

## Accounting for the Shift Towards 'Multifaith' Religious Education in Zambia, 1964 -2017

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# Accounting for the shift towards 'Multifaith' Religious Education in Zambia, 1964 -2017

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*This article sheds light on the factors that contributed to the development of 'multifaith' Religious Education (RE) in Zambia after 1964. Our analysis makes a contribution to the discourse on inter-religious RE in Zambia by demonstrating how Zambia became a multifaith society, a context in which political statements and ideologies have influenced the framing of the aim, and selection of, the content of the subject. Research for this article consisted of interviews with Christian missionaries who shared with us their involvement in developing, teaching and evaluating standards of the teaching of RE. We also carried out an appraisal of literature related to the topic so as to complement our arguments.*

*Contrary to widely held perceptions which attribute RE to the missionaries' influence, this article argues that Christian missionaries, immigrants and local politics all had their own influence on the move to develop a 'multifaith' RE. Missionaries developed the kind of RE that responded to Zambia's religious context, local politics, the multiracial, multicultural and multifaith situation in the country, and invested their time, energy and money in the subject. These efforts to move towards 'multifaith' RE were challenged by internal and external forces. In the context of shifting political ideologies, the current nature and content of RE has been challenged to reflect a multifaith RE which mirrors the religious context of the country.*

*We argue that Zambian scholars of RE can learn a number of valuable lessons from the missionaries such as their hard work and passion to ensure that RE remains a curriculum subject with required books. As the next RE research agenda in Zambia, we propose researching on the subject in terms of its rationale and its educational basis.*

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**Keywords:** Religious Education (RE), Zambian Humanism, Christian Nation, Multifaith, Inter-religious, and Missionaries.

## **Introduction**

Perhaps our introduction should be prefaced by Hulme's point that, "the continuation of British influence on African life is nowhere more apparent than in education" (1989: 104-105). This applies to RE, for developments in the subject in the United Kingdom have interested Zambians for some time, and there has been a continuous trickle of Zambians going to Britain to study this subject

(Katulushi, 1999). Consequently, Zambia has been receptive to pedagogical discourses emerging from England and Wales from the time Professor Ninian Smart set up the first department of Religious Studies in a British university in the mid-1960s, although his contribution to contemporary RE may be a matter of discussion (O'Grady, 2005; Barnes, 2001). But what is fundamental to note is the role that missionaries of British, Irish and American origin have played in the development of RE in Zambia.

In this article we acknowledge that Zambian RE is not wholly 'multifaith'. 'Multifaith' RE is referred to in terms of the efforts that have been made to include other religions in the RE content. RE in Zambia includes basic facts about Islam, Hinduism, and African Traditional Religion that are duly taught in schools, colleges, and universities. More, however, could be done to make the subject more inclusive of the minority religions in Zambia.

Although this study is part of the larger history of RE in Zambia which can be read elsewhere (Henze, 2004; Carmody, 2008; 2011; Chita, 2011), it nonetheless has a specific and distinctive contribution to make. It discusses the relationship between politics and religion in Zambia since independence to illustrate how ideologies, or political narratives of successive governments, have influenced the framing of the aim and the choice of the content of RE. It also considers the influence on RE of the presence of Hindus and Muslims in the country. This article further discusses the role of missionaries and their perceptions of that role in the development of RE. We commemorate their contribution.

The landmark years in the political history of Zambia of 1964-72; 1973-90; and 1991- 2017 provide a framework for the discussion, because of the educational reforms and policies that were promulgated during these regimes. Before discussing the development of RE, it is important to describe briefly the Zambian religious context from past to present.

## **Religious Context**

By 1964 many Zambians had converted to Christianity and only a few to Islam. 'Convert', here means change of adherence from traditional religion to either Christianity or Islam. Research suggests that those who converted or continue to convert to Islam and Christianity have remained at the mixing stage – without necessarily breaking with the past of African traditional religion (Carmody, 1982 and Fisher, 1973). It is generally accepted that most, but not all, Christian missionaries rejected much of the African traditional way of life. They regarded Western education as a means of Christianisation. For most missionaries, especially Protestants, conversion required not only the acceptance of Christianity but most importantly the extirpation of existing traditional or

primal religions. Of the two tasks, however, the latter was the more difficult, and the anthropological work of Elizabeth Colson and Brendan Carmody's work on schooling and conversion in Zambia suggest that the elimination of traditional worldview was only partial.

Known in the colonial period as Religious Instruction (RI), RE was part of the Christianisation process through 'faith formation', a process of grounding a convert into a certain mission's doctrine (Masterton, 1987). Consequently, before 1964 a denominational era prevailed. In more recent terminology, exclusivism was the norm because each mission school taught its own doctrine (Carmody, 2011: 136).

Today Zambia is a pluralistic society in terms of religion. Consequently, there is need to provide an historical background to how Christianity, Islam and Hinduism, which are taught in schools, became established in Zambia.

### **Origins of Religious Pluralism in Zambia**

By definition, pluralism is the condition of society in which numerous distinct ethnic, religious, or cultural groups coexist within one nation or civil polity (Skeie, 2002). The Bantu-speaking people who inhabit Zambia today came from the Cameroon-Nigeria area (Vansina, 1990) and for an unknown number of centuries they were sustained in their wanderings by various forms of faith in a powerful but remote spiritual being who was thought to be the creator of all things, and in the spirits of chiefs and ancestors (Hudson, 1999; Flynn, 1989).

The first missionary to attempt to establish a mission station in what is today Zambia was Frederick Stanley Arnot of the Plymouth Brethren who opened the first school in the country at Lealui, the capital of Lewanika's kingdom in Western Province. He arrived in 1882 but left for good in 1884 (Snelson, 1974). Into the north of the country, well documented by Bwalya Chuba (2013a and 2013b), came the Protestant missionaries of the London Missionary Society. They were followed by the Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers, as they are better known) of the Catholic Church (Hinfelaar, 2005). Into the south of the country came the Catholic Society of Jesus (Jesuits) in 1905, and the Seventh Day Adventists. The history of the "Christian Missionary Factor" in the overall development of education in Zambia has been well documented by Snelson (1974); Henkel (1989); Ragsdale, (1986); and Carmody (1999).

The first non-indigenous religion to arrive in Zambia was not Christianity, but Islam. Muslims, Arab traders and their Swahili partners, first came to Zambia from the east coast of Africa in the 1840s (Phiri, 2008). Their concern was trade rather than converting locals to Islam (Haynes, 1996). Conversion of Zambians to Islam started when the Yao of Malawi entered Eastern Province. More conversions resulted from Indian Muslim immigrants coming directly to Zambia from India in 1905, entering from the south through Bulawayo in Zimbabwe to Livingstone and from the east via the ports of Beira and Mombasa

to Fort Jameson or indirectly through Nyasaland (Haig, 2007). In the mid-1940s Northern Rhodesia's mining industry expanded, encouraging economic growth and attracting immigrants from all over the world, including India.

The majority of Indians entering Zambia were initially Hindus from the Gujarat region of northwest India. Once in Zambia, according to Phiri (2008: 72), Muslims and Hindus became polarised between Livingstone and Chipata, with Asian Muslims dominating the whole of the Eastern Province, but being a minority on the Copperbelt and along the railway line down to Mazabuka. Their Hindu counterparts dominated Southern Province and were the majority also in Lusaka, Kabwe, Kapiri Mposhi, and Solwezi, as well as the Copperbelt.

Fifteen years after independence, in 1979 there were over 11 000 Indians in Zambia and close to three quarters of them were Hindu (Phiri, 2000: 1). Today it is not clear how many Indians (Hindu and Muslim) there are in Zambia. From her research, Haig (2012) reckoned that there were fewer than 12 000 Indians permanently resident in the country, including 2 000 Hindus (less than 0.1% of the total population).

According to the *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Religious Practices* (2014), religious affiliation of the population (14,222,000) in Zambia looked as follows as at 2013:

| Years | Christians | Muslims | Unaffiliated | Hindus | Buddhists | Folk Religions | Other | Jews |
|-------|------------|---------|--------------|--------|-----------|----------------|-------|------|
| 2013  | 95.5%      | 0.5%    | 1.9%         | 0.1%   | -         | -              | 2%    | -    |

A religious profile of the world by Pew Research Centre projected the future of world religions in Zambia from 2010 to 2020 as follows:

| Years | Christians | Muslims | Unaffiliated | Hindus | Buddhists | Folk Religions | Other   | Jews    |
|-------|------------|---------|--------------|--------|-----------|----------------|---------|---------|
|       | 12,770,000 | 70,000  | 70,000       | 10,000 | <10,000   | 40,000         | 120,000 | <10,000 |
| 2010  | 97.6%      | 0.5%    | 0.5%         | 0.1%   | <0.1%     | 0.3%           | 0.9%    | <0.1%   |
| 2020  | 97.4%      | 0.6%    | 0.6%         | 0.1%   | <0.1%     | 0.3%           | 0.9%    | <0.1%   |

From the population of approximately 13 090 000 Zambian in 2010, Pew Research Centre reflected the religious distribution in Zambia with Christianity having the largest number of adherents. The projection for 2020 was based on 'the rapid changes driven by differences in fertility rates and the size of youth population... as well as by people switching faiths' ([www.pewforum.org](http://www.pewforum.org)).

Although Judaism is not taught in RE, Zambia is home to a few Jews, who came to Zambia from a wide array of homelands. By the mid-1970s, only around 100 remained in Zambia. The majority had left because they did not wish to live under black majority rule and they had concerns about the education of their children (Macmillan and Shapiro, 1999).

Quite clearly imperialism and economic opportunities were two of the forces behind migrations of different peoples of different faiths into Zambia. In the next

section we show how respect for the religious integrity of different people in the country was supported by an outstanding relationship between church and state. As we shall demonstrate, RE profited from this good relationship in terms of its status in the school curriculum.

### **Christian Church-State relationship**

From independence, the Christian church has collaborated with the state in the provision of education and health care and also in building a cultural identity based on the traditional Zambian way of life. The church-state relationship since 1964 has been an ecumenical one whereby, while there is separation of church and state, there is, nonetheless, cooperation between the two, where the state does not favour either one or another denomination, in contrast to the colonial days when Protestantism was dominant.

Kenneth Kaunda, from a Presbyterian Malawian missionary family and the first president of Zambia, took a liberal view of religion, premised on a philosophical position that while one's beliefs are non-negotiable, these may not have the absolute truth and for this reason there is something to learn from the religious beliefs of others (Hobson and Edwards, 1999). Religious liberalism in RE started as soon as the idea of 'One Zambia, One Nation' was introduced after independence. When Michael Grimmitt and Garth Read introduced the terms *learning from religion* and *learning about religion* in 1975 (Teece, 2010), Kaunda had already seen the value of religious education in the country, and during his presidency a multifaith curriculum flourished in a country that has had no clear-cut and distinct act or piece of legislation on RE.

Every missionary we communicated with acknowledged the role of 'One Zambia, One Nation' in assisting in the development of RE. Fr. Ben Henze, for one, described the motto as follows: "The atmosphere in the country just after independence was positive, encouraging, confident and ecumenical. The national motto – One Zambia, One Nation – really meant something at that time. A number of ecumenical enterprises were taking off during these times" (Henze, 2016: 42).

### **First Republic, 1964 to 1972**

An aspect of the development of RE in Zambia which has not received adequate attention despite its huge importance, is the role of Kaunda's post-colonial agenda of building a unified nation, which included RE as one of its means. This period of 1964-72 is very important in the history of Zambian education for two reasons: the first is that there were fundamental changes in the country and secondly, there were fundamental changes in the global Catholic Missionaries' evangelisation agenda. The fusion of the two is well explained by Carmody (2016: 3) in the following statement:

*After Vatican II, which largely coincided with Zambian Independence in 1964, the Catholic Church adopted a more open approach to cooperation with the state as well as with other Christian and even non-Christian groups. This concurred with the new Zambian state's approach, which emphasised a non-denominational approach to schooling. The newly independent nation was preponderantly concerned to provide skilled labour for the development of its people. By highlighting development through modernisation, the Zambian Ministry of Education never excluded religion. Rather, it called for the kind of religion that would unite its emerging national community.*

The politics of 1964-72 culminated into the declaration of the One Party Participatory Democracy. Upon attainment of political independence from British rule, Kaunda was faced with the task of building a new, unified nation. From 1964 the motto 'One Zambia, One Nation' was propagated. Kaunda was concerned to promote a unified approach to religion and RE. The trauma of the Lumpa church uprising in 1964 confirmed Kaunda's dislike of the way in which the churches had imported their divisions into Zambia (Kaunda, 1973). In 1965, he welcomed the formation of the United Church of Zambia, aided by Rev. Colin Morris, who had for a long time dreamt of a 'National Church' in Northern Rhodesia (Morris, 1964). Kaunda's position to promote a unified approach to RE was shared by the United Church of Zambia which acknowledged that the study of religion was important for the promotion of moral uprightness in the country. The UCZ stance was informed by its philosophy on education anchored on developing the mind, body, and spirit (Simuchimba, 2006).

In an effort to achieve social cohesion in the country, Kaunda blended the ideologies of secular humanism and European Christian humanism into a brand he termed Zambian Humanism (Bwalya, 1987:31). After the 1972 Education Reforms (which we will address later in the article), RE included Zambian Humanism to foster social and community cohesion. Kaunda took a strong interest in RE in schools and advised the curriculum developers in the following words:

*Our educators must address themselves to the larger task of stimulating the individual's emotional, spiritual, and moral growth as well as his intellectual capacity... there should be a strong moral element in education. This is an important principle which should be maintained and where necessary reinforced (Kaunda, 1973: 28).*

Did Kaunda's Humanism contribute to RE being characterised by a variety of religions? Carmody's opinion is that the influence came from both Humanism and from what was happening in the United Kingdom (UK). Kaunda was, of course, head of state and his voice was very powerful in the one party state, but it is worth pointing out that later, when he wanted to introduce Scientific Socialism, the church challenged him because among the concerns of the church was what would become of RE in Scientific Socialism (perceived by the church as atheism).

Kaunda abandoned the project. Developments in RE in Zambia in the early 1970s bore some resemblance to what was happening in the UK (B. Carmody, pers. comm., 15 June 2016). Fr. Henze and Fr. Edwin Flynn, who were involved in developing the Zambian syllabus, had thoroughly familiarised themselves with developments in the UK. Rev. Cecil King, referring to his involvement with the junior secondary school RE syllabus, pointed out that: “The social cohesion model certainly influenced us in our ecumenical feelings and our drawing on a variety of Zambian languages and traditions; ‘One Zambia, One Nation’ was very important to us” (C. King, pers. comm., 1 June 2016). Suffice to note that by the end of the first republic in 1972, three syllabi (Joint, Agreed or Ecumenical primary and junior secondary school RE syllabi) were in place alongside the two University of Cambridge School Certificate secondary school Bible Knowledge syllabi which had been adopted at independence in 1964, while meetings and discussions aimed at introducing an East African life/experience-centred senior secondary school RE syllabus (CLT) were ongoing from 1975.

## **Second Republic, 1973 to 1990**

In 1974, the government initiated a countrywide debate on education reform with the aim of developing an educational system which would contribute to the realisation of the aims of the one party state. The objective was to give more value to equality and Zambianisation (O’Brien, 2006: 466). For Kaunda, One Party Participatory Democracy and equality went beyond politics to include religion. He believed that the religions represented in the country were equal. He wrote:

*Zambia is a country of many religions – Christianity, Judaism, Animism, Hinduism and Islam, and others. I did not feel it was my place as President of the new Republic to adjudicate between them, to declare this religion or that, ‘official’ so far as the State is concerned. Each has the right to exist, and it is my desire that believers of all faiths should live together in harmony. We are, after all, human beings. We certainly cannot afford to add religious divisions to the tribal differences which threaten our national unity. Because I happen to be one of those odd people who feels equally at home in a cathedral, synagogue, temple or mosque, I recognise the power inherent in all the major faiths and urgently desire to see that power is harnessed for the welfare and good of humanity (Kaunda, 1973:28).*

Consequently, the period between 1972 and the 1980s witnessed an adoption of interchurch cooperation in an ecumenical approach, first at the primary level

and later at the secondary and college levels (Carmody, 2004a: 78-80; Carmody, 2011: 136). Interchurch cooperation was indeed well illustrated very early in the 1970s when tutors in religion from six colleges of education (teachers' colleges then), Ms. Olive Wilks from Livingstone, Mr. Alan Freeburn from Charles Lwanga, Rev. Don Nicol from Malcolm Moffat, Mr. Roma Roy from Kitwe, Fr. Louis Somville from Kasama and Fr. Ben Henze met at Charles Lwanga College to exchange ideas. Organised by Fr. Tom O'Brien from Charles Lwanga, the meeting was not called to create a Common RE syllabus, but it quickly became the focus. It was agreed that the team (three Catholics and three Protestants) should work together and do things ecumenically (Henze, 2016: 106). The ecumenical cooperation resulted in the development of the 'Developing in Christ' syllabus for Junior Secondary Schools in the 1970s. This syllabus was a Zambianisation of the Gaba syllabus 'Developing in Christ'.<sup>2</sup> In the mid-seventies, the following three RE syllabi were taught in secondary schools in Zambia: 'Developing in Christ', 'Christian Living Today' and the 'Cambridge Bible Knowledge'. After the Educational Reforms of 1977 the three syllabi were modified and renamed the 204 syllabus for grades 8 and 9, and the 2044 and the 2046 syllabi for grades 10, 11 and 12 respectively.

### **Third Republic, 1991 to 2011**

By the time of the Third Republic the educational value of RE and its legitimacy had been recognised and a 'multifaith' RE had been accepted. This period presented a challenge to RE. Regime change meant that the political ideologies of UNIP had no place in Chiluba's governance, which adopted a capitalist orientation and pro-Christian ideologies which translated into the declaration of the country as a Christian nation.

The new ideological discourse of capitalism and Christian nation threatened the nature of 'multifaith' RE. RE and other subjects were supposed to be informed by *Educating Our Future*, a policy document introduced in 1996 which was underpinned by the values of liberal democracy. It aimed to produce a learner capable of:

*being animated by a personally held set of civic, moral and spiritual values; developing an analytical, innovative, creative and constructive mind; appreciating the relationship between scientific thought, action and technology on the one hand, and sustenance of the quality of life on the other; demonstrating free expression of one's own ideas and exercising tolerance for other people's views; cherishing and safeguarding individual liberties and human rights; appreciating Zambia's ethnic cultures, customs and traditions, and upholding national pride, sovereignty, peace, freedom and independence;*

*participating in the preservation of the ecosystems in one's immediate and distant environments; maintaining and observing discipline and hard work as the cornerstone of personal and national development (Educating Our Future, 1996: 9).*

*Educating Our Future* was acclaimed as a progressive policy document informed by neo-liberal ideas. In particular, the following: being animated by a personally held set of civic, moral and spiritual values; demonstrating free expression of one's own ideas and exercising tolerance for other people's views; cherishing and safeguarding individual liberties and human rights; appreciating Zambia's ethnic cultures, customs and traditions, and upholding national pride, sovereignty, peace, freedom and independence in the document were deemed (for example by Simuchimba, 2012) as vital provisions for RE.

However, RE as a subject was threatened by calls from evangelical circles to revert back to Bible knowledge because they thought the existing RE lacked spiritual and moral values. In addition, there were moves by some teachers to introduce confessional methods of teaching, such as starting RE with sermons. These trends ignited the division of RE stakeholders, which resulted in failure to revise and produce a common syllabus for 2044 and 2046 as envisioned by the Ministry of Education in 1996 (Simuchimba, 2006). The failure to produce a common syllabus at senior secondary school level entailed the continuation of offering the two already existing RE syllabuses (2044 and 2046).

## **2011 to the present**

By 2011 globalisation had moved to a new level. As the country was about to celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> independence anniversary educational reforms that had taken off in 2009 were aligned to the new ruling party's manifesto and ideology as well as the attainment of Vision 2030. The school syllabi, including RE, were modelled on principles of outcomes-based education, which challenges teachers and learners to move beyond instrumental thinking - which prioritises narrow considerations focused on the technicist ends of education - to critical learning principles which seek to link education to real life experiences that give learners skills to access, criticize, analyse and practically apply knowledge that helps them gain life skills (Spady, 1998). In 2014, the following became the aim of Religious Education:

*The aim of Spiritual and Moral Education is to foster development of personally held civic, moral and spiritual values. The learners are expected to attain a suitable level of competence in knowledge and understanding of spiritual, religious and moral values and the traditions within which they have developed (MoE, 1996). The appreciation of other religions should be drawn from the four main religious traditions in Zambia, (namely: Christianity, Hinduism, indigenous Zambian beliefs and Islam) (CDC, 2012: ii).*

This aim totally ignores the dysfunctional and ambiguous aspects of religion. Michael Grimmitt questioned a purely descriptive phenomenological approach to the study of religion and argued for an approach that inspires critical and constructive engagement of religious faiths that prove to be stumbling blocks to societal and community integration and cooperation. The aforementioned should be preceded by religious engagement in ideological self criticism so as to foster trust, mutual respect and cooperation. Thus for Grimmitt:

*A fundamental task which all societies face and which Religious Education can contribute to is to improve inter-religious communication and inter-cultural understanding so that better social and community cohesion is achieved. But this is not the same as promoting appreciation of diversity and respect for differences (Grimmitt, 2010: 18).*

We have mentioned above that in 2011 new educational reforms were aligned to the new ruling party's manifesto and ideology as well as Vision 2030. [There were some revisions made to the existing syllabi and to their objectives which had to reflect the new outcome-based syllabi]. In the same year, Zambia had a new president, Michael Chilufya Sata, a staunch Catholic. Two days after his inauguration as fifth president of Zambia, on 25 September 2011, he attended midmorning mass at St. Ignatius Church in Rhodes Park, Lusaka, following his usual routine. During mass he made the promise that his government would abide by the biblical Ten Commandments, saying "It is very easy to learn from the commandments how we must behave and conduct ourselves in this society" (Cheyeka *et al*, 2014). At CDC, RE curriculum specialists took serious note of the "Rule by Biblical Principles" pronouncement and included it in the preface of the RE syllabi:

*It is hoped that teachers will use this syllabus to inculcate in learners a deeper appreciation of other religions, deeper understanding of Christian values, and application of Biblical principles to everyday living. The moral aspect has to do with values and morals while the spiritual is provided for in living in harmony with self, with others, and with the supernatural (CDC, 2012: 1).*

The introduction to the syllabi was an elaborate warning to teachers that the teaching of RE in schools is different from faith development or evangelism in churches. RE had a special role to play in nation building because it enables people to overcome the barriers of religious prejudice and to avoid bigotry and fanaticism (CDC, 2012). Carmody had perceptively suggested earlier that the Ministry of Education in Zambia needed to make it clear that from the Ministry's perspective, RE in the public school should not be partisan, nationalistic or an agent of Christian nurture or conversion (Carmody, 2011: 141).

It is hard to determine how much of the discourse on the imperative of RE truly becoming educational has influenced the CDC. The question is, has RE in

Zambia lived up to the tenets of being non-confessional, multifaith and respectful of non-religious ways of life? At the moment, the major problem is that the CDC is not moving any further towards more inclusive and more educational RE. We agree with Bro. George Poirier, that we need to review the goals, objectives, and the vision of RE (pers. comm., 7 June 2014) and with Fr. John Mudalitsa that there is a need for a new rationale for RE (Mudalitsa, 2016: 78).

In the remaining part of the article we will focus on the work of some Christian missionaries in developing multifaith RE in Zambia from the 1970s to the present. We have cited them above, but we dedicate a section to highlighting their profound influence on the development of RE in Zambia to illuminate how missionaries responded to the Ministry of Education's order that they come up with local RE syllabi in a context that favoured multifaith RE.

### **Individual missionaries' contributions towards a 'multifaith' RE <sup>1</sup>**

We argue that a history of RE in Zambia has to show human beings, in that history, for RE in Zambia did not evolve without human actions. But a short article such as ours does not do justice to every missionary who took part in developing RE. We are content nonetheless with the data we gathered on leading events in the history of RE, of tendencies, and of the people that shaped them, and were probably shaped by them. We should also make a disclaimer from the outset that our focus in the current article is largely on the Catholic missionaries. Catholic missionaries went beyond the Catholic school in spiritual, moral and social formation of young people; something Fr. Joe Hayes described as part of missionary enthusiasm coming, not exactly from the love for religious education, but from commitment to evangelisation because missionaries' relationship with God was good news for them and they wanted to share that, and teaching in the classroom was one way (J. Hayes, pers. comm., 12 September 2016).

Beyond working in schools, a few missionaries served as RE Inspectors and curriculum specialists. Additionally, others played an important role in teacher education in colleges of education and the national University of Zambia, and more recently at the Catholic University from which Fr. Mujdrica and Fr. Henze retired.

So, how did the missionaries we are citing, individually and collectively, become pivotal in the development of RE in Zambia? Rev. King provided us with three dynamics or contributory factors which we use in our discussion of

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missionary contribution to the development of inter-religious RE in Zambia, namely (1) consensus about RE among the teachers and lecturers expressed by the Zambia Association of Religious Education Teachers (ZARET), (2) resources for RE, and (3) dedicated, skilled people (C. King, pers. comm., 1 June 2016). We deal with each below:

### **Consensus about RE among the teachers and lecturers**

Our starting point, before we come to deal with consensus, is the historical fact that the RE syllabi being used in Zambian schools and colleges today are products of the Educational Reforms of 1977, when Zambia saw a fundamental reform of the education system in conformity with *Zambian Humanism* (Mudalitsa, 2002: 24). The nomenclature 'RE' was replaced by 'Spiritual and Moral Education' to link well with *Zambian Humanism*. But what drew Christian missionaries to join the reform movement was the challenge from the Ministry of Education (MoE) that Zambian educators were to take the initiative and "produce new educational materials locally" (MoE, 1977: 35). Prior to the reforms, Catholic missionaries in the education sector had taken the initiative to use the Gaba RE syllabi of 'Developing in Christ' and 'Christian Living Today' – the former for primary education and the latter for secondary education. The syllabi followed the *Personal Development model*.

Contrary to the assertion of Simuchimba (cited by Mudalitsa, 2016: 67), that Zambian RE teachers, officials and scholars were, as they are today, divided over what RE ought to be, the developers of RE in the 1970s were mostly in agreement on the kind of RE they wanted in Zambia. Rev. King informed us that there was consensus about RE among teachers and lecturers in the 1970s; the aim of Spiritual and Moral Education was accepted, except by the evangelical teachers. The Evangelicals were not too much involved in primary and junior secondary RE, but became involved in work on RE curriculum after 1977, when Bible Knowledge was to be replaced by "Christian Living Today" at the senior level. Their involvement led to the development of the 2046 syllabus which was basically a Zambianisation of the old Cambridge Bible Knowledge (C. King, pers. comm., 1 June 2016). But creating a common syllabus for primary and junior secondary schools was a major achievement because there were different christian groups in the country, some of whom were long-term enemies.

The consensus about RE was expressed through ZARET, which was founded in 1974, in Southern Province, on the initiative of the Jesuit missionaries, and launched at national level in the same year. In 1976, Fr. Edwin Flynn, a Capuchin Franciscan who had come to Zambia in 1953, was elected secretary of the association. ZARET was the *rendezvous* for RE teachers, inspectors, curriculum specialists, lecturers, and those who cared about the spiritual and moral

development of the youth in the country. Fr. Hayes, a Jesuit from Ireland, during his 15 years at Canisius Secondary School worked through ZARET in giving workshops to teachers in Southern Province on the 2044 syllabus (J. Hayes, pers. comm., 12 September 2016).

What did ZARET achieve before it collapsed after the departure of the missionaries? A major achievement was the development of syllabi. Another achievement was the preparation of teachers' and pupils' books for Grades 8 and 9. These were the result of two previous ZARET publications – notes for people teaching 'Developing in Christ' which had been produced by teachers' workshops. These were developed because the teachers handbooks from Gaba were difficult for the teachers to understand, and thus to turn into lesson plans (C. King, pers. comm., 1 June 2016).

### **Syllabi and reading materials development**

In 1969 the Chief Inspector for Religious Education wrote to the Catholic Bishops and the Christian Council asking them to cooperate in producing an ecumenical syllabus for RE. He offered a syllabus for Grade One, produced by Olive Wilks, as a suitable sample to begin with. The Christian Council and the Catholic Bishops accepted the commission. The ecumenical syllabus for RE came into existence as a result of cooperation between the Christian Council of Zambia, the country's Catholic bishops, the Teacher Training Colleges and the Ministry of Education (E. Flynn, pers. comm., 23 September 2016). Worth pointing out is that to church leaders, RE was meant to nurture the Christian faith among learners, but RE educationists had a different idea which prevailed (Henze, n.d.). Catholic missionaries sourced money to produce books for RE in the 1970s when other subjects were short of text books. The books were published by the Catholic-owned Mission Press and Teresianum Press in Lusaka and distributed by ZARET (C. King, pers. comm., 1 June 2016).

*Fr. Mujdrica, a Jesuit priest, made a valuable contribution to RE curriculum development. He came to Zambia as an untrained teacher in 1975 and taught RE in a number of schools for almost 15 years. As a Jesuit scholastic he taught 'Developing in Christ' at Mukasa Minor Seminary for two years. After his ordination he taught RE in Grades 6 and 7 at Katondwe Primary School from 1982 and 1983. He then went to teach the subject at Mumbwa Secondary School from 1984 to 1994. After his RE studies at the University of Birmingham in 1995, he taught RE at Nkrumah Teacher Training College and later at the Zambia Catholic University up to 2016. While he was at Mumbwa Secondary School, Fr Mujdrica prepared handouts for Grade 10 and*

*11 classes which he showed to Fr. Tom McGivern, who was the RE Inspector at that time: McGivern edited these notes, wrote his own notes for Grade 12 and published the first 2046 pupils' book called Brief Outline of Syllabus 2046 (ZARET: 1988). The booklet inspired the people who wrote the current 2046 pupils' books. (J. Mujdrica, pers. comm., 6 January 2016).*

Another contribution towards materials' development came from an American, Bro. Robert Martineaul of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, who taught RE and English Language at St. Francis Secondary School in Malole, Northern Province, and Matero Boys Secondary School in Lusaka. He was coopted by the RE inspectorate in Lusaka into the task force to formulate a simplified Gaba syllabus of Christian Living Today that would include more materials for other religious traditions in the country. He produced two pupils' text books for Grades 11 and 12 for syllabus 2044 that are still used today (G. Poirier, pers. comm., 7 June 2014).

Missionaries were at the centre of the development process of RE – fully represented on the committees responsible for curriculum development and reviews. Above all, they found time to write and publish RE materials. Pamphlets and booklets<sup>2</sup> written by Fr. Henze and RE pamphlets and booklets<sup>3</sup> written by Fr. Mujdrica have proven useful to students studying RE due to a dearth of literature on the subject in the country. Fr. Carmody's books<sup>4</sup> on religion and education meant for colleges and universities have constituted required reading for students.

Between 1980 and 1990 some Evangelical teachers, unhappy with the less biblical syllabus, and guided by Ms. Masterton, came up with syllabus 2046 which essentially reasserted Bible Knowledge. Fr. McGivern made a contribution to this by providing teachers' notes that he had obtained from Fr. Mujdrica and edited in a bid to develop reading materials for the syllabus. So, Zambia has remained with two syllabi at secondary school level; 2044 and 2046. Both have Christian religious focus. RE is 'multifaith' in as far as it attempts to offer basic facts about the four major religious faiths represented in Zambia. Beyond that it is yet to become 'multifaith' through the aim, content, and approaches that reflect Zambia's pluralistic society.

## **Teacher Education**

Teachers were needed to teach RE in schools and colleges. Here we give examples of some missionaries who were involved in teacher education. Kwame Nkrumah

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Teachers College played a pivotal role in graduating RE teachers to teach RE in secondary schools. Bro. George Poirier of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart opened the department of RE at the college. Arriving in Zambia in 1961 to teach at Charles Lwanga College of Education for primary school teachers, he moved to St. Francis Secondary School in Northern Province in 1967. In 1975 he moved to Kabwe and opened the RE department at Kwame Nkrumah Teachers College (later to be called Kwame Nkrumah College of Education and now Kwame Nkrumah University). Asked to tell us how he found himself at Kwame Nkrumah Teachers College, Bro. Poirier explained:

*I went to Nkrumah at the invitation of the Senior Inspector of Religious Education in Lusaka who was a White Father (Missionary of Africa). He asked me to begin an RE department to facilitate the teaching of the RE syllabus which was a Kenyan adaptation. I taught at Nkrumah from 1975 to 1978 (G. Poirier, pers. comm., 7 June 2014)*

Bro. Poirier advocated for Christian religious education which, according to Thomas Groome, aims to indicate fundamental differences in how people realize their “being” in relation to God, self, others, and the world (Groome, 1998: 11). In the RE syllabus of Nkrumah Teachers College, Bro. Poirier also taught values and values clarifications.

Bro. Jack Gonzales, a Marist Brother from Spain took over from Bro. Poirier. He made a huge contribution to the vitality of ZARET in Kabwe, organising workshops and ensuring that schools were well resourced with RE books. Since Bro. Poirier’s tenure, Kwame Nkrumah Teachers College employed the following missionaries to teach RE: Fr. John MacCauley (Jesuit), Rev. Cecil King (Anglican) and Fr. John Mujdrica (Jesuit). A local Marist Brother, Bro. Abdon Nkuwa also taught at the college (from 1982 to 1990) when Bro. Gonzales left the college. The point has been made that Catholic priests of Irish and British origins were abreast with what was happening in Great Britain in terms of trends and developments. Consequently, when Fr. Edwin Flynn O.F.M.Cap. opened what is now a department of Religious Studies at the University of Zambia (UNZA), to prepare teachers of RE at senior secondary school level, he began to teach religions using the World Religions paradigm (Carmody, 2008: 28) because, as Rev. King told us: “Edwin Flynn was influenced by Ninian Smart” (C. King pers. comm., 1 June 2016). Fr. Flynn’s involvement at the University of Zambia goes back in history to the 1970s when the University of Zambia was given the task of selecting teachers to be trained as lecturers in teacher training colleges. Professor Shanks, who was in charge of in-service teacher training for the teacher training colleges, asked Fr. Frank Carey, the national Inspector for RE, to identify someone who would be qualified for the post of lecturer in Religious

Studies. In 1976, Fr. Carey recommended Fr. Flynn to Prof. Shanks and he was subsequently appointed as a lecturer in the Department of In-Service Training at the University (E. Flynn, pers. comm., 23 September 2016).

At this time, the need for Religious Education teachers at the senior secondary level also emerged. As a response to this situation, the University Board of Studies set up a committee, in 1978, to make proposals about the provision of senior secondary level Religious Education teachers for the country. In 1980, this committee recommended the setting up of a Religious Studies department whose role would be primarily to educate senior level teachers of Religious Education and to generate research in religion, thereby contributing a distinctively religious dimension to university education. In 1985, Fr. Flynn was appointed to offer Religious Studies combined with Religious Education as a minor in the B.Ed. degree programme in the department of Language and Social Sciences Education (LSSE). Mindful of the directives that the University's advisory committee presented, Fr. Flynn designed a course of studies that was primarily academic (Carmody, 2008).

On 1 December 1989, Fr. Brendan Carmody, a Jesuit priest of Irish background, joined Fr. Flynn and forthwith set to deepen the scope of the Religious Studies degree programme. The framework set up by Fr. Carmody included purchase of books for a resource room, and establishing a fund for Zambians to study in the UK so as for them to come back to UNZA and sustain the Religious Studies programme. Fr. Carmody and Fr. Flynn extended and developed a comprehensive curriculum whereby Religious Studies and Religious Education could be offered at a minor and major level of the Bachelor of Arts with Education. In 2003, Fr. Carmody designed a Master's programme in Religious Studies (B. Carmody, pers. comm., 135 June 2016). He left Zambia thereafter.

### **Inspectorate and Curriculum Development Centre(CDC)**

Some missionaries served as inspectors of schools, curriculum and resources developers at CDC. In the mid-1970s, Fr. Carey of the Missionaries of Africa, who had been Deputy Head teacher of Lwitikila Girls Secondary School, was appointed the first National Inspector for Religious Education at the Ministry of Education headquarters in Lusaka. When he stepped down after three years, Fr. Thomas McGivern, a Jesuit who had come to Zambia in 1953, took over and remained in the post until 1997, when Mr. Selisho Chanda replaced him. Mwale and Chita (2016) in a profile of Fr. McGivern referred to him as the "father of RE in Zambia" and as its "hero" (Kelly, 2017: 22).

*Although Fr. McGivern had contact with RE in the classroom, he had never done any formal studies or refresher courses in the subject. But Tom was a good Jesuit who responded where there was need and so he worked hard to establish RE on a sound footing within the Ministry*

*of Education and raise it to a status comparable with that of other school subjects (Kelly, 2017: 22).*

Mr. Austen Chibesakunda, a Science Inspector who worked with Fr. McGivern at the Inspectorate had the following to say about Fr. McGivern.

*I joined the Inspectorate in 1984, and Fr. McGivern was already there. He had a fantastic way of developing RE in terms of curriculum content and readers for teachers and pupils. He worked with teachers in his office, at the Curriculum Development Centre, Examinations Council of Zambia, and at Kalemba hall at St. Ignatius parish. He visited schools and listened to the challenges teachers and pupils were facing. He also participated in the marking of RE examination scripts and took notes of the challenges of learners and teachers. He produced reading materials. He loved to write. I think he did not want RE to suffer the fate of Zambian Languages in this country. He inspired me to write a book on inspection which he reviewed and I am convinced that Vincent Marko Tembo, who was History Inspector, was inspired to write all those History books that he wrote by Fr. McGivern (A. Chibesakunda, pers. comm., 3 October 2016).*

Arriving in Zambia in 1969, Rev. King of the Anglican Church taught RE at two secondary schools of the United Church of Zambia, Sefula and Njase. Then he worked as a Curriculum Development Officer for RE at CDC before moving to Nkrumah Teachers College as a lecturer (pers. comm., 1 June 2016). Rev. King was heavily involved with Grades 7, 8 and 9 to Zambianise the syllabus. When he left in the 1980s, Sr. Josie Clark moved in to help produce the revised primary course when it changed from Christian Religious Education to Religious Education (Henze, 2016). King was appointed to CDC as a specialist in RE and one of his tasks was to cooperate with Junior Secondary teachers in adapting the Catholic University of East Africa's Gaba courses, entitled "Developing in Christ", to the Zambian situation. He had a particular genius for producing texts that were clear, simple and unambiguous. He also helped in the production of University level course outlines (E. Flynn, pers. comm., 23 September 2016). Fr. Ben Henze was appointed RE adviser at Mukuyu House, the Ministry of Education Headquarters in Ndola, where he remained for twenty years when the posts of Inspector of RE, and RE adviser were abolished.

## **Dedication and hard work**

Before the introduction of the degree programme at the University of Zambia, there were no Zambian teachers in the schools with a degree in Religious Studies,

or Religious Education. Fr. Henze and Fr. Flynn strove hard to find resources to have Mr. Joseph Ngangula and Mr. Clement Mweemba obtain Bachelor of Arts with Honors in Religious Studies at the University of Zimbabwe. Mr. Clement Mweemba later went on to read for his Masters in Theology and Religious Studies at Leeds University with finances sourced by Fr. McGivern and Fr. Flynn. Mr. Ngangula spent the last years of his teaching career at Nkrumah College of Education. Mr. Mweemba became Headmaster of Chipembi Girls Secondary School when he returned from Leeds. Fr. Carmody strove hard to find a donor to send other Zambians overseas, to Birmingham and Leeds universities in the UK, so that there could be appropriately qualified staff for the new Religious Studies programme at the University of Zambia. Also, Fr. Henze had been encouraging teachers to further their studies, especially by correspondence, and had secured scholarships for some to study with West Hill College which was accredited to Birmingham University. Some teachers upgraded from certificate to diploma in RE and were promoted to be lecturers in colleges of education.

### **A Disappointing End to the Missionary Era**

Since the 1990s, RE has been researched by undergraduates, post-graduates and established researchers, mostly only as far as historicising the subject is concerned, and within that, reviewing syllabi, analysing challenges and contentious issues and its status as part of the integrated subjects. Overall, students of RE have tended to be chroniclers of the subject, not venturing into researching how the subject is taught so as to generate new teaching techniques.

Currently, the nature and scope of RE has been determined by the established CDC. Some RE experts in institutions of higher learning have defended CDC even when it has failed dismally to respect the integrity of the subject, and even when it was presided over by a Home Economics teacher. Worse still, they have discounted the earlier partnership between the church and the state in developing RE, arguing that only CDC is mandated by law to draw up the RE curriculum.

Ultimately, RE had to fall in line with the general direction and challenges of education in the country as outlined and developed in statements and critiques of *Educating Our Future* (1996) and *Focus on Learning* (1992). Noteworthy is the 1996 policy document, *Educating Our Future*, which had begun to be implemented upon its approval by parliament. Thus, *Educating Our Future* and Fr. Mujdrica's review of the syllabi provided a golden opportunity for CDC to come up with a new Senior RE syllabus – a fusion of 2044 and 2046. In this regard, Mr. Chanda, Senior Inspector for RE, appointed a team of RE teachers from all provinces with the objective of merging the two syllabi to bring about

one Religious Education course for senior secondary. Fr. Henze, who had been appointed RE advisor to the inspectorate in 1983, was asked to be the facilitator for the exercise, not only because of his experience, we suspect, but also because he could mobilise funding for the exercise, which he did from an organisation in the Netherlands. Unfortunately, even after printing a number of 'Realisation' copies, the merger did not happen. According to Mudalitsa (2016: 67), the main reason was that lecturers in tertiary institutions, including those who were part of Ben Henze's team did not endorse 'Realisations'.

### **Lessons for Zambian RE Scholars**

Overall, the driving force behind missionary work in relation to RE development was dedication and hard work by all the missionaries we have cited in this article. It is something local Zambians, lay and priests, can emulate and the point is driven home by Fr. Hayes in the following statement: "Local Zambians are no different from anybody else. They will be as alive and as enthusiastic as that which they invest their energies in ... If all their energies are invested in material living, just working for a salary, job satisfaction, marriage and parenting, then religion will merely be that which gets the left over energies..." (J. Hayes, pers. comm., 12 September 2016).

What can local RE scholars in Zambia learn from the missionaries and the missionary era? As Mujdrlica summarised it:

*Missionaries had a great influence on RE in Zambia because they love RE and saw its great potential to enrich young Zambians. They worked together as friends. They had access to finances to make RE books available. But, above all, they had a very good rapport with the Ministry of Education. Some of them were even part of the Ministry itself* (Mujdrlica, pers. comm., 11 January 2017).

Zambian scholars of RE have no finances and the missionary era is different from the current times. However, Zambian RE scholars can begin to engage CDC so as to provide direction for RE and to work together to enrich the subject. Above all, Zambian RE scholars should start researching and publishing on the subject (pedagogy, teaching and other areas). Associations of RE must be encouraged so that they can serve as avenues of research, dissemination and continuous professional development for teachers and lecturers alike.

### **Conclusion**

Although the missionary era may have ended, one of its notable achievements in RE was the pioneering move towards establishing a 'multifaith' RE in the country in response to the political ideologies influencing the school curriculum. Hence,

in this article we have made an attempt to describe in detail the missionaries' role in the move towards a 'multifaith' RE in Zambia, influenced by the immigrants' presence, and most importantly the local political ideologies. We have demonstrated that today's Zambia has evolved from a conglomeration of a multitude of localised traditional societies to complex multicultural societies, which also include non-African civilisations. Zambia succeeded in creating RE syllabi that include the major faiths represented in the country, thanks to those Christian missionaries who, after being challenged by the Ministry of Education through the Inspector of Schools to come up with RE syllabi suitable for Zambia, selflessly worked towards establishing RE as a curriculum subject; writing books for teachers and pupils, and developing personnel to teach the subject. The RE syllabi developed in the 1970s mirrored the pluralistic nature of Zambian society through the incorporation of religious traditions and political ideologies. However, the achievements attained in the 1970s were not capitalised upon in subsequent endeavours to revise and improve on the subject because of political ideological shifts and lack of resources (committed personnel, money, and lack of influence from religious advocates at CDC). Faced with these challenges, scholars of RE can learn from the missionaries' hard work and passion to ensure that RE repositions its rationale and educational basis in an ever transforming pluralistic Zambian context.

In addition to the lack of missionary drive and investment in RE today, there is no ZARET and there are only recycled, 'copy and paste' RE syllabi and text books that do not make a religious experience central to the learners. Consequently, as Bro. Poirier lamented,

*The RE of today has watered down the moral and spiritual components to please everybody ... I am not sure it has a holistic integral approach to the formation of personality for students. It seems very watered down and therefore may give information and nothing else (G. Poirier, pers. comm., 7 June 2014).*

The initiatives from the 1970s by the missionaries we have cited were good and could have been used as a benchmark for further RE innovations as far as content and teaching strategies are concerned. We regret that the senior secondary school syllabus of 'Realisations' produced in the wake of the 1996 *Educating Our Future*, could not be adopted as the new RE syllabus to replace the 2046 and 2044 syllabi of the 1970s. In our view 'Realisations' had more interactive methodology and had material that promoted religious experience of the learners. As we have already pointed out many teachers and lecturers, including those who were members of the team that worked on the 'Realisations' syllabus were afraid of change.

## End notes

<sup>1</sup> We could not track every missionary who took part in the development of RE in Zambia and some, such as Fr. Frank Carey, had passed away and his successor, Fr. Tom McGivern had returned home to Ireland after suffering a most senseless and horrendous assault by criminals in Lusaka. His memory had been adversely affected by injuries to the head. He later died on 14 January 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Gaba or Ggaba is a Catholic Institute which is now a university campus of the Catholic University of East Africa. It was established in 1967, in Uganda, after turning Gaba Seminary building into an Institute. The institute was moved to its current premises in Eldoret, Kenya, in 1976 due to instability in Uganda during Idi Amin's period of rule. From its creation, the institute created the following departments: Social Communications, Religious Education, and Publications. It is the department of Religious Education that developed the RE syllabuses that Zambia was using including the text books. Retrieved: [amecea.org/development-of-amecea/](http://amecea.org/development-of-amecea/)

<sup>3</sup> Readings for Religious Education Teachers (2000). Ndola: Mission Press; Creative Tension: Essays in Religious Education for the Twentieth Anniversary of Zambia Association of RE Teachers (1994). Ndola: Copperbelt RE Development Unit; Some Basics of Religious Education in Zambia (2007). Ndola: Mission Press; Education (2008). Ndola: Mission Press; Some Simple Teaching Techniques: Ndola: Mission Press.

<sup>4</sup> Growing in Wisdom: a Basis for Education (2013). Ndola: John Yanko Mudalitsa; *Religious Education with a Difference*. Kabwe: Pastoral Care Department; *RE is Great!*. Ndola: John Yanko Mudalitsa; *Religious Education for Excellence*. Ndola: Mission Press; *Towards a Philosophy of Religious Education*. Kabwe: Nkrumah Teachers College;

<sup>5</sup> Carmody, B. (1999). *Education in Zambia: Catholic Perspective*. Lusaka: Bookworld.

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