in school or church?**

A school enables a student to become a worthy member of the society. Therefore it is the duty of the school to nurture the student into a whole person worthy in the society. Religious education gives a holistic education. It is in the study of religious education that the church and the state-school tend to overlap. However, in this overlap, the role and the aim of the school, and the church are seen to be very different. Hartin (1988:1-7) notes that the aim of the church is to help its own members to grow intellectually, morally, and relationally within the biblical heritage of that particular church tradition. It helps its adherents to absorb its own traditions and to preserve the heritage of that particular religious denomination. On the other hand, in the wider community of society, and in particular of the state-school, there are many different religious traditions and denominations. Consequently, the aim of the school can in no way be the same with that of the church. Endorsing one particular religious tradition or denomination would amount to religious proselytism and indoctrination-a betrayal to the trust placed in it by parent.

A school is a mirror of the society itself and its task is to help preserve and hand on the values of the society Hartin (1988). However, in her 'Challenging RE' Thompson (2003) sees it in a different way. She observes that the kind of RE ([Christian] religious education) Hartin is arguing for, and which is upheld by many education policies these

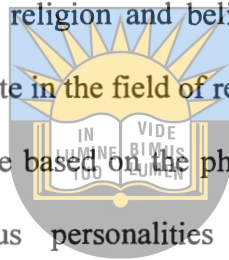
days is tantamount to asking the teachers not to teach their faith as true. She observes that it is of course right for a teacher not to use the classroom as a platform for her/his as her own views and it has been against the UK law to teach denominational belief as true. This means that religious education is always searching for the truth but never allowed to find it, she remarked. Thus the hidden agenda of RE is the privileging of agnosticism. Under the guise of neutrality the teacher and her/his faith are neutered, made safe. As a counterbalance to this, another hidden agenda sometimes surfaces. That is, within all religions are certain 'truths' that may be mined and learned in some way. Therefore, a new religion is created by the teacher from the basic matter provided by the religions and presented to the learners as true and worthy of their acceptance.



However, Thompson (2003) proposes a RE that presents a challenge for teachers and learners to engage in. This RE is challenging, as it requires that a teacher not merely be a conveyor of facts about religions but is required to present facts in a coherent pattern and to face the inevitable challenges that will come from the learners. This is far harder than presenting the unconnected facts about 6 religions. She proposes that this will be based on the acceptance of a particular religion. Of importance, she adds, is the fact that this may be done in a self-critical way. Thus the teaching is at times open to criticism from the learners. The idea is the pupils are invited to explore, not merely to accept.

In the Meeting of Experts on Education and Religion held in May 2001, in the Bimillenary city of Cáceres, Spain, a number of group reports on issues concerning religious freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination in education were produced. A report

presented by Martinez de codes 199 for UNESCO observed that religious education should be defined on the basis of the fundamental principles of all religions and spiritual traditions; unity and diversity. Thus religious education should link both the specificities of each religious tradition and also the common values of all spiritual traditions. Consequently, respect for religious freedom will not be taught only on an abstract or philosophical basis, but on the recognition that the free expression of each religion is a condition for the expression of all religions. The report said that teaching of religion in public education should center in accordance with education in tolerance and with the right to freedom of thought, religion and belief is alright and is compatible with the laicism or neutrality of the state in the field of religious matters. It observes that Religious Education at school should be based on the philosophy and history of religions, but the teachers could be religious personalities or thinkers of religions (historians, anthropologists, etc). It also recommends that Religious Education in whatever form adopted be compulsory for learners and examinable as an academic subject and also that it be taught during school days.

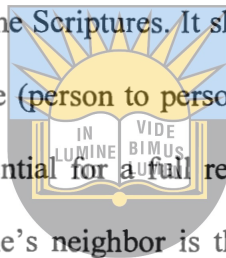


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It recommended that the legal sphere of thought, religious freedom and belief, such as defined in Article 18 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights be included in religious education programs in school curricula. Tahzib (1996:35) emphasizes the underlined importance of education in strengthening respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms and for fostering mutual understanding, tolerance and peace, as observed by states at the second United Nations World conference on Human Rights. The assembly proclaimed the Ten-year period of 1995 to 2005 as the United Nation Decade of Human

Rights Education. Worthy of note here is that what comprises human rights has strong Biblical foundations though humanistically based. Christians promote equality of all regardless of sex, race, or class/status (Galatians 3:28) hence promoting human dignity above all else. Since the principles of the Bible are the groundwork for human freedom, it is impossible to enslave mentally or socially a Bible reading people.

It is the aim of Christian Religious Education to help the individual to lead her /his life in the society in harmony with others. Christian Religious Education shows how this is to be done through the witness of the Scriptures. It shows as well that the relational dimension is not simply a horizontal one (person to person) but also a vertical one (God to human being). Both aspects are essential for a full realization and fulfillment of the Christian person. Love of God and one's neighbor is the point on which the whole of Christ's teaching hangs. This is what Kenya [the world] needs.



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Therefore, what is significant is to develop a curriculum that addresses practical issues of life that are affecting the world today. This observation is also held by Otiende (1982) in his evaluation of the Christian Religious Education syllabus from form one to form four. He observes that form one and two syllabi were conventional in approach, with abstract content, divorced from the immediate praxis and without reference to traditional African religion. He further observes that form three and four syllabi had a broader content founded on Bible centered approach hence hindered learners from getting insights into the nature of their society. He recommended a more radical revision along more open and experience-oriented lines. As noted above, the researcher partially agrees with Otiende

(1982) on the suggestion of slanting the syllabus more towards a traditional-oriented one, the reason being that that would not address the experience of the learner better than the Bible in a Kenya where 4/5 claim to be Christians as estimated by Bible Literature International (June 2003). The current young generation is more at home with the Church than the shrine. On the contrary, of necessity is a post-colonial orientation of the syllabus. As mentioned above, Christianity is as much African as it is Western. Therefore, the issue at hand is how to undress/strip off the western oriented Biblical text of its western attire and clothe it in African attire. That is, contextualization of the Biblical content - a curriculum that will address issues or concerns like beliefs and values, attitudes and world views, rights and responsibilities, intercultural and interfaith relations fostering respect and dealing with diversity besides spirituality. However, spirituality should not be overshadowed by these other factors but as Thompson mentioned above, it should be presented in a challenging way to engage the learner in critical dialogue. In other words, as Joubert (1994:5) observes the role of the teacher in the learning situation is to establish a relationship and that which is to be learnt, and to facilitate the maintenance of this relationship. Quoting (Hull 1982:188), Thompson continues, 'this should be the aim of RE, i.e. giving learners the necessary tools for making their present or future religious choices as meaningful as possible. They should learn to assume their own religious philosophy and verbalize it. The role of the teacher is to enable the learner to come to decisions based on reflections.' In the same vein, Ter Haar (1988:34), notes that formerly teachers taught with value inculcation, which meant that parent, teachers, schools, and the church decided what values were to be taught to the children and adolescents. It was an imposed system of values, and one looked to the formation, or



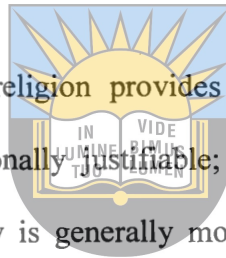
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molding of the students according to this predetermined norm. Nowadays, She continues, because of the changing world and media, students are bombarded with a plurality of values, many of them contradictory. The newer ideas behind religious education are prompted by the idea of value clarification rather, the presentation clarifies the students' ideas, and so the students can use their own conscience to make their own decision.

## 2.4 The impact of religion on one's worldview

Warnet & Klein (1997:159) quoting Oser & Reich report of three possible contributions of religion to morality.

1. They observed that religion provides additional arguments involving ethical principles that are also rationally justifiable; for instance not to give false witness. Furthermore, ascetic morality is generally more strongly supported by those who are believers (Wright 1971; Nucci 1985)



2. They noted that religion furnishes an alternative perspective on issues and assigns a different value on morally relevant facts. Quoting Kohlberg (1974: 1981) they gave an example of a hypothesis explaining why so few people reach the higher stages of moral development as the fact that most people are too preoccupied with their ego needs (Bergman 1974; Dykstra; 1981). A religious approach to the world can help one go beyond one's basic human needs and progress towards satisfying more meaningful, transcendental needs, they said.

3. They observed that religion adds distinctive religio-moral obligations that are, for the most part, required of believers for example, prosocial behaviour within a community.

## 2.5 The state of Christian Religious Education in various parts of the world

With the end of imperialism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Christian Religious Education has become a highly contested discipline. Ryan (1999:20) observes, “The whole world is at the start of confrontations with the dilemmas posed by seeking an adequate and appropriate religious education.” As noted above, the United Nations advocates religious freedom & tolerance in respect of human rights. However, different countries handle this issue differently.

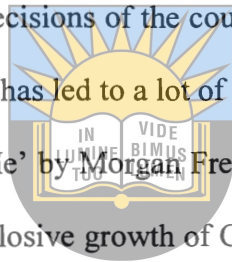


### 2.5.1 Costa Rica

Boyle & Sheen (1997 118-9) note that in Costa Rica for instance, the Roman Catholic Church has been given a pre-eminent position in matters of religious education- that is Roman Christianity- is required by law. Non-Roman Catholic parents can exempt their children from the religious education curriculum by petitioning school authorities. Article 75 of their constitution is interpreted as meaning that Roman Catholic Episcopate Conference is the ‘rector’ of all public religious education and the bishops are responsible for determining curriculum content. Other religions, which can be said to comprise 23% of the population, are not allowed any educational privilege. Worthy of note is the fact that in 1994, the Human Rights Committee of United Nations expressed concern for the pre-eminent position given to the Catholic Church and called on the government of Costa Rica to adopt measures assuring that there is no discrimination in the exercise of the right to religious education.

### 2.5.2 United States of America

In the United States, the case is different: Harper & Row (1990), Boyle & Sheen (1997:159-160) observe that since the 1960s, the supreme court has remained reasonably insistent in holding that state schools cannot advocate and promote religious teaching, particularly confessional teaching. Neither teachers nor students are allowed to lead classes in organized prayers nor can they use the Bible or the Ten Commandments for devotional teaching. These decisions of the court were designed to promote tolerance for all beliefs. Consequently this has led to a lot of indiscipline in public schools as portrayed by the 1989 film “Lean on Me” by Morgan Freeman. Gilbreath, et al (2001) observe that though there has been an explosive growth of Christian schools and home schooling, this cannot be solely attributed to the crisis in public schools. “Shocked by the drift of the culture, many Christian parents no longer see themselves as comfortable at home in a generically ‘Christian’ America. They are convinced that their children need an explicitly biblical framework for their education, a countercultural grounding that will prepare them for life in a resolutely secular society.”

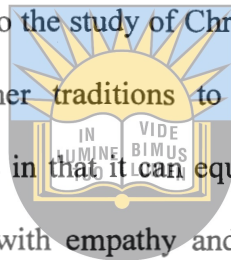


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### 2.5.3 United Kingdom (UK)

Bolton (1997:137) notes that the only part of the curriculum in the UK that remains locally rather than centrally controlled is religious education. This local control of RE, despite Anglicanism’s privileged status, is an important stewardship for the RE teachers. Thus it is free of any government control. The School Curriculum and Assessment

Authority (SCAA) is the central organization used by the British government to control the curriculum in the light of legislation. Bolton (1997:139) observes that by adopting a multi-faith approach, RE teachers have found a sense of integrity. He notes that it has been liberating to move to religious Education and help children think for themselves and explore beliefs and values, beginning with their own but in a pluralistic context. Moreover he affirms that modern RE is about de-indoctrination and seeing through crusades and sectarian, tribal or national interest. However, Lubbe (2003:2) informs us that although the UK has adopted a multi-faith approach, 51% of the time allotted to Religion should be devoted to the study of Christianity, whilst the remaining 49% should be divided among the other traditions to be studied. Bolton (1997:140) further underscores the study of RE in that it can equip young people with skills and attitudes help them relate to others with empathy and understanding. Religious education can foster ethical inquiry within a global rather than a nationalistic framework. He notes that promoting questioning, debate, discussion and hard thinking, the skills and values that strengthen democracy in a pluralistic context are also taught. Referring to Kohlberg's research findings, he emphasizes that moral development happens through children and adults confronting dilemmas and discussing them.

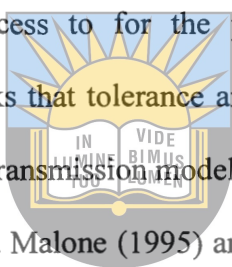


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#### **2.5.4 Australia**

While the British hail the multi-faith approach to RE, an import of this approach into Australian schools did not yield the same results. Ryan (1999:16-20) objects to this importation pointing out that, Australia is not a multicultural or multireligious country.

He asserts that the overwhelming religious characteristic of the general Australian community- for better or for worse – is its Christian foundations. He warns that, coming to terms with the religious experience of another person is not as easy as overlaying a number of abstract categories derived from one’s own cultural experience onto other religious and noting similarities and differences. He raises a number of religious and educational questions to the hypothesis that ‘ all religions share a common set of concerns and interests and a common search. Firstly, he queries the criteria for choosing these five religions: why not more? Why not fewer? How many religions should Australia students have access to for the purpose of academic enquiry? Quoting Grimmitt, Ryan (1999) thinks that tolerance among students cannot be achieved by the implementation of a simple transmission model, which conveys information about beliefs and practices. Citing Patricia Malone (1995) and Paula Norcross, he notes that the study of comparative religion may yield a negative impact on the achievement of tolerance and an open attitude. He gives an example of a group of British primary school children from a Christian background, who gave strongly negative estimations of Muslims after studying the beliefs and practices of Islam. Many thought that Muslim prayer practices- prayer rugs, beads and prayer positions-were “strange”, “silly,” “rubbish” and “senseless”. He observes that the study of religion courses seems to be the only curriculum in contemporary Australian schools where critical analysis and evaluation is discouraged, which he observes is an anathema in all other curriculum areas. He observes that there is a decline in student interest in the study of RE in secondary schools for reasons that await further research and reflection. Ryan does not totally scoff at the study of religion courses; in fact, he applauds the effort of its proponents because they showed



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a way beyond narrow and particular institutional concerns. However, he observes that there is more dialogue and reflection needed before adequate curriculum modules are produced for the schools.

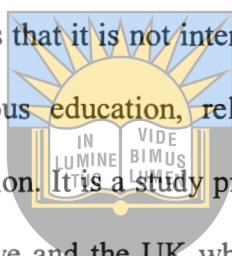
### 2.5.5 South Africa

Boyle & Sheen (1997: 67) inform us that in apartheid South Africa, Christianity was the only recognized legitimate religion. Religious education in schools therefore formed a part of an educational strategy to promote Christianity nationalism and apartheid theology and education.



With the end of apartheid, and the dawn of democratic South Africa, Christianity is no longer the sole faith taught through religious education. Lubbe (2003) notes that 1994 is the year that South Africa appreciated the cultural and religious diversity in the country. Thus a new knowledge of the diversity of the peoples of South Africa came into the light. Mxekezo (1991:32) quoting Jean Holm highlights some key issues involved in the teaching of Religious education. He observes that the changing knowledge in education had caused the syllabus to be changed from time to time. This caused a change in the approach of psychological educationists and a better understanding of the child in relation to the child's growth, the thinking from concrete to abstract by the child, the experience in learning process, which led to the introduction of thematic approach that took into consideration the readiness of the child in understanding the material presented. Thus, when Lubbe (2003:7) calls for a distinction between religious education and religion education in South African schools, he is on the right track. He argues that religious

education tends towards education and formation of an adherent in a specific faith, a responsibility he views primarily as belonging to the family and the religious community. He distinguishes Religious education as teaching religion from Religion education as teaching about religion. He observes that some provinces have already done away with religion in the curriculum due to its sectarian nature He thus proposes a new approach if religion is to be taken seriously in all South African schools. He believes that the only viable alternative to the single-traditional approach and the multiple-traditional approach is ‘ the so called multi-traditional in the form of religious education.’ He observes that the advantage of this approach is that it is not intended to encourage any particular religious way of life. Unlike religious education, religion education is not engaged in the promotion of a specific religion. It is a study programme about religion. He backs up his argument by citing Zimbabwe and the UK where the multi-faith approach to Religious study has successfully been in operation. In the same vein, Roux & Steenkamp (1995:73) agree that due to connotations and different curricula, the term religious Education cannot accommodate a change from a mono to a multi-religious approach. They warned that a change in name should, however, not be merely superficial but be a reflection of the nature of subject. Quoting Cole, Roux & Steenkamp (1995:75) emphasize that the purpose of religious education should be to study religion in order to understand its place and function as an aspect of human activity and its importance in life. Further, they quote Smart as defining the purpose of religious education in schools as follows: “The aim of religious education in schools should be that of creating in pupils certain capacities to understand and think about religion.”



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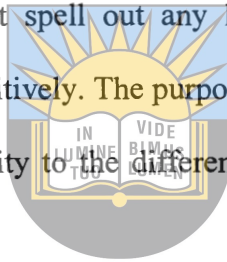
The purpose of religion education in the schools should therefore never be mistaken with 'religious education' in 'Sunday' or 'Sabbath' schools or any other institutionalized religious education. Lubbe (2003: 3) notes that because religion in education in South African schools has been discredited, religion in education needs to regain lost ground and have its credibility as an academic programme restored. If it is to be re-included and promoted in public school curricula, the study of religion has to be justified on educational grounds. He noted that South Africa is in need of an academic, with clear educational aims and objectives for teaching and learning about religion, religions and religious diversity of South Africa and the world. He further notes that religion education as a programme is aimed at learning areas of life orientation and human and social sciences. In these areas, according to curriculum 2005, concerns like beliefs, values, attitude and worldviews, rights and responsibilities, intercultural relations, fostering respect and dealing with diversity etc are addressed. However, he remarks that, in addition to these two learning areas there are other learning areas that call for attention to religion, culture and ethics in their specific outcomes. He gives two major distinctive educational outcomes he believes religion education is capable of achieving. That is, religion education can demonstrate creative and critical understanding of religious traditions, worldviews and ethical orientations. Since South African is living in a country of religious diversity, religion education can assist learners in showing respect and empathy towards religious and cultural diversity and can guide them towards imaginative engagement with the fact of diversity. He observes that all religions, as well as secular world views and philosophies, ask questions about the origin of life, destination of humanity, about the universe and the environment, about poverty, injustice and disability.



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Religion education appears to be one way in which learners can be assisted to relate spiritual and ethical dimensions of human life to social and economic realities. He notes that the aim of Religion education is to prepare our youth to live in harmony with people of other cultures and religions. These ideas were presented in a discussion document for public comment on second March 2003. They have been adopted in the religion and education policy paper for South African schools officially passed by the minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal in August 2003.

The policy however did not spell out any kind of framework that allows Religion Education to be handled sensitively. The purpose of a policy is to provide the parameters, or the “handles” for sensitivity to the different communities-religions and otherwise in South Africa.



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Concerning Kenya, Ter Haar (1988:27) notes that the Kenyan constitution guarantees freedom of worship, but restricts the conversion of students in school from one religion to another without the consent of their parents. She further notes that both Christian and other religions rejected a wide inter-faith syllabus. This parallel operation has worked out well without many hiccups if any.

## CHAPTER THREE

### CHRISTIANITY VERSUS OTHER WORLDVIEWS

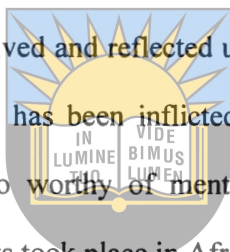
#### 3.1 Relationship between Christianity and African traditional religion

It is important that we establish the relationship between Christianity and African Traditional religion (ATR). Otiende (1982) observed in his research that one of the reasons why the students were reluctant to study religious education was the fact that they felt alienated by the abstractness of Christianity which tended to be more western than African. While this researcher agrees that Christianity is packaged in a western way than an African manner, she takes issue with the observation that it is abstract. Christianity is very practical and deals with day-to-day issues of life. On the contrary the researcher agrees with Waruta (1989:85) in his observation that Christianity and African Traditional Religion have a lot in common and for that reason it appealed to Africans on realizing that they upheld the same kind of virtues in spite of holding different standpoints and hence the easy Christianisation of Africans. Quoting Northcott, Waruta (1989:90-91) notes:

*Christianity did not win its place in Africa merely because the white man recommended it. By its own appeal to the Africans it showed itself to be a religion that met their needs and had close links with their own thoughts. It spoke of the Beginnings of mankind, of the mysteries of creation, of the Great Deity who embraced within his power the whole order of life divine and human. The Old Testament in particular is a very vital book in African Christianity, with its stories of creation and God's dealing with his people... the church comes naturally to the African. He must belong. He is part of the Tree of Life which extends its branches through time to eternity. The church is the Great tribe with Christ as its Great Chief.*

Thus there has been both continuity as well as discontinuity of ATR in Christianity. On the other hand, Prozesky and Gruchy (1995:76) observe that it would appear that African religion has largely succumbed to Christianity. Yet it would be untrue to say that it has been supplanted or crushed out of existence for, however, besides its

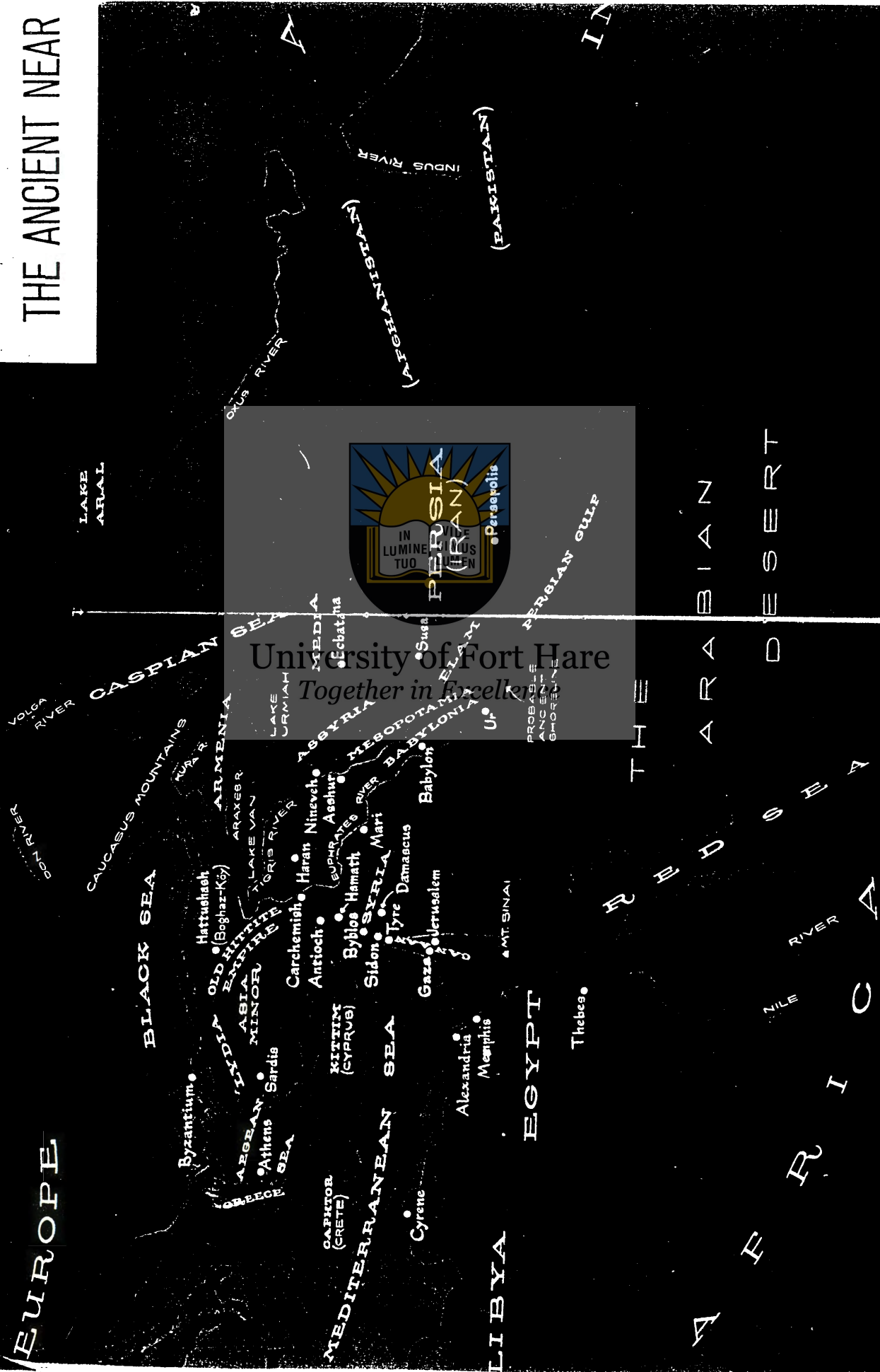
survival in its own right among a percentage of population, it endures as a skin treaded into the weft of Christianity. Some elements have been deeply incorporated, while others blend imperfectly with Christian teaching So the question we ought to ask ourselves is, why and what was discontinued, and why and what was continued? Bearing in mind that culture is dynamic, educators should assess whether the discontinued aspects of African Traditional Religion are worth recapturing or not. Is it worthy of being blended into the curriculum or not? As already observed, the Christian Religious Education syllabus has a topic on Traditional African religion. In both African Traditional Religion and Christianity, we find both sources of tradition when humanity has been lived and reflected upon in the best way possible, as well as times when dire suffering has been inflicted on humanity in the name of religion Scroggs (1997). It is also worthy of mention that in the humble beginnings of Christianity, Biblical events took place in Africa as well as in Asia. It would therefore be fallacious to totally disassociate and alienate Africa in the world of Christianity (see map on the geographical location of the bible world on the next page).



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# THE ANCIENT NEAR



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EUROPE

LIBYA

EGYPT

AFRICA  
RED SEA  
NILE RIVER

THE ARABIAN DESERT  
PERSIAN GULF

LAKE ARAL

CASPIAN SEA

BLACK SEA

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

INDUS RIVER  
(PAKISTAN)

CON RIVER  
VOLGA RIVER

CAUCASUS MOUNTAINS  
ARMENIA  
ARAXES RIVER  
LAKE VAN  
TIGRIS RIVER

Hattushat (Boghaz-Koy)

OLD HITTITE EMPIRE

ASIA MINOR

Byzantium

Athens

Sardis

CAPIROT (CRETE)

Cyrene

Alexandria

Memphis

Thebes

MT. SINAI

Gaza

Tyre

Damascus

Sidon

Byblos

Hamath

Antioch

Carchemish

Haran

Nineveh

Ashur

EUPHRATES RIVER

ABYSSINIA

ECBATANA

SUSA

PERSEPOLIS

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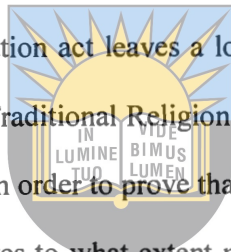
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In the Old Testament, there are several terms used to refer to the African continent. These terms can be arranged into three groups: Egypt, Cush, and a number of different entities with fewer references or more uncertain locations.

Lavik (2001:46) notes that it is evident that the continent of Africa and its inhabitants are indeed present in the Old Testament. The African text can be found in all three parts of the Hebrew canon: the Law, the Prophets and Writings. In the same vein, Maimela (1985:64-65), in his critical insight of the salvific aspect of the African Traditional Religion, believes that the long-held exclusivity of Christianity as the single way to God's salvation act leaves a lot to be desired. He attacks the negative attitude towards African Traditional Religion promoted by the missionaries, based on selective use of scripture in order to prove that God was beyond the reach of Africans. He notes that this illustrates to what extent missionaries were children of their time. As children of their time, their reading of the scriptures was far from neutral, because they approached the Bible with presuppositions, shaped and informed by their culture and class. He further observes that this influenced what they found in scriptures in support of their belief that other religious traditions were not adequate vehicles of salvation for their adherents. As noted above, this condescending attitude led to a number of conflicts with African Traditional Religion adherents. It is definite that not all missionary teaching was undue or rather set against the African way of thought. Thus as cited above, Africans were not fighting against Christianity per se but the 'attire in which it was clothed. It is necessary to adopt a doubly critical stance towards the problems and theories of western philosophies, and as Wiredu (1992) puts it, particularly towards the categories of thought embedded therein. It is of paramount importance therefore that as the curriculum developers set the syllabus, they pay

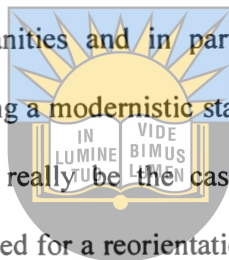


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attention to that literature that is ‘palatable’ to the minds of the learner in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Due reflection should be applied to both African and Christian religions to form a sound and informed stance. That is, to divest African religion and philosophical thinking of all undue influence emanating from the colonial past as well as avoiding the imprisonment of the present by rigid African culture of yester year in the name of religion.

### 3.2 Relationship Between Science and Christianity

The Ministry of Education (Kenya) has been promoting the study of the sciences at the expense of the humanities and in particular the study of religion-Christian Religious Education. Taking a modernistic stance, the two disciplines may be viewed as rivals but should that really be the case? In chapter one, the researcher has suggested that there is a need for a reorientation of our epistemological standpoint for us to appreciate the compatibility of the two. They should enrich and empower each other In his foreword on Tripp’s book the ‘Complementary Nature of Science and Christianity’ Lee observes that science and Christianity are of a complementary nature in helping us understand the world we live in albeit from different standpoints. He carries on to say that the so-called warfare between science and Christianity is a myth propagated by a small number of people committed to various worldviews and have little to do with either science or Christianity. In his opening remarks Tripp said, “there are few subjects that have resulted in more open conflicts, hidden agendas, prejudice, misinformation, popular misconceptions, half truths and wasted energy than that of the relationship between Christianity and science.”



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Lee observes that many Christians appear afraid of science; especially scientific study of natural world chiefly because they are apprehensive that their Christian faith in the creator of the world will be weakened or destroyed by scientific discoveries. Conversely, some scientists are reluctant to look closely at Christianity-perhaps because they see it as irrelevant to scientific philosophy. Einstein<sup>5</sup> challenges these kinds of fears in this observation that “science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.” Einstein further declared that anyone who is not in awe of the mind behind the universe is as good as a burnt-out candle.

Tripp explicitly demonstrates that the roots of modern science are deeply embedded in Christian philosophy and worldview, and that anyone interested in or engaged in science should seriously explore this close relationship, especially given current debates about the nature and relevance of science. It is worrying therefore to note the down playing trend of Christian Religious Education in the Kenyan Education system. The study of Christian Religious Education is craftily being phased-out. As a result, we are bound to produce a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants.

Worthy of mention here is the fact that many scientists of the past (and present) have gone about their scientific studies of astronomy, physics, chemistry, geology, et cetera with belief that they are thinking God’s thoughts after Him. As the psalmist says, “greater are the works of the Lord, pondered by all those who delight in him,” observes Lee.

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<sup>5</sup> perhaps the most revered scientist of the twentieth century

Tripp's observation that modern science has grown out of Christian soil is backed up by Alfred North Whitehead, a widely respected mathematician and philosopher, and J. Oppenheimer, a director of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princetown in 1947. More importantly, it has been amply substantiated within the new discipline of the history of science by scholars such as Duhem, Crombie, Jaki, Nebelsick, and Kaiser. In the same vein, in his argument in 'Religion and the Rise of Modern Science' professor Hooykaas said, 'metaphorically speaking, whereas the bodily ingredients of science may have been Greek, its vitamins and hormones were biblical'.

### 3.3 Why Science And Christianity Need Each Other

Science is unable to meet basic human needs. The bible keeps a balance between the power of our own minds and the need to humbly submit those minds to the truths that God has revealed.



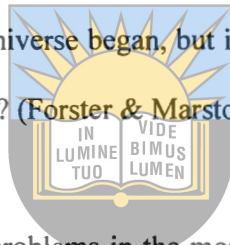
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Central to the enlightenment thought of 17th and 18th century Europe was the celebration of the power of reason- the power by which we understand the universe and improve our condition. This brought enormous progress in science technology and medicine, but inasmuch as it over emphasized the power of reason and ignored divine revelation, it carried the seeds of its own destruction. The bible keeps a balance between the powers of our minds, and hence the capabilities of science, and the need to humbly submit those minds to the truths that God has revealed about himself and our human condition.

Science cannot meet the deepest needs of the human heart. Thus if you leave God out of the picture, as did Jacques Monod the winner of the Nobel Prize for his work in

genetic mechanism, then as he puts it, we are left “alone in the unfeeling immensity of the universe,” however wonderful that universe might be. We live in “an alien world; a world that is deaf to (our) music and as indifferent to (our) hopes and (our) crimes.” At the end of his life, the famous biographer and brilliant scholar Gamaliel Brasford exclaimed, “Who will tell me something about God I know nothing about him whatever. It is a mere name, a mere word to me, and yet it clings. Why?” Why indeed? Science cannot answer that question.


Stephen Hawking, one of today’s most brilliant physicists stated...science may solve the problems of how the universe began, but it cannot answer the question: why does the universe bother to exist? (Forster & Marston, 1999:57).



Science cannot solve our problems in the moral sphere. Our most pressing problems in the world today are moral problems. Science itself is morally neutral. Dr George Lundberg, professor of sociology at the university of Washington, in ‘Can science save us? Says “science only provides a car and a chauffeur for us. It does not tell us where to drive. The car and the chauffeur will take us into the highlands or into the ditch with equal efficiency. It is people who use science for good or for evil”.

Charles Lindberg, the first person to fly solo across the Atlantic, went to Germany after the war to see what allied bombing had done to the Germans, who had been leaders in science. He said, ‘in Germany, I learnt that if this civilization is to continue, modern man must direct the material power of his science by the spiritual truths of his God.’

In his conclusion, Tripp underlines the significance of marrying science and Christianity. “We owe a great debt to science for much good that has been achieved by its discoveries, but without a Christian base, where it largely began our problems will be multiplied.” The Ministry of Education should also realize that by sidelining Christian Religious Education, it is doing the country no favour but more harm Christianity too needs science. In his introduction to ‘Bridging the Gap, Evangelism, Development and Shalom,’ Bruce Bradsha, observes that ‘nothing has hindered the modern mission more than modern dualism that separates body and spirit, science from religion and natural from supernatural.’ It is definite that in Gods eye, there is no such dichotomy. The discoveries of modern science, says Einsten, can greatly enhance our wonder and awe at the amazing complexity and size of the universe and the manner in which it sustains our life on this planet, and the amazing greatness of the God behind it. All this does not necessarily eliminate the conflict between the two disciplines. However, since they need each other, it is vital that we know how to handle the conflict. Tripp observes that it will obviously help a lot if we recognize the truth of physicist Sir William Bragg’s famous saying:



*Religion and science are opposed, but, only in the same sense as that in which my thumb and forefinger are opposed- and between the two, one can grasp anything. We should know that both science and Christianity are seeking to understand the truth-what is really there.*

Truth does not conflict with itself. It is only our perception of what is really there that differ-and that is because none of us has the whole truth, said Tripp. He sums up this argument by saying that, “the future course of history depends upon the relations of science and religion for what men of science can receive from religion a deeper understanding than could be obtained from science alone. The physical world’s deep mathematical intelligibility (signs of the mind behind it) and the finely tuned

fruitfulness (expressive of divine purpose) are reflections of the fact that it is a creation.

Having established the significance of Christianity in science and vice versa, it would be necessary to shift from a system based on a traditional epistemology<sup>6</sup> (modernity) to a one based on a post-modernistic epistemological perspective. This would definitely keep the students in step with the current world. What is required of religious educators is therefore to critically re-evaluate the epistemological assumptions that undergird the curriculum choices and pedagogies.



The question of whether religious education should be taught in schools may seem irrelevant in the Kenyan situation. As already mentioned above, there has not been an outright removal of the discipline in the syllabus but as the saying goes 'akufukuzae hakuwambii toka' (a Kiswahili saying meaning; he who sends you away, does not order you out, you will see things have changed, literally speaking, -for, actions speak louder than words). All these changes affecting the discipline are mentioned above.

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<sup>6</sup> Epistemology is the philosophical discipline concerned with answering questions about the sources, nature, and reliability of knowledge.

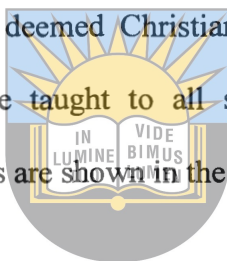
## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1 Students Data Results

This questionnaire was administered in selected Kenyan secondary schools both in town and the rural set up (Meru south district) in both national, provincial and district schools.

- 97 % of the students deemed Christian Religious Education a very important subject that should be taught to all students while 3% disagreed with that hypothesis. The results are shown in the table 1 below.



Question 1: From my class experience Christian Religious Education is a very important subject and should be taught regularly to all students.

Table 1

Choices	Frequency	%
I agree	69	97
I disagree	2	3
I strongly disagree	0	0
Non-committal	0	0

- 3 % of the students deem Christian Religious Education a waste of time and are of the opinion that it should be abolished in schools for the churches can cater for spiritual matters, 7 % disagree with this supposition and 90 % strongly disagree with the deduction.

Question 2: From my class experience Christian Religious Education is a waste of time and should be abolished for the churches can carry it on.

Table 2

Choices	Frequency	%
I agree	2	3
I disagree	5	7
I strongly disagree	64	90
Non-committal	0	0

- 51 % of the students are of the opinion that Christian Religious Education and Science are opposing disciplines, while 30 % disagree with that theory and 20 % strongly disagree.



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Question 3: Christian Religious Education and Science are opposed disciplines

Table 3

Choices	Frequency	%
I agree	36	51
I disagree	21	30
I strongly disagree	14	20
Non-committal	0	0

- 49 % of the students are of the opinion that Christian Religious Education and Sciences are complimentary disciplines, while 30 % disagree with that theory and 20% strongly disagree with it.1 % was non-committal.

Question 4: Christian Religious Education and Science are complimentary disciplines.

Table 4

Choices	Frequency	%
I agree	35	49
I disagree	21	30
I strongly disagree	14	20
Non-committal	1	1

**Comment**

Question number 3 and 4 were purposely written one after the other so as to help the researcher evaluate the degree of discrepancy in answering the questionnaire. The degree is very marginal and shows that most of the student were well aware of what they were saying.



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- 97 % of the students are of the opinion that they are able to tell a well-prepared lesson. 1.5 % strongly disagreed and 1.5 % was non-committal.

Question 5 You can tell a well prepared lesson

Table 5

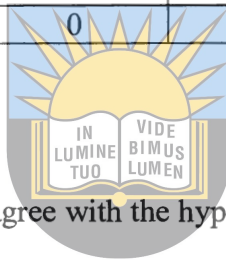
Choices	Frequency	%
I agree	69	97
I disagree	0	0
I strongly disagree	1	1.5
Non-committal	1	1.5

- 55 % of the students are of the opinion that the Christian Religious Education lessons are always well prepared, 41 % disagree with this observation, while 4 % strongly disagree with it.

Question 6 The Christian Religious Education lesson are always well prepared.

Table 6

Choices	Frequency	%
I agree	39	55
I disagree	29	41
I strongly disagree	3	4
Non-committal	0	0



- 15 % of the students agree with the hypothesis that Christian Religious Education lessons are rarely well prepared, while 59 % disagree with this hypothesis and 26 % strongly disagree.

Question 7 The Christian Religious Education lesson are rarely well prepared.

Table 7

Choices	Frequency	%
I agree	11	15
I disagree	39	59
I strongly disagree	21	26
Non-committal	0	0

### Comment

Questions 6 and 7 were intended to measure the degree of reliability on the genuineness of the students' evaluation of well prepared and not well prepared Christian Religious

Education lessons. There is some degree of discrepancy observed as 15 % (11) groups are of the opinion that the Christian Religious Education lessons are really well prepared, yet in question 6, 55 % (39 groups) agreed that Christian Religious Education lessons are always well prepared & 45 % (32 groups) disagreed with that hypothesis. Note that this confirms the technicality of assessing, values and attitudes.

- Questions 8 and 9 engage the student in assessing the teacher's style of evaluation. Both boil down to a participatory style of teaching.

Question 8 The teachers normally engage in both monological and dialogical teaching styles.

Table 8

Choices	Frequency	%
I agree	52	73.2
I disagree	10	14.8
I strongly disagree	8	11.2
Non-committal	1	1.3

Question 9 The teachers normally engage in a participatory teaching style.

Table 9

Choices	Frequency	%
I agree	62	87
I disagree	7	10
I strongly disagree	2	3
Non-committal	0	0

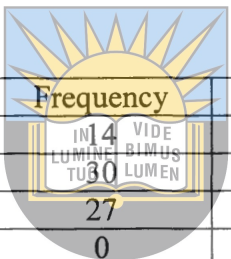
The teachers engage their learners in class to a high degree. This is quite commendable.

- 20 % of the students have been exposed to the use of additional materials, charts, videos films among others in the Christian Religious Education lessons.80 % have not.

Similarly, question 11,accounts for 10 % of the students to have been exposed to instructional aids like slide projectors, computers etc

Question 10:There is adequate use of additional material, charts, video films etc

Table 10



Choice	Frequency	%
I agree	14	20
I disagree	30	42
I strongly disagree	27	38
Non-committal	0	0

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Question 11:There is use of instructional aids like slide projectors, computers etc

Table 11

Choice	Frequency	%
I agree	7	10
I disagree	22	31
I strongly disagree	42	59
Non-committal	0	0

### Comment

This spells a need to try and update our school with contemporary technology for better instruction and wide interaction with the current developments, not only in religious education but also in other disciplines.

- 65 % of the students agreed that they have a variety of textbooks and library facilities, while 35 % did not have these facilities.

Question 12: You have a variety of textbooks and library facilities.

Table 12

Choices	Frequency	%
I agree	46	65
I disagree	17	24
I strongly disagree	8	11
Non-committal	0	0

- 93 % of the students are of the opinion that the study of Christian Religious Education, has helped in their personal formation, that is, given them a strong or sound ethical standing, while 3% disagree with that opinion and 4% totally disagree with it.
- Question 13 Christian Religious Education has helped me in my personal formation, i.e. given me a strong or sound ethical standing

Table 13

Choices	Frequency	%
I agree	66	93
I disagree	2	3
I strongly disagree	3	4
Non-committal	0	0

## Comment

The majority of the students, just like their teachers and principals appreciate the study of Christian Religious Education for its value in their lives. It is therefore perturbing that the Kenyan educational system is downplaying the value of this discipline by evaluating it from a secondary perspective-marketability. We would be doing grave injustice to the young generations if this study is eventually faced out of the education system.

- Question 14 is an open question to students to give suggestions on how they would wish the Christian Religious Education class to be like.

They came up with a number of learning activities for instance:

75 % suggested trips to sacred places.

42 % suggested holding of symposiums.

25 % would like theological clubs for Christian Religious Education students formed.

60 % wished-for regular Interclass competitions.

79 % proposed dramatization e.g. plays and poems.

52 % suggested regular continuous assessment tests.

40 % wished for practical involvement in social work e.g. visiting the sick, prisoners

etc

27 % Suggested that a sharing of real life experiences is needed.

76 % also suggested a number of learning materials e.g.

Use of slides, projectors, videos, films & computers,

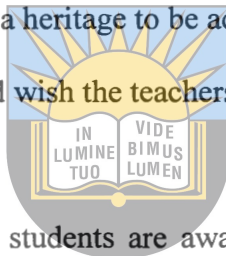
a variety of books, magazines, Christian literature in general.

60 % also indicated that the syllabus is too wide and particularly the form three work and would like it reduced.

They indicated that they would wish to deal more with contemporary issues as opposed to too much history.

50 % wished for more of Africa heritage to be added in the curriculum.

30 % indicated that they would wish the teachers to be exemplary.



This response shows that the students are aware of their needs and therefore teachers should act as their guides to help them develop those potential positive qualities they already have. It affirms Freire's (1970:57-74) "problem-posing" model of education. Students are not just depositories. As indicated above, we are living in times of moral clarification as opposed to moral inculcation.

As noted by Ter Haar (1988:35), from the 1980's, life experiences became the starting point in the process of religious education. "The teachers play a crucial role in this process. Better religious education is not simply achieved by a switch of textbooks but only by teachers who are fully prepared to deal with entirely new educational processes and who have a firm grip on current theology".

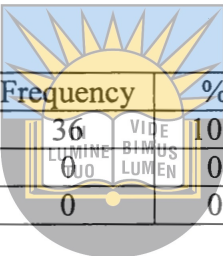
## 4.2 Teachers data results

The questionnaire was tailored to test the opinions and attitudes towards Christian education in Kenyan secondary schools. Below is the data collected from the teachers.

- All the teachers in the schools covered agreed that they are happy to be Christian religious teachers i.e. 100% affirmative.

Question 1: You are happy to be a Christian Religious teacher.

Table 1



Choices	Frequency	%
Agree	36	100
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0

- 31% agree that they are happy with the trend the discipline is taking currently. 47% disagree with the trend the discipline is taking currently, while 22% strongly disagree (see the table below).

Question 2: The trend Christian Religious Education is currently taking makes you happy.

Table 2

Choices	Frequency	%
Agree	11	31
Disagree	17	47
Strongly disagree	8	22

- Response to the government policy towards furtherance of education for Christian Religious Education teachers.

6% of the teachers deemed the move understandable and fair, while 44% disagreed, and 50% strongly disagreed.

Question 3: The education policy denying Christian religious teachers paid study leaves is both understandable and fair.

Table 3

Choices	Frequency	%
Agree	2	6
Disagree	16	44
Strongly disagree	18	50



- 92% of the teachers regard Christian Religious Education as a very vital subject to be studied by all students. However, 8% do not agree with that opinion.

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Question 4. Christian Religious Education is a very important subject for all students

Table 4

Choices	Frequency	%
Agree	33	92
Disagree	3	8
Strongly disagree	0	0

- According to the analysis from the first 4 questions, it is observable that there is some insidious effect besetting the discipline.

All the teachers are happy to be in charge of the discipline, but apparently, the discipline is not running as it ought to as reflected by the 69% of those dissatisfied with the trend the subject is taking.

However, they recommend the subject to be taught to all the students owing to its significance. Worthy of note here is that, religion is intertwined in the life of the society.



As regards the treatment the teachers get from the employer with regard to further studies, there is marked dissatisfaction as reflected by the 97% response in the negative, ranging from 45% merely disagreeing to 52% strongly disagreeing.

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The education policy in the 90s has been emphasizing the study of sciences at the expense of the humanities. This gave Christian Religious Education a status of an “endanger species” as it was not threatened by this move only but also by the introduction of Social Education and Ethics.

- Thus questions 5 & 6 are tailored to get the opinion of Christian Religious Education teachers as far as their understanding the relationship between Christian Religious Education and Sciences

To the question of their complimenting each other, the response is as follows:

Question 5: Science is complimentary to Christian Religious Education.

Table 5

Choices	Frequency	%
Agree	23	64
Disagree	8	22
Strongly disagree	5	14

- To the question of contradicting each other, the response is as follows:

Question 6: Science is contradictory to Christian Religious Education.

Choices	Frequency	%
Agree	15	42
Disagree	14	39
Strongly disagree	7	19

- The two questions show that different teachers hold different perspectives pertaining to the place of Christian Religious Education in the science world, as well as the place of science in the world of Christian Religious Education.

This discrepancy is shown even among teachers from the same schools not to mention from different schools. This raises a key question of how different teachers handle the topic in the same school when teaching different streams-same class.

Are in-service courses a solution?

- There is also a reflection of teachers being mixed up as far as this relationship between science and Christian Religious Education is concerned. This is

witnessed in the contradictory response to question 5 & 6 as illustrated by the table below.

### Question 5& 6

Table 7

Choices	Frequency	%
Agree	7	19
Disagree	3	8

19% of the teachers agree that science is contradictory as well as complimentary to Christian Religious Education. Since the questions are framed from a surface value, this is contradictory in itself. They are uncertain what relationship they would deem more fitting. On the other hand, 8% disagree with the position that science does not contradict nor does it compliment Christian Religious Education. Again, this is a sign of indecisiveness as to the relationship that exist between the two. It is also a contradictoin.

6% disagree that the two compliments each other as well as strongly disagree to their contradiction.

- Question 7 (i.e. You feel proud to introduce yourself as a Christian Religious Education teacher) confirms question 1, as reflected by a 97% response on the affirmative as opposed to 2% who do not feel proud of being Christian Religious Education teachers and 1% who remain noncommittal. The corollary of this, therefore, would most definitely be quality input from the teachers' side. This deduction is strengthened by the response to question 12 which shows 83% of

teachers wishing that their students would love the discipline as much as they do, as opposed to 11% who teach Christian Religious Education as a matter of course and 6% who would even wish to teach their alternative area of specialization given a chance.

- In agreement with the above observation also is the response to question 11 (i.e. what is your number one role in your teaching?) 8% of the teachers put more weight on the appreciation of the aims of the discipline by their students, and 92% affirming not only the above, but also the passing of the national examination.
- Question 10 Do you regard yourself as a devoted Christian?
- This question further shows that 97% of the Christian Religious Education teachers regard themselves as committed Christians and only 3% do not. This is quite an interesting response. Nevertheless it reflects what the teachers think about who should be teaching the subject.



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There are undertones of the lack of market for Christian Religious Education graduates in a science-oriented country and this has affected the attitude of the students towards Christian Religious Education.

Thus the question is intended to get the teachers attitude to the subject as well as that of the criteria of evaluation. As reflected by the table above, the teachers think that the discipline deserves more than it is given.

- 47% are of the opinion that Christian Religious Education ought to be evaluated from the perspective of it's social effect while 50% are of the opinion that it ought to be evaluated from the perspective of it's personal formation. Consequently, this would spill over to social effect-if more morally upright, self respecting and environmentally aware students graduate from the schools, then the society has peaceful, law abiding citizens.3% preferred to remain non-committal.

On the criteria for the evaluation of Christian Religious Education, the response was as follows:

Question 8: From what angle should Christian Religious Education be evaluated?



Table 8

Choices	Frequency	%
Marketability	0	0
Social effect	17	47
Personal Formation	18	50
Noncommittal	1	3

- Question 9. All the teaching periods of Christian Religious Education are utilized for that purpose.
- This question is tailored to test the seriousness with which Christian Religious Education is taken in various schools.

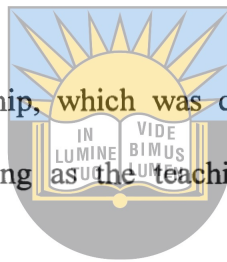
The response is that only 26% use the lesson for Christian Religious Education learning, 54% use it for both Christian Religious Education and anything else that they may deem more worthwhile, and 20% totally use it for other purposes.

- Question 13: Are you following a curriculum in your teaching of Christian Religious Education?

97% of the teachers follow a set curriculum in their teaching while 3% do not.

- Question 14 Are there areas in the curriculum that you feel should be removed?

42% of the teachers are of the opinion that the Christian Religious Education curriculum needs some adjustments. They proposed a removal of some topics. These include:



The topic on Israel's kingship, which was deemed quite incomprehensible to many students, too long and boring as the teaching tends to be more lecture like than participatory.

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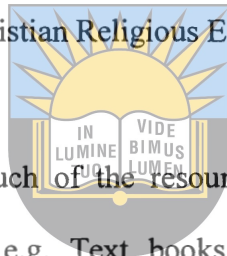
A reduction in the coverage of the prophets, which an overwhelming majority deemed too wide.

Others suggested the removal of some topics, which they said are not Christian in nature.

No example was given.

50 % of the teachers suggested that there is need for an in depth detailing of the topics. In other words the topics are narrowly covered as the syllabus book guides teachers on the depth of coverage of various topics.

- 53% are of the opinion that the curriculum is complete and quite relevant to contemporary living. However, when given a chance to suggest topics, the prevalent one was HIV/AIDS
- More than half suggested a comparative study with African Religions Education
- A few suggested a return to the old curriculum that emphasized on the social aspect of life.
- As question 16 indicates, it is only a handful of schools that have enough modern resources to teach Christian Religious Education and these are national schools.



Question 16 How much of the resources do you have for teaching Christian Religious Education e.g. Text books, library stock, films, charts, overhead projectors etc?

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Table 9

Choices	Frequency	%
Enough	7	19
Not enough	27	75
Not at all	2	6

Most schools have no resources as reflected by 81% response, and only few have enough resources as indicated by the 19% response.

### 4.3 The Principals data results

Opinion and Attitude towards Christian Religious Education in Kenyan secondary schools. This data was collected from both urban and rural setups that is in sampled schools in Nairobi and Meru South district (across both national, provincial and district schools).

- 65 % of the principals in the schools contacted confirmed that their schools were church sponsored while 35 % said that theirs schools were public schools.

This can be graphically presented as follows:

Question 1 Is your school: .....

Table 1

Choices	Frequency	%
Church sponsored?	11	65
Private?	0	0
Public?	6	35

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- 100 % of the principals deem religious education as a pivotal subject in the life of students. None was of the opinion that spiritual nourishment should be the work of the church, nor was any of the opinion that it is a waste of time due to its unmarketability in the country.

It is also interesting to note that this response cuts across both public and church sponsored schools.

Question 2 What is your attitude towards Christian Religious Education as a subject?

Table 2

Choices	Frequency	%
It is a pivotal subject in the life of a student	17	100
It is not necessary in school as spiritual nourishment can be catered for in churches	0	0
It is a waste of time as it has no marketability in the country	0	0

- Out of the 17 schools covered, 15 have a curriculum committee dealing specifically with Christian Religious Education while 2 schools do not have any.

Question 3: Do you have a curriculum committee dealing specifically with Christian Religious Education?



Table 3

Choices	Frequency	%
Yes	15	89
No	2	11

- 94 % of the principals admitted that they encourage their students to study Christian Religious Education while 6 % resolved to be non-committal.

Question 4: Do you encourage your students to study Christian Religious Education?

Table 4

Choices	Frequency	%
Yes	16	94
No	--	--
Non-committal	1	6

- 77 % of the principals affirmed that they motivate the Christian Religious Education teachers equally with the science teachers, while 23 % felt that it is/was not necessary since the science teachers motivation comes directly from the employer, and that the emphasis on sciences is needed more than in Christian Religious Education due to its marketability after school.

Question 5: Do you motivate your Christian Religious Education teachers equally with the science teachers?

Table 5

Choices	Frequency	%
Yes	13	76.5
No	4	23.5



- 71 % of the principles agree that the current lack of proper discipline among the youth has a link with lack of proper Christian Religious Education, while 29 % did not agree with that hypothesis.

Question 6 Do you think the current lack of proper discipline among the youth has any link to the lack of proper Christian Religious Education?

Table 6

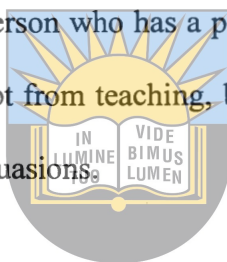
Choices	Frequency	%
Yes	12	71
No	5	29

- 88 % of the principals were of the opinion that the best-suited teacher for Christian Religious Education is a committed Christian, while 12 % the character

of the teacher is not of prime importance as long as the teacher was/ is professionally qualified.

**Comment**

This is best done by academically qualified teachers who teach this subject neutrally, that is objectively, fairly and not simply advocating or promoting their religion, nor should they advocate no religion and exhibit hostility or prejudice against religion in general, or some specific religions. A person who has a personal religious conviction should not be discriminated against and kept from teaching, but such teachers should not be advocates in class of their religious persuasions.



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Question 7: In your opinion, what would you deem to be the prime characteristic of a Christian Religious Education teacher?

Table 7

Choices	Frequency	%
A committed Christian	15	88
A non-committal teacher as far as religious affairs are concerned	0	0
cynic of Christianity	0	0
It does not matter as long as the teacher is a Professionally trained.	2	12

- 100 % of the principals agreed that teaching Christian Religious Education does help as far as the general school discipline is concerned. The researcher therefore observes that we cannot isolate Christian Religious Education from ethics.

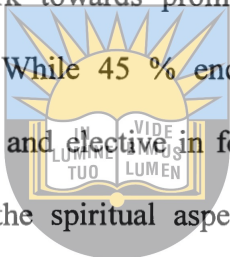
Question 8 Does is help to teach Christian Religious Education at school as far as general discipline is concerned?

Table 8

Choices	Frequency	%
Yes	17	100
No	0	0

- Question 9: What steps do you take to (i) promote or (ii) demote Christian Religious Education?

82 % of the principals work towards promoting the study of Christian Religious Education in their schools. While 45 % encourage students directly by making it compulsory in form 1 and 2, and elective in form 3 to 4, others engage co-curriculum spiritual activities to uplift the spiritual aspect of the students in inter class/school discussions of Christian Religious Education and movements like Christian Union and Catholic Association.



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- Others have cited moves to directly motivate the Christian Religious Education teachers. On the other hand 12% of the principals are of the opinion that promotion of the subject is not necessary. It should be treated like any other .As for the teachers, they observe that they made their choices from their training institutions so it is not up to the principal to do anything special. 6 % remained noncommittal on this question.
- Would you support a move to make Christian Religious Education one of the compulsory/core subjects in schools? Why?

77 % Of the principles were affirmative to the suggestion of making Christian Religious Education a compulsory or core subject. Above, all affirm that the discipline directly attributes to sound personality formation in the life of the students, which spills over to a healthy society. However, 23 % did not support that suggestion, citing reasons like:

- Academic excellence in the subject does not automatically lead to moral uprightness.
- That would sideline other faiths like Islam, Hinduism, African traditional religion etc as our schools are comprised of multifaith students.
- Others were of the opinion that the sciences have suffered failure for long and ought to be emphasized instead.
- There was also a feeling that a move to make Christian Religious Education compulsory does not necessarily assure a liking of the subject, and, on the contrary, may lead to discontentment hence insurrections or rebellions thereby producing the opposite results rather than the expected.

### **Conclusion.**

It is observable from the response from the three shareholders that they regard Christian Religious Education as a subject of great importance in the schools. It helps in personality formation of the individual students and the general student body at large. The students, teachers and principals have therefore voted for it to be made a core subject.

It is also noticeable from the responses that the curriculum needs some fine-tuning in terms of both content and scope.

There is also a noticeable tension pertaining to the understanding of the place of Christian Religious Education in the science world and vice versa.



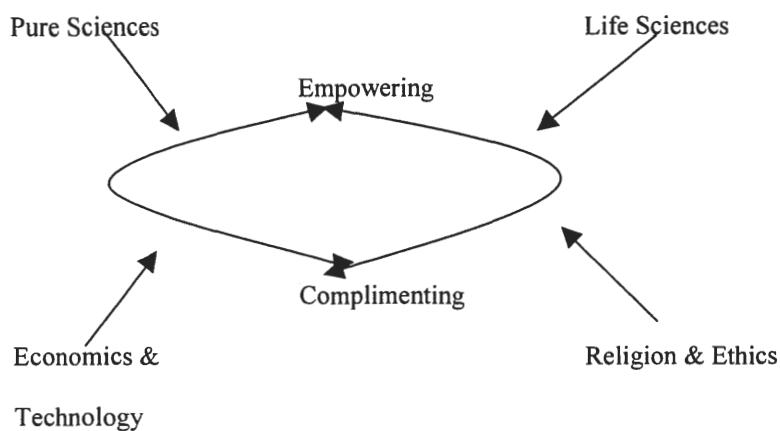
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## CHAPTER FIVE

### RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 Recommendations

5.1.1. As noted in Chapter 1, there is a need for a reconception of the interaction between the two knowledge systems i.e. between the sciences and the humanities, as opposed to the traditional notion that these are always in conflict. In the research conducted, it was evident that both teachers and students also experience this tension. The diagram below illustrates my own conceptualization of the real world in which these two systems of knowledge operate and ought to operate.



The two systems of knowledge ought to compliment and empower each other as opposed to being looked at as totally divorced from each other.

It would be of great importance, therefore, for the Ministry of Education to encourage the study of sciences together with Christian Religious Education to allow the students to experience wholeness in their education. The researcher would concur with the Zambian justification for the teaching of Religion Education in their schools that (Ter Haar (1988:27) “the answer is found in man himself. Man is both physical, mental, social, emotional and spiritual by nature. Therefore, if any of these areas is neglected in education, then that education is unbalanced, even defective.” As observed in chapter three, Jacques Monod, the winner of the Nobel price for his work in genetics mechanism attests to the emptiness of humanity without Godliness (spirituality). The researcher is persuaded to believe that this ‘emptiness’- immensity of alienation- is not what the Ministry of Education aspires to effect in our students. It is her opinion therefore that the Ministry revise its policy on Christian Religious Education as mention above.

**5.1.2.** The researcher recommends that Christian Religious Education be made a core subject. The immediate stakeholders share this opinion, i.e. (the learner, the teacher and the principal) by a landslide majority as is evident in chapter 4. This was also an opinion shared by a task force investigating the cause of school unrest in Kenyan Secondary Schools in 2001. In the document, “Report of the Task Force on Student Discipline and

Unrest in Secondary Schools” (September, 2001:16), the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology made a recommendation that “religious education should be embedded in the school curriculum and made compulsory all the way from form 1 to form 4 so as to strengthen the spiritual foundation of the students.” As a corollary therefore, it is imperative that the Ministry of Education free Christian Religious Education from the humanity cluster to allow all students an opportunity to study Christian religious education plus any other arts subject of their choice.

**5.1.3.** The curriculum, it is here suggested, should be subjected to a thorough reflection in terms of its scope, content, methodology and to some degree, the teaching agents. Both the students and teachers suggested that some very lengthy topics in the syllabus that tire both the teacher and the students, be eliminated from the curriculum. When the scope is too wide, it defeats the purpose for which it is set. Worthy of note is the fact that education is not the volume given but the quality retained. The narrowing of the scope would allow flexibility in varying of teaching methodology. It is observable that the students noted this concern as they cited the various props they would wish to see used in their study of Christian Religious Education to facilitate their understanding. With a wide scope to cover, it would be impractical for the teacher to engage a number of props due to pressure over syllabus coverage. On the other hand, the content also ought to be reevaluated.

**5.1.3.1** The researcher therefore recommends that, the curriculum developers should review the Christian Religious Education syllabus in such a way that it fits in or is relevant to the times. For instance it is irrelevant to keep on glorifying poverty

because the disciples were chosen from the lowly or because Jesus was born in a manger. God has a purpose for that. Quoting Freire, Waruta (1989:91) notes that,

*we need an education which would lead men [and women] to take a new stance towards their problems...That of intimacy with those problems, one oriented toward research instead of repeating irrelevant principles. An education of 'I wonder', instead of 'I do'. Validity instead of insistence on the transmission of what Alfred Whitehead has called 'inert ideas...that is to say, ideas that are merely received in the mind without being utilized, or tested, or thrown into fresh combinations*

**5.1.3.2** It is mentioned above that the teaching of Christian Religious Education should

not be confined to religious experts but to professional teachers who should not be cynical. While this is very rational, there is some technicality in the sense that where the teaching of values is concerned, consistency between word and deed in the lives of the teachers themselves is vital. Where there is inconsistency, values stand no chance of being effective. The attitude of “do as I say not as I do” is a recipe for disaster. Credibility in teaching of values has a lot to do with how the teachers model for their students in daily life. In the same vein, Joubert (1994:8) asserts that the greatest truth is given through interpersonal relationship because it provides minimal distortion with maximum interaction. She notes that, you can impress a person from a distance but can only impact up close. We communicate our values by what we are not what we say. The researcher would therefore recommend that the Ministry of Education devise a mechanism of getting those teachers who are truly God fearing to teach Christian Religious Education.

5.1.4 The researcher recommends the constant mounting of workshops and in-service courses by the Ministry of Education so as to keep the Christian Religious Education teachers abreast with new ideas and changing theological stance and methodology. Of late there is a lot of research and publications on Bible interpretation from an African perspective. This is the kind of literature necessary to be included in the syllabi

5.1.5. The researcher recommends that Christian Religious Education not be evaluated from the perspective of marketability but from its social effect. For morality to be embedded in the social fiber of the nation, religious education is a necessity and not an option. Quoting Weggen (1991:257), Punt(1997:9) in accord with this assertion highlights the danger of viewing people as mere economic beings and quotes the Japanese industrial saying;

“What we need is good people, we can make anyone an engineer”.

Thus the call for rediscovering the place of role of values in the educational curricula needs to be underscored. Christian Religious Education equips the students with values albeit, it is not the only source of moral ethics but is a very strong one. In chapter four, the students affirmed the crucial role of the discipline in their personal formation by a landslide majority.

5.16 It is also recommended that in the teaching of Christian Religious Education, the teacher engage the student/learner into dialogue to help her/him assume her/his own sound and informed religious philosophy.

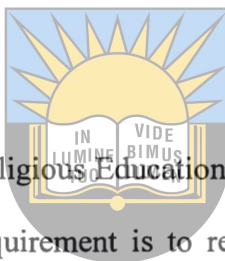
5.17 The researcher recommends that the Ministry of Education conduct more research pertaining the relationship between science and religion and mount workshops for teachers to avoid unnecessary contradictions.

5.18 The researcher recommends that the Ministry of Education try to balance the resources in all caliber of schools to give all students equal chance to quality education. In the data collected, the researcher observed that the National schools and few Provincial schools were the ones that were well equipped with resources.

### **Conclusion**

It is evident that Christian Religious Education is an important discipline to be taught in our schools. The only requirement is to reconceptualize our attitude towards it. Christian Religious Education is not basically about offering certain jobs but is weft in all other areas as it promotes morally sound behavior which is needed in any job market.

It is therefore necessary that the curriculum developers restructure it in such a way that it accommodates other faiths to strengthen the social fiber of the society. It is also important that the post-colonial stance be employed in this study. The adjustments should not be a blueprint from another country but should be drawn from a Kenyan situation. Sound religious education, could help the learner acquire a sound attitude towards life hence minimizing unrests in schools.



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## APPENDIX 1

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

I am conducting a research towards the study of Christian Religious Education in Kenya.

Please kindly respond carefully and with candor to the questions below by marking a circle at one of the alternative a), b), or c) you consider appropriate.

Your assistance is greatly appreciated.  
Thank you.

#### QUESTIONS

1. From my class experience Christian Religious Education is a very important subject and should be taught regularly to all students.

- a) I agree
- b) I disagree
- c) I strongly disagree



2. From my class experience, Christian Religious Education is a waste of time and should be abolished in schools for the churches could carry it on.

- a) I agree
- b) I disagree
- c) I strongly disagree

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3. Christian Religious Education and Science are opposing disciplines.

- a) I agree
- b) I disagree
- c) I strongly disagree

4. Christian Religious Education and Science are complimentary disciplines.

- a) I agree
- b) I disagree
- c) I strongly disagree

5. You can tell a well-prepared lesson.

- a) I agree
- b) I disagree
- c) I strongly disagree

6. The Christian Religious Education lessons are always well prepared.

- a) I agree
- b) I disagree
- c) I strongly disagree

7. The Christian Religious Education lessons are rarely well prepared.

- a) I agree
- b) I disagree
- c) I strongly disagree

8. The teachers normally engage in monological and dialogical teaching styles.

- a) I agree
- b) I strongly disagree
- c) I strongly disagree

9. The teachers normally engage in participatory teaching style.

- a) I agree
- b) I disagree
- c) I strongly disagree



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10. There is adequate use of additional material, charts, video, films etc.

- a) I agree
- b) I disagree
- c) I strongly disagree

11. There is use of instructional aids like slide projectors, computers etc.

- a) I agree
- b) I disagree
- c) I strongly disagree

12. You have a variety of textbooks and library facilities.

- a) I agree
- b) I disagree
- c) I strongly disagree

13. Christian Religious Education has helped me in my personal formation, i.e. given me a strong or sound ethical standing.

- a) I agree
- b) I disagree
- c) I strongly disagree

14.If you are given an opportunity to suggest certain steps to make Christian Religious Education a more interesting subject, state briefly what would you suggest, for instance on the teaching methods, curriculum, teaching aids etc.

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## APPENDIX 2

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

***Dear sir/ madam***

I am a postgraduate student at the University of Fort Hare (South Africa). I am conducting a research towards the study of Christian Religious Education in Kenya.

Please kindly respond carefully and with candor to the questions below by marking a circle at one of the alternative a), b), or c) you consider appropriate.

Your assistance is greatly appreciated.  
Thank you.

***QUESTIONS***

1. You are happy to be a Christian Religious Education teacher?
  - a) I agree
  - b) I disagree
  - c) I strongly disagree
2. The trend Christian Religious Education is currently taking makes you happy.
  - a) I agree
  - b) I disagree
  - c) I strongly disagree
3. The education policy denying Christian Religious Education teachers paid study leaves is both understandable and fair.
  - a) I agree
  - b) I disagree
  - c) I strongly disagree
4. Christian education is a very important subject for all students.
  - a) I agree
  - b) I disagree
  - c) I strongly disagree
5. Science is complimentary to Christian Religious Education.
  - a) I agree
  - b) I disagree
  - c) I strongly disagree



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6. Science is contradictory to Christian Religious Education.

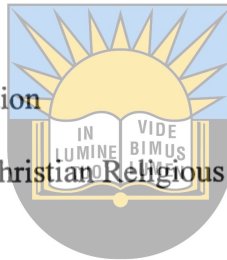
- a) I disagree
- b) I disagree
- c) I strongly disagree

7. You feel proud of yourself when you introduce yourself as a Christian Religious Education teacher.

- a) I agree
- b) I disagree
- c) I strongly disagree

8. From what angle should Christian Religious Education be evaluated?

- a) Marketability
- b) Social effect
- c) Personal formation



9. All the lecturing periods of Christian Religious Education are utilized for that purpose.

- a) Always
- b) Sometimes
- c) Not at all

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10. Do you regard yourself as a devoted Christian?

- a) Yes
- b) No

11. What is your number one role in your teaching Christian Religious Education?

- a) That the students appreciate the aims of the discipline
- b) That the student pass the national exams
- c) Both the above

12. What is your attitude towards this subject, Christian Religious Education?

- a) I am teaching it as a matter of course.
- b) I love the subject and wish my students would love it too
- c) I would rather teach my other area of specialization but unfortunately, Christian Religious Education was allocated to me.

13. Are you following a curriculum in your teaching of Christian Religious Education?

- a) Yes
- b) No

14. Are there areas in the curriculum which you feel should be or removed?

- a) Yes
- b) No

If No, specify.

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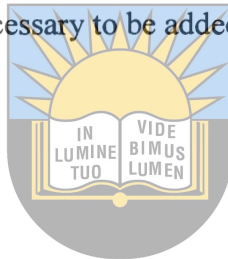
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15. Are there topics you deem necessary to be added in the curriculum?

- a) Yes
- b) No



If yes, specify.

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16. How much of the resources do you have for teaching Christian Religious Education e.g. text books, library stock, films, charts, overhead projectors, slide projectors, etc ?

- a) Enough
- b) Not enough
- c) None at all.

17. Christian Religious Education should be taken out of the curriculum.

- a) I agree
- b) I disagree
- c) I strongly disagree.

## APPENDIX 3

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE PRINCIPAL.

*Dear sir/ madam*

I am a postgraduate student at the University of Fort Hare (South Africa). I am conducting a research towards the study of Christian Religious Education in Kenya.

Please kindly respond carefully and with candor to the questions below by marking a circle at one of the alternative a), b), or c) you consider appropriate.

Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Thank you.



#### QUESTIONS

1. Is your school:-----

- a) Church sponsored?
- b) Private school?
- c) Public school?

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2. What is your attitude towards Christian Religious Education as a subject?

- a) It is a pivotal subject in the life of students.
- b) It is not necessary in schools as spiritual nourishment can be catered for in churches.
- c) It is a waste of time as it has no marketability in the country

3. Do you have a curriculum committee dealing specifically with Christian Religious Education?

- a) Yes
- b) No

4. Do you encourage your students to study Christian Religious Education?

- a) Yes
- b) No



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10. Would you support a move to make Christian Religious Education one of the compulsory/core subjects in schools?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Why ?

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