

Religious Pluralism and Conflict as Issues in Religious Education in Uganda

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Dedication

To

my beloved wife Alice

and children, Sheba, Shevaun and Shaun

for their love and sacrifice throughout my course.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the complications raised in teaching a confessional Religious Education in a multi-religious context pertaining in Ugandan religiously founded public schools, government and private founded schools.

The thesis contends that the introduction of Islam, Anglican and Roman Catholic Christian religious traditions in Uganda not only presented alternative religious systems to the existing African traditional religion but ushered in an era of competition for converts that subsequently led to religious conflict.

The thesis also submits the view that the missionary aim of formal education in Uganda led to the creation, not only of a denominational, but a divisive educational system. While the study commends the colonial government and the first independent government's efforts towards establishing a non-denominational educational system, it suggests that their failure to address the controversial questions raised by the nature of RE at the time was a missed opportunity.

The study probes the current syllabuses, aims and content of CRE and IRE for secondary and primary schools and suggests that their main intention of promoting spiritual growth of students is inappropriate for implementation in the multi-religious schools.

The thesis questions the government's proposed exclusion of RE from the education curriculum and its replacement with Moral Education. It suggests that while Moral Education could be a subject on its own, Religious Education needs to be maintained but re-designed to address the multi-religious context. It presents a multi-faith RE as the ideal format of teaching about religion.

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Abbreviations

ADF	Allied Democratic Forces
ATR	African Tradition Religion
BTTC	Bishop Tucker Theological College
CLT	Christian Living Today
COU	Church Of Uganda
CRE	Christian Religious Education
DP	Democratic Party
EACE	East African Examination Certificate
EPRC	Education Policy Review Commission
IRE	Islamic Religious Education
MIUIU	Mbale Islamic University In Uganda
NRM	National Resistance Movement
NTC	National Teachers College
PIEA	Pastoral Institute of East Africa
PTC's	Primary Teachers' Colleges
RCC	Roman Catholic Church
RE	Religious Education
SCAA	Schools Council Assessment Authority
SCWP	Schools Council Working Party
SSS	Senior Secondary School
UACE	Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education
UCE	Uganda Certificate of Education
UJCC	Uganda Joint Christian Council
UMEA	Uganda Muslim Education Association
UMSC	Uganda Muslim Supreme Council
UNCDC	Uganda National Curriculum Development Centre
UPC	Uganda People's Congress

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: RELIGIOUS PLURALISM AND CONFLICT AS ISSUES IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN UGANDA

1. Explanation of the Thesis

1. Purpose of investigation

The thesis explores the current provision for Religious Education in Ugandan secondary and primary schools. The standpoint of the exploration is the multi-religious context of the schools *vis-à-vis* the absence of a satisfactory RE curriculum that can address it. The thesis therefore focuses on the current RE curriculum's promotion of a confessional RE and its implications for students' appreciation of religion. The thesis also concerns itself with RE curriculum's implications for students' interpersonal relationships and the promotion of national unity and harmony, Uganda's first national goal of education.

1.1. Religious Education

Teaching about religion in Uganda's government, private and religiously founded schools follows either a Christian or an Islamic Religious Education syllabus. CRE and IRE syllabuses derive their identity from the Christian and Islamic religious traditions and the purpose of teaching about religion has been the promotion of the two major religious traditions. This in turn has meant that Christian and Islamic religious leaders are responsible for designing the CRE and IRE syllabuses and that these are adopted by the Uganda National Curriculum Development Centre (the body that is responsible for designing and approving of curriculum in Uganda) for use in schools.

Map 1: Political Map of Uganda Showing Key Populated Areas and Natural Features



Source: www.infoplease.com/atlas/country/uganda.html

Religious Education (RE) is the umbrella term for the two syllabuses for use in teaching about religion in Ugandan primary and secondary schools. It comprises Christian Religious Education and Islamic Religious Education. Religious Education as a subject on the Ugandan primary and secondary school curricula is the primary concern of this thesis and can be described as the most contentious. It is the only subject that attracted public attention and debate during the most recent primary school curriculum review process (see chapter five).

1.1.2. Religious Pluralism

This refers to the multiplicity of religious traditions in Uganda. Although Christianity and Islam are the 'recognised' religious traditions in terms of RE curriculum arrangements, there are other religious traditions in Uganda. Whilst the current population statistics census results are inadequate in pointing out the religious composition of the country (since they do not point out the adherents of the African traditional religion and the different Christian religious denominations) there is evidence to indicate that the major religious traditions are the African traditional, Islamic and Christian religious traditions.¹

Table 1: Population by Religion in Uganda in 1991.

Religion	Female	Male	%
Roman Catholic	44.4	44.5	44.5
Church of Uganda	39.1	39.5	39.3
Islam	10.5	10.6	10.5
Others (not specified)			5.7
Total			100

Source: Statistics Department, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Entebbe, Uganda (1994), of the *1991 Uganda Population and Housing Census National Summary Results*.

African traditional religion can be referred to as an ever present religious tradition. Mpagi (2001: 4) defines it thus:

This is the indigenous religion of the peoples of Uganda whose main teaching is belief in one God and creator, a firm belief in the immortality of the soul, and veneration of ancestors.

¹ The most recent population census results of 1991 indicate the Church of Uganda, Roman Catholic Church and Islam as the only religious expressions of the population of Uganda (see table 1 a) and yet there are many other religious traditions as indicated in the subsequent discussion. In addition, the 1959 census results give us a glimpse of the dominant position of Africa traditional religion. Although it is true that evangelism has reduced the numbers of African traditional religions' adherents since 1959, the ATR remains a dominant religious tradition as referred to in the subsequent discussion.

Mpagi stresses the binding note of the African traditional religion as belief in a supreme being, the creator and the concept of the living dead.² Nonetheless, while Mpagi's definition may seem to suggest that the African traditional religion is a uniform religious tradition, this is not necessarily true.³

Table 2: Population by Religion in 1959

Adherents	%
Tribal Religionists	36.9
Roman Catholics	32.2
Anglicans (now Church of Uganda)	24.6
Muslims	5.4
Hindus	0.7
Sikhs	0.1

Source: David Barrett in *World Christian Encyclopedia* (1982: 686)

The different tribes in Uganda have variations in their articulation of the concept of the Supreme Being and the place of the living dead (Byaruhanga, n.d.: 10). Notwithstanding, the term African traditional religion is used in Uganda to refer to the ever present religious tradition whose influence is expressed differently. Mpagi (2001:4) argues that 'although ATR only remains with a small number of followers, its influence remains deeply rooted in people's hearts.'⁴ Similarly Waliggo (2001:3); while arguing for the inclusion of ATR on the curriculum for CRE in African schools, he refers to African traditional religion's 'ubiquitous presence in the world view of parents and children'. The continued influence of this religious tradition on the lives of many Christian and Muslim followers as attested to by Mpagi and Waliggo, alongside its being subscribed to by some Ugandans makes it one of the major religious traditions.

² The traditional belief is that the dead continue to be involved with the living through blessings or curses (Ray: 2000: 102)

³ Ray (2000:ix-xiv) traces the evolution of the study of African religions including the use of the term African traditional religion and prefers to use the term religions to denote the different expressions of the religious beliefs of Africans.

⁴ Magumba (2002: 28) in an unpublished Ph D thesis, University of Leeds, argues that there is a large number of Christians in Uganda who subscribe to key aspects of the African traditional religion and he describes them as schizophrenic Christians.

1.1.2.1. *Islam*

In 1844 the Islamic religion was introduced by Arab traders in Buganda, the central kingdom from which it was to spread to the rest of Uganda and it was therefore the first religion to be introduced from outside Uganda.⁵ According to the 1991 population and Housing Census results, 10.5% of Uganda's population is Muslim and this makes the Islamic religion the second biggest religious tradition in Uganda. While 10.5% might seem to be a low statistical figure, in comparison to Christianity's 83.8%, Islam continues to be a major religious tradition of historical and current importance in the life of the Ugandan nation (see 1959 statistics and chapter 2 discussion).

1.1.2.2. *Christianity*

This is the religious tradition of the majority in Uganda as per the 1991 population and housing census results since it comprises 83.8% of Uganda's population. The census results indicate that the Roman Catholic Church membership comprised 44.5% of Uganda's population and the Church of Uganda 39.3% of the population.⁶ The statistics for the Church of Uganda are deceptive since they subsume the Protestant Christian religious denominations in Uganda and are therefore not only likely to be offensive to other religious groups but likely to mislead for government planning purposes. The Uganda government's failure to address squarely the question of religion is one of the major concerns of this thesis. Waliggo (2000: 2-3) enumerates the different types of Christian churches, communities and movements in Uganda today that include the Orthodox churches, main-line Protestant Churches which are Episcopal in organisation, Protestant Congregational Churches, non-Episcopal, The African founded churches, the newly born Pentecostal Churches and recent Christian movements. In short, the Christian religious tradition is not only a major religious tradition but a diverse religious tradition.

⁵ Buganda is in the central region of Uganda and was the focal point from which Arabs and Europeans were to center their business, evangelical, political activities to the rest of Uganda.

⁶ Church of Uganda is the name of the Church that belongs to the Anglican communion, formerly called the Native Anglican Church.

1.1.2.3. Other Religions

The question regarding other religions which have adherents in Uganda is not clear enough due to the unavailability of official government statistics. However, Mpagi (2001) provides us with a rather current and seemingly fair account of the question of other religions in Uganda.⁷ According to Mpagi (2001:4) 'the Bahai came to Uganda in 1948 and comprise 140, 000 followers of Ugandan nationality'. In addition he observes that the Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs and Jainists are mainly people of Asian origin and are few in number. He mentions that the Hare Krishna religious movement comprises 40 Ugandan nationals. It is important therefore to note that although the majority of these other religions have adherents from people of Asian origin, they are of importance in view of the historical and present links between people of Asian origin and Ugandans.⁸

1.2. Religious Conflict

Conflict expresses the 'clash' that is taking place between the promotion of a confessional CRE and IRE in secondary and primary schools and the multi-religious context of the schools. A question to be asked is, 'can a confessional RE address itself to a religiously founded public education institution?' If it cannot, how best can this conflict be resolved? Secondly, the thesis reflects the 'clash' between the religious foundation bodies and the government in resolving the question of what kind of RE needs to be taught in the religiously founded public education institutions. A question can be asked, 'how can the foundation bodies and the government arrive at a common ground in addressing the issue of RE which has proved contentious? Can either group do without the other?

Other conflicts mirrored in the thesis are the one between Roman Catholics and Church of Uganda members and between members of the Christian religious

⁷ Mpagi (2001:4) quotes exact figures in the case of the Bahai and Hare Krishna and although he does not quote exact figures for other religions, his descriptions reflect the scope of the diversity of religious traditions found in Uganda.

⁸ The 1959 Ugandan population statistics census results indicate that 0.7% of Uganda's population was Hindu while 0.1% was Sikh. The expulsion of Asians by Idi Amin President of Uganda in the early 1970's was responsible for the decline in these figures. However with the current government's policy of returning Asian properties to their rightful owners and the liberalisation of the economy which has witnessed the massive return of people of Asian origin, the religious population figures might soon reflect an increase in these religions.

tradition and Muslims. The thesis refers to historical and recent cases or claims of religious discrimination and intolerance. It further cites cases of religious violence accruing from (or alleged to be) sparked off in response to religious discrimination.

A resolution of the questions raised by the current format of teaching RE in primary and secondary schools is to be seen as a contribution to solving the above mentioned Uganda's religious social problems. In short, the RE curriculum needs to address the issues raised by the religious plurality of the nation and the conflicts thereof if it is to contribute towards promoting national unity and harmony, Uganda's first national goal of education.

1.3. Outline of the Dissertation

The thesis argues that the main aim of teaching CRE and IRE in the religiously founded public education institutions and the purely government founded schools ought to take into account the multi-religious composition of the schools. The thesis presents the view that the current confessional CRE and IRE in the secondary and primary schools needs to be reviewed so as to give prominence to the exploration of other religions as an essential aspect of promoting good interpersonal relations.

Chapter one begins by explaining the key terms used in the title of the thesis and proceeds to make a general introduction to the issues discussed in the eight chapters. The geographical location of the field study is made and the identification of the key concepts used in the thesis. Chapter one explores the research methods and methodology used in gathering information and concludes by highlighting the importance of the different literature sources used in the thesis and their demerits.

Chapter two begins the main discussion with the view that an understanding and appreciation of the historical circumstances in which formal education and the teaching of religion were introduced is essential in mapping the course of RE. It is from this perspective that the thesis critiques the colonial government

and the first independent government's oversight in addressing the subject of RE in view of their plans to nationalise religiously founded schools.

Following the discussion regarding the nationalisation of schools, chapter three highlights the problematic nature of the current confessional CRE and IRE in secondary schools in addressing themselves to the multi-religious classroom context. The thesis argues that an appropriate RE curriculum for schools should enable students to appreciate the commonality and diversity within and between religious traditions. The aims of promoting understanding of religion and development of skills of respect and tolerance are argued to be the priority concern for such an RE curriculum.

Chapter four explores the teaching of CRE and IRE in secondary schools and contends that there is overt and covert pressure on RE teachers in teaching the subject which arises from religious foundation bodies. This undue pressure, it is argued might compromise their professional roles. The thesis argues that while personal religious convictions of teachers may be an important resource for RE, they may be an impediment if used to promote particular religious view points.

Turning to primary CRE and IRE, chapter five argues that government criticism of the inappropriate nature of the 1974 and revised syllabuses for the multi-religious schools is not ill-placed. The thesis submits that the confessional nature of primary CRE and IRE syllabuses needs to be revisited so that it provides for prominence in the exploration of other religions as a response to meeting an identified need by the government and in view of the anticipated benefits of a multi-faith approach to RE.

The proposed introduction of Moral Education by the government as a substitute to the divisive CRE and IRE is critiqued in chapter six. While the strengths of Moral Education, including its neutrality, interdisciplinary nature and capacity to provide for the study of controversial moral issues (in comparison to the confessional CRE and IRE that may be limited in this aspect) are investigated, its limitations in a hostile religious political environment are explored. A recommendation is made that Moral Education could be an independent subject on the curriculum but an RE curriculum that acknowledges

diversity in interpretation of moral issues not only between religious traditions but even within the same religious tradition needs to be promoted.

The climax of the thesis is chapter seven with the presentation of a multi-faith RE as a plausible option of teaching RE in the religiously founded public education institutions, government founded and private founded schools. This standpoint is illustrated with relevant literature that mainly draws on the similar experience of community schools in England and Wales that responded to the multi-religious nature of schools in 1970s by introducing a multi-faith RE, notwithstanding other reasons. The thesis heavily relies on questionnaire responses of students, teachers of RE and lecturers of Religious Studies at Ugandan Universities to justify the strengths and prospective benefits of a multi-faith RE. Conversely, views mainly of religious leaders and some lecturers against a multi-faith RE are explored and are presented as the basis of the dilemma of implementing a fully fledged multi-faith RE.

Mindful of the dilemma of implementing a multi-faith RE in the religiously founded public education institutions chapter eight finally presents a middle way of putting emphasis on the promotion of the religious tradition of the respective religious foundation bodies alongside the exploration of other religions. This is termed 'a single faith syllabus with a multi-faith element', which despite its limitations, enables students to explore other religions and thereby contribute to good interpersonal relations. Finally suggested areas of further research and an overall conclusion to the thesis are made.

1.4. Scope and Limitations of the Study

Mbarara Municipality is used as a case study to reflect on the issue of teaching a confessional RE in three religiously founded public education schools, one government founded school and one private founded school.

Mbarara Municipality was chosen firstly because of its proximity to my field work base at Ntare school and thereby convenience financially and otherwise. Secondly, the Municipality prides itself with hosting some of the most

successful and representative educational institutions in Uganda. The Church of Uganda founded Mbarara High school, one of the best performing schools in national examinations and with eminent old boys in the public and civil service, was founded by the Church Missionary Society CMS members from Britain in 1905. Likewise, Ntare school one of the first few purely government founded schools was founded in 1956 and has contributed substantially to Uganda's manpower needs in the public and civil service. The Roman Catholic Mary Hill High school was founded shortly after Ntare School by Bishop Marie Ojez from France in 1961 and has made significant successes as Mbarara High school and Ntare School. Lately, the Islamic founded Nyamitanga S.S.S was founded in 1986 and is a beacon for Muslim education despite its being a public education school.

The Roman Catholic and Church of Uganda religiously founded schools epitomise the spirit of the different foundation bodies since they do not only share the same compound with the religious leaders of the two major religious traditions but also the Cathedrals for the two Christian religious traditions. Similarly Nyamitanga.S.S.S shares its compound with a Mosque although in their case the Islamic religious leader resides near the major mosque in the town centre. Ntare School is also strategically situated near Kamukuzi Hill, the government administrative centre.

While the four representative schools for the religious and government schools were easy to pick since there are no other representative secondary schools in the Municipality, the private school founded in 1994, Mbarara College that I chose, was for my convenience since it was a stone's throw from my work station. There are numerous private founded schools in Mbarara Municipality and Mbarara district at large, a phenomenon which has come to characterise the provision of education services in Uganda. This is likely to continue being the case following the institution of a Universal free primary education programme in the country whose graduates can no longer be accommodated in the religiously founded nor government founded schools.

One of the major characteristics of the different schools is that most parents want to send their children to schools whose foundation body is in line with their

religious tradition. This means that in a school like Mbarara High School, three quarters of the school population may be members of the Church of Uganda, while at Mary Hill, a Roman Catholic founded school, Roman Catholic students comprise approximately three quarters of the school population. In each case, the remaining quarter is made up of students from other Christian traditions, Muslims and even members of other minority faiths. This trend, however, can be deceptive, since there is a growing interest among parents to send their children to the best performing schools in national examinations, irrespective of religious background.

While the study for secondary schools was intensive, since it involved lesson observations, collecting questionnaire responses and conducting interviews with teachers and some student leaders, it was rather low key for the primary schools. I was only able to concentrate on interviewing primary CRE and IRE teachers of at least one Roman Catholic, Church of Uganda, Pentecostal and Islamic founded schools' in the Municipality (see appendix 1 for details of interviewees).

Although Mbarara Municipality was the pivot of the research, the field activities extended to Kampala, the capital city of Uganda where the major educational offices for government and religious education advisors are, Universities and key resourceful educational facilities. Mukono town, where Uganda Christian University is based, was also visited.

The major limitations of this study are that, while the selected schools in Mbarara Municipality could mirror the implementation of the CRE and IRE syllabuses and the approach to teaching the subject in the rest of Ugandan schools, differences are possible. S. Tirwomwe on 20th March 2002 a student at the University of Leeds then, informed me that in his different capacities as an education secretary of the Church of Uganda schools, Board member and Parents Teachers Association executive member in Kabale schools of Kabale district, he had not witnessed a situation where primary CRE teachers taught about Islam in Church of Uganda founded schools. It is possible therefore that there might be variations in the implementation of the CRE and IRE syllabuses and the approach of teaching CRE and IRE in other districts of Uganda. Nonetheless, in view of the centrality of administration of the respective Religious Education advisors' role, all of whom were interviewed, variations might be the exception and not the norm.

1.5. Identification of Key Concepts

1.5.1. Students' Spiritual Growth

Spiritual growth of students refers to the upbringing of students according to their respective religious traditions. It is the intention of CRE and IRE in secondary and primary schools in Uganda to promote this goal and the use of this term in the thesis is a deduction made from the specified aims of CRE and IRE syllabuses.

The syllabus aim of the secondary school CRE is contained in the preamble of the two textbooks for CRE, Christian Living Today Books one and two. It is specified as ...

to enable the student to grow towards responsible Christian maturity; seeing more clearly the demands of his faith in his life, making his own the values he now considers worthwhile and bringing them to the world by relating his Christian faith to his life. (Pastoral Institute of East Africa, 1974 and 1975a)

The syllabus aim is tersely expressed as the concern for the Christian upbringing of students who ought to use what they study as the term of reference for interpreting their life experiences.

The syllabus aim of the primary CRE is even more clearly defined in terms of expectation of pupils to be brought up within the Christian religious tradition. It is specified as 'having a learned, practicing and morally upright person basing on the teachings of Christianity' (NCDC, 2000: 517)

The intention of primary CRE to produce practicing Christian pupils in the religiously founded public education institutions is one of the main concerns of this thesis! A question can be asked how the same syllabus that is designed to produce practicing Christians can address itself to members of other religions without having implications for converting them.

The link between spiritual growth of students, the role of RE in schools and the school chaplain's work is reflected in an address by Cardinal Wamala (leader of the Roman Catholic Church in Uganda in the 1980s) given to secondary students of St. Mary's College Kisubi. He observed:

That is why I still insist that you get Religious Education in this school because it is the basis of true education and it helps you to act in a fully human way. We appreciate the importance of the spiritual life of a student, and that is why you have a place for prayers in this school and a chaplain to cater for your spiritual well being (Ssekamwa and Kasibante, 1985: 4).

The above statement by Cardinal Wamala serves to reflect the understanding of church leaders (the designers of the CRE syllabuses) about the expected

role of RE in the spiritual growth of students. The thesis similarly uses the term spiritual growth of students while referring to IRE since the intention of the IRE syllabus for secondary and primary schools is the upbringing of students according to the Islamic religious tradition.

Although the IRE syllabus as expressed in the main text-books of Islam, Books one and two, does not prescribe a key aim of the syllabus, the syllabus outline is exclusively concerned with the exploration of the Islamic religious tradition (Quraishy, 1987; 1989). Secondly, the IRE aims as contained in the *UNEB Regulations and Syllabuses Book* (1996: 49) have as their intention the enabling of students to study and positively respond to the Islamic religion (see chapter three). The intention therefore can be deduced as enabling students to explore and appreciate the Islamic religion by relating it to their life experience. The primary IRE syllabus, similar to the primary CRE syllabus, is specific in its intention of producing 'a learned, practicing and morally upright individual basing on the teachings of Islam. (NCDC, 2000: 59).

Interestingly, save for the word Islam, the phraseology of the syllabus aim is the same as that of primary CRE. This seems to suggest a common stand on the intention of RE and its definition as the spiritual growth of students within their respective religious traditions. The thesis explores the implications of fulfilling such an aim in the religiously founded public education institutions for students who belong to different religious traditions. This exploration is done from the perspective of looking at the type of RE promoted in Ugandan secondary and primary schools as fitting in with a confessional model of RE.

1.5.2. Confessional Religious Education

The term confessional RE is used in the thesis to refer to an approach of teaching about religion in Ugandan schools that promotes one particular religious tradition. This approach has as its main intention the affirming of students within their respective religious traditions. This in turn is based on the widely acceptable purpose of RE for students in Uganda which is the spiritual growth of students within their religions.

This thesis refers to literature concerning the development of RE, mainly in England and Wales, which was of a confessional nature before it was replaced with a multi-faith RE. While debating the question of the most appropriate approach to teaching RE in British maintained schools in the early 1970s, the Schools Council Working Party Members described the confessional approach thus:⁹

This begins with the assumption that the aim of religious education is intellectual and cultic indoctrination (Schools Council Publications, 1971: 21).

Exclusiveness is therefore central to a confessional approach to RE. This is because the students are meant to appreciate their own religious tradition and not to be exposed to other religious traditions, which might lead to comparison and probably expression of weaknesses within one's religion. In British schools, as was observed at the time by the Schools Council Working Party Members, this kind of approach could no longer address itself to the multi-religious nature of the majority of British maintained schools.

Similarly, the thesis argues that the intention of CRE and IRE in Uganda, which is the spiritual growth of students within their respective religions is confessional in nature and does not meet the multi-religious context of the religiously founded public education institutions. Confessional RE in principle largely sets itself against the worth of exploring other religions. In Uganda's case, there is a slight modification since within the confessional CRE and IRE there is a provision to engage with other religions. While the thesis commends this development, it goes on to portray the complications of the objectives of exploring other religions within a confessional RE and the need for a genuine, instead of token, exploration of other religions.

⁹ Maintained schools in England and Wales or community schools as they are officially referred to currently are the schools that are managed under the government through the Local Education Authorities. They are inclusive schools since any parent irrespective of religious, racial or social background can send his or her children to them. Similarly government founded schools in Uganda, religiously founded public schools and private schools share this inclusive characteristic.

1.5.3. *Unity in Diversity*

Unity in diversity is a phrase mainly used in Ugandan ecumenical circles to express the common ground between Roman Catholic, Church of Uganda and Greek Orthodox churches' despite theological and other differences.¹⁰ The thesis however argues that the confessional CRE does not enable students to fully appreciate the characteristic nature of the Christian religious tradition and in particular the diversity within it. Unity in diversity is specifically used to highlight the limitations of the joint primary and secondary syllabuses in using this concept to stress commonality within the Christian religious tradition and downplaying the differences. In other words, the thesis argues that an approach of emphasising similarities and downplaying differences while exploring the Christian religious tradition is an inadequate interpretation of the concept of unity in diversity. Most important it limits students' capacity to engage with difference in a classroom situation and subsequently in real life situations.

While the thesis uses unity in diversity with specific reference to the Christian religious tradition, this concept is reflected in the discussions of Islam in Uganda which is not a monolithic religious tradition (Kabwegyere, 1998). The study therefore argues that the study of Islamic religion in Uganda needs to take into account the appropriate use of the concept of unity in diversity by enabling students of IRE to appreciate not only the concept of the unified nature of the Islamic religion but also the differences as expressed in the different Islamic brotherhoods or renewal movements. The thesis argues that religious discrimination and intolerance, Uganda's most challenging religious social ills are in part a result of the RE curriculum not enabling students to explore other religions and to appreciate the concept of unity in diversity.

¹⁰ Waliggo (2000: 7-8) cites some of the common ties and heritage between the three Christian churches as belief in God the father and creator of all, belief in Jesus Christ, the promised messiah, the Saviour, redeemer and liberator, the Holy Bible as the message of God to humanity, belief in one baptism, trinity and resurrection of the dead.

1.5.4. Religious Discrimination

Religious discrimination refers to the preferential treatment of a member (or members) of a particular religion of another member (or members) of the same religion to the exclusion of another (or others). The issue of religious discrimination in Uganda is mirrored in the historical and current religious political conflicts. It is for this reason that it is an issue of major concern addressed by the Ugandan constitution.

Chapter four of the 1995 Ugandan Constitution entitled *Human Rights and other freedoms* expresses the equal respect and dignity to be accorded to people. Article 21 of chapter four expresses the need for safeguard against religious discrimination, alongside other forms of discrimination and in part it reads:

A person shall not be discriminated against on ground of sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, tribe, birth, creed or religion, or social or economic standing, political opinion or disability.¹¹

Religious discrimination is presented as one of the social evils that the laws of Uganda do not allow. This in turn raises questions about the possible legal implications of teaching of religion in schools. Should some students continue being compulsorily expected to study religions other than their own in the religiously founded public schools? How about Uganda's subscriptions to the respect of international conventions such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which cautions against such abuse of people's religious and other freedoms which goes thus:

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, and conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in a community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.¹²

¹¹ <http://www.government.go.ug/constitution>

¹² <http://www.un.org/overview/rights.html>

The United Nations charter serves to illustrate the dignity and respect of an individual in matters related to religion either in private or in public places such as the school context. In short, a denial of one's choice to study a religion of his or her choice may carry overtones of religious discrimination and may not only contravene national but international conventions. The thesis therefore attempts to respond to the problematic nature of the RE curriculum that could raise a possible charge of religious discrimination of some students who are denied to study a religion of their choice in publicly funded government institutions. The government dissatisfaction with the current format of RE in Uganda (reflected in the statements of the government task force that reviewed the CRE and IRE syllabuses detailed in chapter five) is an illustration of the uneasiness of government on this issue.

1.5.5. Religious Intolerance

Religious intolerance refers to behaviour of a religious person (or particular religious group) towards a member of (or members of) another religious group that reflects or expresses the incompatibility of members of different religious traditions. The *Collins Paperback Dictionary* (1995) defines the adjective intolerant thus 'refusing to accept practices and beliefs that differ from one's own.' The refusal to accept each other's religious beliefs and practices may be covert (as reflected in certain actions of individuals towards people of other religions) or overt (clearly expressed as shown by some statements made about other people's religions or through religiously motivated violence). The thesis makes reference (especially in chapter seven) to overt religious intolerance but in drawing conclusions about the confessional RE curriculum in Uganda reflects the potential for this format of RE to be interpreted as 'a religiously intolerant RE.'

While there seems to be a thin dividing line between religious discrimination and intolerance, the thesis presents the view that religious discrimination breeds religious intolerance.¹³ This hypothesis can be illustrated with reference to the 1985 incident of religious violence which inspired me to engage in

ecumenical issues including this thesis (see subsequent discussion on research methods). Secondly, it is illustrated with reference to the religiously motivated armed conflict that has recently befallen the country (see chapter seven). The lack of and desire for religious and national unity is therefore central to the thesis discussion since it would provide a solution to Uganda's religious social ills, religious discrimination and intolerance.

1.5.6. National Unity and Harmony

National unity and harmony can be referred to as one of the most popular political slogans in Uganda.¹⁴ As a concept it signifies the ideal of good interpersonal relationships among Ugandans who belong to different religious, ethnic, cultural, social and economic backgrounds. National unity and harmony are reflected in the national anthem with the words 'united' and 'together' portraying the desired unity and are further reflected in the phrase 'in peace and friendship we live'. The national anthem is given below:

Oh Uganda, may God uphold thee
We lay our future in thy hand,
United, Free,
For liberty
Together we'll always stand.

Oh Uganda, the land of freedom,
Our love and labour we give,
And with neighbours all
At our country's call,
In peace and friendship we live.

Oh Uganda, the land that feeds us
By sun and fertile sown grown
For our own dear land
We'll always stand
The pearl of Africa's crown.

¹³ While Mpagi (2001: 5-7) attempts to answer the question concerning cases of religious intolerance in Uganda, he finds himself using the term religious discrimination to describe the scope of the problem.

¹⁴ This is often ranked high on political manifestos of national political leaders and this is an indicator of the paramount importance the question of national unity raises. Promotion of national unity is point number three on the current National Resistance Movement (NRM) government's ten point political programme.

Good interpersonal relationships irrespective of differences are therefore a central theme in the national anthem which reflects the objectives of the Ugandan nation. In addition, 'forging national unity and harmony' is stipulated as the first national goal of education in Uganda (Uganda Government, 1992: 6). It is in this respect that the thesis uses this term to reflect one of the most important ideals of Uganda as a nation. The realization of this ideal is not possible without taking into account the political status of the Ugandan nation which is supposed to underpin the policies that are implemented in public education institutions.

1.5.7. The Secular Nature of the Ugandan State

This is an unofficial but helpful term that is used in the thesis following its common usage by politicians and religious leaders to describe the expected neutrality of the state in religious matters.¹⁵ The secular or religious neutrality of the state is supposed to underlie the state relationship with government founded schools and both religiously and privately founded schools.¹⁶ This standpoint is supposed to be reflected in policies concerning RE for the schools mentioned. The term 'secular' seems to have been adapted from an interpretation of the Ugandan Constitution Article 5 part 1 of Chapter two entitled *The Republic of Uganda* states, 'Uganda is a sovereign state and a Republic.' Article 7 entitled *Non-adoption of a state religion* continues: 'Uganda shall not adopt a state religion.'

While the Republic of Uganda was born following the abolition of traditional kingdoms in 1966, this event can be said to have marked the shift from the royal-political and traditional religious role of the leader (epitomised by Kabaka

¹⁵ *The Monitor* newspaper of 26/05/1999 reported the Ag. Commissioner for Education Fagil Monday as saying that since Uganda was a secular state it was under no obligation to consult religious leaders on issues of RE in schools. His standpoint reflects how sometimes government officials are oblivious of the foundation bodies continued partnership with government in the religious founded but government aided schools. In another incident referring to the secular nature of the state, *the Monitor* newspaper of 5/05/2002 quoted the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Church of Uganda religious leaders as having issued a joint statement asking the Ugandan government to withdraw its membership from the Organisation of Islamic Conference countries (a status they acquired during Idi Amin's time, a Muslim) since 'Uganda was a secular state.'

¹⁶ The uniqueness of the private founded schools under discussion is that they are founded by individuals whose prime interest is financial. They are different from religiously founded private schools which do not normally recruit students of religions other than those of the foundation body.

Muteesa who was executive president of Uganda, King of Buganda and thereby de-facto head of the traditional religious establishment) to that of career politicians who wanted a separation between religious and political leadership. Subsequently the non-adoption of a state religion is a shift from the historical position where the King wielded religious and political power and where religion and politics were inseparable. The constitution therefore attempts to overcome past mistakes whereby particular religions were favoured by leaders over others. It is in view of the context of the religious neutrality of the state that the thesis similarly questions the policies of teaching RE in religiously founded public education institutions.

On the other hand, the reference to the secular nature of the Ugandan state is rather ironic in Uganda's case since religion is not only a dominant force in people's lives but is reflected in the national symbols of the country. The national motto 'for God and my country' and part of the national anthem reflect deep religious statements that signify the religious spirit of the citizens. In addition, all national political functions begin with prayers led by the leaders of the major religious traditions in Uganda.¹⁷ The major challenge to the religious character of the nation is the unresolved religious tensions and conflicts between members of the different religious traditions.¹⁸ It is for this reason that the secular nature of the state becomes justified. Subsequently the neutrality of the state in religious matters is supposed to be reflected in the teaching of RE in religiously founded public schools, in which the government is a key stakeholder. It is for this reason that a multi-faith RE is explored in the thesis as an alternative to the existing confessional RE, in view of its characteristic nature to address the multi-religious context of schools.

¹⁷ Katulushi (2000) in an unpublished PhD Thesis at the University of Leeds refers to Zambia as a country that is officially known as a Christian nation with a population of 72% Christians. With Uganda's Christian and Muslim population totaling 94.3% of the population Uganda could as well be declared a religious nation.

¹⁸ Fr. Vincent Kanyonza (1990) while addressing himself to the topic patriotism and national solidarity in Uganda, argues that although the Christian churches through the UJCC had tried to address the question of unity among believers during the early years of Uganda's independence, 'its impact up to now has not been felt.' Waliggo (2000: 2) most recently expressed the need for more religious dialogue between Muslims and Christians while addressing himself on the topic 'inter-religious dialogue and joint peace efforts in Uganda.'

1.5.8. Multi-faith RE

Multi-faith RE describes the type of RE that is overtly concerned with the exploration of different religious traditions. It is a term that is reflected in literature that I mainly refer to with respect to the debate concerning the teaching of RE in community schools of England and Wales. One of the major characteristic of these schools is that many of them are not only funded by government but comprise students from different religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds.

A multi-faith RE became established in England and Wales in the 1970s with the intention of promoting the understanding of different religions and the development of tolerance and sensitivity for other people's religions (Jackson, 1997: 74). A multi-faith RE therefore is essentially concerned with the exploration of different religions as opposed to a confessional RE, which could be referred to as a single faith RE. In England and Wales therefore the confessional RE was to be replaced by a multi-faith RE in the community schools (as will be discussed in chapter seven) partly as a response to the multi-religious nature of the emerging new society.

Reference to a multi-faith RE or a phenomenological RE in the thesis is to be appreciated from the standpoint of phenomenology of religions' concern with trying to understand another person's religious life 'through laying aside one's own presuppositions, and through empathizing with the insider's experience' (Jackson, 1997: 14). This is an issue that is explored in the subsequent discussion. While multi-faith RE refers to study of other people's religions, phenomenology may be said to be concerned with how other religions can be studied effectively. The two are therefore closely related as expressed by Watson (1993: 43) that 'phenomenological RE is referred to loosely as the multi-faith or world religions approach.' The thesis presents the primary purpose of a multi-faith as the promotion of understanding of religion.

1.5.9. Understanding of Religion

Understanding of religion as a concept is not normally defined by RE scholars, however its objective is to promote an approach of teaching RE that uses educational tools of enquiry and exploration. The term is used in this thesis to denote the end product or academic status achieved by students who are exposed to an RE curriculum that acknowledges use of educational tools to explore religious issues.

Understanding of religion is normally presented by RE scholars as providing for student's thinking about religious issues as opposed to being inducted into a particular religious standpoint. The SCWP members explain it thus:

Although the term understanding of religion is not directly defined by scholars, its objective is reflected as enabling students to think about religion instead of being passive recipients of religious information (SCP, 1971: 37).

The active participation of students in reflecting on religious issues is discussed by Holley (1978: 19) and Watson (1993: 42) who consider it a source of promoting an independence of mind among students who can in turn draw conclusions from what they study. The thesis refers to a situation where students are able to explore religion, understand it (without undue influence from the teacher or any other authority) and draw their conclusions about religious issues as the academic integrity of students. In short, academic integrity of students is an expression used in the thesis to denote understanding of religion on part of students as opposed to a situation where students are 'passive recipients of religious information.'

1.5.10. Respect and Tolerance

'Respect and tolerance', as a phrase, refers to a situation where a person has a positive attitude towards other people's religions. It is a secondary aim of a multi-faith RE (see chapter seven). The underlying principle is that people need to hold the religious beliefs of others in high esteem instead of having a low

opinion about them. As a consequence the assumption is that this situation can lead to good interpersonal relations between people of different religions. Respect and tolerance of other people's religions is therefore an antidote to religious discrimination and intolerance referred to in the foregoing discussion.

Respect and tolerance are expressed as an aim for secondary school IRE (UNEB: 1996: 49). Although no accompanying explanation is given about their meaning, they are written from a context where a Muslim student is expected to develop a positive attitude towards other people's religions. Scholars of RE referred to in this thesis mainly use the phrase respect and tolerance with reference to a positive attitude towards other people's religions in a multi-faith RE but in different contexts. While Arthur (1990: 43) uses the phrase to portray the positive attitude that can be developed towards other people's religions through a multi-faith RE, Watson (1993: 43 and 1993: 44) uses respect and tolerance in different contexts to express them as key objectives of a multi-faith RE which enables one to develop a positive attitude towards the religious beliefs of other people.

Jackson (1997: 74) cites the promotion of respect and sensitivity as a secondary aim of a multi-faith RE. While respect and tolerance are commonly used to portray a positive attitude of holding in high esteem other people's religions and an attempt to live in harmony with them, sensitivity is presented as a new term probably preferred over tolerance by Jackson. Sensitivity reflects a spirit of equanimity that willingly accepts to engage with what is different.

Respect and tolerance therefore do not have the same meaning but the thesis uses them as a phrase to refer to a positive attitude or ideal of holding in high esteem the religious beliefs of others and seeking to accept living with religious differences.

1.6. Research Methods and Methodology

An empirically oriented research was undertaken using qualitative methods with a significant reliance on interview and observation methods, referred to as, 'the central-gathering techniques of a qualitative approach' (Burns, 2000: 393). The contemporary nature of the debate about what type of RE is best suited for Ugandan schools meant that up-to-date and relevant information needed to be gathered through interaction with key players.

Interviews were crucial while seeking views of the different sections of the Ugandan community and this was particularly important in the absence of enough documentary evidence. Lack of enough documentary evidence is in part a result of government and religious leaders alike withholding some information, since the issue of RE is treated as 'a nationally sensitive issue'. Secondly even in some cases where there is willingness to avail information, especially of historical importance, there is generally a problem of record keeping that prevents one from getting some vital information.

The observation method was particularly helpful in being able to establish a correlation between the different religious communities' expectations of RE teachers and the RE teachers approaches to the subject. It was an essential aspect of the field work that brought to the light the dilemma of implementing a confessional RE in a multi-faith context.

Apart from the interview and observation methods, there are other methods that were used in collecting information. The following section spells out the key motivating factors behind the choice of the research topic, the different methods used in interacting with participants in the research, the methodology as a reference to justification of methods used (Clough and Nutbrow, 2002: 29)¹⁹ and an overview of the literature sources that I used in the discussion.

¹⁹ P. Clough and C. Nutbrow (2002: 29) refer to the contentious nature of defining methodology in the social sciences.

1.6.1.1. *Personal Motivation: Experience of Religious Conflict*

The turning point of my keen interest in issues of religious conflict and dialogue (and which provides the raw material for the hypothesis that I make in the thesis that religious discrimination leads to religious intolerance and that religious intolerance can lead to violence or passive resistance) is my personal witness of religious violence in my home county of Ibanda in Mbarara District in 1985. This was a result of the removal from power of an interim government of Paulo Muwanga whose party affiliation to the Uganda Peoples' Congress was generally identified with Protestants in Mbarara district.²⁰

Although the new President of Uganda was later to be announced as Major General Tito Okello Lutwa, a Protestant, the military officer who made the radio announcement of the take over of government was Bazilio Olara Okello. The name Bazilio rang a bell in the ears of some Roman Catholics in Ibanda sub-county of Mbarara district to imply that 'one of their own' had at last become president of Uganda and what followed was gruesome.²¹ Some key members of the Roman Catholic Church are said to have encouraged the ordinary lay Catholics in Ibanda to destroy personal and church property of Protestants (specifically Church of Uganda).²² Although the violence was mainly targeted at former political leaders who belonged to UPC, it was indiscriminate in many respects especially in the area of Maboona Parish.

Although one can lay blame on the Roman Catholics for the violence meted out on some Church of Uganda members including places of worship, as I

²⁰ While it is generally true that in some parts of Uganda, the UPC was supported by Catholics, in the western region (including Mbarara) UPC was synonymous with the Protestant religion with a colloquial term United Protestants of Canterbury while Democratic Party DP synonymous with Catholics was given the colloquial term *Dini ya Papa* (a Kishwahili word meaning 'the religion of the Pope'). Paulo Muwanga took over leadership after a military coup that toppled Milton Obote, a Protestant, but was swiftly replaced due to suspicion of his allegiance to Milton Obote and probably other reasons.

²¹ In Uganda, it is often easy to tell one's religion by the name. A person's first name in many circles is referred to as his or her Christian or Islamic name and it is from this that one can tell if you are a Roman Catholic, Muslim or member of Church of Uganda.

²² There were references in public discussions about the brains behind the mayhem. This seemed to point to information that was leaked to some Church of Uganda members who had close relatives among the Catholics. The information indicated that some Roman Catholic priests and key lay people had incited the violence. This might sound far fetched especially since no investigations has been carried out nor a truth and reconciliation commission instituted. However the genocide in Rwanda provides some parallels that could indicate the possibility of such violence being orchestrated from high levels and not from ordinary lay Catholics.

observed in my article on the subject (see following discussion), 'it was just the fulfilment of a long time nourished grudge. It was a consequence of the hostility exerted on the Catholics by the members of the Church of Uganda during Obote's rule,' (*BTTC Journal*, 1988: 18).²³ In short, the religious intolerance exhibited by some members of the Roman Catholic Church was much more a product of the religious discrimination they had been subjected to under the leadership of President Milton Obote in Ibanda. My personal view about this issue is reflected in a poem I wrote which is contained in the same article that I wrote for the *BTTC Journal*, which goes thus:²⁴

The Mis-calculated Conflict

Christianity envelopes all believers in Christ
 The Catholics and Protestants spring from this union
 However the British and French though Europeans
 Deliver the message in differing ways
 When it comes to the recipients it worsens
 Tribesmen develop hatred of each other
 Just because of a religion whose aim they ignore
 A quarrel as to whether Yesu or Yezu
 May even precipitate into a bitter fight
 When political parties are formed
 Many are associated to religion, thus dissension
 The fundamental ideal is lost
 Love for one another is yet to be achieved
 The barriers ought to be pulled down
 Why the divisions, if the fountain is one?

The circumstances leading to the motivation to write this poem in 1985 provide the background to my personal experience of religious conflict and keen interest in the ecumenical debate one of whose major concerns is the promotion of the concept of unity in diversity. This calls for an acknowledgment of and pride in similarities and differences that exist within the membership of the Christian religious tradition and the willingness to live in harmony.

²³ During President M. Obote's rule, the net-work of administration in Ibanda-Mbarara district was manned by Protestants who were also in charge of the distribution of essential commodities since the economy at the time was weak. The distributions were generally unfair since Protestants in turn UPC were given preferential treatment. In some cases Catholics were unfairly treated when it came to certain political decisions affecting the local society.

²⁴ This article was written at a time when I was serving as a General Secretary of Gaba (Roman Catholic), Mukono (Church of Uganda) Ecumenical Contact, a theological fellowship of Roman Catholic and Church of Uganda theological students.

1.6.1.2. Experience as a Teacher and Chaplain

My four year experience as a deputy head-teacher and chaplain at Kibubura Girls S.S.S, a religiously founded school and four years experience as a deputy head-teacher at Ntare School, a government founded school will be drawn as a resource. It will be used with reference to discussion on school policies concerning RE, provision for religious rights of students and issues of interpersonal relations between members of the different religious traditions. As an insider who has been a school administrator and religious leader, I have been involved in school administrative and pastoral duties which have enabled me to get a first hand experience of the issues mentioned above. This advantageous position was extended to my field work role whereby I received positive response from all the head-teachers in whose schools I conducted research.

The challenge of my dual role of school administrator and ordained minister of the Church of Uganda, as a researcher, cannot be overlooked. I had a feeling that while I could move in and out of Protestant schools easily, I could not in the case of Roman Catholic or Muslim schools. This only enabled me to realise that I was part of the tension and conflict that members of the different religions live with. While in the majority of cases my fears were unfounded, in others they were confirmed as it proved hard to get adequate information. This confirmed what Gerson and Horowitz (in May, 2002: 207) refer to as some of the constraints of access to areas of research, which in my case was religious identity. On the side of Ntare school, my most recent work place where I expected minimal response from the students (in view of my administrative role there which might have been confused with 'spying' for the current school system), I was pleasantly surprised since student leaders whom I interviewed presented candid views on the subject of religious intolerance. However, I could sense that if it was some other independent person, much more information might have been revealed.

1.6.1.3. Academic Influence

My one year Masters in Education course in Religious Education at the University of Leeds was an important influence in my decision to investigate issues of Religious education in Uganda. The module on *Rationale and Principles of Religious Education* gave me insight on possible alternatives to the confessional RE that I had been exposed to in Uganda both as a student and as a teacher. This module, while enabling me to explore issues of RE in Uganda, exposed me to the evolutionary nature of the English and Welsh RE system that had moved from a confessional RE to the present multi-faith RE.

While my academic experience enabled me to appreciate the advantaged position of a multi-faith RE in a religious plural society, and was the basis of my anticipated conclusion for Ugandan RE, I was to shift my position in the course of my fieldwork following my research findings. The final recommendation of a 'single faith RE with a multi-faith element' is therefore a 'field created solution to the RE issue', not 'a book created solution.'

1.6.2. Questionnaires

1.6.2.1. Students' Questionnaires

A questionnaire for senior one and five secondary students was designed with the main purpose of gauging the students' perception of the purpose of RE in schools, and considered an important issue in view of the confessional nature of RE. The students' views on the prospects of a multi-faith RE for Uganda were sought following the literature that I had read which portrayed a multi-faith RE as an alternative to a confessional RE.

A total of 295 questionnaires were filled in by secondary school students from five secondary schools (see limitation and scope for detail of schools) and their responses were analysed, categorised and reflected in the discussions of the thesis and also in pie charts and bar graphs in chapter three and seven. I was able to personally administer the questionnaires to students in all the schools,

except Mary Hill High school, where despite being given permission by the head-teacher to liaise with the Head of CRE department, she was not able to fix a time-table for me to meet the students citing a tight student programme. I was therefore privileged and fortunate to have the opportunity to explain to students in the rest of the schools, the purpose of my research, its importance and the need for the students to give free responses without any fear.

The students' responses were to prove very helpful since the majority were able to articulate their views that reflected important aspects of the debate on the confessional nature of CRE and IRE in Uganda as contained in literature written by RE scholars.

A limitation of the students' questionnaire method was that some of them were not intelligible and were therefore not taken into account for the thesis discussions or for analysis. This problem of English Language usage is not uncommon for schools as reflected recently by the Minister of Education Kiddu Makubuya in a New Vision release of 1/04/2002 following results of Uganda Certificate of Education UCE when he said, 'the drop in percentage of candidates obtaining grade one has been attributed to poor performance in English Language, a key and compulsory subject. Inability to communicate orally or in writing will inevitably affect performance'.

1.6.2.2. Secondary School Teachers' Questionnaire

15 questionnaires were filled in by CRE secondary school teachers; four of Mary Hill High school, four of Nyamitanga S.S.S, three of Mbarara High school, three of Ntare school and one of Mbarara College.

The questionnaire for teachers was designed with a purpose of getting their views about the confessional status of the subject, especially by finding out how they related foundation bodies' expectations of them (a key issue reflected in the literature critique before going on field work) to the teaching of the subject. Secondly, their standpoint on Moral Education was to be evaluated following the Government White Paper recommendations of Moral Education for the secondary school curriculum and the religious leaders preference of teaching morals through RE instead of Moral Education. Thirdly, the teachers views on

the prospects of a multi-faith RE were considered essential since they are the professionals in the subject of RE and therefore stakeholders.

The CRE teachers' questionnaire was well responded to and is used in the discussions of the thesis as an important resource to the issues out-lined in the foregoing discussion. The limitation with the questionnaire was that there was a tendency to be precise on the part of some respondents and thereby leaving out some detail which can only be got through an interview. However this method was more convenient to the teachers since they preferred it to being interviewed.

1.6.2.3. Lecturers' Questionnaire

One questionnaire was filled in by two lecturers of Religious Studies, one from Makerere University and the other from the National Teachers' College-Kakoba. The lecturers' questionnaire was designed to solicit the views of lecturers of Religious studies who were considered to be resource people in the field of teaching about religion in Ugandan schools. The questionnaire sought their views on Moral Education as a possible subject on the Ugandan curriculum, mindful of the Ugandan public's rejection of it. Secondly, their views on the prospects of a multi-faith RE for Uganda were asked for. The responses of the lecturers' were clearly articulated, resourceful and are referred to in the thesis discussion. The questionnaires were administered as a second option (since I could not schedule an interview with the lecturers) to interviews and it is for this reason that the rest of the lecturers' were interviewed.

1.6.3. Interviews

54 interviews (see appendix 1 for list of interviewees) were held with different stakeholders in the subject of RE including religious and civic leaders, the former who are involved in designing RE syllabuses (key stakeholders who founded schools) and the latter who are responsible for policy matters on RE including administration of schools. In addition 3 interviews of the Islamic, Roman Catholic and Church of Uganda student religious leaders at Ntare

School were conducted. Ntare school was chosen because I could easily get permission to talk to the student population as a staff member on study leave, but in addition it was suitable in view of its being a purely government founded school, in which case it was supposed to reflect ideal conditions for 'justice and fairness' to all religions (see chapter four for an exploration of this concept). In contrast, as the thesis reveals, this is not the case. Finally one student leader, a Muslim from Makerere University was interviewed regarding press reports about the alleged denial of religious rights to Muslim students who study in Christian founded schools.

Interview responses were an invaluable resource for the research since, in my estimation, honest views came to light in the process and I developed a feeling throughout my interviews, the 'real temperature gauge' for the feelings and views of people was through interviews much more than official documents.²⁵ Depending on the mood of the interviewee though, I didn't ask the planned questions straight away but began with some 'starter conversation' in order establish a rapport. Without a doubt, this was the greatest challenge of the interview method since in some cases the interviewees had to move through different phases of first expressing apprehension, showing some interest in my study and finally being cooperative and in cases ending up very resourceful.

1.6.3.1. Secondary School Head-teachers

Seven head-teachers of primary and secondary schools were interviewed on the policy of RE in their schools, their views on Moral Education and the prospects of a multi-faith RE. These were treated as a key resource of articulating the issues underpinning the interplay between foundation bodies and government on issues of RE plus interpersonal relations between students of different religions in their schools. The questions asked in the interview did not necessarily follow those on the head-teachers questionnaire (see appendix) due to the issue of 'mood of interviewee' mentioned earlier. Often I was able to get unanticipated and essential information from interviewees but overall the questionnaire was the guide.

1.6.3.2. Primary School Teachers

Eight teachers were interviewed as key stakeholders who are involved in teaching the subject of RE. Their views on Moral Education as a possible subject on the Uganda curriculum were sought and so were the prospects of a multi-faith RE for primary schools. Their views were significant to the debate on teaching about other religions and in addition, contrary to findings from religious leaders and Religious Education supervisors (who are directly responsible for the CRE teachers through foundation bodies), it was found out that some of them in Christian founded schools were teaching CRE and some IRE out of their initiative to better the students Examination scores (see discussion in thesis).

1.6.3.3. Religious Studies Lecturers

Nine lecturers of Universities and one National Teachers' College were interviewed. The interview questions were based on a questionnaire filled in by the lecturers referred to in the foregoing discussion. The interviews were resourceful and of particular importance, the views of lecturers on the curriculum review process in Uganda with specific reference to Moral Education.

1.6.3.4. Religious Leaders and Religious Education Secretaries

Ten religious leaders and eight Religious Education supervisors of the different Christian and Islamic religious traditions were interviewed. I considered these to be the major stakeholders in the subject of RE in Uganda especially in view of the religiously founded status of schools (that continues to have its mark on the subject despite the nationalisation of schools) and most important as designers of the RE curriculum through the Religious Education committees of the UJCC and the Uganda Muslim Education Association UMEA. Their views were

²⁵ Keith Punch (1998: 174) refers to interview method as 'a very good way of accessing people's perceptions, meanings, definitions of situations and constructions of reality.'

relevant to the question of introducing Moral Education and replacing it with RE which had been contested by them and their perceptions on the prospects for a multi-faith RE for Uganda. In addition, the question of what kind of person is supposed to teach RE was essential in order to gauge the interrelationship between a confessional RE and the foundation bodies expectations of RE teachers. The religious leader's views as reflected in the thesis discussion are important to take into account for RE curriculum reviews since they continue to command high respect in society. Similarly are the religious education supervisors' views, the technical people responsible for designing the RE curriculum. In the case of two of the religious education supervisors, I was able to conduct telephone interviews with them on returning to Leeds University since there was information that I received from some sources about the revised syllabus and wanted to corroborate it with official views of the RE curriculum designers.

1.6.3.5. Ministry of Education Officials

Six government representatives in charge of education policy and administration matters in the religiously founded public education schools were interviewed. The question of government policy on RE was the primary one. Secondly, the clarification on the question whether the government supported Moral Education and whether it was satisfied with the current format of teaching RE in religiously founded public education schools. Thirdly, the question of religious rights of students in religiously founded public education schools was raised in view of the conflicts surrounding the Gayaza pork saga whereby Muslim students in the Church of Uganda founded High school were said to have been unfairly exposed to eating meals prepared from the same saucepans that were used to prepare pork for the Christian students.

1.6.4. Observation of Secondary School CRE and IRE Lessons

I was able to sit in eight lessons of CRE and IRE in four of the five schools that I carried out research in. This offered me a reasonable sampling of the different schools and in particular the approaches taken by teachers in teaching RE in

the Muslim and Church of Uganda religiously founded schools, one government founded and one private founded school. The only disappointment was with the Roman Catholic founded Mary Hill High school whereby despite permission from the Head-teacher to conduct research in the school, the numerous promises by the Head of CRE did not bear any fruit and I was not able to sit in any of the lessons at the school. The objectives of the lesson observation were to gauge whether the issue of personal religious convictions came into play during lessons and the possible implications for students. Secondly, I was interested in finding out the provision for students reflection on what is studied as a measure of the confessional characteristics of RE in Ugandan schools.

The observing of lessons was an exciting and fruitful exercise since I was able to freely sit in the classroom and record the proceedings of the lessons without a hitch and the findings are a key part of chapter four. Surprisingly in my estimation the teachers and the students acted naturally without any inhibition. I could sense that this was the normal atmosphere in lessons since there was no attempt to adjust the procedure of lessons (and except for two lessons the rest were senior four or candidate class lessons, whereby students are normally sensitive on syllabus coverage or procedure). In addition, the interaction between teacher and students was characteristic of lessons in Uganda as I have come to know them.

1.6.5. Attendance of a Workshop

From the 30th July 2001, I was able to attend a two day workshop at Lake View Hotel Mbarara in Uganda on the theme of religious and tribal discrimination in Uganda. The workshop was a unique opportunity that coincided with my field work trip. It addressed one of the key issues discussed and reflected in the thesis, religious discrimination. My personal contact with Rev. Dr. Waliggo, an eminent personality in matters of ecumenism in Uganda was to prove invaluable since he willingly offered me his public lecture notes that I was later able to collect from his office in Kampala. I have extensively referred to Waliggo's public lecture notes and some of which are the only Ugandan

reference source that I was able to come across that articulates some theories of Ugandan RE.

1.6.6. Magazines and Newspapers

The thesis makes use of two school magazines which contain information on school life experiences of old boys of the government founded Ntare School reflecting on issues of religious conflict and religious dialogue among students. Another magazine *Your Rights a Uganda Human Rights Commission Monthly* magazine is referred to in discussions concerning mushrooming churches, religious freedom in Uganda and the implications this may have for RE.

Newspapers are also another invaluable resource that I have used in the thesis discussions. This has particularly been helpful in tracing the conflict sparked off by the alleged threat of excluding RE from the curriculum and replacing it with Moral Education. The issue attracted national attention and was covered by the local press mainly due to the political overtones it reflected. The issue of religious discrimination, intolerance and violence is often reflected in the press.

The major Ugandan newspapers quoted are *The New Vision* newspaper which is the official government national newspaper and *The Monitor* newspaper which is an independent daily newspaper. For both newspapers I used internet or online versions of the newspapers and Ntare School archive versions of the newspapers (see appendix) for some other articles that I had not read online. Although newspaper reports can at times be sensationalist and therefore unreliable sources of information, the cross checking of stories in the government and independent newspapers provided a good balance.

1.6.7. E-mail and the Internet

The two electronic facilities were helpful in gathering information. E-mail was helpful since it was normally quick and reliable compared to letter writing. The major frustration was the constant breakdowns of e-mail systems due to electric and other technical reasons on the Ugandan side. This often caused some

frustration when in need of information. The e-mail method of gathering information was particularly helpful in my communication with Jenny Ottewell, a recently retired Church of Uganda Assistant Provincial Education Secretary who was very resourceful in updating me on the revised CRE syllabus and the developments concerning primary CRE in Uganda in which she was involved for about thirty years. I was able to use E-mail to communicate with the Librarian of Ntare School and other teachers who were helpful in arranging for me copies of CRE text-books and providing some missing background information about schools I had visited during my research.

The thesis makes use of two internet sources by quoting the official Uganda web page to refer to the Uganda constitution and the United Nations official web page to refer to the United Nations Human Declaration of Human Rights UNHDHR. Both of these are key references on the question of religious discrimination in Uganda. This facility was helpful since I could not readily get the hard bound copies of the publications in question.

1.6.8. Dissertations

Unpublished degree and diploma theses from Uganda Christian University-Mukono were particularly resourceful on the question of religion and politics in Uganda, an issue that has been well researched. Secondly, I was able to obtain information on research done on Church of Uganda students' religious rights in Roman Catholic founded public education schools. A published PhD thesis at the University of Leeds addressing the interplay between ethnicity, religion and politics in Uganda was consulted and so was another thesis investigating the influence of African traditional religious beliefs on Ugandan Christians.

1.6.9. Literature Critique

There are three categories of books that I have used in discussing issues related to religious pluralism and conflict and the subject of RE. The first category is that of books containing historical information about religious pluralism and conflict and developments concerning the introduction of formal

education in Uganda. The most resourceful authors in this category have been J.C. Ssekamwa and A. Kasozi who are elaborate on their coverage of developments concerning the establishment of formal education in Uganda and the implications of the formal education system for the religious lives of students.

The second category of books used is the text-books for secondary school students and primary school pupils' books. These are twenty in number and are included in the bibliography. These are the major books used in implementing the CRE and IRE secondary and primary school syllabuses and are therefore central in reflecting the spirit behind the CRE and IRE syllabus intentions through the content or subject matter of the books.

The third category of books referred to in the arguments of the thesis is those mainly written and published in Britain on the subject of the theory and practice of Religious Education. Some of these books express the historical circumstances in which the teaching of religion in community schools in England and Wales arose and in particular how it evolved from a Christian oriented CRE to a multi-faith RE. The thesis largely relies on these books to tease out the professional issues of RE such as commitment and neutrality of teachers in order to reflect on the current practice of teachers in Uganda. The recourse to British scholars is mainly because while there is no known written literature on the theory and practice of RE from a Ugandan perspective (except for some of Walligo's lecture notes), there is a wide range of literature on the subject in Britain. Secondly, the literature written by British scholars reflects similarities with the Ugandan context as is reflected in the thesis discussions. Thirdly, the principles that underlie Religious Education as a subject mainly revolve around its educational nature which would suggest some universal characteristics.

On the other hand, the greatest challenge of using books that articulate the theories of RE developed in Britain in order to reflect on Ugandan RE context is that they have as key standpoints a marked reliance on the interrelationship between psychological theories of learning and human development (Cox, 1983; Grimmit, 1978). While this is often acknowledged by CRE and IRE

syllabuses in Uganda, the thesis reflects in its discussions on the content of CRE and IRE that this may sometimes be a superficial statement. Alongside this, the advancement in theology and the implications it has had on the subject of RE in Britain have been radical (Smart, 1966) and yet in Uganda one could dare say that the dominant theological standpoint continues to be conservative as evidenced by the persistence with a confessional RE and as reflected in the CRE and IRE syllabuses. Finally, while the theories of RE articulated by British scholars often have as one of their key standpoints, the consideration of Britain as a predominantly secular society (O'Keeffe in Watson: 1992), in Uganda's case any theory of RE would need to have as its key standpoint the consideration of the dominance of a religious view of life among people.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ROOTS OF RELIGIOUS CONFLICT IN FORMAL EDUCATION IN UGANDA

2.1 Introduction

Although religious conflict was a common feature of the African traditional religious system, it took on a new dimension and intensified with the onset of Islam and Christianity, and later with the involvement of the British colonial government.²⁶ This chapter will therefore briefly reflect on the historical religious conflicts in Uganda which were crucial in shaping the psyche of the people and setting the scene for religious, social, political and educational developments. Secondly, this chapter will explore the missionaries' aim of establishing formal education, also referred to by Ugandan historians as secular or western education.²⁷ Thirdly, the British colonial government's policy of support to mission education and the ambivalent policy to Muslim education will be explored. Fourthly, this chapter will bring to light the dilemma and attempted solutions of provision for a non-denominational educational system by the colonial government which was to culminate in the nationalisation of religiously founded schools. Finally, the chapter will reflect upon the pitfalls of the colonial and first independent governments' failure to provide a solution to the thorny issue of religious education in the nationalised schools.

²⁶ Abdu Kasozi (1996:9) explains that before the advent of Islam and Christianity, religious beliefs in Buganda contributed to peace through the maintenance of the status quo of the rulers and the ruled. However, he observes that they were 'often used as a tool to seize power, to maintain power, to fight those in authority or fight external enemies.' Arye Oded (1995:62) similarly argues that the competition for power among chiefs became intense with the advent of foreign religions.

²⁷ Secular education was a term commonly used in Uganda to refer to the general curriculum offered in missionary schools including in the initial stages the three R's reading, writing and arithmetic and later on Mathematics, Geography, Science and others. This kind of education was preparing students for skills necessary to survive in the new world order or the 'secular world.' Since the Christian missionaries had come from the western world, formal education took on the tag 'western education.' The secular status of formal education serves to distinguish it from the religious menu that the missionaries offered alongside or even within it. As is referred to in this discussion, the dividing line between secular education and the

2.2. Historical Religious Conflicts in Uganda

The historical religious conflicts which involved African traditional religion adherents, Christians (Roman Catholics and Protestants) and the Muslims were motivated by political, economic and religious reasons.²⁸ Since the African traditional religious beliefs were used as a tool for some few powerful Baganda chiefs to achieve their selfish political and economic interests, Kasozi argues that:

It was therefore not surprising that when Islam and Christianity were introduced in Buganda, they were adopted not only for spiritual but also for political, and in a number of cases, for selfish motives (Kasozi: 1996: 10).

While Kasozi does not play down the importance of some people's attachment to their religious beliefs with respect to African traditional religious beliefs, Christianity and Islam, he highlights the ulterior motives of some people in Ugandan society to use religion to achieve their ends. This is a key issue that needs to be constantly reflected upon in the social, political, economic and even educational developments by all citizens so that personal interests are not disguised as society's interests. This is especially important in view of the recurring nature of this theme in Uganda's history that is dominated by the inter-play between religion and politics (Kayunga in Mamdani and Oloka Onyango: 1994; Oded: 1995; Kanyeihamba: 1998; Welbourne: 1968; Hansen: 1984).

To refer to political or economic reasons as being the main driving force behind all religious activity in Uganda would be doing injustice to the rich religious heritage of the nation and most important the events of history. The Muslim converts who were killed in 1876 after defying Kabaka Muteesa I have gone on to be acknowledged as the first Muslim martyrs (Oded: 1995; Quraishy:

religious menu it offered was to be a key issue in being viewed as antagonistic to the Muslim Arabic world view.

²⁸ This thesis is not concerned with tracing the many positive contributions of the different religious communities in Uganda which are so vast and well documented that providing a bibliographical reference would be an unnecessary task

1987).²⁹ Similarly, the Christian converts who were killed in 1886 in defiance of Kabaka Mwanga have gone on to become important icons of Uganda's religious heritage (Sekamwa and Kasibante : 1985; Pastoral Institute of East Africa: 1975).³⁰

The religious wars which took place in Uganda mainly between 1888 and 1892 were to have a significant effect on the relationship between different religious groups and in particular on the distribution of power and resources. Religious alliances were a key feature of the religious wars and these included one between the Roman Catholics, Muslims and Protestants who united to fight Kabaka Mwanga, another one between Roman Catholics and Protestants who fought against the Muslims and the battles between Roman Catholics and Protestants (Kasozi: 1986; Oded: 1995; Kabwegyere: 1998; Tiberwondwa: 1998). The turning point of the religious civil wars was the defeat of the Roman Catholics by the Protestants in 1892 with the help of Captain Lugard of the Imperial East African Company IBEA. It is important to observe that although the Roman Catholics kept a low profile, the Muslims continued to carry out several rebellions against what they had regarded as the raw deal given to them by the British Colonial government.³¹ This was to be a key factor in the British colonial government's subsequent consideration of Muslims as a potentially warring religious group in comparison to other religious groups.³²

The British colonial government's support of Protestants in the religious wars and in particular the privileged position it was to bestow on them and to a great extent the Roman Catholic missionaries, following the 1900 Buganda agreement was to be a decisive factor in the missionary domination of formal education. Kasozi (1996) summarises it thus:

²⁹ Kasozi (1986:36) points out that the main reason of killing the Muslim converts was their refusal to eat meat offered for pagan rituals and Muteesa's leadership of Islamic prayers when he was not circumcised.

³⁰ The twenty two Catholic martyrs were canonized by Pope Paul VI in 1964 and according to the Roman Catholic theology they are held in a high esteem which includes their intercessory role to believers. As a result Roman Catholics from Africa and the world over congregate annually to mark the martyrs' day. The Church of Uganda martyrs who were also twenty two in number are held in high esteem except that the dominant 'evangelical' theology of the Church which stresses the salvific and intercessory role of Christ has meant that they have not been given significant 'attention'.

³¹ The settlement by Captain Lugard in 1892 included the allocation of counties to Protestants who were most favoured, the Catholics who were the second beneficiaries and the Muslims who were given only three unproductive counties (Kasozi: 1986: 30)

³² Kasozi (1986; 1996) refers to the revolts that the Muslims engaged in for some lengthy period after the end of the religious wars.

The 1900 agreement established the Anglican Protestants as the most favoured group with privileged access to resources and power to allocate administrative and political positions as well as land. The Catholics received less than the Protestants but the Muslims obtained the least power and resources (Kasozi, 1996: 15).³³

Kayunga in Mamdani (1994: 329) observes that this was to be the key reason why the missionaries were to have an edge over Muslims in starting educational and social services that required land and other key resources.

It is therefore worth noting that the environment in which formal education was introduced in Uganda was characterised by religious tension and conflict which was manifest in different ways including the subject of religious instruction (later on religious education) which will be the main concern of this thesis.³⁴

2.2.1. The Aim of Missionary Education

The aim of missionary education from its introduction in Uganda from 1877 to nearly 1925 was to establish Christianity and its practice in the country and to convert as many people as possible to that faith. Other educational aims were secondary (Sekamwa: 1997: 224).

As Sekamwa observes, the primary aim of missionary education was not the secular curriculum but the religious curriculum. While the religious wars could be viewed partly as a measure by the local Christians and Muslims, with the assistance of foreign powers to win over new converts through extending their respective spheres of influence, schools were to be the new battle fields. Schools were to play a central role as conversion centres especially in view of the longer period that children could spend at them. The missionary aim of conversion and spiritual growth of children is referred to in a report given at an educational conference held in April 1915 that spelt out the motivation behind the missionaries' education goals:

³³ Kasozi (1986: 74) points out that according to the Buganda agreement of 1900, free hold land was allotted to various religious groups except Muslims. Some few prominent Baganda Muslim royals who had not rebelled against the colonial government were given some land.

The position of education within the whole complex of CMS activities was defined at first on the basis of a comprehensive view of missionary work while the overall aim was always defined in spiritual terms, aptly summarised in the words; instruction, conversion and formation of character (Hansen, 1984: 249).

The three-tier base of missionary education is given by Hansen as the main goal of all their education efforts. Formal education was therefore mainly introduced in Uganda by missionaries to enable their converts to read the Bible and learn how to pray according to the Christian religious tradition. It is important to note that it is not only converts but even those who were adherents of the African traditional religions and Islam that were targeted for admission to these schools. In other words, these were informal conversion centres of the missionaries.

Another important dimension of the missionaries' aim of education is referred to by Hansen. This was to include not only the teaching of a secular curriculum but the changing of children's attitudes and behaviour which were mainly dictated by their subscription to the African traditional cultural experience. This is what has often been referred to as the civilising of Africans through the 'inculcation of western civilisation and the uprooting of local customs' (Oded: 1995: 73).³⁵ This is summed up by Tiberondwa who observes:

The whole African man had to be influenced; his soul, mind and body had to be saved. Therefore at mission stations, it was usual to find a church, to 'save' the soul, a school to capture the mind and a dispensary or hospital to heal the body (Tiberondwa: 1998: 38).

Therefore, while the main aim of the missionaries could be seen as the battle for souls, it was closely associated with meeting the health and intellectual needs of Africans, as Tiberondwa put it 'capturing the mind' to signify their anticipated subservience to the missionaries goals.

³⁴ Oded (1995: 61) submits that, 'the religious wars in Uganda between Christians and Muslims contributed to the widening of the gap between the two groups. This led to the lack of trust between each other, bitterness and rivalry.'

³⁵ Critics of the missionaries' wholesale condemnation of African religious and cultural practices as pagan have for example referred to the African cultural moral code as was the case in Buganda which stressed the ethic of *Obuntu bulamu* a Luganda word meaning 'a good person' or 'being human' which underpinned informal education in Buganda (Kasozi: 1996: 49)

Missionary education therefore needed a conducive atmosphere if it was to realise the main aim of conversion and spiritual growth of the converts and to a great extent the secondary aim of the civilising influence that mission education had on its converts. The denominational nature of education was a calculated step to ensure that children of a particular religious denomination were exposed to a kind of education that promoted the Christian faith in line with that denomination. In such schools they could be able to execute their programmes without undue interference from the government or any other authority.

2.2.2 The Denominational Nature of Western Education

The introduction of 'western education' in Uganda was marked by the establishment of a denominational school system and this was mainly because it is the religious denominations that pioneered education work. The denominational nature of education at its start was to have a marked impact on the trend of education organisation in Uganda since it was characterised by emphasis on the differences that existed between the religious groups. Each religious group provided its own school system in order to effectively fulfil the propagation of its religious ideals. One of the distinct features of 'western education' in the missionary schools was the unique position of the missionary as a teacher and evangelist. Tiberondwa says:

School education, as introduced in Africa by European missionaries, could not be completely separated from evangelisation. In fact, the two were one and conducted by the same white missionary (Tiberondwa, 1998: 64).

With specific reference to his Roman Catholic mission school experience in the early 1950s Pontiano Walakira (in Berman, 1975: 144) points out that Christian instruction went alongside the study of other curricular subjects in a Catholic out-post and that in all cases the teacher was the same. Evangelisation and Christian instruction were conducted in line with the religious tradition of the foundation body. It is mainly for this reason that there had to be efforts towards separation of children of the different religious traditions. Members or converts of either the Roman Catholic or Church of Uganda religious traditions in turn

saw themselves as potential rivals and tried to keep away from each other as much as possible. Tiberondwa expresses it thus:

What was particularly surprising was that even in the same village, all the Catholic children would go to a Catholic mission school while all the Protestant children would go to the Protestant mission schools. Mixing was not permitted because education was based entirely on religion (Tiberondwa, 1998: 44).

Tiberondwa's observation highlights the tension between the two major Christian religious groups since parents could dispense with all other factors such as proximity of a school to one's home for the sake of attending the one that belonged to a convert's religion. This is evidenced by Walakira who recounts his personal experience as a Roman Catholic whose father and the Roman Catholic priests did not want him to join the Protestant schools observing:

Brought up in a Catholic spirit, I never considered that the Protestant children should go to school with Catholic children. We had so many differences, at least I was made to believe so; different churches, different names, our priests were called Fathers and theirs Parsons, their boys and girls studied together and ours studied separately. Our district school soccer matches were not merely an extra curricular past time, but were used to demonstrate the superiority of our respective schools and religions (Walakira in Berman, 1975: 146).

The differences between Roman Catholics and Protestants were fundamental to the Roman Catholic and the Anglican mission although Walakira seems to downplay their significance. The differences reflected commitment to their respective ethos. This is even the main reason why Walakira (in Berman, 1975: 146) himself observes that 'the education received in either education system carried with it a Protestant or Catholic imprint.' The differences reflect the missionary ethos of 'instruction, conversion and formation of character' with due respect to the respective Christian religious denomination and point to the major reason why the missionaries were opposed to a non-denominational educational system.

It is important to note that this denominational system of education had become more or less an established school system in Uganda, even including the Asian immigrants. Ssekamwa comments on this aspect thus,

The Asian community had Hindus, Muslim Ismails, Sikhs and Roman Catholic Goanese. All these different Asian groups had their own schools along religious lines (Ssekamwa, 1997: 198).

In light of the missionary aim of education which centred on converting as many people as possible and their domination of education between 1877 and 1921, it would not be far fetched to submit that they had a great advantage of spreading Christianity than any other religious groups. It is for this reason that the Muslim question is explored especially in view of the Muslim parents' initial refusal to expose their children to 'western education' and the ambivalent role of the colonial government in supporting their cause for 'western education.'

2.2.3. Muslims' Preference for Islamic Spiritual Education

According to Kasozi (1986:85), 'Quranic schools in Uganda developed out of a need for Muslims to have a place for themselves and their children.' In other words, these schools were not only for the children but the Muslim converts of all ages who would benefit from their services. This can be seen as a parallel development to the missionary school situation that catered for Christians' spiritual interests. There was a deliberate effort to prepare their converts for the spiritual benefits of Islam. Kasozi while commenting on the aim of the Quranic School observes that ...

The aim of education in these schools was to make pupils good Muslims so that they would go to heaven, it was not intended to make them participate in the various secular activities of the world they lived in on this planet (Kasozi, 1986: 85).

This line of argument stresses the consideration of the Quranic education system as a self-fulfilling educational system. This is further evidenced by the fact that some of those who graduated from the advanced classes at these schools were later sent to Muslim countries abroad for further education (Kasozi, 1996: 104). In addition, the education of Prince Badru Kakungulu

which was characterised by different social forces that wanted to influence him included some Muslim clerics (Mullahs) who wanted him to have a purely Quranic education (Kasozi, 1996: 48). The decision of what kind of education to offer to Prince Badru Kakungulu, a Muslim and a member of the royal family in the early 1920's was to epitomize the problem of Muslims' 'western education' in Uganda. Although it was felt by the colonial government, the members of the royal family and Kabaka Daudi Chwa that it was best for him to get 'western education', there was no Muslim school that could offer it. He finally joined the Protestant founded Buddo school where express orders were given to the Headmaster Rev. Garrett not to convert him (Kasozi, 1996: 48). The attempts by Muslim clerics and different sections of the establishment to keep the young prince away from a Protestant founded school was an acknowledgement of the missionary nature of the school system. It was for this reason that the majority of the Muslims preferred their children to be exposed to Quranic education that fitted in with their religious tradition.

For those Muslim parents' who wanted their children to acquire 'western education' following the changed attitudes in early 1930's (when with the help of Prince Badru Kakungulu and Ramadhan Gava 'western education' was 'grafted into Quran schools')³⁶, there was the major problem of internal divisions that plagued the Muslim community based on leadership and theological differences:

On the issue of education Muslims divided their forces by failing to put all their resources into one single project. Thus one would find, as was the case in Masaka township, two Muslim schools within a mile of each other. Instead of bringing all their money together and putting up one good school, the Muslims built two or three bad ones (Kasozi, 1986: 97).

It is possible that if Muslims had been more united, they would have gained significant successes in the education of their children especially from the time when the attitude of many Ugandans changed towards 'western education.' It has commonly been argued by many people in Uganda that when Muslims lost

³⁶ The system of 'grafting western education' into Quran schools was to win over the conservative Muslims who detested western education with its 'Christian baggage.' Kasozi (1996:110) observes that their curriculum stressed the transmission of Islamic religious values based on the Quran and 'western education' consisting of the three R's in the Roman alphabet.

out in the political administration of the country, many resorted to transacting business and a lot of them became rich. Although the wealth they gained might have helped them to set up schools, it is also likely to have been a downside factor in shunning 'western education' since most of them could satisfy their monetary needs³⁷.

2.2.4. Muslims' Fear of Conversion to Christianity in Mission Schools

The missionary domination of education and the demand for 'western education' on part of some Muslims meant that some Muslim parents decided to send their children to mission schools and the clash between religions and 'cultures', parents and their children was to become a key issue in the education of Muslim children. The clash between religions and cultures is best summed by Kasozi while referring to the attitude of Ugandan Muslims who viewed 'western education' as 'a socialising agent of the Judeo-Christian cultural system that colonial officials were trying to build in Uganda with the help of Christian missionaries' (Kasozi, 1996: 102).

While the Muslims' attitudes are portrayed as being oblivious of some of the pro-Muslim colonial officials views towards the promotion of 'western education' in a Muslim environment (referred to in subsequent discussion), he reflects on their view of the Christian religion as being the vehicle of the cultural values arising from the originators of the Christian religion. These Christian cultural values were seen to be diametrically opposed to the Arabic-Islamic ones. In short, much as some parents wanted 'western education' for their children, they did not want their children to adopt Christian values or to be converted to Christianity, and this was to become a self-fulfilling prophecy as argued in the next discussion.

The clash between Muslim parents' and their children was best illustrated by the conversion of Yusuf K.Lule, the son of a prominent Muslim Abdulla Kironde from Islam to Christianity which did not go down well with his parents and the

³⁷ In Uganda there is a common view that education is primarily meant to enable one to get a job and earn a living or live a better life. Since many Muslims were able to become wealthy without getting educated, it was generally felt by some Muslims that 'western education' was not necessary.

Muslim community³⁸. The conversion of Lule from Islam to Christianity happened when the youthful Y.Lule was sent to the Protestant Buddo School (Kasozi: 1996: 104). This was to be one of the main reasons why Muslims shunned 'western education' (Kayunga in Mamdani: 1994:329).³⁹ Kasozi (1986: 111) further observes that many Muslim youngsters on going to Christian schools altered their names to those that rhymed with Christian one's and these included Musa for Moses, Yusuf for Joseph and Abdu for Abby. This was a key indication that Muslim children had low self-esteem and sought to overcome this by taking on a Christian character (since some did not convert as Lule did). It is also possible that their personal evaluation of the new world order showed them that they stood better chances of benefiting from it by identifying with Christianity or, as in the case of Lule, converting to Christianity.

2.2.5. The Ambivalent 'Colonial Policy' Towards Islamic Education

While the British colonial attitude towards Muslims' education has at times been seen to have been the outright prevention of its advancement, there is also evidence to show that the reverse was true.

According to Welbourne (1965:7) there was no articulated colonial policy regarding Islam in general and that it was only individual colonial officials who in some cases displayed their outright distaste for Islam. In other words, it can be inferred that individual colonial officials cannot be taken as an embodiment of the British colonial policy. On the other hand, in his reflection on the Church-State relationship in the colonial setting, Hansen (1984: 434) observes that the colonial government's religious policy was such that Muslims were not given equal status with the Christians. The two accounts of Welbourne and Hansen indicate that there could have been different statements written by the British colonial government officials that could have seemed to reflect the policy of the

³⁸ On the other hand, Kasozi (1996: 112; Kabwegyere, 1998: 14; Tiberondwa, 1998:31) refers to the close dialogue or relationship between Muslims and Protestants (like Lule) expressed in the former's preference to attend Protestant schools and to have close alliances in politics. Kasozi's explanation is that the Protestants were quick to strike the alliance when they realized that the Roman Catholics were more numerically superior and a potential threat to their political ambitions. On the other hand, the Muslims' are said to have anticipated more cooperation from Protestants than Catholics. It seems to be an enigmatic question though with no simple answers.

³⁹ Yusuf Lule went on to become one of the Presidents' of Uganda in the aftermath of the 1979 liberation war that toppled dictator Idi Amin Dada.

colonial government on Islam in general and their education in particular. It would seem that the major reason why some colonial officials developed a negative attitude towards Islam is the several revolts that they engaged in after the end of the religious civil wars (refer to foregoing discussion). As we shall observe in the subsequent discussion, there is evidence to indicate that some colonial officials advocated for Muslims' education in a non-denominational setting.

Perhaps one of the most important reasons why the colonial government may be blamed for not having provided the much needed 'western education' for Muslim children was their failure to organise a centralised education system. Since they had taken on the burden of administering then it would have been logical for them to be expected to have the means to supply the necessary social services for the citizens regardless of religious background. In addition, it is important to note that while they did not give financial support towards Muslims' education, they gave some to missionaries in support of the missionary education system (Tiberondwa, 1998: 68; Hansen, 1984: 225). This is an indicator that if the problem had been lack of adequate funds, they probably should have shared it out equally to all the religious groups.

The action of some colonial officials in supporting the cause of Muslim children's education is worth reflecting upon since it might easily be subsumed under the generally accepted view that they all had a negative policy towards Islam (Hansen, 1975; Oded: 1995; Kasozi, 1986; Kayunga in Mamdani and Onyango, 1994). Although the colonial officials tried in the early 1920s to initiate a non-denominational education system to run parallel to the missionary education system, they met with stiff opposition from the missionaries (Kasozi, 1986: 102).⁴⁰ While this can be considered a weakness on government's part, it seems to have been a realistic estimation of their anticipated failure in running such a system without the assistance of missionaries at some point who had the resources and personnel. It is worth noting that not only was there a lack of schools for Muslim children but Christian children since the nation was vast and

⁴⁰ Colonial officials like George Wilson in 1905 and Eric Hussey in 1924 had their plans for a non-denominational educational system resisted by Bishop Tucker and Bishop Willis respectively (Kasozi, 1996: 103). In addition some Ugandans who wanted to establish private secondary schools in the 1930's

adequate resources could not easily be mobilised. This was to be the case until gradually schools were established across the country. Muslim education particularly gained momentum from the time when a young Muslim prince's education became a source of contention following the different groups that wanted to influence him.

The case of Prince Badru Kakungulu became a test case of Muslims' education in Uganda since it witnessed the clash of different social forces in early 1920s that wanted to influence him and these included the colonial government. The then Governor of Uganda Jarvis is said to have taken keen interest in the education of Prince Kakungulu so that he would play a leadership role among the Muslim community (Kasozi, 1996: 53). What is particularly significant about the benevolent attitude of the colonial officer and probably the interests he represented is that he wrote letters to the Governor General of the Sudan and the Resident of Zanzibar seeking their help in educating the young Muslim prince. The main aim of preferring his education in Sudan or Zanzibar was to expose him to the best possible education in a Muslim environment. In short, the colonial officer in this respect is seen to have preferred in the first place the exposure of the young Muslim prince to an Islamic education instead of enrolling with Buddo, a mission school where he could most likely end up being converted.

The positive attitude of former colonial government officers to Islamic education is reflected by Kasozi (1996: 57) who observes that one of the former teacher's of Prince Badru Kakungulu Commander Calliwell went on to found Nyakasura Secondary School for philanthropic reasons. Although this school was a quasi-Protestant school since it had been founded by a Protestant who was not a missionary, 'it continued to reflect the founders positive attitude towards Muslim students through the 1940s, 1950s and into the 1960s (Kasozi, 1996: 57).

It was not to be the only positive attitude exhibited by a few colonial officials but a steady shift in attitude towards assuming the educational responsibility from the early 1930s that saw the successive attempts to address the Muslims'

on a non-denominational basis were vehemently opposed by the missionaries but went ahead to establish them (Kasozi, 1996: 107)

education question. First, it was by supporting Muslims efforts towards acquiring 'western education' within the Quran schools and second, through the provision of an all inclusive education system.⁴¹

2.2.6. Effort Towards the Nationalisation of Education

The establishment of government secondary schools on recommendation of the De Bunsen Education committee of 1952 was a key step taken by the colonial government towards the nationalisation of education in Uganda.

Government secondary schools were viewed as all inclusive educational institutions that would comprise students of different religious denominations. The colonial government therefore, by instituting them, was finally responding to the denominational nature of education in Uganda which had been characterised by emphasis on religious differences and therefore compromising the national unity of the country. The key beneficiaries of such an inclusive education system that was to provide 'western education' without the 'Christian baggage' attached to it were the Muslims. Furley and Watson (1978: 280) observe that, 'the increase in government senior secondary schools after 1952 enabled more Muslim pupils to reach a higher western education.'

One of the schools, started under this programme was Ntare School in western Uganda established in 1956 with its first Headmaster William Crichton from Scotland.⁴² The new spirit of an all inclusive education system at the time is referred to by Yoweri Museveni the current President of Uganda who went to Ntare School in 1962 at the threshold of Uganda's independence.⁴³ Museveni describes his school experiences thus:

⁴¹ Kasozi (1996: 109-111) observes that by 1935 there were few good Muslim schools that offered 'western education' at elementary level and that some colonial officials had been supportive of the efforts of establishing 'western education' in the Quran schools. Muslims' acquisition of 'western education' was to be streamlined with the formation of the Uganda Muslim Education Association in 1944 which was to play an administrative and supervisory role of the Quran schools that took on the teaching of 'western education' It received huge donations from H.H The Agha Khan (Kasozi, 1996: 106)

⁴² Other schools which were regionally located included Sir Samuel Baker High school in Gulu, Kabarega Secondary school in Bunyoro, Teso College Aloet in Teso

⁴³ Welbourne (1965) while discussing the Catholic and Protestants relationship towards independence points out the association of religion with politics in Uganda whereby the Democratic Party (DP) came to be led and dominated by Roman Catholics and the Uganda People's Congress (UPC) came to be led and dominated by Protestants. It is important to note that sour relationships between the two different political

Ntare School was very different from many other secondary schools at that time. It had been founded in 1956 and was not based on religion, like other older schools in the country which were predominantly Catholic, Protestant or Muslim. Boys came from all over the country and the school developed a character of its own where one was free to make friends regardless of religious denomination, tribe or social class (Museveni, 1997: 13).

Similarly, Eriya Kategaya, his former school mate and Uganda's first deputy Prime Minister, describes the non-sectarian spirit that developed at the school:

It was at Ntare School that for the first time in my life, I attended a Roman Catholic service. I was taken to Nyamitanga by my late friend Bangirana and I went there out of curiosity just to see a Catholic service. It was at this school that I developed a non-religious and non-tribal attitude towards fellow Ugandans (*The Lion Magazine*, 1997: 18).

The two experiences of Museveni and Kategaya serve not only to signify the potential benefits that lay in an all inclusive educational system for the unity of the country but also serve to illustrate the discriminatory nature of the religiously founded schools. This scenario illustrates the strengths of a non-denominational system compared to a denominational system that seeks to separate children of different religious traditions when in after school experience they will inevitably have to learn how to live together. It might further strengthen the case for the possible benefits of a multi-faith RE whose underlying motive would be, as in Kategaya's experience, to shake off the curiosity and encounter other people's religious traditions instead of imagining what they are like. The Muslims' response to an all inclusive nature of education in a government secondary school can be reflected by Swaibu Musoke, a Muslim, who went to Ntare school as a pioneer student and is now the Vice-Chairman of the Board of Governors at the school.

It is worth noting that the colonial government's establishment of government secondary schools was an attempt towards the nationalisation of education in Uganda. The subsequent implementation of this ideal by the first post-

parties were a common occurrence which often found its way in schools. The sour relationships between the Roman Catholics and Protestants could have been reflected in the verbal battles that Walakira (in Berman: 1975) describes.

independent government is therefore to be seen from this perspective. As illustrated or reflected by the experiences of Walakira (in Berman, 1975), Museveni (1997) and Kategaya (in the *Lion Magazine*, 1997), the divisive nature of the denominational educational system and later on the RE curriculum could no longer be acceptable for an independent country whose political ideals of unity and harmony among all people's were paramount.

2.2.7. The Nationalisation of Religiously Founded Schools

Although the nationalisation of religiously founded schools in 1963 was, as expected, bound to face 'quiet resistance' from the missionaries and supporters of mission education, it had been a long awaited development by the pan-Africanists who criticised the divisive nature of religion and vouched for the promotion of not only a Ugandan but an African spirit.⁴⁴ Their failure to resolve the issue of teaching about religion as a subject in schools at such an opportune time is in part responsible for the dilemma in which the subject currently finds itself.

The greatest motivation behind the first independent government's plans for the establishment of a non-denominational education system is expressed by Berman:

On the eve of independence in the early 1960s it was felt that one way to diffuse the smouldering denominational issue was to remove schools from sectarian control by nationalising them (Berman, 1975: 137-138).

The smouldering problem which is reflected in the foregoing discussion was therefore considered to have its roots in the separation of students of different religious traditions. In other words, they were not going to have any common

⁴⁴ At around this time most African countries were struggling for their independence from the different colonial powers and pan-Africanists campaigned for a call towards inculcating among African children the sense of unity and the promotion of African educational, social and (for some since the majority of graduates of mission schools did not subscribe to this view) religious values. Another related development at this time was the creation of the Uganda Joint Christian Council UJCC in 1964 which is an ecumenical organization formed in response to the need for unity mainly between Roman Catholics and Protestants communities (Waliggo: 2001) The two communities had been 'torn apart' by the historical religious conflicts, the denominational school systems and the political party activities of the late 1950's and early 1960's.

ground in their educational and social lives. This was considered a threat to the social, political and economic development of the newly found independent nation and the promotion of 'an African identity' (Ssekamwa, 1997:170).

Another key issue that was taken into account before the nationalisation of education is cited by Ssekamwa (1997: 171) who points out that since the building of schools by the three major religious traditions did not take into account logistical reasons, it was to address the unnecessary duplication of educational services in one given area which would in turn minimise costs. In other words, the government's neutral stand towards religion and its taking the education responsibility meant that they could overlook the 'trivial differences' of religion (regarded fundamental by the religious communities) and concentrate on the benefits of 'western education' without its 'Christian baggage.' Another related problem that was identified by the first independent government is the political question raised by the missionary education imbalance in distributing their educational services⁴⁵. This is because they mainly preferred to settle and offer their services to people in good human settlement areas and therefore ignored what they considered as environmentally or socially harsh areas.

The issue of the creation of a centralised teaching service was considered essential for 'inculcating a national consciousness' among the school children (Ssekamwa, 1997:172). The missionary and Muslim religious leaders' running of the education system which included recruiting, paying and ensuring that teachers followed the code of conduct for the respective religious foundation bodies that recruited them was considered an administrative inconvenience. It is against this background that the nationalisation of religiously founded schools was to be fully endorsed by the first post-independent government.

The 1963 Education Act ratified the nationalisation of religiously founded schools and according to Ssekamwa (1997: 171-172) it was thereafter that for the first time the government took over the religiously founded schools.⁴⁶ In principle this meant that the overall management and administration of schools

⁴⁵ Ssekamwa (1997) argues that nationalization was meant to address the problem of unequal development in the country.

was to be in the hands of the government. Of particular significance at the time was the disbanding of the positions of the mission schools supervisors for the Roman Catholic and the Protestant church.⁴⁷

In 1963, consequently the positions of the mission school supervisors, held by representatives of the Catholic and Anglican churches, were abolished. The work of these supervisors was centralised in various education offices, and the initiative, planning and financing of denominational education have, theoretically at least, passed into the hands of civil servants (Berman, 1975: 138).

While this was to be an important land mark in the shift from missionary to government control of education, what Berman refers to as the 'theoretical' position of education officials in fulfilling all these duties reflects the inadequacy of the central government then, as is the case now, in addressing decisively key issues concerning the overall management of schools. As will be observed in subsequent discussions concerning some government policies in schools, it can be safely said that in some respects it is the 'super-structure' of the denominational educational system that was 'taken over' and not the sub-structure.'

The temporary resistance to the 'government take over' of schools was mainly from the Roman Catholic Church with the support of the Democratic Party (DP), the party in opposition then (Ssekamwa, 1997: 173). As will be reflected upon in the subsequent discussions, the Roman Catholic Church has always been very keen to retain the denominational nature of their schools, in particular through the choice of who teaches RE and in promoting a Roman Catholic ethos. This strong desire to retain the Roman Catholic religious ideals led to the establishment of several Roman Catholic mission schools in the aftermath of the nationalisation of religiously founded schools⁴⁸. These were founded through the effort of some missionaries but mainly parents' who wanted their children to be exposed to a Roman Catholic ethos in addition to acquiring 'western education'.

⁴⁶ The 'government take over of schools' in Luganda referred to as 'Amasomero bagatwaala' (a local language) was to become a slogan that was popularized mainly by those who resisted the nationalization of religiously founded schools.

⁴⁷ Kasozi (1996: 114) mentions that Prince Badru Kakungulu was president of the Uganda Muslims Education Association until education policies centralized issues of school administration in 1964.

⁴⁸ Such schools to this day continue to play a dominant role in the education of Catholic children.

The Protestants on their part did not resist the government take over of schools to the same extent as the Roman Catholics and this is likely to have been a result of the election of the Uganda People's Congress (UPC), a Protestant led and dominated party.⁴⁹ In other words, with respect to Kasozi's political maxim of 'upward social mobility', they were poised to benefit economically and otherwise from the new political order. Similarly with the possible influence of Prince Badru Kakungulu (who despite first opposing the idea of Muteesa II becoming President went on to vehemently support his fellow royal family member), the Muslim community may have been reluctant to oppose the government 'take over of schools.' In addition as discussed in the foregoing discussion, a marriage of convenience had developed between the two religious groups over time and this could have been strengthened by often cordial relationships that developed between the Protestants and the Muslims who went to Protestant schools.

2.2.8. The Unresolved Question of 'Religious Education'

Any efforts to settle Uganda's social problems must take into account the country's multi-religious condition and accept Islam, Christianity and traditional religions as part of Uganda's mosaic, brutally inherited from our brutal past (Kasozi, 1986: 92).

The failure of the first independent government to treat the teaching of religion in the newly nationalised schools as 'a special subject' with major implications for the much needed national unity is partly to blame for the current dilemma in which the subject finds itself. While the Roman Catholic and Protestant agreement to design a Joint Christian syllabus is commendable as a gesture of efforts towards religious unity, the failure of extending the same gesture to Muslims at such an opportune time is regrettable.

The only reference to the subject of teaching religion in school by the first independent government is contained in a report written as a background to the

⁴⁹ The first President of Uganda was Kabaka Muteesa II, a Protestant, who had been sweet talked into taking up the highest political post (against the advice of the King of Bunyoro and Toro and Prince Kakungulu) after some manouevring by the political ideologues of the UPC led by Dr. Milton Obote, a Protestant who was to become the Prime Minister (Kasozi, 1996).

1963 Education Act which specified that 'teaching of religion in school should be of the highest standard, as carefully planned for the learner as any other subject' (Ssekamwa, 1997: 172). In light of the 'government take over' of schools, it would have been pertinent for the detailed report to trace the developments in the subject right from the missionary intention of teaching the subject in its schools. This background would have enabled them to assess potential problems in allowing for the teaching of religion in the nationalised schools based on the religion of the foundation body of the school. A logical deduction from such an assessment would have called for a reconsideration of the purpose of RE in schools in view of the multi-religious nature of the classes. At this point in Uganda's history it might have been more feasible for the government to arbitrate in this matter since there was a high sense of anticipation of unity and harmony among all Ugandans in an independent nation.

The teaching of religion in the nationalised schools in line with the respective religious traditions of the foundation body which was to continue until much later in the 1970s is an indication of the government oversight in not initiating reforms in the teaching of the subject. As we shall observe in the next chapter this was to be compounded by the lack of a policy to safeguard the religious or religious education interests of students who attended schools that did not belong to their religion.⁵⁰ On the side of the Christian religious tradition it was therefore a significant step in the direction of religious dialogue and efforts towards unity for the Roman Catholics and Protestants to design secondary and primary syllabuses that went beyond the denominational horizons. It had implications for dialogue and improved interpersonal relations between the two Christian religious traditions. The limitations of the joint syllabuses especially arising from their stagnant nature and therefore failure to identify questions of current importance to the multi-religious society and most important the multi-religious schools will be explored in the third and fourth chapters.

⁵⁰ A relevant policy on RE at the time could have given some guidelines on the need to promote the educational and not evangelical dimension of RE with markers of the two drawn. In addition it could have made some safeguard against the compulsory study of religions other than one's own in the newly nationalized schools.

The reluctance of the Protestants and Roman Catholics to extend the newly found spirit of religious dialogue to the Muslims in designing a Joint Christian and Islamic education syllabus raises some questions. Firstly, it might have been too early to make amends between the Muslims and Christians following the historical religious wars between the two groups. This is mentioned by Oded (1995: 50): 'one can understand why the hostility between Christians and Muslims lingered on for a long time afterwards.' While this could be true to some extent, it cannot be fully justifiable in view of the bitter religious wars fought between Roman Catholics and Protestants up till 1892 and the subsequent tension and conflicts between the two Christian religious traditions prior to the designing of the Joint Christian syllabuses.

Perhaps, the anticipated theological differences between the two major religious traditions would have been the cause for worry. This could have been a significant but not insurmountable problem especially if the purpose of teaching religion in the nationalised schools was not to centre on spiritual growth or conversion of students. The purpose of religion could have centered on the promotion of the understanding of the different religions in Uganda and the development of respect for other people's religions, key requirements of an RE curriculum that addresses itself to multi-religious schools like the then newly nationalised schools.

The question of education for Muslims was to remain largely unresolved by the first independent government. This was because the teaching of religion in the Christian religiously founded schools from early 1960s was to continue along lines the religious tradition of the respective Christian religious foundation bodies. Since the majority of schools (and the good ones at that) were Christian founded, this meant that Muslim students had to further face the same old problem of engaging with the learning of religion in class whose intention was for the spiritual growth of students within the Christian religious tradition. Another development is that in the purely government founded schools such as Ntare school, neither the colonial government that instituted them in the 1950s nor the first independent government was to seriously reflect on the possibility of introducing the teaching of the Islamic religion to cater for the Muslim students' religious interests. As the subsequent discussion will show this has

continued to be the practice in the government secondary schools such as Ntare School where it is only the Christian religious tradition that is taught as a compulsory subject to senior one and two despite the presence of Muslim students in the school.⁵¹

2.3. Conclusion

This chapter has shown that there are important lessons to learn from the root of religious conflict in Uganda, the introduction of formal education and the teaching of religion in particular. This chapter has shown that it is important for society to draw a distinction between people who use religion to achieve their selfish interests and those who use it to promote the common good. It has further been shown that the main intention of missionary education was to cater for the spiritual growth of students within their respective Christian religious traditions and to convert the unbelievers. The denominational nature of education and the divisive characteristics that it reflected was to become a cause of concern for the colonial government.

This chapter has also shown that although some Muslims preferred Quran education to 'western secular education', those who wanted to benefit from the latter were prevented by its potential to lead to conversion. While the efforts of the colonial government to provide a non-denominational educational system (through the establishment of government secondary schools) have been highlighted, their failure and that of the first independent government (following the nationalisation of schools) to address the issue of RE has been pointed out as a great oversight. It is against this background that the next chapter explores the current provision of RE in the nationalised secondary schools and the continued problematic role of the subject since its main aim is the spiritual growth of students within the students' respective religious traditions.

⁵¹ Several reasons can account for the low numbers of Muslims in the school part of which have their roots in Uganda's past history (see foregoing discussion), however this may not be a license to ignore the importance of IRE being introduced in a government founded school.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PROVISION FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN UGANDA

This chapter is concerned with the exploration of the secondary school Christian Religious Education and Islamic Religious Education syllabuses, the aims of Christian Religious Education and Islamic Religious Education and the textbooks in use in Uganda.⁵² Firstly, I will argue that the joint Christian syllabuses *Developing in Christ* and *Christian Living Today* and the IRE syllabus, whose main aim is the spiritual growth of students⁵³ within the Christian and Islamic religious traditions, was deeply problematic then, as it is now for implementation in the multi-religious schools.

Secondly, I will argue that the study of either the Christian religious tradition or the Islamic religious tradition exclusively in a multi-religious context limits students' capacity to engage with other religious traditions so that in the process they can develop respect and understanding for them (see chapter one for definition of respect and understanding of religion). Similarly, I will argue that despite the benefits of emphasizing the theme of unity by the *Developing in Christ* and *Christian Living Today* syllabuses, diversity within the Christian religious tradition needs to be given due attention.

Thirdly, I will argue that although IRE aims desire the development of respect and tolerance for people of other religious traditions, their main emphasis is on enabling students to become practicing Muslims. Alongside this issue, I will explore the limitations of the IRE text books which, apparently, do not seem to portray a healthy engagement between Islam and other religious traditions and in particular Christianity.

⁵² Both syllabuses were designed in the early 1970's in part as a response to the gradual replacement of the Cambridge Examinations by the East African Examinations Council (Pastoral Institute of East Africa, 1975: 1; Quraishy, 1987: ix)

⁵³ This is a term used in the discussion to refer to the concern of the religious leadership of the Christian and Muslim religious communities to provide an RE curriculum that caters for the spiritual growth of students in their faith or exposes them to the religious beliefs, practices and values of their respective religious traditions

3. Background to 'Developing in Christ' and 'Christian Living Today' Syllabuses

Developing in Christ syllabus is a background course to the main secondary school CRE syllabus, the *Christian Living Today* syllabus⁵⁴ and is supposed to be offered to students in the first and second years of secondary education in Uganda.⁵⁵ *Christian Living Today* syllabus is the main course offered by students in the third and fourth years of secondary school. *Developing in Christ* and *Christian Living Today* syllabuses were designed by the same joint Christian ecumenical committee following a series of work-shops held at Rubaga in Uganda from 1970 to 1972 under the auspices of the Pastoral Institute in Eastern Africa whose offices were at Kampala, Uganda. The offices were later to be shifted to Eldoret in Kenya following uncertainty of the safety of the operations of joint Christian activities at hands of President Idi Amin who had started to suspect any such gatherings as a potential political threat. These are the syllabuses which have formed the basis for Christian Religious Education in Ugandan schools ever since.

The designing of both syllabuses was a result of a regional joint venture of Roman Catholic and Protestant RE specialists plus other resource personnel in the field of religion⁵⁶. Although the Church History reference section of *Christian Living Today* Textbooks One and Two⁵⁷ contain articles by historians who were Christian, such as Louise Pirouet, educationists such as J.C. Ssekamwa and Religious Studies lecturers such as Akiiki Byaruhanga, the names of the members of the ecumenical committee and the religious denominations they represented were not spelt out. The joint effort between Roman Catholics and Protestants from Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia and Uganda (Pastoral

⁵⁴ *Christian Living Today* syllabus is the main Christian religious education syllabus for secondary schools upon which the national examinations in the subject of Christian religious education are based.

⁵⁵ None of the five schools in which I conducted research seemed to follow *Developing in Christ* syllabus. Instead students are introduced to *Christian Living Today* as early as in the first year of secondary education. The argument of the teachers is that there is 'too much pressure' from students to begin the syllabus on which national examinations are based. The lesson that I observed in a senior one class at Ntare school was introducing students to the theme of Happiness which is a sub-theme of the *Christian Living Today* syllabus while the senior one teacher at Nyamitanga S.S.S was introducing students to theme of Living in a changing society, a sub-theme in the *Christian Living Today* syllabus.

⁵⁶ RE specialists at the time, even as is the case now, were mainly representatives of respective Christian churches and often these included RE supervisors and CRE teachers in secondary schools.

⁵⁷ These are the two text-books used by students who follow *Christian Living Today* syllabus and were published in 1974 and 1975 respectively.

Institute of Eastern Africa, 1975:1) in designing the *Christian Living Today syllabus* was a significant step in working for Christian unity, especially in view of the historical religious conflicts between the two major Christian religious traditions not only in Uganda but in East-Africa.

On the side of Uganda, without the endorsement of the Roman Catholic and Church of Uganda religious leadership, the Joint Christian syllabuses would not have come into force. On the other hand, the involvement of the mentioned East African countries in designing Joint Christian syllabuses largely resulted in the failure to address the specific religious education problems and/ or needs of Ugandan students, in particular by seeking the best way of responding to the unique historical religious conflicts (see Chapter two). Notwithstanding, as I shall discuss in reference to the content of the textbooks of *Developing in Christ* and *Christian Living Today*, there are benefits from both syllabuses in contributing towards Christian unity.

It is important to note that although the Joint East African Committee that designed the syllabuses is no longer in place and other countries such as Zambia designed new syllabi, the *Christian Living Today* syllabus continues to be the official syllabus of *Christian Religious Education* in Uganda while on the whole the *Developing in Christ* syllabus is on the brink of expiry.⁵⁸ The static nature of *Christian Living Today* syllabus therefore raises questions on the dedication towards sustaining this ecumenical project by the Roman Catholic and Church of Uganda members who were greatly involved in its inception and are currently directly responsible for its implementation not to mention the address of the problem raised by the failure of teachers to follow *Developing in Christ* syllabus for first and second year secondary students.

⁵⁸ In a personal conversation with Dr. Clement Katulushi at Leeds University on 20/10/2002 who used the two joint syllabuses to teach students in Zambia, he informed me that since the 1980s, Zambia had developed its own Christian religious education syllabuses in order to reflect the specific needs of the country and students' interests.

3.1.1. Intentions of the *Developing in Christ* Syllabus and its Organisation

The *Developing in Christ* syllabus comprises two major courses that are subdivided into six sub topics and these match with the study book titles⁵⁹ out-lined below. The syllabus is contained in the preamble of the study books and indicates brief introductory notes on the units that are covered while exploring the topics.

The main intention of *Developing in Christ* syllabus, similar to that of the *Christian Living Today* syllabus, is the concern for the spiritual growth of students within the Christian religious tradition and this is expressed in light of the central role of Jesus Christ in the life of the students:

The *Developing in Christ* series' is a life-experience, Bible based programme for Christian religious education. The Bible is the word of God for life: it is about our lives as individuals and a community. The great revelation of God is a person, Jesus Christ, who calls people to see the significance of their own lives by, pointing out to them the meaning of human existence (*Teachers' Handbook for Developing in Christ*, 1981: 7).

The emphasis on the importance of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and in particular reference to the Bible (a basic resource) as the 'word for life' has connotations of its sanctified nature and presupposed ideal relevance for students in their spiritual growth. In short, the above statement reflects an expectation of the students to live lives that revolve around the person of Jesus Christ. Mindful of the multi-religious nature of the schools in Uganda in which the syllabus was and is still implemented, it raises questions of appropriateness to members of other religious traditions, an issue that I explore while discussing the aims of CRE.

Course One of *Developing in Christ* syllabus is entitled '*Christ and my humanity*' and it is composed of three topics and these are '*Christ and My Personal Freedom*', '*Christ and My Work and Relationships*' and '*Christ and My Power to*

⁵⁹ These study books are essentially picture study books and they mainly contain pictures and captions. Most of the captions are Bible references given as a guide to understand the pictures and several pictures also portray daily life experiences from which lessons can be drawn to teach the particular topics or themes.

Live' The first major course is followed by students in the first year of secondary school. The second major course is for students in the second year of secondary education and it is entitled '*Christian life in the Community*'. It is composed of three study books whose titles are '*My Responsibility in the Community*', '*My Search for Values*' and '*My Response to Values*'. Reference will be made to the content of some of these study books in the discussion of the content of textbooks of CRE.

3.1.2 Intentions of '*Christian Living Today*' Syllabus and its Organization

The *Christian Living Today* syllabus is contained in the *Christian Living Today Book Two* as an appendix and it expresses the general aim of the syllabus as:

This syllabus of Christian religious education aims at educating the student in an awareness of his life in relation to God's revelation in Jesus Christ, in the changing and developing society of which he is a member (Pastoral Institute of Eastern Africa, 1975a: 142).

The main focus of the syllabus is the central importance of God's revelation to man through Jesus Christ and it is on this basis that the syllabus derives its significance. The students of CRE are expected to appreciate the value of the concept of God's revelation to man in Jesus Christ and thereby live according to its principles. This argument is made more concrete when we reflect on the special aim of the *Christian Living Today* syllabus which is expressed thus:

The aim of this two year course is to enable the student to grow towards responsible Christian maturity, seeing more clearly the demands of his faith in his life, making his own the values he now considers worth-while and bringing them to the world by relating his Christian faith to his life (Pastoral Institute of Eastern Africa, 1975a: 142).

From the outset the *Christian Living Today* syllabus's main intention is expressed as concern for the spiritual growth of students within the Christian religious tradition. It is divided into five major themes and fifteen sub-themes. *Christian Living Today Book One* contains two major themes and six sub-themes while *Christian Living Today Book Two* contains three major themes

and nine sub-themes (see discussion on the 'content'⁶⁰ of the above mentioned textbooks).

Table 3: Summary table showing the development of Secondary RE

Secondary School CRE				
Date syllabus designed	Date aims formulated	Title of books	Date published	Comments
1972	1972	My Responsibility in Community	1973	The six books are meant for use in senior sec school one and two following the Developing in Christ syllabus. The books are out of print and the books referred to are from Ntare School archives.
		My Search for Values	1973	
		My Response to Values	1973	
		My Personal Freedom	1975	
		My Work and Relationship	1975	
		My Power to Live	1975	
		Christian Living Today Book One	1974	The two books are for use in senior three and four following Christian Living Today syllabus
		Christian Living Today Book Two	1975	
Secondary School IRE				
1972	1972	Textbook of Islam Book 1	1978	The two books are for use following the IRE course for the four years of sec. school.
		Textbook of Islam Book 2	1979	

The *Christian Living Today* syllabus provides for students to reflect on themes and sub-themes from different perspectives before arriving at their own conclusions as explained below:

Each theme is looked at from different sides, so that you can come to some useful conclusions. There are four 'dimensions' (or angles, or windows) which you ought to consider before coming to your own conclusions in the 'synthesis' The four dimensions are: present situation, African tradition, the experience of the Christian churches

⁶⁰ The 'content' explored will mainly refer to the written material expounding on the different themes with a major view of establishing the extent to which the text-books promote the Christian religious tradition, the theme of unity in diversity and issues concerning other religious traditions.

5. in Africa and the teaching of the Bible (Pastoral Institute of Eastern Africa, 1975a: 3).

As we shall discuss in reference to the aims of CRE, the different dimensions are considered essential resource areas since the 'responsible mature Christians' can appreciate their origins from the African cultural past, proceed to acknowledge their membership to the Christian Church and the wider community. The syllabus is therefore presented as addressing issues that are relevant to the students' life experience (Pastoral Institute of Eastern Africa, 1975a: 1). This might further explain the relevance of the title of the syllabus and the textbooks *Christian Living Today*. Although the relevance of this syllabus for students in Uganda today raises some questions in light of the static nature of the syllabus, the extent to which the syllabus enables students to meet the challenges of living in a multi-religious society will be the major concern of our subsequent discussions.

3.2. The Aims of CRE and the Multi-faith Context

The CRE aims are expressed in the Uganda National Examinations Board Regulations and Syllabuses book, the official document for secondary school curriculum and were formulated by the committee of RE specialists (see discussion on background to *Christian Living Today* syllabus) who designed the *Christian Religious Education* course.⁶¹ They were adopted for use by the Uganda National Examination Board. They are stipulated thus:

1. To study man's understanding of his relationship to God and fellowmen in the Bible, in the history of the church and the African tradition.
2. To deepen the student's awareness of his relationship with God and his fellowmen through Jesus Christ.
3. To present an understanding of the present state of the Church in East Africa making him aware of the historical circumstances from which this structure has arisen.
4. To introduce him to a range of service to the church in the life of the nation.

⁶¹ Dr. Clement Katulushi informed me that the aims were originally published in a Teachers' Handbook published around 1982 which offered secondary aims and objectives plus a range of suggested teaching materials and resources.

5. To help the student appreciate the contributions of the Church in East Africa to the Universal Church.
6. To develop the student's understanding of the African world view and of his background generally.
7. To develop the student's ability to relate elements of his African traditional religious views with those of his Christian view.
8. To develop the student's ability to evaluate what he is seeing and experiencing daily in light of the African traditional religions and of Christianity.
9. To develop the student's knowledge of those elements which are common to traditional religions in East Africa with the main variations and detailed study of one of them, (Uganda National Examinations Board, 1996: 48-49).

3.2.1. Spiritual Growth of Students

The first five aims of CRE are exclusively concerned with the exploration of the Christian religious tradition and concerned with enabling students to perceive themselves as members of the Christian religious tradition, from which they are to derive their identity, have obligations to and consider as a basis of their relationship to the wider community. This approach is what Brenda Watson (1993: 39) refers to as the 'confessional model for RE' in her discussion of what she refers to as the three approaches.⁶²

The emphasis on Jesus Christ as the 'apex' of God's revelation to man and as the basic term of reference for the students, as reflected in the first two aims of CRE, has implications of regarding the Christian religious tradition as the ideal religious tradition. According to Watson (1993:40) one of the most important objections to a confessional approach to RE in a religiously plural and secular society⁶³ is that it does not give due credence to the appreciation of religion as a phenomenon. Although Uganda may not be defined as a secular society in the British sense of the term, the religious pluralism defined appropriately addresses the Uganda situation. In other words the CRE aims will only enable students to explore the Christian religious tradition and not the other major religious traditions such as Islam. It is important that students in Uganda are

⁶² The other two approaches Watson refers to are the Highest Common Factor Model (a term she coins) and the Phenomenological Model.

⁶³ Bernadette Okeeffe in Brenda Watson (1992) argues that in view of Britain's secular nature today there is a generally accepted view that religion is no longer a vital force in peoples' life. On the contrary Uganda can be described as a religiously active and sensitive society.

introduced to an understanding of 'religion as a phenomenon of human experience' (Holm: 1975:7) if they are to fully be qualified as 'religiously educated persons'. The concept of a religiously educated person is discussed by Edwin Cox (1983) while reflecting on what it would mean to be educated about religion in a religiously plural society. He observes that:

Education involves helping pupils to cope with the environment in which they live and in a pluralistic situation that means helping them to cope with religions and belief systems other than their own (Cox, 1983: 119).

Taking into account the observation made by Cox, the spirit behind the five aims of CRE cannot favour the promotion of an adequately religiously educated student since their perception of religion will be limited to the Christian religious experience. Consequently as Cox infers, the students will not easily 'cope with' religious traditions other than their own. Cox's mention of belief systems other than their own (a reference to other philosophies of life or life stances), in Uganda's case raises the question of looking at Religious education and education in general from another dimension since as of now it is only religious traditions, specifically Christianity and Islam that are recognised as 'religious traditions' and any consideration of other belief systems as being part of RE or the general education system may be an uphill task (see discussion on moral education).

The students' questionnaire responses following the field work that I did, cite spiritual growth as their main conception of the purpose of RE. In a question set for senior one and senior five students but phrased slightly differently, 202 out of 489 responses, expressed their answer in terms that mirrored the intention of RE as spiritual growth within their religious tradition,⁶⁴ the highest number compared to other categories.⁶⁵ The question for senior one students was, 'Is Religious Education useful in society today? a) Yes or No

⁶⁴ 101 responses of students from senior one and five were not considered because of their failure to express themselves well in the English language. One of the responses went thus: 'Religious education helps us giving with others' while another is 'puts more light on God'

⁶⁵ The other major categories that I identified were promotion of good moral values, respect of other religions, unity and harmony, study of religion as a phenomenon, creates employment, enables students to pass exams and is essential for academic purposes.

b) Give two reasons for your answer in (a)'. The same question but phrased differently was put to senior five students and it went thus: 'Of what benefit do you think is Religious Education in secondary schools? Mention two reasons'.

Table 4: Summary of Reflection of Student Perceptions of the Purpose of RE in Ugandan Schools

	Senior 1	Senior 5	Grand total	%
Promotes spiritual growth	98	104	202	41.3
Promotes good moral values	76	90	166	34
Leads to employment	20	20	40	8.2
Promotes the study of religion	18	13	31	6.3
Important for passing examinations	04	22	26	5.3
Promotes unity and harmony	13	07	20	4.1
Promotes respect for other religions	02	00	02	0.4
Good for academic purposes	01	00	01	0.2
Not very useful	01	00	01	0.2
	233	256	489	100

Some of the responses included one from a senior one student from Mary Hill High School (Roman Catholic foundation) who observed that, 'it strengthens one in her faith'. A student of Mbarara High School (Church of Uganda foundation) observed that, 'it teaches people their religion' while a Ntare School student (Government founded school) said that, 'it teaches people in society to be good Christians.' The three responses, representative of others, reflect the students' perceptions of RE as a subject whose intention is to enable students to become groomed in their faith and/or religious traditions. The responses of senior five students cited are even more vivid in their description of the inter-relationship between RE and nurture of students within their religious tradition. One student of Mbarara High School observed that, 'it guides us spiritually to live as good and exemplary Christians.' Another student from Mary Hill High School said, 'it makes students to improve their behaviour by some getting

saved⁶⁶ since they relate themselves with people talked about in the Bible.' A student of Mbarara College (a private founded school) said, 'to some people they get encouraged in attending Sunday services.' Finally one response from a student of Ntare School seems to summarize the students' perception of RE. He observed that, 'it simplifies the work of religion teachers in Churches and Mosques.'

The students views in effect, greatly assist us in understanding the way RE is perceived as a subject whose intentions are almost identical to those of religious leaders as being concerned with the spiritual growth of members of their congregations as inferred in the response of the Ntare School student. As we shall observe during our discussion on the lessons of RE that I observed, there is a great extent to which the students responses are true in perceiving RE as a subject whose intention is their spiritual growth. In my view this is a challenge to the aims of CRE and the study of the Christian religious tradition since it restricts students understanding to only one religious tradition and it is in turn bound to affect their interpersonal relationships with people of other religious traditions since they are not informed about their religious belief systems. In addition, it implies that non-Christian students might be disadvantaged by being covertly introduced to a religious tradition whose religious ideals they might end up 'adopting.' Despite the limitations of this stand point of looking at the aims of CRE as promoting the spiritual nurture of students, the five aims of CRE reflected upon in our foregoing discussion have implicit intentions of promoting good interpersonal relationships in society or what we can call 'good Christian moral values.'

3.2.2. The Promotion of Christian Moral Values

The underlying intention of the first five aims of CRE is to enable students to appreciate their membership to the Christian religious tradition denoted by the term 'Church' (refer to third, fourth and fifth aims of CRE) and their subsequent service to the wider community. The overall aim of introducing the student to

⁶⁶ Getting saved is an expression used mainly by Christians who 'accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour' and they are characterised by the public confession of sins (some groups do not subscribe to this teaching) and witnessing for Christ in order to win more people to Christ).

the history of the Church as reflected in the third and fifth aims of RE is summarised in the fourth aim of CRE which has expectations of the student to 'render service to the Church in the life of the nation'. The implication of this statement is that responsible mature Christians are expected to have good Christian moral values that enable them to exercise good interpersonal relationships with members of the wider community. Indeed, along these lines, despite the failure of the aims of CRE to explicitly address the subject of respect and tolerance of other peoples' religions, 'service to the Church in the life of the nation' carries with it overtones of promoting good human relationships between 'responsible mature Christians' and people of other religious, social or political points of view.

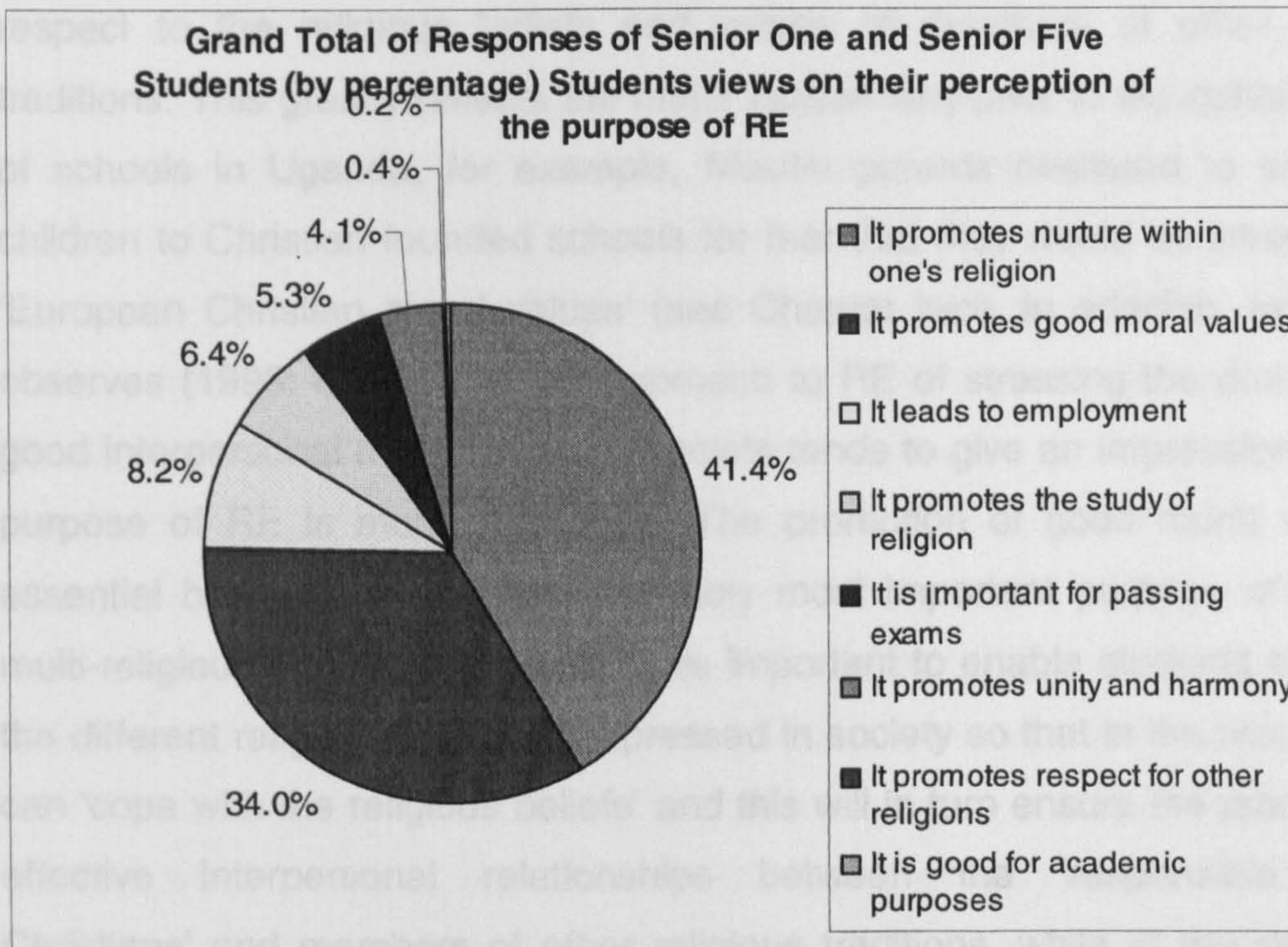
The perspective of looking at RE as a vehicle for promoting good moral values is prominent across several sections of the Ugandan society⁶⁷ the students inclusive. In my interview with Ruyendo a lecturer at Makerere University I asked 'Do you consider it proper to teach RE in secondary schools in Uganda?' He replied, 'Yes, it contributes to one's development in moral formation'. Sheik Katuramu, a lecturer at Mbale Islamic University in Uganda (MIUIU) in response to the same question observed that, 'Anything connected with learning religion promotes morals based on religious belief.' Similarly in an interview with Mrs E. Bagambakyi Headmistress of Mary Hill High School she referred to RE's role of promoting good moral values among students. This stand point is further reflected in the students responses to the questions for senior one and five (refer to foregoing discussion on spiritual growth of students).

The promotion of good moral values was ranked second to the promotion of spiritual growth within one's religious tradition. 166 out of 489 responses from senior one and senior five students referred to the promotion of good moral values as their perception of what RE as a subject is meant to achieve. Some of the responses of senior one students are; a student of senior one from Nyamitanga S.S.S (Muslim founded) said that, 'this subject teaches about how you should behave.' A student of Mbarara High School said, 'it teaches people

⁶⁷ It was the major argument advanced by religious leaders interviewed, head-teachers of schools and this discussion will be explored under the chapter on Moral education

how to live in a community', while a student of Mary Hill High School observed that, 'it helps people to get some values suitable in society.'

Pie-Chart 1: Students views about RE



These responses infer good moral values expected of 'responsible mature Christians' and although students do not specifically tag them to Christian moral values, it is more likely that many of them do.⁶⁸ One of the senior five responses from a student of Mary Hill High School related the moral values to the Christian tradition. She said, 'it helps one to be religious and teaches morals of a Christian.' The students' responses in my view and the foregoing discussion serve to illustrate what can be considered as a major benefit of the aims of CRE and Christian religious education in general and this is greatly why the 'consideration'⁶⁹ of introducing the subject of Moral Education (see discussion on Moral Education) was contested since it was felt that RE was an adequate subject to cover the promotion of moral values among students.

⁶⁸ In light of the multi-religious nature of the schools it is not possible to equate a response made from a Christian founded school to that of a Christian. Nonetheless in some cases it is possible and there is also the generally accepted and proven view (with reference to interviews of head-teachers) that Muslims at least are fewer in most of the mentioned Christian founded schools.

⁶⁹ The 'debate' which concerned the banning of RE in Ugandan schools and its 'replacement with Moral Education' was an elusive one' (see chapter six)

In view of the multi-religious nature of the classes, the promotion of Christian moral values has implications for proselytization⁷⁰ of non-Christian students. In other words Christian moral values are portrayed as the ideal religious values upon which all students need to approach issues in life. It does not give due respect to the religious beliefs and values of members of other religious traditions. This greatly reflects the major reason why prior to the nationalization of schools in Uganda, for example, Muslim parents hesitated to send their children to Christian founded schools for fear that they would be introduced to 'European Christian moral values' (see Chapter two). In addition, as Watson observes (1993: 8-10), such an approach to RE of stressing the promotion of good interpersonal relationships in society tends to give an impression that the purpose of RE is moral education. The promotion of good moral values is essential but not the only and probably most important purpose of RE in a multi-religious society. It is much more important to enable students to explore the different religious traditions expressed in society so that in the process they can 'cope with the religious beliefs' and this will in turn ensure the promotion of effective interpersonal relationships between the 'responsible mature Christians' and members of other religious traditions, while at the same time giving chance to students of other religious traditions to explore their own religious traditions and to contribute to the class discussions in light of their experiences. The four remaining aims of CRE, the subject of our next discussion, concern themselves with the exploration of the African religious tradition, an important resource referred to in understanding the Christian religious tradition.

3.2.3. The Resourcefulness of the African Tradition

The prominence given to the exploration of the African tradition⁷¹, is an essential step in acknowledging the inter-relationship and inter-dependency of cultures and religious traditions. In addition, it is a significant step that could be interpreted as an acknowledgment of the multi-religious nature of Ugandan

⁷⁰ This is defined by An-Naim in Mamhdan (1999:5) as the 'effort of believers in one religion to change the spiritual and material conditions of perceived unbelievers' and this therefore implies implicit methods of influencing and/ or targeting to change one's religious beliefs or values.

⁷¹ The African tradition is an inclusive term that covers the African traditional religious, political, moral, social, economic and cultural life of the people.

society. Nonetheless, the lack of exploration of other religious traditions, apart from the African traditional religion, in the CRE aims has implications of denying students a chance of appreciating the inter-relationship between the Christian religious tradition and other religious traditions.

Firstly, the theme of inter-relationship between the African religious tradition and the Christian religious tradition is reflected in the sixth and seventh aims of CRE which have intentions of enabling students to explore and appreciate 'Africa's past to better understand the present situation' (Pastoral Institute of Eastern Africa, 1975a: 3) an expression used in explaining the importance of the African tradition as one of the dimensions through which students study the themes of the *Christian Living Today* syllabus. This study of Africa's past, which includes the African traditional religious understanding of God's revelation to man, a subject of discussion in the 'content' of *Christian Living Today* textbooks (Pastoral Institute of Eastern Africa, 1975a: 87-94) is therefore considered essential in enabling students to appreciate the concept of God's revelation to man in Jesus Christ as expressed in the first and second aims of CRE (see CRE aims). Subsequently, students are expected to relate their understanding of African religious issues to that of the Christian religious tradition, an expectation of the seventh aim of CRE. The implication of this stand point is that there are points of similarity between the African understanding of God and those of the Christian religious tradition such that an appreciation of the former enables students to positively evaluate the latter. In addition, there are suggestions of the Christian religious tradition being informed by the African traditional religious experience, an issue that infers that Christianity could as well learn from the African tradition in the process of expressing itself to the Africans.

The eighth and ninth CRE aims have an intention of enabling students to explore the different expressions of religious beliefs, practices and values of the African traditional religions⁷². The major aim of this study is reflected in the eighth aim of RE which requires students to make meaning out of the African traditional religions by seeing how they can inform their understanding of the

⁷² African traditional religions are not a uniform religious movement and as such are normally treated as a diverse religious tradition.

Christian religious tradition. This in particular can be appreciated through the exploration of different African traditional moral codes as implied in the *Christian Living Today Book Two* (Pastoral Institute of Eastern Africa, 1975a: 3) which refers to the need to reaffirm traditional African humanist ideals while appreciating the African tradition as a resource for studying the Christian religious tradition. This in my view is an essential way of approaching the study of religion in a multi-religious classroom situation since it is inclusive in its use of the African traditional religious experience (a shared religious heritage of all students) and overlooks the often derogatory view of studying the African traditional religious experience as 'heathen or worthless', held apparently by some Ugandan Christians.⁷³ In addition, it portrays the appreciation of studying about other people's religious belief systems since the African traditional religion still has adherents in Uganda as reflected in national census reports.

The explicit absence of the exploration of the Islamic religious tradition in a manner accorded to the African religious tradition denies students the chance to explore this major religious tradition that has lived side by side with Christianity (see Chapter two). The CRE aims should have given some attention to this important tradition. The seventh CRE aim which expects of students 'to relate elements of the African traditional religious views to those of Christianity' ought to have been extended to Islam. This is even more important since a brief article written as an appendix in the (Pastoral Institute of Eastern Africa, 1975a: C23) by James Holway on Islam and Christianity observes that, 'it may even be said that the most urgent religious issue in modern Africa is the relationship between Christianity and Islam.' Although he proposes 'dialogue and understanding of this great religious tradition' this commitment was not reflected in designing the aims of CRE which would have in turn enabled the 'responsible mature Christians' to study it and develop respect and understanding for it. Such an opportunity would have given chance to Muslim students in Christian founded schools to study Islam and contribute to the discussions from their personal religious experiences in the same way Christians do during Christian religious lessons.

⁷³ This is a view held by most members of revival groups or saved Christians

In view of the students general perceptions of the purpose of RE as being spiritual growth within their respective religious traditions, it is not surprising that out of the total 489 students responses to the question set to gauge students perceptions of the purpose of RE, only two responses referred to RE as a subject that enables students to relate well with people of other religious traditions. The two responses from Ntare School were that RE enables students 'to avoid differences among people of different religions' while another response was 'to understand that we all believe in one God.' The consciousness about RE as a subject that addresses students interpersonal relationships with members of other religious traditions is very low and much as one might argue that the promotion of 'Christian moral values' of love for one's neighbour, sharing and giving infer good relationships with members of other religious traditions, there is a great extent to which this is not true. The conceptual development of these values is not tagged to specific areas of consideration and as such is bound to remain narrow in interpretation. It is worth noting that even at the Muslim founded Nyamitanga S.S.S where senior one students study CRE and IRE, none of the students defined the purpose of RE in light of its promotion of respect for members of other religious traditions⁷⁴. The reason behind this is greatly as a result of the aims of both subjects which is the promotion of the respective religious traditions and not the exploration of the inter-relationship between the two religious traditions.

The foregoing discussion therefore largely shows that the main intention of the CRE aims is the spiritual growth of students within the Christian religious tradition. The African traditional religious experience is important since it enables students to understand better the Christian religious tradition and to make some comparisons for the possible 'borrowing of ideas to enrich their religious tradition' and in my view this is why I have queried the non-provision for the exploration of the Islamic religious tradition in the aims of CRE since it

⁷⁴ This school is unique in that it provides for both CRE and IRE and the background to this from my informal interviews of the teachers at Nyamitanga S.S.S is that since CRE was a fully fledged subject that was advantaged right from the founding of Teacher Training Colleges, (the Muslim Founded National Teachers College is a recent one compared to Christian founded ones) Christian teachers were many and the subject was resourced right from the start thus giving it an edge over IRE. In addition, I was informed that CRE is normally considered easier than Islam in national exams since it deals with daily life issues while Islam concentrates on doctrine and history of Islam which is often 'tough' for the students. As a result some Muslim students choose it as one of their optional subjects at senior three and take it up to senior four.

would similarly be acknowledged as a key religious tradition to be engaged with in the multi-religious Ugandan society.

3.3. Developing in Christ Study Books and the Multi-faith Context

While it is true to observe that *Developing in Christ* study books stress concern for Christian students to develop interpersonal relationships with members of the wider community, a subject of our subsequent discussion, the dilemma in a multi-religious context is that it is tagged to the promotion of Christian moral values and yet some students are not Christians. In addition, the treatment of the Christian religious tradition as a single religious tradition has limitations since it downplays the diversity within the religious tradition and infers a unified approach to the interpretation of moral, doctrinal and other issues.

In the study book *My Search for Values* (Pastoral Institute of Eastern Africa, 1973a: 18-21) an introductory remark is made in the book to the effect that it is concerned with exploring 'the values which are the basis of living in a community.' The study book explores the value of friendship and while it draws on students' daily life experiences of understanding friendship plus African traditional ideas of friendship, the study book refers to the value of friendship by quoting Proverbs 18:24 which says 'there are friends who lead one to ruin, others are closer than a brother' and Ecclesiasticus 6:17 which says 'whoever fears the Lord makes true friends, for as man is, so is his friends'. The other subsequent Bible references are made in particular reference to 'Jesus' friends' and to various Christian illustrations of friendship and service to others as a mark of friendship. The concluding remarks in the study book suggest an expectation of students not only to appreciate friendship as understood in a Christian context but to consider believing in Jesus Christ and subscribing to the doctrine of trinity:

Jesus invites everyone to respond to his friendship. If we place our trust in his love for us, the Holy Spirit will unite us more closely with the father and with each other in fellowship (Pastoral Institute of Eastern Africa, 1973a: 20).

In effect, the value of friendship is explored in light of Jesus Christ as the standard measuring rod of true friendship and although this is essential in enabling the Christian students to develop the Christian value of friendship so that they behave responsibly in the community, it does not seem to take into account the implications for non-Christian students. The invitation for a response to the Christian teaching about the value of friendship and the 'origin' of this teaching, Jesus Christ, suggests possible consideration of conversion to Christianity by non-Christians or infers proselytization. In a multi-religious context it is important that if it is expected of students to learn from a particular religious tradition, this is not confused with covertly exposing them to religious values of other people since it infers holding evangelistic goals in the guise of educational objectives. This limitation of the *Developing in Christ* study books is further reflected in the study book *My Personal Freedom* while exploring the responsibilities of a Christian in the service of the community. The study book uses examples of nurses, engineers, Bible translators and teachers as communicators of the Good news of Jesus Christ as reflected in their service to the community. The caption that accompanies the photograph of a teacher of RE on a blackboard reads thus:

Many teachers of religion explain the Gospel message to others. If present trends continue, it is estimated that by the year 2000, Africa will be the home of 350 million Christians-the largest number of Christians to found on any continent (Pastoral Institute of Eastern Africa, 1975b: 24).

This caption suggests that the teachers of RE have an evangelistic role of contributing towards the increase in number of Christians. This view equates the role of a teacher to that of an evangelist (refer to response of student from Ntare School about role of CRE teachers as compared to that of religious leaders) and is therefore contrary to an acceptable purpose of RE in a multi-religious school. The study book expresses a triumphal attitude which reflects competition with members of other religious traditions and this cannot promote respect for these religious traditions among students nor be appropriate for the multi-religious classes in view of its offense to members of other religious traditions.

Developing in Christ study books do not explicitly engage with the diversity within the Christian religious tradition. In my view this limits students' chances to engage with the diverse Christian religious tradition with a view of developing understanding of the characteristic nature of the religious tradition and as a consequence make it easier to develop respect for the unique expressions of religious beliefs, practices and values of the different Christian religious denominations. While exploring the theme of unity in the study book *My Responsibility in the Community* (Pastoral Institute of Eastern Africa, 1973b: 13) the study book illustrates this with a drawing of a traditional African symbol of unity and alongside it are two Bible references 1 Corinthians 12:27 'you together are Christ's body' and Ephesians 4:12 'we together make a unity in the work of service.' This seems to be an attempt to explore the theme of unity in diversity and yet it is made with illustrations of the different professions that people engage in instead of the different religious denominations to which members of the Christian tradition belong.⁷⁵

Mindful of the importance of this theme to the intentions of the joint Christian syllabus to promote unity in diversity, the text-books ought to have given reference to examples of differences in interpretation of doctrinal teachings or moral values or even the expression of religious practices between different Christian religious denominations. This in turn would enable students to appreciate the view that, despite the commonality within the Christian religious traditions, there is an extent to which they cannot be treated as a homogenous religious tradition. Subsequently, in the process, students can begin to appreciate the need to develop respect and understanding of the differences and thereby contribute to the development of good interpersonal relationships among members of the Christian religious tradition, an essential issue in light of the realities of religious intolerance and discrimination in Uganda (see chapter on multi-faith RE). Similar to the foregoing discussion, the next discussion on the 'content' of the *Christian Living Today* textbooks explores the extent to which they promote the Christian religious tradition, the subject of the diverse

⁷⁵ John Hull in an editorial written in the *British Journal of Religious Education*, Autumn 1992, Vol.15 No.1 highlights the dilemma of choosing material by teachers to teach about Christianity in Britain due to the 'size and complexity of Christianity' and this point in Uganda's case evokes the need to consider the representation of the different Christian religious 'traditions' in curriculum designing before consideration is given to books about Christianity.

nature of the Christian religious tradition and the implications this has on the interpersonal relationships between Christians.

3.4. 'Christian Living Today' textbooks and the Multi-faith Context

Similar to *Developing in Christ* study books, *Christian Living Today* textbooks are overtly concerned with the promotion of the Christian religious tradition and despite the benefits of this approach to understanding the purpose of RE, it has limitations of appropriately addressing itself to the multi-religious context, not to mention the diverse Christian religious tradition.

While exploring the major theme of 'Man's response to God through Faith and Love', the *Christian Living Today Book Two* (Pastoral Institute of Eastern Africa, 1975a: 98-102) explores the sub-theme of 'Man's quest for God' and the portrayal of the theme of God's revelation to man is illustrative of the centrality attached to Jesus Christ in the text-books. The sub-theme treats the African traditional religions as an important stage in man's understanding of his quest for God, while the sub-theme goes on to argue that the Old testament is 'an explanation and reflection of how one particular people (who called themselves 'God's people'), experienced their relationship with the supreme being, God (Yahweh) (Pastoral Institute of Eastern Africa, 1975a: 98). The Jesus Christ event is referred to as 'the climax of God's self-revelation to all men'. This expression of the understanding of God's revelation to man reflects the first and second aims of CRE (see aims of CRE) and enables us to appreciate the intention of the text-books of presenting the Jesus Christ oriented life as the ideal religious experience for the students. Since this infers the development of a responsible mature Christian who can be of valuable 'service to the Church in the life of the nation' this can be considered an important benefit of the *Christian Living Today* text-books. Although there is a provision for students while studying the books to arrive at their own conclusions after reflecting on the four dimensions of the theme of Man's quest for God (see discussion on syllabus of *Christian Living Today*), in a multi-religious context, this 'content' might suggest that non-Muslim students should consider giving a response to Jesus Christ 'the climax of God's self-revelation to all men'. As we shall observe

in the chapter on teachers' issues, there is a great extent to which suggestions of an expected positive response from students cannot be dismissed.

Another illustration of the approach taken in portraying the Christian religious tradition as the ideal religious tradition and alongside it, the centrality attached to the person of Jesus Christ in understanding and 'living' the Christian religious tradition, is explored by *Christian Living Today Book Two* (Pastoral Institute of Eastern Africa, 1975a: 52-67) in the major theme of 'Man and Woman' through the sub-theme of 'Family life'. While the textbook presents the African traditional society as one that respected polygamy, it proceeds to portray the transitions in the acceptable patterns of family life through the early Church times in African history. While presenting information on the theme of family life in the Old Testament, the Pastoral Institute of Eastern Africa, (1975a: 67) acknowledges that polygamy was honoured in Israel but 'it virtually disappeared after the exile.' This presentation of information provides the background for the expression of monogamy as the ideal family pattern (Pastoral Institute of Eastern Africa, 1975a: 67), and is done by quoting Jesus' teaching in Mark 10:1-12 in which he stressed the indissolubility of marriage and upheld the teaching of Gen. 2:21-24 emphasizing the bond between man and woman. In short, the text-book sums up the discussion on the note that monogamy is the ideal family pattern. While the merits of a monogamous pattern of family life cannot be overlooked, such information seems to suggest that for example the Islamic religious teaching on polygamy which allows a man to have more than one wife is not ideal. In my view, it is important that the 'content' of CRE books used in multi-faith schools is designed mindful of the implications for the different religious traditions. This would in turn provide for respect, not only of other religious traditions but even for the students of these religious traditions who would be using them in these schools.

The Christian Living Today textbooks are designed on a presupposition that the emphasis on the commonality within the Christian religious tradition is an adequate basis for the promotion of good interpersonal relationships between different members of the Christian religious tradition. The textbooks are not an adequate vehicle for promoting unity mainly because they do not make an attempt of introducing students to the characteristic nature of the Christian

religious tradition (see discussion on content of *Developing in Christ*). The major dilemma is that Christian students are not acquainted with each other's religious denomination and the classroom environment would have been the most suitable for exposing them to the diverse nature of the Christian religious tradition. An illustration of this is drawn from a point made by W. Owen Cole and Ruth Mantin (1994:16) while discussing the question of why teachers of RE in Britain have not adequately taught Christianity and why they should? They observe that teaching of the Christian religious tradition should take into account 'what Christians do and believe' instead of what the teacher believes. The underlying point here is that there are different expressions of the Christian religious tradition and therefore Christian teachers while engaging in the exploration of 'what Christians do and believe' can effectively address themselves to the diverse nature of the Christian religious tradition.

In Uganda today, the increased number of different expressions of the Christian religious tradition, especially as a result of an upsurge in Pentecostal and/or renewal movements is an adequate reason for justifying a new approach to understanding the Christian religious tradition. This is even more important in view of the realities of religious discrimination and intolerance between different members of the Christian religious tradition. The willingness to accept differences through exploring them, the essence of unity in diversity, is essential in enabling students to engage with differences in an academic and therefore 'controlled' environment, instead of the school compound and student hostels which could prove unhealthy (see Chapter seven). The use of images in the textbooks which illustrate unity of Christians is essential and indeed it is noteworthy that textbooks' One and Two of *Christian Living Today* do not feature a discussion or reflection on the work or activities of the Uganda Joint Christian Council. This in my view would enable students first to know the members of the UJCC (currently not all Christian religious traditions belong to this organization) and therefore consider themselves 'owners' of the textbooks if their religious denominations are represented. They would in turn start to appreciate the closeness between the different members who form the Joint Christian Council and the implications such books have for promoting respect and understanding of the Christian religious tradition in view of the often 'small but significant' differences that exist between their religious denominations.

The foregoing discussion therefore has shown that the intentions behind the *Developing in Christ* and *Christian Living Today* syllabuses, CRE aims and Study books of *Developing in Christ* plus textbooks of *Christian Living Today* are overtly concerned with the promotion of the Christian religious tradition. Subsequently, it has been revealed that non-Christian students cannot comfortably fit in with the expectations that the *Christian Living Today* syllabus and the *Developing in Christ* syllabus have of them. It has been suggested that aims of CRE that enable students to appreciate religion as a phenomenon and textbooks of *Christian Religious Education* that enable students to engage with other religious traditions, plus the diversity within the Christian religious tradition, are better suited to promote an understanding of different people's religious traditions while promoting good interpersonal relationships. Similarly the next discussion explores the Islamic Religious Education syllabus, the aims of Islamic Religious Education and textbooks in use to establish the extent to which they address the multi-religious context in which they operate.

3.5. Background to the Islamic Religious Education Syllabus and Aims

The IRE syllabus in Uganda secondary schools, similar to that of the *Christian Living Today* syllabus, has not changed since its inception in 1972. The designing of the syllabus by a Joint committee of Muslims from Uganda and Kenya, in my view largely implied putting emphasis on the unified nature of the Islamic religious tradition and downplaying the consideration of national religious interests⁷⁶ of Ugandan students.

The IRE syllabus, just like the aims of IRE in use, trace their origin to the formulation of the East-African Examinations Council in 1972 (Quraishy, 1987: x).⁷⁷ Prior to this, the teaching of religion in Uganda was mainly the preserve of

⁷⁶ Formation of a Joint syllabus meant for two countries is bound to have complications, especially if it is dealing with religions which take on different 'forms' in different countries and contexts. Therefore it has limitations of not easily taking into account the different religious, social, political or cultural climate of the respective countries and concentrating on areas of commonality.

⁷⁷ In my interview of Katalamwa Ahmed, a qualified teacher of IRE and History at Ntare School but who teaches History on 19/09/2001, he informed me that secondary school IRE had not undergone any changes since its inception.

the Quranic schools which centered on teaching Islamic religion and Arabic language (Kasozi, 1986:73). In addition, it is noteworthy that the Muslims had initially resisted the idea of sending their children to Christian founded schools (as Christian missionaries introduced formal education in Uganda) since they regarded the formal or 'secular education' as it was referred to then as a way of promoting 'European Christian moral values.' (see Chapter two). This is reflected by Furley and Watson (1978: 280) who observe that 'the increase in government senior secondary schools after 1952 enabled more Muslim pupils to reach a higher western education'. The expectation was that in purely government founded secondary schools, the teaching of religion and curriculum in general would not be skewed towards the promotion of the Christian religious tradition. Nonetheless, this has not been the case since for example Ntare School which was established in 1956 on that basis has been offering Christian Religious Education and non-Christian students have been studying it as a compulsory subject in senior one and two.

The joint syllabus for Muslims from Kenya and Uganda drawn under the auspices of the East-African Examinations Council in 1972 is one that is still in use in Uganda today. This is specified in the *Textbook of Islam Book One* written by Quraishy (1987: xii), who observes that despite the formation of a new National Examinations Authority in Uganda, the Islamic Religious Education syllabus for Uganda and Kenyans 'remained intact'. The syllabus is defined in terms of the major topics that the students are to study from senior one to senior four. These are contained in the *Textbook of Islam Book One* (Quraishy, 1987: x) and they are, the Prophet Muhammed and the early Muslim community, Islam in East-Africa, the Quran and *Tafsir* plus Muslim civilization, Hadith and *Fiqh*. In effect, the syllabus is mainly concerned with the promotion of the Islamic religious tradition and in particular through enabling students to become practicing Muslims, a major issue upon which the subsequent discussion will be based in exploring implications of this for non-Muslim students and the appropriateness of the syllabus in a multi-faith context.

The joint effort between Muslims of Uganda and Kenya in designing a joint Islamic Religious Education syllabus for use in Uganda, in my view portrays a missed opportunity for dialogue between Uganda Muslims and Christians to

draw a Joint syllabus for RE in view of the nationalization of schools in 1964 and the pre and post-independence periods in which emphasis by the government was put on the promotion of national unity. Nonetheless, the acknowledgement of respect and tolerance for other people's religions as reflected in the next discussion on aims of IRE is an indicator of the willingness on part of the Islamic religious tradition to dialogue with members of other religious traditions, notwithstanding the limitations of the aims in addressing themselves to the multi-faith schools.

3.6. The Aims of Islamic Religious Education and the Multi-faith Context

While the IRE aims have their main intention as the spiritual growth of students in the Islamic religious tradition, they are concerned with the inter-relationship between the practicing Muslim and members of the wider community. The IRE aims are contained in the Uganda government official secondary schools curriculum book and are specified below:

1. To develop in the student an appreciation of and a positive response to spiritual and moral values based on belief in God as expressed in the Holy Quran and in the teachings and exemplary life of Prophet Muhammed (Peace be Upon Him).
2. To help the student develop a sense of awareness of belonging to the Muslim brotherhood, and have respect and tolerance to other religions.
3. To help the student develop an awareness of the Muslim community and how it came into being by studying the history of its civilization with specific reference to East-Africa.
4. To help the student develop a sense of awareness of interaction between faith and good works through the study of Islamic doctrines, rituals and festivals based on the Holy Quran, Hadith and *Fiqh*, (Uganda National Examinations Board: 1996: 49).

3.6.1 Spiritual Growth of Students

The main focus of the IRE aims is the centrality attached to God's (Allah) revelation to man through the study of the Holy Quran and the life and teachings of Prophet Muhammed. The four IRE aims have as their stand point the appreciation of and promotion of the Islamic religious tradition. Similar to the main intention of the aims of CRE (see discussion on CRE aims) the

emphasis is on enabling students to become a 'practicing Muslim' and this in turn suggests an understanding of the purpose of RE as spiritual growth within the Islamic religious tradition.

The first IRE aim reflects the task of the students as being 'an appreciation of and a positive response' to the teachings of the Holy Quran and those of Muhammed. The presentation of this aim has a presupposition that the 'Islamic spiritual and moral values' are good for students. There is an implication that they are not subject to debate⁷⁸ by students. The intention behind this aim therefore is to promote Islamic spiritual and moral values among the students. The fourth IRE aim puts emphasis on the correlation between faith and good works for a Muslim student. This IRE aim has, as its goal, the 'development of a sense of awareness between faith and good works' or it is an effort towards enabling the students to reflect on their actions in light of the expectations of the Islamic religious tradition.

The expectations of the Islamic religious tradition of the student of IRE is the study of 'Islamic doctrines, Hadith and *fiqh*' and in effect once 'studied' and 'lived' they can act as the criteria for judging a practicing Muslim whose faith is in turn accompanied by good works. It is noteworthy that the spiritual and moral values reflected in the first IRE aim also derive their potency from the student's development of a sense of awareness between faith and good works. In short the first and fourth IRE aims have implications for students to view their lives as being 'purposeful' in so far as they are based on Islamic religious ideals. The promotion of Islamic religious ideals, in view of its stressing of the need for an interaction between faith and good works is a pointer to the potential within the aims of IRE to promote good interpersonal relationships in society. It suggests that students of IRE will be exposed to teachings that will enable them to be conscious of their actions basing on their faith and the reference to good works is enough to infer good service and/or inter-relationships with the wider community. The dilemma though is that the development of Islamic religious ideals in a multi-religious classroom implies that non-Muslims will be expected

⁷⁸ This refers to denying students a chance to discuss religious issues and it expresses a view given to me by Ismael Ecum Secretary for Education and Social Affairs, Uganda Muslim Supreme Council in my interview of him at Kampala at 14/08 /2001 on whether it was proper for Muslim students to study about

to develop these ideals too (see similar argument on development of Christian moral values and impact for non-Christians).

The second and third IRE aims, save for the second part of the second IRE aim, derive their potency from the fulfillment of the first and fourth IRE aims. The prominence given to the exploration of the Islamic community can be appreciated in light of the students' perception of Islam as 'their own' and 'ideal' religious tradition and suggest an induction of students not only into the Islamic religious tradition but even the world wide Islamic community as inferred in the development of the concept of Muslim brotherhood. This in my view is an illustration of the overt concern for the students to be groomed in the Islamic religious tradition beyond even national borders.

Developing a sense of unity among believers of the same religion is not a problem in itself since it evokes joint effort in addressing religious, social, economic or political problems among believers irrespective of race, tribe or colour, the implication though is that emphasis of the aims is on developing this aspect more than for example the inter-relationship between Muslims and members of other religious traditions essential for the multi-religious Ugandan society (see discussion on textbooks of IRE) or the provision for exploration of other religious traditions. In addition, in view of the multi-religious nature of the classes, non-Muslim students would not appropriately benefit by exploring only one religious tradition which they do not even belong to. Another issue to consider is that Muslim students would also miss out on developing a comprehensive view of religion, since unlike in the aims of Christian religious education, the IRE aims do not have a provision for exploring the African religious tradition.

In light of the foregoing discussion on the IRE aims as mainly being concerned with the spiritual growth of students within the Islamic religious tradition, some of the views of students from Nyamitanga S.S.S, a Muslim founded school, were explicit in referring to their perception of the purpose of RE as serving the

other religions, when he observed that, 'For Muslims, religion is a matter of life and death and therefore classroom debate is not acceptable.'

above mentioned purpose.⁷⁹ Two senior one students in response to the questionnaire 'Is religious education useful in society today?', had this to say, 'to be in better positions of receiving the word of 'Allah' and another one observed that, 'it teaches us how to be good Muslims.' The two responses of students reflect the general understanding of the purpose of RE in Uganda schools (see students responses on discussion of CRE aims). It is important to note that in a Muslim context, this can be an acceptable purpose of RE but in a multi-faith context, it raises questions similar to those pointed out on the aims of CRE in a multi-faith context.

The presentation of the Islamic religious tradition as the ideal religious tradition suggests a confessional approach to RE. Edwards Hulmes (in Watson 1992: 132) refers to the challenge posed by Islam as a subject in the multi-religious and plural British society since it does not easily allow for debate on Islamic religious issues in the same way as Christianity. The IRE aims in Uganda seem to reflect the standpoint described of IRE aims in Britain and most likely in any other country. The treatment of the Islamic religious tradition as a sacred and insulated religious tradition in an educational environment raises questions on the educational justification of the subject for inclusion on the curriculum. It suggests that students will not easily have provision to discuss religious issues in IRE lessons and will instead be passive recipients of information. Grimmit (1978:10), while discussing the justification of RE as a subject in Britain, argues that one of the key educational criteria that subjects need to meet if they are to merit educational status is their provision for 'children's capacity to think and develop understanding of what is being studied.' This is an important point to consider in developing an IRE curriculum for Uganda since it takes into account the academic integrity of students. Despite the limitations of the IRE aims for a multi-faith context, they specify the development of respect and tolerance of other people's religions as a concern of the Islamic religious tradition.

⁷⁹ Other student responses categorised under the purpose of RE being spiritual growth of students did not specifically refer to the Islamic religious tradition but to general statements such as RE enables students to grow in their religions.

3.6.2. *Promotion of Respect and Tolerance of Other Religions*

The second key component of the IRE aims is its explicit concern for the interpersonal relationship between 'a practicing Muslim' and members of other religious traditions. This is a key element of approaching the study of religion in a religiously plural society like Uganda that even addresses itself to the multi-religious classrooms.

The second aim of IRE, while addressing itself first to the students' development of the concept of Muslim brotherhood, proceeds to specify the development of respect and tolerance of other people's religions. In my view, unlike in the case of the aims of CRE, the explicit reference to this issue in drawing aims of IRE in 1972 was an acknowledgement of the historical-religious conflicts between Muslims and Christians in East Africa (refer to discussion in Chapter two plus content of IRE textbooks). In my view the provision for exploring the theme of respect and tolerance of other people's religions reflects the basic intentions of one of the essential tools in approaching the study of religion in multi-religious society. Watson refers to the phenomenological model for RE thus:

The name 'phenomenology' betrays its origins in University departments, but in ordinary language this approach is usually referred to loosely as the multi-faith or world religions approach. The aim is to develop an attitude of tolerance and openness through the study of religions (Watson, 1993:43).

Although the designers of the second aim of IRE might not have envisaged a study of other religions in the sense that Brenda Watson describes, the spirit behind the aim is in consonance with the main intention of a multi-faith RE whose aim is to 'develop respect and openness'. In other words, it can be suggested that such a willingness to develop respect and tolerance of other people's religions is good ground for considering a multi-faith approach to RE, subject to the definition of what kind of multi-faith RE it might be. On the other hand some questions can be asked as to the interpretation of the application of this aim or the willingness to implement it, since the text-books of IRE, the subject of our next discussion, do not reflect it.

3.7. Islamic Religious Education Textbooks and the Multi-faith Context

The textbooks of IRE portray their main intention as that of spiritual growth of students within the Islamic religious tradition and although they concern themselves with exploring the inter-relationship between Islam and other religious traditions, in particular Christianity, the language used and presentation of information does not reflect respect and tolerance of other religious traditions.

The *Textbooks of Islam Book One* and *Two* set out to define the main intention of the 'content' of IRE as presenting 'in a simple and pleasing form the whole faith of Islam and its practice in worship (Quraishy 1987: xi). The object of this presentation is the Muslim student and non-Muslim students as referred to by Quraishy (1987: xi), who observes that 'young Muslims and non-Muslims alike will find them written in a language which they understand, and which contain in a handy form the fundamental things which every Muslim requires to know'.⁸⁰

The *Textbook of Islam Book Two* is solely concerned with the exploration of the religious beliefs, practices and values of the Islamic religious tradition. Its focus is on the promotion of the Islamic religious tradition with the attendant purpose of enabling students to grow in their faith and become practicing Muslims. This is expressed in the publisher's note, 'we sincerely hope that this book will make the teaching, learning and practice of Islam and its civilization a very fascinating, easy and fruitful exercise' (Quraishy, 1987).

The inter-linkage between 'teaching, learning and practice of Islam' is a reflection of the expectations of the first aim of IRE (a key aim that is concerned with 'developing in the student an appreciation of and a positive response to spiritual and moral values based on a belief in God as expressed in the Quran and in the exemplary life of Prophet Muhammed (pbuh). In effect, the choice of 'content' of IRE as we shall further reflect is dictated by the need to provide for

⁸⁰ It is possible to view this statement as implying that the text-books are written with a view that non-Muslims can use them to learn about the Islamic religious tradition but it also has connotations of

the spiritual growth of students within the Islamic religious tradition. The challenge of the 'content' of IRE in meeting the multi-religious composition of the classes arises from this stand point. We can ask how the 'content' of IRE that is aimed at promoting the Islamic religious tradition can effectively and meaningfully address itself to Christian students or members of other religious traditions.

The main aim behind *Textbook Two of Islam* is explained in the publisher's note thus:

The second text-book of Islam expounds in simple language the basic Islamic beliefs, duties and customs, and the development of the sciences of Traditions of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w) and of Islamic law, Islamic Theology and Philosophy, and gives brief biographical sketches of some famous Muslim scholars and scientists in History (Quraishy, 1987).

The second text-book of Islam could be described as a 'manual for a practicing Muslim' since it is meant to serve as 'a directory' that a Muslim could refer to in matters related to worship according to Islamic faith, ways of living in respect to Islamic beliefs and law.⁸¹ In short, the Text-book of Islam Book Two concerns itself with the sum total of the Muslims' 'world view' and this is what is referred to as Muslim civilisation. In other words every aspect of a Muslim's life is meant to be addressed by the wide range of reference sources for questions regarding spiritual, moral, social, economic, scientific or political problems. This in my view is in line with 'total submission to the will of Allah' the definition or essence of Islam. Indeed the submission to the will of Allah is advanced by Sayied, the signatory of the publisher's note (*Textbook of Islam Book Two: 1987*), as the foundation of Islamic civilisation. The question that arises though is the extent to which the content of IRE that is overtly concerned with the promotion of the beliefs, practices, customs, theology and philosophy of the Islamic religious tradition takes into account other religious traditions especially since one of the aims of IRE is to promote 'respect and tolerance of other religions'.

positively considering to subscribe to the 'fundamentals' of the Islamic religious tradition after exploring them and finding them 'beneficial'

⁸¹ The text-books of Islam book one and two refer to four schools of Islamic law that Muslims refer to in matters related to the requirements of the Sharia (code of behaviour) (Quraishy:1987:132)

Noteworthy about the 'content' of IRE in *The Textbook of Islam Book Two* is the explicit absence of engagement with the Christian religious tradition. The implications of this are that in light of the aim of promoting 'respect and tolerance of other religions', the 'content' of IRE in text-book two of Islam does not provide for this aspect. Anyhow, it further reflects the main concern of the aims of IRE and the syllabus in general as being the promotion of the Islamic religious tradition. It is in this respect that we ask ourselves how Christian students can relate to the 'content' of IRE that is overtly concerned with the Islamic religious tradition. This question becomes more vivid when we reflect on the 'content' of the Text-book of Islam Book One which raises more questions with respect to the theme of respect and tolerance of other people's religious traditions, not because of its failure to engage with them but because of the manner in which they are presented.

The 'content' of *The Textbook of Islam Book One* concentrates on the life and ministry of Prophet Muhammed (pbuh) in light of the early Muslim community and it goes on to look at Islam in East Africa, the Quran and *Tafsir* (Quraishy, 1987:x). As regards the life and ministry of Prophet Muhammed, out of the sixteen chapters, nine are committed to the birth, life and ministry of Prophet Muhammed and the early Muslim community in Arabia. In the first place, the uniqueness and centrality attached to the prophet-hood of Muhammed in founding the Islamic religion portrayed through his vision of the angel Gabriel (Jibreel) instructing him to be the Prophet of God (messenger of God) so as to end 'a period of ignorance or *jahiliyah* with the conversion of the whole of Asia to Islam. (Quraishy, 1987:63)

The presentation of Muhammed as a 'change agent' not only of the religious but social lives of the people of Arabia is a reflection of the comprehensive view of Islam as 'a way of life' that is concerned with the religious, social, economic and political aspects of man. Indeed *The textbook of Islam Book One* presents the historical account of Muhammed as inextricably tied with the social, economic and political life of all the peoples of Arabia. Therefore it explores the interaction between Muslims and people of other religious traditions and in view of the intentions of the aims of IRE portrays Muhammad as the final prophet and Islam as the ultimate religious faith to be followed: it observes that ...

Most western writers hold that Prophet Moses (Musa) initiated Judaism, that Prophet Jesus (Isa) initiated Christianity and that Prophet Muhammed (may peace of Allah be upon all of them) initiated Islam. Muslims disagree with this statement. They claim that Prophet Muhammed (may peace of Allah be upon him) did not preach a new religion, but merely completed the mission of the earlier prophets, which was, in essence, the same message and guidance from God. They thus declare Islam as the perfection of the religion of God left incomplete by the prophets before him (Quraishy, 1978:1).

The 'content' of IRE is not only concerned with the promotion of the Islamic religious tradition through its presentation 'as the perfection of the religion of God' but goes ahead to present Moses (Musa) and Jesus (Isa) as forerunners of Muhammed. In other words Islam is presented as the fulfillment of Judaism and Christianity or for that matter the last stage of God's revelation to man. This stand point from which the IRE text-book reflects on the life and ministry of Muhammed and the Islamic religious tradition poses challenges for example to Christian students who study IRE in a Muslim founded school. The question is, how do they perceive the Christian faith in light of the 'content' of IRE text-books which look at Islam as the fulfillment of Christianity? Doesn't this scenario suggest a possibility of a Christian student considering becoming a Muslim in order to perfect his or her faith?

On the other hand, one can envisage a situation where the Muslim student who is exposed to such an understanding of the Christian and the Islamic religious traditions is likely to look down upon members of the Christian religious tradition. This might in turn complicate the realisation of the aim of IRE that seeks to promote 'respect and tolerance of other religious traditions'. In addition since the 'content' of IRE presents several cases in the history of Islam where Christians were being converted to Islam, the subject of our next discussion, this stand point can be an indicator to the student of Islam that the Christian student is a target of conversion to Islam rather than being respected for his or her religious tradition.

While illustrating the history of the spread of Islam in Arabia, the 'content' of IRE puts emphasis on the inter-relationship between Muslims and Christians

but with a main view of exploring the several incidents in which Christians seemed to approve of Islam and/ or accept Islam as a religious tradition. One such incident is mentioned by Quraishy (1987:21) when he refers to the young Muhammed (before he became a Prophet) who had gone on a commercial journey accompanying his Uncle Abu Talib and met a Christian monk Bahirah who is talked about thus, 'he had studied the features and characteristics of the last Prophet (a reference to Jesus, Isa) from the scriptures and declared without any hesitation that the young lad had a great career ahead.' In effect, the mention of an apparent approval of Muhammed's upcoming prophet-hood or choice as God's messenger by a Christian monk is in this respect meant to put weight on Muhammed's credibility in the 'eyes' of a prominent Christian religious leader. In fact the reference to the monk's detailed study of the last prophet, who in light of Islamic theology seems to infer Jesus Christ, is yet another affirmation of the centrality of Prophet Muhammed in the salvation history of man as reflected in the 'content' of IRE textbooks.

The challenges set by this 'content' of IRE is that it high-lights the areas where the Christian religious tradition is portrayed as inferior to the Islamic religious tradition and this approach does not seem to be a possible facilitator of 'respect and tolerance of other religions'. Nonetheless, the 'content' of IRE makes an attempt of exploring those areas where there was a healthy inter-relationship between Islam and Christianity. Reference is made to the point that, although there was no Christian community in either Mecca or Medina, 'Prophet Muhammed had discussions several times with individual Christians or with Christian delegations.' (Quraishy, 1987: 72) In addition, *the text-book of Islam Book One* argues that following several tribal and interstate wars fought in Arabia, treaties were made and 'Christians were given full protection and safeguards against foreign intervention. Amongst several privileges granted, Christian women married to Muslims were permitted to follow their religion.'

Although an evaluation of the historical implications of the Muslim and Christian relationships during Prophet Muhammed's time might be interpreted differently, it is quite clear that the incidents quoted above reflect a relative measure of trust and inter-dependence between Muslims and Christians. The only major limitation is that the 'content' of *Textbook One of Islam* does not explore these

incidents in much the same way as those concerning Christians' conversion to Islam or the Islamic religious tradition's 'superiority' over the Christian religious tradition.

With regard to the spread of Islam in East Africa, the 'content' of IRE which covers three chapters of *The textbook of Islam Book One*, starts by attributing the spread of Islam to East Africa to the fleeing of Muslim Arabs who sought refuge from the persecution in Arabia arising from inter-tribal and religious wars especially between the two Islamic religious groups, the Shi'as and Sunnis (Quraishy, 1987:149).

The 'content' of IRE textbook One proceeds to 're-dress'⁸² the history of Islam of East-Africa by high-lighting the achievements of Islam and this can be illustrated by the reference given to the 70 Muslims who died at the hands of Kabaka Muteesa in 1876 after refusing to eat meat killed through pagan rites. It specifies that ...

The dead were the first martyrs to die on account of their religion in Uganda. The sacrifice of these Muslims has been played down by several historians, who have glorified the Christian martyrs ten years later (Quraishy, 1987: 197).

Indeed it is important to note that Muslim martyrs died ten years earlier than the first Christian martyrs as argued by Quraishy and much as this is a desirable revelation or better still emphasis on historical events, it is important that the presentation of such content of IRE is not cast in light of the undervalue given to it by several historians. In my view, if it is presented as a fact of history, even alongside the information concerning the death of Christian martyrs ten years later, it would be left to the reader or the students to draw their conclusions about who the first religious martyrs were.

Chapter fourteen of *The text-book of Islam Book One* concentrates on the process of compilation of the Quran, instructions on the sacredness of the

⁸² The writer of the book Quraishy (*Text-book of Islam Book One*, 1987:v) in the acknowledgement observes that he had to rely on oral notes in some cases because 'of the absence of materials on the spread of Islam' and that 'Most of the books available on the history of East-Africa glorify some of its aspects and rarely that of Islam.'

Quran and explores the criticism given by some scholars, 'especially western scholars' on the chronological arrangement of the Surahs and attempts to explore the philosophy of the Surahs in order of the Surahs in the Quran. This is another indication of the insulated nature of the Islamic religious tradition which does not easily approve of criticism of the tenets of the Islamic religious tradition and this is in turn a pointer to the complication such a stand point presents for an educational environment where students are expected to give their contributions in a debate concerning religious issues. Despite the criticism of mainly 'western scholars or non-Muslims' scholars on the Quran, the concluding remarks of this chapter point to the prospects of dialogue between Christians and Muslims by observing thus:

It can be said that after many centuries of unsympathetic isolation, there are now signs of hope and toleration. Attempts are being made to build bridges of understanding between the two people. Amongst many Christians there is a desire to understand Islam without hostility. There is a recognition that episodes of history such as 'The crusades' brought nothing but suspicion and enmity between Muslim and non-Muslim. But, we cannot escape from the fact that there is still much misunderstanding to be overcome. The future is, however much more hopeful than it has been (Quraishy, 1987: 238).

The conclusive remarks in my view portray the gist of IRE aims that seek to promote not only 'respect and tolerance of other religions' but also an understanding of the Christian religious tradition⁸³, which in turn suggests exploring it. 'The desire to understand Islam without hostility' on part of the Christians can be appreciated by a 'content' of IRE in an educational environment that treats the Christian religious tradition as one among many religious traditions and not by defining it in terms of its 'inferiority' to the Islamic religious faith. In so doing, the IRE aim of promoting 'respect and tolerance of other religions' on part of the IRE syllabus, would be easily achievable.

⁸³ While respect and tolerance might be considered to be ideals to work towards, understanding of a religious tradition calls for engaging with that particular religious tradition or getting familiar with its characteristic nature.

3.8. Conclusion

The foregoing discussion has therefore revealed that the main intention behind the CRE and IRE syllabuses, CRE and IRE aims, plus text-books of CRE and IRE is the promotion of spiritual growth of students within their respective religious traditions. It has been argued that while this standpoint can promote moral and spiritual values among students beneficial for good interpersonal relationships, in view of the multi-religious nature of the schools, an approach of studying RE that enables students to appreciate religion as a phenomenon is better suited to address the multi-faith context since it provides for respect and understanding of other people's religious traditions.

In view of the foregoing argument that the syllabuses of CRE and IRE in secondary schools are aimed at the spiritual growth of students within their respective religious traditions, the next chapter explores the teaching of CRE and IRE in secondary schools and, based on the expectations of foundation bodies of RE teachers, argues that undue pressure may be exerted upon them to promote particular religious ideals which in turn might compromise their professional obligations.

CHAPTER FOUR

TEACHERS OF CRE AND IRE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND THE MULTI-FAITH CONTEXT

This chapter explores the extent to which factors other than professionalism, which is a reference to qualifications to teach RE irrespective of religious denomination and the role of an RE teacher as an educator, may have a big impact on the role of Christian Religious Education and Islamic Religious Education teachers. Firstly, the following discussion will reflect on issues of professionalism and commitment(s) of RE teachers as expounded by some British RE scholars especially as applied to the multi-religious community school context in England and Wales.⁸⁴

Secondly, the discussion will present the view that the principles underpinning professionalism and commitment(s)⁸⁵ of RE teachers in Britain largely reflect the professional ideals that would be expected of RE teachers in Uganda's religiously founded public schools, government and private founded schools.⁸⁶ Thirdly, basing on the principles of professionalism and commitment(s) of RE teachers, I shall present the view that the expectations of foundation bodies of religiously founded public schools of secondary school CRE and IRE teachers' and the religious convictions of these teachers may have a marked impact on their approach to teaching RE in the multi-religious schools. The discussion will specifically refer to questionnaire responses of CRE and IRE teachers and draw on classroom observations of lessons of CRE and IRE. While

⁸⁴ These are also referred to as maintained schools and most RE scholars reflect the principles underpinning the teaching of RE in such schools as largely being in response to the multi-religious, multi-cultural and secular nature of the British society. These schools in effect have far more in common with the religiously founded public schools in Uganda which were nationalized in 1964 will be reflected in the subsequent discussion.

⁸⁵ Commitment(s) denotes 'influence' or 'influences' on the teacher of RE apart from professionalism. In this discussion, commitment(s) is mainly with specific reference to teachers' personal religious convictions and the expectations that foundation bodies' of religiously founded schools have of RE teachers.

⁸⁶ The three categories of schools comprise students from different religions. This chapter though mainly refers to religiously founded public schools since the case for professionalism of RE teachers in purely founded government school is not affected by 'extra pressures' on RE teachers apart from professional obligations. Similarly, since the category of private schools that I refer to in my field work do not have

acknowledging the difficulty of gauging the extent to which expectations of the foundation bodies of religiously founded schools can be reflected in the different approaches of teaching RE adopted by teachers, I shall illustrate how personal religious convictions of teachers have far reaching implications for the multi-religious classes.

4.1 Professionalism in the Teaching of RE

Being a professional RE teacher presupposes qualifications to teach the subject and subsequently professionalism in RE suggests the possession of key attributes that reflect commitment to the educational purpose of RE.

4.1.1. RE Teacher as an Educator

While discussing the general principles that underpin the subject of RE in a multi-cultural and multi-religious British society, Garth Read *et al* (1992: 3) argue that the role of an RE teacher ought to be that of an educator who is committed to enquiry. Similarly, Hulmes (1979: 44) argues that the only justifiable commitment RE teachers can have is a commitment to search.⁸⁷ Enquiry and search in either case suggests the exploration of religion by the teacher and students as a key educational objective. It is therefore an emphasis on the professional role of the teacher as a guide or facilitator rather than a religious instructor. Subsequently, the acknowledgment of the professional role of RE teachers as educators suggests that they need to give due credence to students' capacity to actively participate in the learning process and thereby ensure their academic integrity.

4.1.2. RE Teachers' Respect for the Academic Integrity of Students

The concept of academic integrity suggests a provision for students to participate fully in the learning process by acknowledging their independence of

any unique expectations of RE teachers and are managed by individuals mainly with pecuniary interests, it is assumed that the RE teachers would exercise their professional role without any 'external pressures.'

mind (Watson: 1993: 40). The object of this learning process is to enable students to think about religion with the main intention of promoting understanding of religion. Watson (1993:88) and Michael Grimmit (1978:7-8) stress the importance of teaching RE with a purpose of providing for thinking about religion so that students can develop understanding of religion. This is an issue reflected by different scholars who stress the educational objectives that can promote the understanding of religion among students. Holley, Watson and the Schools Council Working Party members to a great extent share views on the aim of RE but express their views differently. Holley observes that:

...of the educational criteria which the general aims must satisfy the one dominant criterion is the advocacy of depth and breadth of religious understanding and of scholarly understanding of religious phenomenon, contributing to an understanding of man's position and status in this world (Holley, 1978 : 19).

Watson says:

The widely accepted, and soundly based, educational aim of RE, advocated in almost all policy statements, is to help pupils achieve understanding of religion (Watson, 1993:42).

The above two explanations are similar to that of the Schools Council Working Party (SCWP):

The study of religion should be governed by the same principles as any other subject. The aim of religious teaching in schools should not be to evangelize or induct pupils into predetermined religious view points but to create capacities to understand and think about religion (Schools Council Publications, 1971:37).

The central feature of the three statements is on the purpose of RE being the promotion of understanding of religion or ensuring the academic integrity of students and this can be summed up by reflecting on what RE should not aim at and that is 'not evangelizing or inducting pupils into predetermined religious view points.' In other words, the three statements suggest that professional RE teachers ought to put emphasis on the 'self-education' of children or their ability to participate fully in the learning process so that they can arrive at their own

⁸⁷ Hulmes (1979: 44) observes that contrary to professional expectations some RE teachers may perceive

conclusions. The issue of students drawing of their own conclusions from what is studied is clarified by the SCWP Members and Ronald Goldman in their discussion on the suitable approach of teaching religion in Britain and its justification as a subject on the curriculum:

True knowledge and understanding which becomes part of the pupils' interior mental life and convictions are arrived at by personal discovery (Schools Council Publications, 1971: 28).

Goldman observes thus:

Young people seem to resent authoritarian teaching and more and more wish to explore ideas and beliefs for themselves. Good permissive relationships, allowing personal questioning and discussion, seem to be the best climate for religious education in secondary schools (Goldman, 1965: 55).

The SCWP Members and Goldman express what can be referred to as the ideal goals of a professional RE teacher who seeks to ensure the academic integrity of students. In other words, the teachers' provision for students' personal discovery, questioning and discussion of religious issues can enable them to draw conclusions instead of being provided with ready made answers. In short, the promotion of understanding of religion which ensures the academic integrity of students is a key attribute of a professional RE teacher.

4.1.3. RE Teachers' Respect for the Integrity of Religious Traditions

One of the key attributes of a professional RE teacher in a multi-religious and multi-cultural British society cited by RE scholars, is the exercise of the 'concept of fairness' to the different religions taught.

While discussing professionalism in RE as applied in a secular context, Trevor Cooling (in Astley and Francis, 1994: 154-155) argues that the 'concept of fairness' which calls for an avoidance of domination of particular religious views over others, is an essential concept in a secular context since 'a professional teacher is bound by the norms of fairness appropriate to a secular context.' In

other words, the secular nature of British society calls for the treatment of all religious traditions as of equal importance or value (Read *et al.*, 1992: 7; Westerhoff III in Felderhof, 1985: 58).⁸⁸ Most important, in a multi-religious and secular society like Britain, professional RE teachers need to show respect for the different religions taught including non-religious philosophies.

The exercise of fairness to all religious traditions on the part of professional RE teachers according to Cox has implications for the teacher to consider that sometimes his or her religious beliefs may not necessarily be true in comparison to those of others. Cox argues that a teacher needs to 'study all beliefs objectively with the possibility that the beliefs with which he agrees (and which matter to him deeply) might be false, and that those which he disagrees might be true' (Cox, 1983: 55).

Cox portrays the professional RE teacher as human and one who, while entitled to his or her own views, is expected to exhibit a quality of self-sacrifice which calls for abandoning of an absolutist stance about the unique claim of rightness that his or her own religion may subscribe to. As will be reflected upon in the subsequent discussion concerning RE teachers in Uganda, this is one of the greatest tests of professionalism since the common practice is support for one's own religious views points and the down playing of other people's.

4.1.4. Religious Convictions of RE Teachers and Professionalism

Personal religious convictions are a key resource for RE since teachers who are practicing members of religious communities have a first hand experience of religion. Hulmes argues that it is important for teachers of RE to consider their religious commitment as a key resource for RE since one of the purposes of RE is for students to make genuine choices basing on available information and/or evidence:

⁸⁸ The multi-religious oriented nature of the RE syllabuses that are followed by students in the community schools in England and Wales reflect this rationale though for historical and cultural reasons of the British nation, the syllabuses give more coverage to the Christian religious tradition than any other religious traditions. While this might imply a downplaying of the value of other religions, the provision for these religions, even when practiced by the minority largely reflects the 'concept of fairness.'

The teachers commitment is vital to this process and cannot be hidden away, implicit, and beyond the criticism of the classroom exchanges. But there is no reason why it should be hidden away, because it constitutes the teacher's primary and most valuable resource, out of which will flow the most pointed questions and penetrating insights of which he is at the moment capable (Hulmes, 1979:82).

The argument above expresses the importance of a teacher's religious convictions in enabling students to appreciate the significance of religions to their adherents since the teacher will serve as 'a perfect example' of other religious people who belong to the religion he is teaching about. The problem though is that no single individual may adequately represent the diversity that is often representative of the religious practices and values within one same religious tradition. Nonetheless, according to Hulmes (1979: 32) religious convictions of teachers can be made use of in a context where there is discussion between students and teachers since students can positively contribute towards what it means to have a religious commitment.

While discussing the role of an RE teacher in a multi-religious environment Read *et al* (1992: 7) argues for the need for RE teachers to be aware of the commitments of students or non-religious commitments so as to give due respect to their different stand points (see also Watson: 1993: 7; Hughes in Wright and Brandom, 2000: 36). On his part Hulmes calls for dialogue on the different commitments and he says that this involves, 'a mutual respect between the teacher and the one taught, facilitating the explicit expression of the respective commitments of teacher and pupil, is surely one of the characteristics of religious education, for it safeguards the autonomy of both parties' (Hulmes, 1979: 28-29).

While Hulmes seems to refer to the object of the shared commitments as the safeguard of the integrity of the teacher and students (a reference to academic integrity of students and professional integrity of teachers), his stand point suggests that the religious convictions of teachers will provide an open discussion on commitments of students and therefore can be a valuable resource for RE in particular and if it is presented in an impartial way.

On the other hand, it is worth noting that a teacher's personal religious or non-religious commitments can be an impediment to the teaching of RE. According to Doble (in Erricker, 1995: 15) and Hulmes (1979: 19), teachers of RE need to acknowledge the personal commitments they may hold as individuals so that in the process of teaching these are not hidden from the students but used as a resource for RE. According to Hulmes (1979: 19) 'what is required is not a blanket dismissal of 'commitment' as if to suggest that some teachers contrive to operate without it in some form'. What can be deduced from this is that the argument on the part of some RE teachers that they are neutral or do not have commitments which can influence their teaching of RE is not an honest one.

As will be observed in the subsequent discussion on the different approaches of teaching RE adopted by teachers of RE in Uganda, there is an extent to which some teachers who may be considered objective in their approach to RE, since they do not express strong religious convictions as their counterparts, might be, for example, agnostics and therefore not necessarily neutral.

In light of the foregoing discussion concerning the different 'commitments' that RE teachers may have to contend with, the next discussion explores the expectations that religiously founded schools in Uganda have of RE teachers and the views of these teachers about these expectations. The purpose of this exploration is to establish the extent to which the expectations of foundation bodies of CRE and IRE teachers may compromise the professional role of teachers.

4.2. Expectations of Foundation Bodies and Professionalism of RE Teachers

The expectations of the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of Uganda and the Islamic religion of teachers of CRE and IRE respectively have not only impressed upon teachers the need for the promotion of their respective religious traditions and ideals in the religiously founded public schools but also had implications for professionalism. The following discussion argues that these expectations suggest that professionalism is not the only pre-requisite for teaching in the religiously founded public schools.

4.2.1. *Expectations of the Roman Catholic Church of CRE Teachers*

The Roman Catholic Church in Uganda is explicit in its expectations of CRE teachers and Head-teachers to promote the Roman Catholic 'doctrine.'⁸⁹ The Roman Catholic Education Church law stipulates that:

The local ordinary is to be careful that those who are appointed as teachers of religion in schools, even non-Christian ones, are outstanding in doctrine, in witness of their Christian faith, and their teaching (Ssekamwa: 1985:154).

In a similar manner, while discussing the role that Roman Catholic schools play in the teaching of Christianity Magembe⁹⁰ argues that:

The whole atmosphere in a Roman Catholic School should be Catholic. The Head-teacher should also be Catholic to ensure the proper teaching of the Catholic traditions (Magembe in Ssekamwa, 1985: 70).

In view of the choice of an RE teacher, it is worth noting that the Roman Catholic Church expects of teachers of CRE in their religious founded schools to be vetted by the local priest of the parish where the school is situated. The expectations of the Roman Catholic Church Laws raise questions on several issues. If all teachers of CRE are officially appointed and posted by the Ministry of Education, why should a teacher of CRE in a Roman Catholic founded school be approved of by the Roman Catholic Church?⁹¹ In addition, since the CRE syllabus is joint for Christians, why shouldn't any qualified Christian (and probably Muslim)⁹² teacher be allowed to teach the Joint Christian syllabus?

⁸⁹ Although this is referred to in Roman Catholic Education Church Laws, its characteristic nature is not defined (refer to subsequent discussion)

⁹⁰ Rev. Fr. Magembe is a Roman Catholic priest whose views in such an official Roman Catholic publication have to be taken seriously.

⁹¹ This scenario portrays the weaknesses in the government system of appointing and posting teachers in the 'national educational institutions' since although all appointments are supposed to be done centrally, Head-teachers often flout this policy by locally identifying their own teachers and then recommending them to the Ministry of Education for appointment and posting. This is normally the practice even for teachers of other subjects.

⁹² In practice any student irrespective of religious background can train as an RE teacher and indeed at Nyamitanga S.S.S one of the teachers of Christian Religious Education is a Muslim and I came across

The reference to non-Christians being allowed to teach CRE in a Roman Catholic founded school provided they are outstanding in doctrine is problematic since before being vetted, a teacher may not be aware of what this doctrine is actually about, except probably for the Roman Catholic teachers. This would in turn effectively exclude non-Catholics! This stand point might greatly explain why Magembe refers to the 'whole school environment', including the school leadership and the teachers of CRE should aim at promoting the 'Roman Catholic tradition'. This raises questions on the professional status of such a CRE teacher since his or her training will not have taken into account denominational identity. On the part of the students who belong to different religious traditions, there is a complication raised since they all do not belong to the Roman Catholic tradition. In other words, the expectations of the Roman Catholic Church of RE teachers in their schools raises questions on the integrity of the Joint syllabus and compromises the professional status of the teachers since the concept of fairness within the different Christian religious traditions cannot be provided for.

In the questionnaire responses of the four teachers' of CRE at the Roman Catholic founded Mary Hill High School, they all acknowledged their awareness of the expectations of the Roman Catholic Church of them. The question that I asked was, 'Does the foundation body of your school play any role in the teaching of RE in your school or have expectations of you as an RE teacher? One of the responses was, 'yes, those who teach hold the interests of the foundation body'. Another one was, 'the CRE teacher has a religious bias towards the foundation body.'⁹³ The teachers' responses not only express an awareness of the expectations of the Roman Catholic Church on them but reflect a willingness to fulfill these expectations. In light of the foregoing discussion on the choice of who teaches CRE in a Roman Catholic founded school I can deduce that these teachers are keen to promote the Roman Catholic religious ideals or doctrine. However how this can be provided for under a Joint syllabus is not easy to tell and seems impractical but cannot be dismissed. The observations of CRE lessons in the Roman Catholic founded

another student teacher, a Muslim who was about to qualify as a teacher of Christian Religious Education and History.

schools might probably have revealed something but I was not able to fully establish this aspect as I did not get the opportunity to observe lessons.

Another key issue concerning the expectations of the Roman Catholic Church of CRE teachers is that it seems to reflect the choice of teachers whose personal religious convictions are known and approved of by the Catholic Church. This might be part of the implications of a teacher being expected to be outstanding in Christian doctrine. This may be the reason why three of the four teachers of CRE at the school are ordained Church ministers. This, in itself as referred to by Hulmes (1979: 32), may not be a problem since in that case the teacher can use his religious experience as a resource for RE lessons provided that his or her commitment is made explicit and that open discussion is provided for about it between the teacher and the students.

4.2.2. The Expectations of the Church of Uganda of CRE Teachers

The following discussion refers to the Church of Uganda expectations of CRE teachers in their religiously founded but public schools and observes that although there is a renewed interest in the choice of who teaches CRE, the Church of Uganda has not been overtly concerned with this issue since the nationalization of religiously founded schools.

While the field work information from the Church of Uganda founded Mbarara High School suggests a relaxed attitude of the Church of Uganda foundation body concerning CRE teachers, in light of the interviews that I held with the religious leadership and the new Church of Uganda official document on education, there is renewed interest in the question of who teaches CRE and in view of the multi-religious nature of the classes, this development may lead to a compromise of the professional role of CRE teachers.

On my field work trip to Mbarara High School, I was informed by the Head-teacher who is a Church of Uganda member⁹⁴ that, 'the school has a liberal policy on RE and the Head of CRE is a Roman Catholic'. In his view the choice

⁹³ The four teachers of CRE are Roman Catholics, three ordained and one a lay woman.

of a Roman Catholic to head a CRE department in a Church of Uganda school is considered liberal and while this is greatly true in contrast with the Roman Catholic founded Mary Hill High School, where all the CRE teachers were Roman Catholics, the school's liberal policy did not extend to Muslims since there is no IRE in the school and yet there are Muslim students in the school. Nonetheless, this reflects the general relaxed attitude of the Church of Uganda in being concerned with issues of CRE since the nationalization of schools. It is also important to note that in contrast to the three Roman Catholic Mary Hill High School teachers, two⁹⁵ of them who filled in the questionnaire on the Church of Uganda expectations of CRE teachers at Mbarara High School indicated that the Church of Uganda did not have any expectations of them as CRE teachers or exercise any role in overseeing their teaching of the subject. Their responses were:

'No participation is seen and not even expectations from me. Teaching is purely academic and not theological'.

The second teacher observed that:

'It does not play any role in Religious Education'.

The responses of the two teachers seem to reflect an attempt of defining their role as neutral and not being influenced by either personal religious convictions or expectations of the Church of Uganda of them, an issue that will be reflected in the approach that is adopted by one of them in the subsequent discussion concerning lessons of RE that I observed. While reference to being 'academic' reflects emphasis on educational principles, 'theological' reflects emphasis on religious convictions or promotion of religious ideals of the Church of Uganda.

On the other hand, the third teacher of CRE, the Head of Department who is a Roman Catholic, interestingly refers to the Church of Uganda as having expectations of him as an RE teacher and the school administration as being

⁹⁴ Interview held with Mr. Yoramu Tibasiimwa on 9/07/2001 at Mbarara High School

⁹⁵ The two teachers are members of Church of Uganda

concerned with the spiritual life of the students. While replying to the question on expectations of foundation bodies he replied:

'Yes, we have a Chaplain who also teaches religion (a reference to CRE) and the department of education of the diocese (a reference to the Church of Uganda Diocesan Education Secretaries' office) sometimes has a hand in posting of Head-teachers who will ensure that the teaching of the subject and its belief is generally maintained'.

The response of this teacher is quite revealing, the teacher indicates that the Church of Uganda expects the Head-teacher to play a key role in CRE and the general spiritual life of the school, yet the Head-teacher down plays that role in view of his reference to the liberal policy of the school on CRE.

The general expectation of Church of Uganda schools to have Church of Uganda Head-teachers who can 'appoint' Church of Uganda teachers of CRE is generally true. The difference in implementation of this 'policy' seems to be a result of the 'level of commitment' of the particular Head-teacher since some of them may be born again and others nominal or not zealous in their approach to issues of RE.⁹⁶ On the other hand, the reference to a 'Chaplain who teaches CRE' by the third CRE teacher of Mbarara High School is an indicator of the vested interests of the Church of Uganda in providing for the spiritual growth of students within the Church of Uganda religious tradition and as we shall observe in our discussion on the lessons of CRE that I observed, the approach of teaching adopted by this teacher is in line with a confessional approach to RE and contrasts sharply with the approach suggested by the two teachers of the same school mentioned in the foregoing discussion.

The renewed interest on the question of who teaches CRE in a Church of Uganda founded school and the resultant effect of this is worth noting. The

⁹⁶ It is generally true to say that the Church of Uganda has two dominant groups within its 'religious tradition' and these are the born again and the 'nominal' Christians. The former are normally more enthusiastic in the expressions of their religious convictions and Head-teachers in this category are more likely to choose CRE teachers who are evangelical. The second category comprises of Christians who are not necessarily non-Church attendants but those that do not express zeal in wanting their religious tradition to dominate all aspects of school or community life and such may not care about who teaches RE if they are Head-teachers.

Church of Uganda recently drafted a document named *Strategies for Improving Church Participation in the Management of her Educational Institutions* (July, 2001) and Rev. Kamukama, Provincial Education Secretary for the Church of Uganda, informed me that, 'the choice of who teaches CRE in Church of Uganda founded schools had been ignored for quite a long time' and that, 'the issue was now being revisited in line with new Church of Uganda educational guide-lines'.

The new position of the Church of Uganda on CRE teachers is reflected by Jenny Ottewell (2000:18)⁹⁷ who quotes the *Church of Uganda Provincial Board of Education Report and Policy for Teacher Education 2000* which specifies that: 'dioceses must re-emphasize the need for committed, practicing Christians to train for and subsequently teach the subject'.⁹⁸ The emphasis on particular Christian attributes for a teacher of CRE in a Church of Uganda founded school suggests a desire to promote particular Christian religious ideals. It echoes the Roman Catholic prescription for a CRE teacher who is expected to promote the Roman Catholic tradition. In effect, religious convictions can be an impediment to RE as is the case with some CRE teachers referred to in the subsequent discussion on CRE lessons that I observed. On the other hand, if personal religious convictions are used as a resource for RE and professionalism exercised, this may not be a problem. The challenge is that some other professional RE teachers will be denied the chance to teach CRE if they do not fit in with the 'special Christian attributes' described above.

The question raised by the choice of a CRE teacher whose religious convictions are approved of by the Church of Uganda reflects the renewal of the Church of Uganda's interest in promoting spiritual growth of students along the lines of their religious ideals. However it would be mistaken to consider the Church of Uganda as having one particular stand point of interpreting for example moral

⁹⁷ Jenny Ottewell was an Assistant Provincial Education Secretary for Church of Uganda for about 26 years and retired recently.

⁹⁸ Committed practicing Christians in the Ugandan context is a reference to born again Christians who accept Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour and offer to witness for him and preach in order to win over others. These may belong to the evangelical wing mainly associated to Church of Uganda and several other Pentecostal groups.

or ethical issues.⁹⁹ Spiritual growth as a purpose of RE therefore becomes problematic when we consider members of other Christian or even non-Christian religious traditions. We can be left with an option of considering the purpose of RE as being the evangelization of students. While it is true to say that committed practicing Christians can make good teachers of CRE since they fully value its importance in their lives, and can therefore be a good resource for CRE lessons, the danger can arise if they use their personal religious convictions in an unprofessional manner to win over students to their points of view.

4.2.3. Expectations of the Islamic Religion of IRE Teachers

While the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council (UMSC)¹⁰⁰ does not seem to have an official document that prescribes the kind of person to teach IRE in the Muslim founded public schools, the interviews that I held with Islamic religious leaders and teachers of IRE plus questionnaire responses of these teachers suggest an out-look on the purpose of IRE as being the spiritual growth of students within the Islamic religion. In view of the multi-religious schools in which this goal is implemented, it implies that the professional obligations of IRE teachers are compromised.

During my interview with Ismail Ecum, the Secretary for Education and Social Services for the UMSC, I put to him a question concerning the kind of teacher that was expected to teach in the Islamic founded public secondary schools. He replied that:

‘He should be a trained teacher with in-depth knowledge of the Islamic religion and he should have good knowledge of Arabic and be an exemplary Muslim’.

The implications of being well versed with the Arabic language suggests a requirement that is not reflected in the Syllabus of IRE, while the emphasis on

⁹⁹ Born again Christians within the Church of Uganda belong to different sub groups that include the revival brethren, the re-awakened brethren, the Pentecostal or renewal Christians and alongside these there are Christians who are normally referred to as the nominal Christians. The practice of religious worship of the different sub-groups differs and some Churches of recent have resorted to organising different services to cater for the different expressions of worship within the Church of Uganda.

being an exemplary Muslim seems to express the official view of UMSC since such a requirement does not exist in Teacher Training Institutions. This means that if Christian students are interested in becoming IRE teachers, then they would not easily stand the chance of being 'approved' by the UMSC to teach IRE. One can deduce that religious convictions of teachers' take precedence over qualifications in the subject. This stand point was revealed in an interview that I held with Amir Sheik Ssekimpi¹⁰¹, a leader of the *Tabligh* Muslim 'sect' in Uganda whom I asked the question concerning the kind of teacher that he thought was suitable for teaching IRE in Uganda's Muslim founded public schools. He informed me that:

'Islam must be taught by a Muslim teacher in order to persuade them into Islam not just passing exams'.

His understanding of the role of IRE therefore was one of promoting the Islamic religion. Mindful of the multi-religious composition of classes, this argument means that non-Muslim students will become targets of conversion to the Islamic religion. Since the teaching of IRE is the preserve of the practicing Muslim teachers, then in light of the arguments reflected above there is a likelihood of the teachers' religious convictions becoming an impediment to RE.

While interviewing Sheik Kassim Matovu¹⁰² an IRE teacher at the Muslim founded Nyamitanga S.S.S, he informed me that it is not only the teachers of IRE from whom the Islamic religion has expectations but even ordinary Muslims. He illustrated this point by saying, 'In Islam even an ordinary Muslim is not supposed to take alcohol'. The perspective from which he defined the expectations of the Islamic religion of him as an IRE teacher was meant to reflect the basic requirements of the UMSC of an IRE teacher and do reflect the argument advanced by Hulmes (1979: 7) concerning the insulated or sacred nature of Islam which is hesitant on any separation between the practice of

¹⁰⁰ This is the supreme religious body that is concerned with religious affairs of Muslims in Uganda

¹⁰¹ The *Tabligh* is a Islamic religious group in Uganda, normally referred to as a sect or a fundamentalist group and although in some cases they are at logger heads with the UMSC, they closely work with it in many respects including educational matters. It was interesting to note that when I entered the office, the language of communication between staff members was Arabic although the members were all Ugandans (interviewed 17/10/01).

¹⁰² Interview held on 21/07/2001 at Nyamitanga S.S.S in Mbarara

Islamic religion by its adherents and the study of the religion. This reflects the confessional approach to RE and suggests that the main aim of preferring a practicing Muslim to teach Islamic religion is to promote Islamic religion and/ or religious ideals. This stand point is expressed in the questionnaire responses of the two IRE teachers who responded to the question, 'In your view, what kind of teacher is best suited to teach IRE in secondary schools? One replied:

'A person have to be qualified and again putting into practice what he learnt following Islamic rules'.

His counterpart similarly observed:

'The person should be trained, qualified and belongs to the belief to teach as his profession'.

The teachers' responses therefore, while giving due recognition to professional qualifications of IRE teachers, reflect an equal or even greater value to their membership to the Islamic religious tradition and thereby their religious convictions. As we shall observe in the next discussion concerning the approach adopted by IRE teachers in the IRE lessons that I observed, there is an extent to which the confessional approach to IRE described above compromises the teachers' professional obligations in light of the multi-religious schools.

4.3. Observations made from observing of CRE and IRE lessons

There are two easily identifiable approaches to the teaching of RE, namely one whereby personal religious convictions are used to promote particular religious standpoints (in some cases representative of the foundation bodies' expectations of RE teachers)¹⁰³ and another one which can be considered as

¹⁰³ As observed earlier in the discussion, this aspect may not be easy to assess in a classroom situation, but as in the IRE lessons that I audited, it can be deduced from the teachers' terminology.

an 'open approach to RE'¹⁰⁴ whereby the teacher does not use personal religious convictions to promote particular religious views. On the other hand, the following discussion observes that two of the eight teachers reflect a middle course in their approach to teaching RE since they use more than one approach.¹⁰⁵ The implications of some of these approaches for the multi-religious classes of RE will be indicated as comprising the teachers' professional obligations since personal religious convictions are used to promote particular religious standpoints and due credence is not given to the academic integrity of the students.

4.3.1. A Confessional Approach to RE

Five of the eight teachers of CRE and IRE reflected the use of personal religious convictions in their approach to teaching RE as an avenue for promoting particular religious stand points.¹⁰⁶

The first teacher of Mbarara High School¹⁰⁷ used his personal religious convictions as a means of realizing a positive change on the part of the students. His approach to teaching CRE could also be interpreted as being in line with the expectations of the Church of Uganda, the foundation body.¹⁰⁸ He used his personal religious convictions to win over students to his religious stand points. In view of the special aim of the Joint syllabus he can be considered to have been aiming at 'enabling students to grow towards responsible Christian maturity.'

¹⁰⁴ Fred Hughes in Wright and Brandom (2000:36) refers to an Open RE as one that is suitable for State maintained schools in Britain (these share the multi-religious characteristics of Ugandan religiously founded but yet national secondary schools) since 'it seeks to respect the variety of backgrounds from which pupils come' and 'it does not prescribe the conclusions pupils should come to through their search.'

¹⁰⁵ Reference will be made to the two teachers' approaches whereby one reflects an 'Open approach to RE' but along with a Confessional approach plus another one whose teaching reflects an 'Open approach to RE' but with some possibility of holding an 'a quasi open approach'.

¹⁰⁶ Although teachers in religiously founded schools can be considered not only to promote their personal religious convictions but the expectations of the foundation bodies to which they belong, teachers in the purely government founded Ntare School also belong to different religious groups to which they owe allegiance and this is partly reflected in the discussion concerning observations of lessons made at the school.

¹⁰⁷ Reference to the teachers has not included their names and has mainly followed the inter-relationships concerning the styles of teaching CRE across the five schools.

¹⁰⁸ The teacher who is also the Chaplain for Church of Uganda is a born again Christian and makes every effort to make known his personal religious convictions.

Notwithstanding the benefits of such an approach in fulfilling the aims of CRE, it raises some questions concerning how he proceeds with his task with regard to academic integrity of the students. He began his lesson with a word of prayer and he was putting on a clerical shirt.¹⁰⁹ In line with the topic of the lesson 'Bible teaching on Man's quest for God,' he proceeded to introduce the topic by illustrating it with Gen:11:1ff and Gen:12ff. Concerning God's call of Abraham, he observed that, 'Abraham sought God and he (a reference to God) blessed him.' He proceeded to say, 'when you search for God you find him and receive blessings.' 'That is why I told you to read a verse today?'.¹¹⁰ The teacher approached the topic man's quest for God in the Bible not only by using Biblical material but used it as an opportunity to encourage the students to read the Bible for their personal spiritual growth. This in itself may not be a bad idea. The problem is that there is lack of acknowledging the boundaries between when he is involved in teaching CRE and when he is concerned with the spiritual lives of students as a Chaplain. The teacher proceeded with the lesson by mainly reading the prepared notes while interjecting with questions to provoke the students into responding to the topic of the lesson.

His concluding remarks in the lesson were:

'How I wish that each of you seeks God. Then you will receive blessings. Do you hear Timothy?' (this seemed to be a sarcastic reference to one of the students who probably is not as responsive to his lessons or religious advice).

He went to say:

'God would make you a sober, disciplined boy so that when others say let's go to a disco, you are able to stop'.

¹⁰⁹ Lesson for senior four students observed on 17/07/2002. Since he normally leads morning prayers at school assembly, it seems he always puts on a clerical shirt and therefore he moves on straight to his lessons. Although putting on a clerical shirt in an RE lesson may not affect the professional role of a teacher, it might 'scare a bit' or create some inhibitions on the part of the students who might have the problem of not making a distinction between the 'one way fiery preacher man' at their Sunday service (as some are) and the professional teacher who is supposed to be open for exchange of views.

¹¹⁰ This was a reference to the Bible sharing he had with students at school morning assembly

In short, his remarks are reflective of the strong religious convictions that he has and which he shares with the students so that they can receive God's blessings. He is only short of concluding his lesson with an invitation to students to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour which is characteristic of sermons preached by the born again ministers.

The above mentioned approach to teaching CRE raises some questions such as, 'how should a Roman Catholic student respond to such a message since the teacher considers going to a disco as 'sinful' or not promoting 'responsible Christian maturity' while to a Roman Catholic going for a disco dance is not considered 'sinful?'.¹¹¹ What about Muslim students who may not consider going to a disco as 'sinful?'. Does this not seem to suggest that the teacher is approving of the generally accepted religious values of the Church of Uganda as opposed to those of the Roman Catholic Church and the Islamic religion? This might reflect the reason behind the choice of particular CRE teachers for religiously founded schools since the teacher is expected to promote the religious ideals of their particular religious denomination. In this respect, the students are denied a chance to arrive at their own conclusions since the issue of going for a disco for example has not been debated by the students so that they can exchange views with him and finally arrive at their 'synthesis' of what man's quest for God means to those who go for discos. His use of personal religious convictions in the CRE lessons therefore is an impediment to the students' effective learning of the subject.

Similarly, one teacher of CRE at Ntare School¹¹² set about his lesson with a view of 'realizing a positive change' in the lives of the students and he was very clear in his use of personal religious convictions¹¹³ to win over students to his religious out-look on particular issues. Whilst it is true to say that he is overtly concerned with the main intention of the Christian religious education syllabus, the promotion of the Christian religious tradition by enabling students 'to grow towards responsible Christian maturity'; the problem is that there is no provision for the students to reflect on what they are studying and subsequently draw

¹¹¹ When I was a High School student, a Roman Catholic priest Father Fleskins used to organise disco for students at Old Kampala S.S.S as part of his ministry to the youth.

¹¹² A lesson of senior one students observed on 17/07/2002

their own conclusions from the lessons. His topic for the first year students was on the different ways that happiness is expressed in society and this was derived from the theme of Happiness, a sub-theme in *Christian Living Today Book Two*.¹¹⁴ He read out notes which were numbered one to six.¹¹⁵ On the sixth point, he dictated to students to write:

We also become happy when we are in fellowship. We worship God and praise him. We pray and even share in the word of God and become happy after knowing that we were created in God's image. You know humans are not like monkeys (possibly referring to the scientific evolutionary theory of the origin of species through natural selection-and this was like an interjection not meant to be part of the dictated notes). For us we know that we are created in God's image. We have the conscience of God.

The teacher spoke from the perspective of 'we' and the context of his notes seems to greatly lean on his membership to the 'good Christians' who attend fellowship¹¹⁶ and in so doing he seems to be commending Christians who subscribe to the idea of fellowships. He does not make any attempt to make reference to the diversity in interpretations of what it may mean to be happy according to the different Christian religious 'traditions' in which case the concept of fairness to different religious traditions is not exercised. For example some Christian religious denominations detest the idea of fellowships.¹¹⁷ He uses his personal religious convictions to promote particular religious stand points and since these are 'ready made' notes being dictated to students, it carries an implication of being the ideal for students. In addition, he did not encourage discussion of the points he gave. In fact on point number five he set a question for himself, anticipated the students' response, gave his own answer and he said 'let us write.'

¹¹³ The teacher is a self confessed Pentecostal born again Christian and always takes any occasion to make his religious convictions known.

¹¹⁴ He was therefore not following the Developing in Christ Syllabus (refer to discussion in Chapter three about Developing in Christ syllabus).

¹¹⁵ The other five in summary were about passing exams, receiving good things, having good relationships with God, being loved in the community and when people are enjoying their free time.

¹¹⁶ Some Christian religious denominations especially the Roman Catholic Church in Uganda do not subscribe to the idea of fellowships to which 'born again or saved' students attach much importance since they meet together to read the Bible and give testimonies of God's workings in their lives, this also involves public repentance of sins.

¹¹⁷ In my role as a Deputy Head-teacher at Ntare School, I handled some cases in which parents complained about their sons' membership of the 'born again groups' and in their view they argued that fellowships took a lot of students' time and that some had abandoned reading their books seriously

In such a respect it is not only the Muslims who might not easily relate with this particular approach to CRE but even the students who belong to different Christian religious denominations. This approach is therefore not suitable for the multi-religious class room context and not in the least for a single faith community since it does not give due credence to students academic integrity. In some cases one can envisage a situation where some students could easily be 'converted' to the religious stand points of the teacher of CRE and thereby to his particular Christian religious denomination.

The two IRE lessons that I observed had one thing in common namely, the two teachers expressing their identification with the Islamic religion. The common usage of 'we' and 'us' by the teachers when referring to their membership of the Islamic religious tradition that they 'represent' in class is a pointer to the teachers' possible reflection of the expectations of the UMSC of them more than say the Ministry of Education, the appointing authority.

The first teacher of IRE¹¹⁸ who was handling a topic on the history of Islam, had this to say while dictating notes on the successes of the UMSC which was established in 1972, 'Muslims had no hospitals, but their counterparts had Lubaga, Mengo (a reference to Christian missionary founded schools) for them they had hospitals but for us we did not have any hospitals'. The teacher considers himself as one with the Muslims by using the phrase 'us' and uses 'for them' when referring to Christians.¹¹⁹ Such a presentation of information serves more to emphasize the disadvantaged status of Muslims at the time and insinuates the privileged status of the Christians. When the teacher asked students at one point to mention the reasons that they thought led to the establishment of the UMSC, one student replied, 'to fight the Christians' upon which the students laughed and the teacher seemed to brush it off by moving on to another point. Although the student could have been making a joke, such

because of such programmes. In one case, a Roman Catholic parent expressed dismay at his son's membership of the fellowships since it implied the joining of 'a new religious tradition' in her view.

¹¹⁸ Lesson observed on 22/07/2002 at Nyamitanga SSS. Although the teacher was aware of my identity as a researcher, he did not reveal it to the students and he did not adjust his lesson to suit 'a visitor's taste' from what I could see. This is the case because his approach reflected an approach that presupposed that his 'audience' was always for Muslims only.

a joke would not possibly go down well with some Christian students if they happened to be in an IRE lesson.

It is important for the teacher of IRE to be objective in the presentation of information so that he teaches from a third party perspective (Doble in Erricker, 1995:15) instead of using 'us' and 'we' language. In addition, the comment of the student 'to fight Christians' might have been a good opportunity for the teacher to express the need for 'respect and tolerance of other people's religions.' In short, the personal religious convictions of the teacher are drawn upon only by identifying with the Islamic religion and this can send a message of alienating non-Muslim students if they are in a class of IRE. Such an approach of teaching IRE therefore fails to take into account the implications of professionalism for his religious convictions in light of the multi-religious nature of the schools or even the kind of attitude that is being formed by the Muslim students towards the Christians whom they have to relate to on the compound or in real life situations.

In the same way, the second teacher of IRE¹²⁰ while handling the topic of impurities in Islam, used a method of teaching IRE that presupposed that students were Muslims. This is not the case since in senior one, IRE is compulsory for all students. While handling the sub-topic of 'Ablution', he wrote on the black board, 'Desirable habits of ablutions before we go for prayers', the phrasing of the title indicates how the teacher of IRE addresses the class as if it comprised of Muslims only. The reasons behind this stand point of the teacher of IRE to teach Muslim and Christian students as if it is a class of Muslims only is in part a result of the IRE aims that have intentions of enabling students to become 'practicing Muslims'. By commission or omission, the bottom line is the promotion of the Islamic religious tradition and the challenge in this is failing to address oneself to the multi-religious context of the classes.

In other words, students of other religious traditions cannot easily relate to the approach used by the teacher since it alienates them while it reflects a strong bond between the teacher and Muslim students. The possible implication of this

¹¹⁹ I was not able to establish whether some Christians were in the class since at senior four IRE is an optional subject which Christian students can study in the same way as Muslims students can choose CRE.

is that the IRE lessons can only make proper meaning to the non-Muslim students if they consider becoming Muslims. In addition, there is the inability of such an approach of teaching IRE to promote 'respect and tolerance of other religions' since Muslim students are not exposed to an approach of IRE that enables students to develop skills of respect and tolerance of other people's religious traditions. This becomes even clearer in the failure of the IRE teacher to take into account the multi-religious composition of students in his class while mentioning some animals that are considered an abomination for Muslims while they are 'treasured' by the Christians. He referred to pigs and dogs as 'haram' types of impurities' that can disqualify one from prayers in Islam. However he did not bring in a comparative element of what pigs or dogs may mean to members of other religious traditions. This is the point at which the aim of 'respect and tolerance of other religions' would be implemented.

The absence of discussion or contributions by students on what they feel about pigs and dogs, mindful of the multi-religious nature of the class, reflects the teacher's perception of his role as a teacher of a 'sacred religion' that is not subject to scrutiny. The silence on the part of the Christian students can be taken to mean 'respect of the religious traditions of the Muslims' or 'decision to keep quiet since the Muslims are on their home ground (in view of the Islamic foundation status of the school). Most important it is an indication of a one way process from teacher to student whereby students, Muslim and non-Muslim students alike, do not have provision to reflect on what they study in a critical manner. It is worth noting that in view of the main intention of the IRE syllabus, it might be expecting too much from an IRE teacher to provide for an open discussion on such sensitive religious issues without any specific term of reference from a multi-faith oriented syllabus that would provide for such issues.

4.3.2. The Open Approach to Teaching RE

Two teachers, one from Mbarara High School and another one from Nyamitanga S.S.S did not use their personal religious convictions to 'win over

¹²⁰ Lesson observed on 22/07/2002 at Nyamitanga SSS

students' to their religious view points in contrast with the ones discussed in the foregoing discussion. The teachers used a 'third party perspective' to address themselves to the topics in RE lessons. However both of them while providing for some discussion on issues, gave prepared notes to students thus raising questions on students' academic integrity.

One of the teachers from Mbarara High School¹²¹ had prepared notes for his class and actually apologized when I came to observe his lesson saying, 'it will not be helpful to you since I will just be reading notes.' My reply was that he should not worry since it was my interest as a researcher to carry out on the spot observation teaching if the findings of my research were to be authentic. He seemed to signal a message that although it was an acceptable method of teaching CRE in Uganda to give notes to students,¹²² it would sound odd for a researcher or a school inspector for that matter. Anyhow, the lesson proceeded and the notes that he was giving were on the theme of work in African traditional society and his approach to the notes was to talk from 'a third party perspective' which did not betray any support of or disapproval of a particular issue. In short, his religious convictions did not come into the lesson either through an explanation of a particular issue or when reflecting on the notes he gave to students. My observation was that there was no single point at which he seemed to offend any member of any religious denomination and although I deduced that it is partly due to the theme of African traditional understanding of work, instead of say Biblical understanding of work which would easily provide for one's being prompted to share his religious convictions, he did not generally reflect such an approach to the teaching of CRE. In addition, his questionnaire responses reflected his approach of teaching CRE.

A teacher of CRE at Nyamitanga S.S.S,¹²³ as in the case of the one at Mbarara High School, did not reflect an approach of CRE that uses religious convictions to 'win students over' to particular religious stand points. The theme he was handling was *Living in a Changing Society* with the sub-theme of 'Changes

¹²¹ Lesson audited on 16/07/2002 at Mbarara High School, Uganda

¹²² Notes are compiled by teachers who use the Christian Living Today text-books and the numerous pamphlets that are produced by mainly Examiners of Ordinary Level CRE exams and these are just summarised notes of the key issues from the themes. In all classes that I audited, notes were given by the teacher and indeed students and teachers alike did not have a single text-book in sight.

¹²³ Lesson audited on 8 / 08 / 2002 at Nyamitanga .S.S.S

experienced in Uganda today'. It would seem that his handling of the sub-theme of Changes experienced in Uganda today, through exploring the dimension of the present situation, could not easily give rise to one's own religious convictions.

4.3.3. *A Confessional and Open Approach to RE*

While one teacher can be described as using personal religious convictions to promote the Christian religious tradition, he was ready to point out the 'contradictions' within the Christian religious tradition and the challenge that science poses to it.

The teacher of CRE at Ntare School approached his lesson from what could be referred to as mainly a confessional approach to RE, however to some extent, he was quick to refer to other stand points opposed to the authenticity of the Christian religious tradition. He introduced the topic of Man's quest for God by asking students what the word quest meant. After one student answered, 'search' he proceeded to ask, 'How does man search for God?' The responses included through fellowships, prayers and following the Ten Commandments. It is interesting to note that his immediate question seemed to test their personal religious convictions in light of the answers they had given by asking, 'how often do you pray by the way? There was more or less a chorus response (which was characteristic of any question that seemed to ask about their personal religious convictions), 'Waa'¹²⁴. He proceeded by reading notes to the students and these read in part, 'education and even Christian teaching have contributed to doubts and questions about the traditional views of God without offering understanding'. After writing this sentence, he proceeded to give an explanation of the statement (which was characteristic of the whole lesson). He said:

'In science man is not created by God except by is it chemical...it was a monkey....chimpanzee.....but who created the monkey, the scientists have

¹²⁴ This is a characteristic chorus response of students at the school (at which I recently served as Deputy Head-teacher) whenever they disapprove of a statement made by a teacher or a fellow student, mainly student leaders. Although some times it can depict a joke or funny situation not to mean offence to the speaker, some times it depicts disapproval and disagreement with some one's ideas.

grasped this theory without any questions. Where did nature begin? That teaching keeps people confused or should I say stuck'.

A brief reflection on this portion reveals the teacher's disputation of the theory of evolution mainly because of its criticism of God's hand in the creation story. Nonetheless, he proceeds to portray the limitations of the Christian teaching on man's quest for God referring to the 'contradictory nature' of the Bible. He observed that, 'the Bible talks of beginning Gen:1&2 different accounts of creation'. He proceeded to draw a conclusion from this issue saying, 'this is why we have sects, others are humble, some beat chairs',¹²⁵ to which some students almost in unison said 'Karugaba' (referring to one of the students who might have belonged to the CRE class and at the same time was a member of the 'born again' group that prays while banging walls and other similar practices).

The teacher's derivation of the issue of religious sects from Gen: 1 & 2 was meant to explain the different Biblical interpretations, which often times lead to the starting of different Christian religious denominations or sects in Uganda thus his acknowledgment of diversity within the Christian religious tradition, though not expressing respect for it. Although he does reflect the limitations of the Christian teaching in understanding the process of man's quest for God I can say that he was almost totally opposed to the scientific theory of evolution as a hindrance to man's quest for God. In short he does not seem to provide for the possible justification of the theory of evolution but most important, there was no exchange of views with students. Consequently in this respect, it can be deduced that his desire was for the students to accept his religious point of view which, despite its limitations as exemplified by the different accounts of creation in the Bible, is more plausible and meaningful than the theory of evolution which is bent on 'confusing people' and 'keeps them stuck' in disbelief.

Notwithstanding, the teacher's attempt to introduce the subject of evolution and his mention of the 'contradictory nature' of the Biblical material is an indication

¹²⁵ The teacher almost sarcastically refer to those who beat chairs while praying, a reference to some Pentecostal students, who are often derided by the rest of the school for their 'uncouth religious behaviour' and in so doing the teacher who does not take into account the feelings of Pentecostal and/ or

of the extent to which he exercises some relative measure of openness in discussing issues of religious education in contrast to the four teachers of CRE and IRE discussed in the foregoing discussion who in their presentation reflected their religious convictions and/ or religious traditions as sacred and probably beyond reproach.

4.3.4 A Quasi-Open Approach to RE

One teacher can be described as using an 'open approach to RE' since he encourages students' participation and does not use his personal religious convictions to win students' over to his points of view. Nonetheless, his approach seems to be so distanced from the main aim of the Joint Christian syllabus and may reflect indifference to it.

The CRE teacher at Mbarara College¹²⁶ reflected an approach to teaching CRE whereby he seemed to be indifferent to the question of personal religious convictions. I argue that he was more on the objective side since he allowed for debate on part of the students but at the same time in view of not being 'concerned' with providing 'some guidance' to the discussion, he seemed to care less about the ills within the Church, as a topic of discussion and therefore might not have the 'sympathy' of the aim of the syllabus.

While handling a senior one class, he led a discussion on the meaning of Church, achievements of the Church and failures of the Church. He involved students by allowing them to respond to various questions. Whilst he introduced the topic by observing that 'the Church does not mean a building but a place where people gather to pray' he went on to ask, 'who can tell us the different Churches that we have?' (the lead question was meant to get responses concerning the different Christian religious denominations to which students in the class probably belonged). The students' answers included Roman Catholic, Church of Uganda, Pentecostal, Fire Gospel, Seventh Day Adventist Church. He went ahead to lead students into a discussion of the positive contributions of

born again students since they are not only represented in the class but in the school and society and deserve respect for their religious practices.

the Church in social and economic development of society. This he did by asking them to mention particular projects that they knew which were run by Churches and indeed they mentioned many that belonged to the different Christian religious denominations in Mbarara.

His concluding section was on the failures of the Church and his approach could be defined as a balanced one since he did not give a concluding remark to represent a particular stand point on the discussion in question. His conclusion on a note that high-lighted the failures of the Church (with a long list) could be taken for inadequacy in assisting students' to draw a conclusion on the importance of the Church. One can envisage a situation whereby his approach may not easily enable students to 'grow towards 'responsible Christian maturity' in line with the special aim of CRE. It would seem that his approach was not as 'sympathetic' to the intentions of the joint syllabus and whilst his approach can be viewed as objective enough, it reflects why some particular schools, especially religiously founded schools, seriously take into account the religious convictions of the CRE teacher.

On the other hand, one can argue that 'responsible Christian maturity' can only be successfully and meaningfully achieved where a student is exposed to such an 'open approach to RE' that allows students to make their own contributions in RE lessons and arrive at their own conclusions. However, one cannot help thinking that may be he does not have 'strong religious convictions' like the teachers discussed in our foregoing discussion and that he is not as enthusiastic to 'enable students to grow towards responsible Christian maturity.' He might belong to a group of teachers of CRE who do not take seriously their own religions and who consider RE as an academic and dispassionate subject. What is important in light of the discussion on the teacher as a resource for RE, is the 'declaration of one's commitment religious or otherwise' so that it is known by students instead of being implicitly used to promote teachers' deeply held views.

¹²⁶ Lesson audited on 27 / 07 / 2002 at Mbarara College which is a purely private founded secondary school

4.4. Conclusion

The preceding discussion has shown how difficult it is to combine professionalism alongside the expression of personal religious convictions. Some teachers have been portrayed as using their personal religious convictions to win over students to particular religious standpoints, which compromises their professional role as educators and thereby limits the understanding of religion by students, who may not ultimately arrive at their own conclusions about religious issues. This chapter has also revealed the professional complications created by the expectations of the foundation bodies of RE teachers and the need for the teachers to respond appropriately.

The foregoing discussion has further revealed that professional RE teachers need to make their personal commitments (religious or otherwise) known to students so that an open discussion of them is held alongside those of the students, if they are to be an important resource for RE lessons. This chapter has also expressed the need for professional teachers to be mindful of the multi-religious composition of classes so that diversity within particular religious traditions is acknowledged and respect for this diversity equally reflected in teaching CRE and IRE. The next discussion turns to Primary school CRE and IRE and argues that despite the review of the CRE and IRE syllabuses and aims, the main aim of CRE and IRE Primary school syllabuses and aims is the spiritual growth of students within their religious traditions in similar ways to the CRE and IRE secondary school syllabuses and aims.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PROVISION FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN UGANDA

This chapter will explore the view that the original aims of the Joint Christian Religious Education syllabus for primary schools formulated in 1974, similar to the purpose behind those of the joint CRE syllabus for secondary schools (see chapter three), were deeply problematic for implementation in the multi-religious schools.¹²⁷ Similarly in this chapter, I will argue that the original aims of IRE for primary schools were not appropriate for use in schools. Secondly, the chapter is concerned with the lack of attention given to the concept of unity in diversity in the joint Christian syllabus and the content of CRE pupils' books¹²⁸ especially with regard to inter-relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and the Church Of Uganda (a vital aspect in view of our discussion in Chapter one and two on the historical religious conflicts).

Thirdly, I shall reflect on the Joint syllabus's failure to give prominence to the exploration of the Islamic religious tradition and likewise the failure of the IRE syllabus to do the same to the Christian religious tradition. Finally, this chapter will present the view that, although the primary school CRE and IRE syllabi have been reviewed (largely as a result of government policy and/or 'pressure')¹²⁹, the aims and syllabi have in essence not changed and the new policy guide-lines on teaching RE in primary schools will favour an approach of teaching RE that promotes the spiritual growth of students within their religious traditions instead of addressing the multi-religious nature of schools.

¹²⁷ Ssekamwa (1997:170-173) mentions the 1963 Education Act which ratified the nationalization of religiously founded schools and this is often referred as the 'government take over' of these schools for general administration and direction of curriculum.

¹²⁸ While it is a common practice in school circles and even in official documents to refer to instruction books used by students as text-books, the primary school books are referred to as pupils' books.

¹²⁹ In principle curriculum review takes place almost every ten years in Uganda but due to financial constraints, reviews are some times not done on schedule for all subjects. Although RE falls in the general curriculum, it is rather different since the religious leadership has often been responsible for designing its curriculum. The recent reviews of the year 2000 for all subjects affected RE more since it was the only subject that generated public debate mainly because the government and in part foreign donors considered the syllabus unsuitable for the grant aided government schools due to its 'divisive' nature. In effect there

5.1. The Intentions Behind the Uganda Primary CRE Aims – their development and limitations

The original aims of CRE or the 1974 aims are contained in the Uganda National Examinations Board publication that contains examination Regulations and Syllabuses (1991-1995) and were in use until 2001¹³⁰ when new ones were officially endorsed following the review of the CRE syllabus. The original aims are defined in light of the student as an examination candidate¹³¹ who should be able to:

1. Show his/her understanding and appreciation of the work of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in his life and the life of all mankind.
2. Show his/her awareness of the responsibility God gave him/her over creation and his/her understanding of the need for respect, conserve and develop it.
3. Demonstrate a correct and sound understanding of Christian teaching and a degree of commitment to the Christian principles of love, trust, friendship, justice, honesty, service *etc* in his or her relationship with other people in the community.
4. Demonstrate his/her knowledge and appreciation for Christian forms and practices of worship.
5. Demonstrate his appreciation of and tolerance for other people's beliefs and practices, and understanding of the complementary nature of Christian and African values.

(Uganda National Examinations Board, 1990:56)

The original aims of CRE were mainly concerned with the exploration of the Christian religious tradition and were designed as if they were meant for Christian students only. The dilemma in this is that in view of the multi-religious nature of the schools and compulsory nature of CRE in the first and second

was formal and informal debates going on before the reviewed syllabus was accepted (an issue to be discussed in chapter six)

¹³⁰ The New Vision newspaper of 11/01/2001 reported the official launching of Volume two of the Uganda Primary school syllabus in which CRE and IRE were included. Volume one had been launched earlier and it contained other subjects of the curriculum.

¹³¹ These aims are an adaptation of the aims of CRE as designed by the religious leaders. This is a pointer to the examination oriented nature of the curriculum and possibly to the saving of funds by publishing examination regulations with aims and the syllabus.

years of secondary education¹³², members of other religious traditions would have difficulty in relating to them.¹³³

The first aim of CRE stresses the Christian understanding of the doctrine of the trinity. Students are expected to acknowledge the presence of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in their lives. This aim of CRE would be problematic to a Muslim student whose educational task should have been to explore the Christian teaching about the trinity. In other words it creates a situation whereby Muslim students should see themselves as targeted to become practicing Christians who subscribe to the doctrine of the trinity.¹³⁴

The second aim of CRE can be described as inclusive in its expectations of students to have awareness of the responsibility God gave them over creation. This aim can address itself to students of different religious traditions since it reflects an allowance of discussing issues concerning God and creation not only from the Christian perspective. In my view this is important in light of the multi-religious composition of the classes whereby students can refer to their own experiences in light of their religious backgrounds.

The third aim of CRE, like the first aim, was designed on the premise that students would 'study and live' the Christian message. Its reference to students being able to 'demonstrate a level of commitment to the Christian principles' (refer to original aims of CRE) implies that students are expected to have attained Christian principles that would govern their lives by the end of the course. Although the 'Christian principles' mentioned can be shared by other religious traditions, the expectations to develop Christian principles among students who are not Christians raises questions on the suitability of the aims for them since they have implications for them to 'convert' to the Christian faith.

¹³² Students are subjected to all subjects on the curriculum in the first and second years and CRE becomes optional at the third and fourth years of secondary education

¹³³ Kasozi (1986:52) refers to Muslim parents' refusal to send their children to Christian founded schools 'before the nationalization of schools' since they were looked at as centers of 'conversion and propagation of European Christian values.'

¹³⁴ According to Muslim theology (Monitor IRE: 1999:5) the unity of the Godhead is paramount since Polytheism (shirk) or paganism is referred to as an association of God with his creatures.

The fourth aim of CRE has the intention of students exploring and in the process appreciating the Christian forms and practices of worship. This aim is solely concerned with the importance of worship to Christians. In other words it has implications of introducing students to one religious tradition and not taking into account what worship means to people of other religious traditions. We can argue that the Christian religious tradition is presented in an advantaged position since students are subjected to interpret religious worship in terms of the Christian religious tradition only.

It is noteworthy that despite the major intention of the aims of CRE in putting emphasis on 'studying and living' the Christian religious tradition, the fifth aim of CRE intends to promote respect and tolerance of other people's religious beliefs and practices. This is an indicator of the awareness of the UJCC committee (refer to discussion on secondary school CRE in chapter three) of the need to address themselves to the multi-religious nature of the schools and the Ugandan society. However, the major question is: since the schools had become nationalised, was it not a foregone conclusion to expect members of other religious traditions to be present in the Christian founded schools? If so, how would these students relate to aims of CRE that had expectations of them to 'live according to Christian principles?'

In my view, at the time of formulating these aims, there was a policy gap on the part of the government that failed to arbitrate in defining the course of the subject in the schools. In addition, there was an absence of dialogue between leaders of the different religious traditions, especially Christians and Muslims that would have possibly provided for aims of CRE or IRE that suited the schools.

In short, the original aims of CRE, despite acknowledging the need for 'respect and tolerance' of other people's religions, reflect the disadvantaged status of students of other religious traditions and portray the implied confessional nature of these aims which in turn renders them problematic for use in the multi-religious schools.

Table 5: Summary table showing the development of Primary School CRE

Date joint CRE syllabus designed	Date aims formulated	Book Title	Date published	Comments
1974	1974	Christians on the Way Pupils Book 6	n.d.	Students for each of the seven levels of primary school are required to have a pupils book but these are out of print and I only managed to acquire two copies. Students depend on teachers' notes.
		Christians and the Holy Spirit Pupils Book 7	1976	
2000 (reviewed)	2000 (reviewed)			New books have not been published yet and therefore the old books are still in use. Although there was a syllabus review, the books to be published might only have slight differences in the use of language and presentation (see views expressed by J. Ottewell).

The revised CRE aims of 2000 as contained in Volume Two of the Uganda Primary School Curriculum (see foregoing discussion for source), in sharp contrast to those formulated in 1974, seem to have given less attention to the inter-relationship between the Christian religious tradition and other religious traditions. This is an interesting development in light of the recent expression of government dissatisfaction with the 'divisive nature' of CRE and IRE. The CRE aims of 2000 echo the emphasis on 'denominational identity' of the schools (see Chapters One and Two) and the attendant confessional outlook on the purpose of RE. This approach to RE cannot easily provide students a chance to explore other religious traditions and limits their potential to develop respect

and tolerance of other people's religious beliefs, practices and values. The CRE aims of 2000 are specified thus:

1. To develop awareness and knowledge of God's presence and purpose in the world as revealed through His creation, the Bible, the Christian community, the life and teaching of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit living in us today.
 2. To develop the Christian values of love, joy, peace, service, and build a personal Christian ideal to inspire her/his development and growth to maturity.
 3. To live a committed Christian life following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.
 4. To acquire the practice of praying alone and in fellowship with other Christians.
 5. To get knowledge of the teaching of the Bible.
 6. To appreciate the common elements in traditional and other religions and Christian beliefs.
 7. To develop the Christian moral values of honesty, concern for others, sharing, tolerance and justice.
 8. To develop personal qualities of leadership to serve others in the community.
- (NCDC: 2000:516)

The first aim has an intention of introducing students to the basic Christian understanding of God's revelation to humankind since it reflects the importance of 'God the Father, the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit'. In addition, since there are expectations of the students to acknowledge God's presence in their lives and the Holy Spirit as inferred by the phrase 'living in us today', we can deduce that the intention behind this aim is to enable students to arrive at an appreciation and positive response to the Christian doctrine of the trinity (refer to foregoing discussion on original aims of CRE or 1974 CRE aims). The first 2000 CRE aim and the first 1974 CRE aims (refer to foregoing discussion) are in effect not different in intentions.

The second 2000 CRE aim echoes the special aim of CRE for secondary schools (see chapter three) in its intention of enabling students to 'grow towards responsible Christian maturity'. This aim is similar to the third 1974 CRE aim except that it does not relate the 'attainment of Christian values to the service of fellowmen'. It has expectations of the student to 'develop Christian values' and 'build personal Christian ideals'. In effect the intention of this aim is to enable

students to become 'responsible mature Christians'. This is a pointer to the problematic nature of this aim in a multi-religious context.

The third, fourth and fifth 2000 CRE aims are explicitly concerned with the promotion of the Christian religious tradition and it is noteworthy that the language used is not apologetic in comparison to that of the original aims of CRE. The intention of these three aims in my view seems to be summarised in the third 2000 CRE aim which is specified as enabling students 'to live a committed Christian life following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ'. This is largely because the fourth 2000 CRE aim, which expects the student 'to pray alone' and the fifth 2000 CRE aim that has expectations of the student 'to get knowledge of the Bible' are pointers to what we would refer to as 'attributes of a committed Christian'. In other words, the explicit expression of the three 2000 CRE aims in their intention of producing 'committed Christian students' poses serious questions regarding their suitability for students of other religious traditions.

The sixth 2000 CRE aim has as its intention the promotion of the inter-relationship between Christianity and other religious traditions. Although this is essential in exposing students to exploring other religious traditions, the fifth 1974 CRE aim was more focused in its intention of 'development of appreciation and respect for other people's religious beliefs and practices' in comparison with 'appreciating the common elements in other religions'. In other words the sixth 2000 CRE aim does not stress the need for development of respect and tolerance of other people's religious beliefs and practices, an essential objective of exploring other religious traditions.

The intention behind the seventh 2000 CRE aim is not very different from that of the second 2000 CRE aim. The difference is that the seventh aim while stressing the development of Christian moral values (similar to Christian values mentioned in the third aim) introduces the element of the Christian students' 'concern for others'. Nonetheless, its emphasis on the development of 'Christian moral values' is an indication of the intention of the aims to produce 'committed Christians'. This objective further serves to cast light on the dilemma that students of other religious traditions might face in having to relate to these

aims. In short, unless it is expected of them to become 'committed Christians', these aims cannot enable students to explore the Christian religious tradition without considering to 'live it', a key expectation of the aims in any case. As we shall reflect in the way forward, this suggests that CRE needs to be left to Christians alone, if the aims do not take into account the implications for students of other religious traditions. However, the challenge would still remain promoting an approach of RE that does not give due attention to developing tools of respect and tolerance for other people's religious traditions.

The eighth 2000 CRE aim is concerned with the inter-personal relationship between a 'committed Christian' and the community. It has the intention of enabling the students to appreciate their membership in and service to the wider community. This is an important aspect of the revised CRE aims that can promote 'national unity and harmony',¹³⁵ however the idealistic view of the concept of the community and the failure to explore the characteristic nature of this community, a subject of our subsequent discussion, limits students potential to identify it and relate with it in real life situations.

5.1.1. The CRE Syllabus and the Multi-faith Context

The reviewed primary school syllabus for CRE as contained in the Uganda primary school curriculum Volume Two and published by the National Curriculum Development Centre 2000 (the same book that contains the 2000 CRE aims) is problematic for implementation in the multi-religious schools in much the same way as the 1974 syllabus.

First, the overall understanding of the nature of the revised syllabus can be summed up in the words of Jenny Ottewell¹³⁶ who responded to my enquiry concerning the revised syllabus thus, 'it may interest you to know that the main changes in the syllabus are in presentation and language rather than content'. This is indicative of the 'unchanged essence' of the 1974 CRE syllabus. In short

¹³⁵ According to the Government White Paper on Education published in 1992 this is specified as Uganda's first national goal of education.

¹³⁶ Ottewell retired in 2001 after serving as Assistant Provincial Education Secretary for Church of Uganda for about thirty years and this response was in an e-mail sent to me on 4/10/2002

the main intention of the revised syllabus is the promotion of the Christian religious tradition and this is defined thus:

The overall achievement from implementing this Christian religious education syllabus is to have a learned, practicing and morally upright person basing on the teachings of Christianity (NCDC: 2000:517).

The explicit intention of the above attainment target of the syllabus to produce 'a committed Christian' reflects the emphasis of the syllabus on the centrality of the person of Jesus Christ and the subsequent expectation of students to live lives based on his example and teachings. The CRE syllabus in effect is introduced with an attainment target that makes it inappropriate for students of other religious traditions to relate to without causing offence. It is worth noting that one of the points raised by the task force¹³⁷ that reviewed the 1990 and 2000 Primary school curriculum for RE was the concern with the explicit intentions of the CRE syllabus that are echoed in this statement:

The choice of which religion a school should teach especially where the religion of the foundation body is the minority will dictate choice on the majority. There are dangers of degenerating into teaching the faith [conversion] rather than principles and Religious education (see footnotes about source).

The above statement is an expression of dissatisfaction with the exposure of students to one religious tradition whose intentions are for promoting that particular religious tradition even when the majority of students (as a result of government open policy of admission of students) do not belong to it. In view of the intentions of the reviewed syllabus and mindful of the statement made by the task force, it is evident that students who are not Christians will be unfairly subjected to the Christian religious tradition. The response of religious leaders , both Christian and Muslim, in dismissing the statement of the task force when they responded that, 'to a large extent the syllabus focuses on principles of Religious education and not conversion' seems to betray a certain level of

¹³⁷ In the process of reviewing the RE syllabus (CRE and IRE), a task force was put in place by the government to analyze the old syllabus (1990 syllabus which is a reference to the one published by UNEB for 1991-1995) and the manuscript of the reviewed syllabi for CRE and IRE 2000 with an aim of establishing the 'content' and place of RE in the grant aided government schools. The quote is an extract from the document written by the Christian and Muslim religious leaders in defense of the CRE and IRE curriculum for the schools against the charge of 'divisiveness'.

admission that both CRE and IRE are concerned with 'conversion' (which according to religious leaders might be a reference to the spiritual growth of students within their religious traditions and not converting non-Christians, although this is a possibility).

As regards the organisation of the reviewed syllabus, it is divided into seven major themes that correspond to each of the seven years a student spends at primary school and each major theme is sub-divided into ten units or sub-topics and these are normally covered across the three terms of the school calendar year. The method used to study the syllabus is a life-centred one which is described thus:

Starting from the learner's experience, and leading to the experience of others. These are then looked at in light of the Bible and the learner is encouraged to respond to the message and live it (NCDC: 2000: 519).

The life centred approach is to enable the students to reflect on what they study in light of how it applies to their lives and thus the target of encouraging the learner 'to respond to the message and live it'. This has implications of conversion on part of the students if they do not belong to the Christian religious tradition or concern for meeting the spiritual needs of Christian students, an issue that seems to be of major concern to the task force (refer to foregoing discussion). Owing to this, we ask ourselves what provisions the reviewed syllabus has for exploring other religious traditions, one of the aims of CRE.

It is important to note that the revised Joint CRE syllabus has a provision for introducing students to Islam, a major religious tradition in Uganda. Unit two of the primary five syllabus (an extract from the detailed syllabus outline) is entitled Christianity and Islam and has as its objective the exploration of some basic beliefs of Islam, similarities between Islam and Christianity and the target of developing respect for Muslims' beliefs. (NCDC: 200:565) In addition, unit two of primary seven syllabus has some provision for the exploration of some world religions with an objective of respecting religious beliefs of other people. Some of the religions are given as Judaism, Hinduism and Bahai. Nevertheless,

further reflection on the above provision for exploration of Islam reflects that it has not changed from that of the old syllabus in terms of scope¹³⁸. Only one unit out of seventy is set apart at primary five for exploring Islam. In view of its importance in Uganda's multi-religious society (see chapters One and Two), the revised syllabus should have given it more attention by providing more units on it, in order to realise progression on issues concerning learning about its characteristic nature and in the process developing skills of respect and tolerance among students. In addition, committing one unit to such a vast 'content' of IRE is not commensurate with the task at hand.

Notwithstanding, the introduction of a new unit on world religions (not included in the 1974 CRE syllabus) is a pointer to the effects of the increased pressure on the religious leadership to have an 'inclusive' RE that is not restricted to one religious tradition since it gives students a chance to engage with other religious traditions and subsequently to be able to relate with members of these religious traditions in real life situations. Although it is important to explore world religions, as contained in unit two of primary seven, it is even more important to give more attention to religions that are found in Uganda if students are to be equipped for engagement with people of other religious traditions in the Ugandan society.

Although the Joint Christian syllabus is meant to promote religious unity in diversity, this concept is not given the prominence it deserves as in the case of the 1974 syllabus. First, it is not mentioned among the nine concepts¹³⁹ that a student is expected to explore in the revised syllabus and, secondly, it seems that the syllabus sets out to achieve the promotion of unity in diversity by emphasising commonality within the Christian religious tradition without differences. In my view this limits the students' potential of exploring the differences between religious beliefs, practices and values of the different Christian religious denominations and the subsequent development of skills of

¹³⁸ Waliggo (2001:5) in a paper delivered at a regional workshop for RE curriculum developers while addressing himself on the topic 'Religious pluralism and its impact on the teaching of Religious education in primary schools in Eastern and Southern Africa' argues that 'where Islam is a major religious tradition, CRE should greatly advance mutual understanding and highlight common values in the children from an early age'.

¹³⁹ The key 'concepts' to be explored are Creation, The individual, God the Father, Jesus Christ, The Holy Spirit, The people of God, Christian living, Other religious communities, Christian values

respect and tolerance for each other's religious tradition. In short, the syllabus presupposes that the emphasis on commonality is enough in itself to promote respect for each other's religious denomination. It is interesting to note that religious discrimination in Uganda, according to Mpagi, is first and foremost between fellow Christians and not between Christians and Muslims:

First of all, our major problem is mainly between Christians against their fellow Christian brothers and sisters of other Christian denominations. That is to say, Catholics mainly discriminate against Protestants (this is often used to refer to members of Church of Uganda) and Protestants discriminate against Catholics. Then at a lower degree Protestants can also discriminate against a member of another Protestant denomination (Mpagi, 2001:6).

In light of the above observation it is pertinent that the Christian religious tradition is explored mindful of the differences that exist so that students are able to appreciate diversity within the Christian religious tradition and, in the process, develop the tools of respect for this diversity. The approach of the Joint Christian syllabus in presenting a unified Christian religious tradition leaves some ground uncovered since there are several areas where there is difference in interpreting the Christian religious tradition as below.

For example the emphasis on the commonality of the Christian religious tradition especially as exemplified in the common sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion (NCDC, 2000: 579) fails to exploit the concept of unity in diversity since the syllabus spells out the specific objective of studying these as explaining the meaning and importance of Baptism and Holy Communion. The exploration of differences¹⁴⁰ in the practices of Baptism by different Christian churches' and the understanding of the importance of Holy Communion for the different Christian religious denominations is not provided for. The approach of the syllabus in exploring the sacraments of Holy Communion and Baptism therefore does not take into account the varied expressions of these sacraments by the different Christian religious denominations and therefore

¹⁴⁰ In Ugandan society there is often debate on issues of baptism as practiced by Pentecostals, Church of Uganda members and Roman Catholic church since some Churches argue that true baptism is by immersion, others argue for baptism using fonts in Churches' and many re-baptisms have taken place on such counts. In addition the importance of holy communion to a Roman Catholic (whose motto can be argued to be 'the altar is higher than the pulpit' and to a Church of Uganda member (whose motto can be

fails to prepare students for differences in encountering them in real life situations. In such a respect, they will not be equipped in engaging with such differences.

5.1.2. *The Content of CRE Pupils' Books and the Multi-faith Context*

The Joint CRE pupil's books for primary schools¹⁴¹, in line with the intentions of the Joint CRE syllabus, are overtly concerned with the promotion of the Christian religious tradition through emphasis on common Christian religious beliefs, practices and values. Since the concept of unity in diversity is downplayed and the exploration of other religions is not provided for, the pupil's books may raise challenges for Christian and Islamic religious unity especially in the light of the multi-religious schools.

The CRE pupils book for primary six students (*Christians on the way*: 1976:68-69) introduces students to a sub-topic 'brothers' which is under the major theme of 'How we behave on the way (a reference to the 'Christian journey')'. The pupils book illustrates the Christian virtue of love by referring to 'Christian qualities'¹⁴² students require to show love to one another such as generosity, kindness etc. The theme of 'love in the Christian family' is further stressed in the message of a song that is sung by students as part of the lesson¹⁴³ and it reads in part:

Let us join hands together, let's be Christians
Join hands together we are one
For when we are together Christ is with us

argued to be the pulpit is higher than the altar) are some issues of diversity for consideration by students if they are to appreciate the differences and respect one another for them.

¹⁴¹ This discussion refers to CRE pupils' books that are still in use in schools. It makes reference to two pupils' books for primary six and seven that I was able to get. Pupils books are out of publication partly because they are due to be replaced with new ones in line with the syllabus reviews but mainly because it seems most schools are not normally enthusiastic in buying these books for economic reasons and therefore printing them does not seem to be a viable project, a point mentioned by a bookshop attendant. Just like in the case of secondary schools teachers make their own notes from various sources, mainly basing on past Examination questions and do not normally have pupil's books as instruction materials. It is important to note that in view of information from Jenny Ottewell (refer to foregoing discussion), it is most likely that the content of the books will not change.

¹⁴² What is normally referred to as Christian qualities is interestingly similar to good moral qualities of Muslims, African traditional teachings and other religious traditions. An indication that Christians' moral values are largely in consonance with those of other religious belief systems

¹⁴³ The pupil's books contain Christian Church hymns that are sung during some lessons in light of their relationship to the theme of the lesson.

Join hands together we are one.

The emphasis of the theme of 'brotherhood' of the Christian family as reflected in common 'Christian qualities' and the message of the song that stresses the oneness of the Christian family, would do better if it related the messages of the lesson to the different Christian religious denominations. This limits the student's awareness of the constituent parts of the Christian family and in turn might make it difficult to relate to, in its entirety. During my field work, it was interesting to note that the CRE teacher¹⁴⁴ at Mbarara Pentecostal Primary school referred to the Joint Christian pupils books as 'books published by Catholic nuns and priests', (referring to Roman Catholic nuns and priests). The teacher's lack of information about the Joint authorship of the books between the Roman Catholics, Church of Uganda and Orthodox Church education representatives reflected in part a possible failure of the text-books to give prominence to illustrations that depict the different Christian religious denominations that formulated the syllabus. In other words if a teacher is not sure as to whether the text-books belong to the Church of Uganda, Orthodox or other Christian religious denominations, then how can students fully appreciate the view that these books are meant to promote religious unity in diversity among the different Christian denominations. On the other hand, the response of the teacher might reflect the 'created myths'¹⁴⁵ about people of other religious denominations that is characteristic of Ugandan society¹⁴⁶ and shows the need for making the Christian denominations 'owners of the text-books by defining their identity in relationship to the important lessons that are being given.

The primary seven pupils book, (*Christians on the Way* n.d: 82-83) explores the sub-topic of 'companions of other tribes, races and nations' under the theme of

¹⁴⁴ Interview held with Ntabara Rovinca on 19/09/2001

¹⁴⁵ Waliggo (2000:12) in a paper delivered at Nsyambya in Kampala during the Unity Week for Christians on the topic 'Strengthening common ties: removing obstacles to Christian unity: The major challenge to Uganda Christians in the twenty first century' refers to these thus 'ignorance and prejudice always produce myths about the people one does not relate with....These myths will have to be destroyed before a strong commitment to ecumenism is seen in various churches'.

¹⁴⁶ The reason that Ntabara gave for thinking that the books were produced by Roman Catholic nuns and brothers is that they were 'more academic' and 'not spirit based' (a reference to not being evangelical enough) and in fact she observed that, 'For me I look for the real thing, I ought to teach the kid and he receives Jesus Christ' (a reference to a confessional approach of RE that seeks to convert students or enable them grow within their religious tradition).

'People on the Way' (a reference to the Christian journey) which in my view is an illustration of the theme of unity in diversity. Although the pupils book emphasises an important aspect of promoting national unity and harmony as mirrored in the 'respect of and love of people of different races and tribes' mentioned in the book, the omission of inter-relationships between different members of the Christian family as an illustration of unity in diversity for the Christian family is noteworthy. It denies students a chance to reflect on what is meant by or involved with relating to a member of a different Christian religious denomination. From such a perspective the pupil's books cannot easily promote respect and tolerance between members of the Christian religious tradition, for whom the text-books are meant.

As regards the issue of other religious traditions, the pupils books give little attention to this aspect (refer to foregoing discussion on syllabus of CRE) and secondly where they do, an impression is created that the Christian religious tradition is at the apex of other religious traditions. Between the two pupils books that I refer to, that is for primary six and seven, the only reference to other religious traditions is in the primary seven pupils book (*Christians and the Holy Spirit*, 1976:40-41) that depicts symbols of different religious traditions (these include Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism) of the world with captions expressing key religious beliefs of members of those religions.

It is interesting to note that while page 40 of the above mentioned pupil's book is covered by all the other religious symbols, page 41 is reserved only for four symbols depicting messages concerning the Christian religious tradition. The catch-phrase that runs in part across both pages but is mainly on page 41 is 'Men everywhere seek God (and God) seeks all men in Christ: I am the way, the truth and the life.' In effect the portrayal of other religious traditions alongside Christianity in a manner that insinuates Jesus Christ as the ultimate expression of man's search for God cannot easily promote respect for other people's religious traditions. Consequently, the lack of engagement with other religious traditions and the portrayal of these religious traditions in low esteem compared to Christianity indicates the problematic nature of these books not only for students of other religious traditions but even Christian students since

they have connotations of lack of respect for and/ or tolerance towards other religious traditions.

5.2. Islamic Religious Education in Primary Schools – its aims, development and limitations

The intention behind the original aims of IRE (1974 IRE aims) and the revised IRE aims (2000 IRE aims) is the spiritual growth of students within the Islamic religious tradition and this makes them problematic for implementation in the multi-religious classes. Nonetheless, there is a potential within the revised aims of IRE to promote interpersonal relationships between Muslims and members of other religious traditions.

The 1974 IRE aims are contained in the Uganda National Examination Board book, *Regulations and Syllabuses* (1991-1995) and were in use until 2001 (refer to identity of book in our foregoing discussion on the revised CRE aims). The 1974 IRE aims expected students or candidates to:

- a) Have a sound understanding of Islamic instruction.
- b) Acquire knowledge and appreciate Islamic practices of worship.
- c) Develop Islamic virtues and good conduct.
- d) Gain an appreciation of God's attributes and his relationship to his creation (*Iman*).

These aims were overtly concerned with the promotion of the Islamic religious tradition and, in particular, enabling students to become 'practicing Muslims' the language used in formulating the aims was explicit in expressing the intentions behind the aims. This can be inferred from the first 1974 IRE aim which is built on the premise that the Islamic religious tradition is a sanctified religious tradition that only calls for response and understanding on the part of the student. In other words, this aim did not expect students to critically reflect on what was being studied. Such an aim raises questions on the educational viability¹⁴⁷ of IRE, (an issue that seems not to have been debated at the

¹⁴⁷ Michael Grimitt (1978:7-8) in his reference to the debate that concerned the inclusion of RE on the school curriculum in schools in Britain argues that key educational criteria that subjects ought to meet

inception of IRE as a subject in Uganda), since students are portrayed as passive recipients and not participants in the process of learning and it also casts light on the dilemma that it poses for students of other religious traditions as it introduces them to only one religious tradition, that is not to be investigated.

The second 1974 IRE aim, similar to the intentions behind the first aim, is concerned with a realisation of a positive response on the part of students to the Islamic religious tradition. It is built on the basis that the students' task is to 'acquire knowledge' (about the Islamic religious tradition) and to hold in high esteem the Islamic practices of worship.

Table 6: Summary table showing the development of Primary School IRE

Date Syllabus designed	Date aims formulated	Book Title	Date Published	Comments
1974	1974	Monitor IRE Book 1	1999	Prior to 1999 IRE teachers used different source materials for Islam. This is possibly a result of the majority of the teachers not being professionals like the one at Nyamitanga PS whom I talked to.
		Monitor IRE Book 2	1999	
		Monitor IRE Book 3	1999	
		Monitor IRE Book 4	1999	
		Monitor IRE Book 5	1999	
		Monitor IRE Book 6	1999	
		Monitor IRE Book 7	1999	
		IRE Book 1 IRE Book 2 IRE Book 3 IRE Book 4	1999 1999 1999 1999	These books, all by Umar Nsereko, are not specific as to what they correspond to for a given class.
2000 (reviewed)	2000 (reviewed)			No new books are to be published. Nsereko's books will remain in use (see my discussion with Dungu Lwanga)

include the potential of the subject to 'widen and deepen a child's cognitive development' and the 'development of the child's capacity to think for themselves' preconditions that should generally be true for the Ugandan curriculum.

In short the second 1974 IRE aim has connotations of receiving information without enabling students to discover for themselves or share their own experiences of what worship means to them. In this respect students capacity to arrive at their own conclusions in the learning process will be limited and consequently they can turn out to be religiously instructed and not religiously educated.

The third 1974 IRE aim has as its intention the promotion of good moral values among students. Although it stresses the development of Islamic virtues, there is the potential in this aim to 'speak' to students of other religious traditions. In other words, subject to the approach taken by a particular teacher, students of other religious traditions could benefit from a discussion on moral values that may not necessarily have to be restricted to one religious tradition. The reference to 'development of Islamic virtues' though, reflects the unique identity of Islamic moral values that non Muslims may find different in view of their perception of morality. This point further illustrates the limitations of the aims of IRE in being relevant to students of other religious traditions since the third aim of IRE stresses Islamic religious virtues and does not provide for interpretation of morality according to other religious belief systems.

The fourth 1974 IRE aim has the intention of introducing students to the concept of God's revelation to man. This aim has an expectation of the students to acknowledge the uniqueness of God (Allah) in the salvation history of man. The use of Arabic (considered a holy language for Islam by Muslims) word *Iman* for creation reflects the stand point from which the aims derive their authenticity. In other words, the aims are written from a Muslim perspective (as opposed to a neutral or educational stand point that seeks to subject the issues they address to investigation) and are meant for Muslims as expressed in the four aims of IRE. In brief, the aims of IRE were designed to meet the religious needs of Muslim students and coupled with that, the absence of an element of exploration of other religious traditions rendered them inappropriate for students of other religious traditions. This analysis further reflects the insulated nature of the IRE curriculum (and in particular the strength of the religious leadership) at its inception since it seems not to have been subjected to scrutiny before its

inclusion on the curriculum in the same way as the reviewed syllabus¹⁴⁸ has been.

The revised aims of IRE as contained in Volume two of the Uganda primary school curriculum book published by the NCDC are to enable the student:

1. To experience and live as a practicing Muslim at school and at home thus enabling her/him to appreciate God's relationship with her/him and her/his relationship with others in different situations.
 2. To enrich her/his life and develop the whole personality.
 3. To foster reconciliation between Islam and her/his cultural values of the individual learner for happiness, stability in character, peace in an individual, in the home, community and nation at large.
 4. To acquaint her/himself with the teachings of the Quran.
 5. To appreciate and internalise the value and practice of the teachings of Islam, as taught in the Quran and practiced by the Prophet to develop a sense of morality in the individual learner according to the teachings of Islam.
 6. To grasp the basic concepts of Islamic theology so that she/he can recognise where Islam and Christianity overlap and where they differ.
 7. To study the principles and the life of Prophet Muhammad.
 8. To trace the origin and development of Islamic civilisation, culture and describe the significance of Islamic historical events to the spread and development of Islam.
 9. To live an integrated life and live in harmony with others.
- (NCDC: 2000599)

The prime intention behind the first 2000 IRE aim is to enable students to become practicing Muslims. This aim is formulated on the stand point that the students are to interpret their home and school experience in light of the expectations of the Islamic religious tradition on them. IRE as a subject therefore is seen to complement the spiritual upbringing of the students by their parents in the home. In the first place, there are implications of being 'a ready made package' for their consumption, which is not to be explored but received. Secondly, it raises questions on its appropriateness for the multi-religious schools. Nonetheless, this aim acknowledges the Muslim students' interpersonal relationships with members of the wider community and therefore portrays its potential for promoting national unity and harmony.

¹⁴⁸ CRE and IRE are the only subjects that attracted official public and informal 'debates' during the curriculum review of 2000 and that was mainly because of the 'alleged banning of RE and its replacement with moral education' (see chapter six).

The second 2000 IRE aim can be described as relevant to the multi-religious classroom situation since it does not address itself to the development of the student's personality with particular reference to the Islamic religious tradition. In other words, it reflects the concept of developing the personality of the student, which can be a result of taking into account different religious experiences of the students and/or exploration of other subjects on the curriculum. Nonetheless, the context of the IRE syllabus, in which this aim is placed, might have implications for the development of the 'whole personality' according to the Islamic religious tradition. This is especially so in light of the first 2000 IRE aim that concerns itself with the students' 'school and home experiences' and thereby stresses the holistic view of the Islamic religious tradition about the life of Muslims, an aspect reflected in the third 2000 IRE aim.

The third 2000 IRE has the intention of emphasising the resourcefulness of African traditional values in complementing Islamic religious moral values. This is a new element which was not expressed in the 1974 IRE aims and indicates a shift in acceptance of the African traditional religious experience by Islam (and Christianity)¹⁴⁹ as an important stage in God's revelation to man. Indeed it can be argued that both Christianity and Islam are now more comfortable with the provision for the study of the African traditional religions than with each others religious tradition.¹⁵⁰ Noteworthy is that the third 2000 IRE aim, similar to the first 2000 IRE aim expresses concern for the students' interpersonal relationship with members of the wider community. In this respect, this aim addresses itself to 'service to the nation' which is an indicator of a response to the expectations of 'promoting national unity and harmony'.

The fourth, fifth, seventh and eighth 2000 IRE aims are explicit in their intention of enabling students to become practicing Muslims. This in turn leads us to question their viability in a multi-religious classroom situation. The fourth and fifth aims are inter-related since their focus is on the importance of the Quran in the Islamic religious tradition. The expectation of the student is the appreciation

¹⁴⁹ Benjamin Ray (2000: xi) considers this concept to have developed from African theologians who were educated by the missionaries.

¹⁵⁰ The reason behind this seems to be that the African traditional religious experience is considered not so much as a dynamic religious experience but as a stage that took place during man's search for God and that it was fulfilled in Christianity or Islam for Christians and Muslims respectively. In addition, it contains lessons of moral value that are similar to teachings of both religious traditions.

and adoption of the Quranic teachings. Belief and practice is at the centre of this aim and is the expected response of the student to the Quranic teachings. Thus, the student is expected to 'study and live' the Islamic religious tradition.

The sixth 2000 IRE aim, characteristic with the desire to express and/ or to reflect dialogue with other religious traditions (refer to discussion on the 'pressure' of government during curriculum review of CRE syllabus) introduces students to a new element of looking at aims of IRE. Provision for engagement with Christianity is a pointer to the effort towards bridging the gap between the Islamic and Christian religious traditions (refer to foregoing discussion on CRE syllabus). Nonetheless, the standpoint from which the sixth 2000 IRE aim is written seems to be meant to serve a purpose of enabling students to be fully equipped with information about Islamic theology in order to interpret it in relationship to Christianity. In other words, the intention seems to be more of exploring similarities and differences rather than developing tools of respect and tolerance for Christianity, an important aspect in light of Uganda's history.

The seventh and eighth 2000 IRE aims have as their basic objective, the tracing of the Islamic religious tradition from its foundation right from the time of Prophet Muhammad. The intention of these two aims is largely to enable the students to appreciate God's ultimate revelation to humankind (refer to discussion on content of secondary school IRE in chapter three) through the message of Prophet Muhammad. The two aims are therefore explicitly concerned with the promotion of the Islamic religious tradition and in view of the major intention of the IRE syllabus, they are intended to enable the students to become practicing Muslims and to appreciate their membership to the world wide Islamic family. Such a standpoint from which to explore the Islamic religious tradition throws some light on the dilemma of using the aims of IRE to address a multi-religious classroom situation.

The ninth 2000 IRE aim can be described as having the potential to address itself to the multi-religious classroom situation, especially if the teacher approaches it from such a perspective. However in view of the context in which the aims are formulated, reference to 'living an integrated life' might be interpreted in light of the Islamic religious tradition (refer to similar argument on

the second 2000 IRE aim). It is important to note that this aim of IRE, similar to the first and third 2000 IRE aims can be described as being concerned with the inter-relationships between Muslim students and the wider community.

Although the 2000 IRE aims have a provision for the promotion of good relationships in society, they are built on the presupposition that they are meant for Muslims and their main intention is the promotion of the Islamic religious tradition. The implications of this are that either by commission or omission, they were designed without seriously taking into account students of other religious traditions. In light of Uganda's fragile religious interpersonal relationships, the 2000 IRE aims are not only bound to deny non-Muslims a chance to learn about their own religious traditions but can cause offence to them since they 'demand a response' that is not expected of them in an educational environment.

5.2.1. The Syllabus of IRE and the Multi-faith Context

Although the reviewed syllabus of IRE is more specific in out-lining educational tools¹⁵¹ to be used in implementing the syllabus, it is in essence similar to the old one (1974 syllabus) and therefore raises questions for effective implementation in the multi-religious schools.

The revised syllabus of IRE (2000 IRE syllabus) as contained in volume two of the Uganda primary school curriculum is explicitly concerned with the promotion of the Islamic religious tradition and this is specified in the key attainment target of the syllabus:

The overall achievement from implementing this IRE primary school syllabus is to have a learned, practicing and morally upright individual basing on the teachings of Islam (NCDC, 2000:599).

The above statement poses a challenge for implementing this syllabus in the multi-religious schools since it suggests that students who study IRE will grow

¹⁵¹ Whilst the old IRE syllabus does not specify any objectives, attainment targets or method of study to be used in implementing the syllabus, the revised IRE syllabus is more specific in defining what is to be

up to become practicing Muslims or produce individuals whose sets of values will be based on the Islamic religious tradition. Students from other religious traditions join Muslim founded schools, like any other grant aided government schools based mainly on the academic and discipline records¹⁵² of the school but would normally not expect to work towards becoming Muslims or live according to the moral values of the Islamic religious tradition. The stand point of looking at IRE as an avenue for promoting the Islamic religious tradition portrays the confessional nature of IRE and reflects the dissatisfaction on part of the government concerning the 'divisiveness' of the subject in light of the multi-religious schools since it can lead to conversion of students of other religious traditions. The response of the religious leadership to this criticism as pointed out by the government task force that analysed the 1990-2000 curriculum review for IRE is not strong enough since it overlooks such an analysis and instead refers to the potential within IRE (and CRE) to promote good interpersonal relationships and to be applied to other areas of the curriculum. The response reads thus:

Aspects of the environment, friendship, service, concern and sharing, road use, hospitality, family life, honesty and fairness, life skills like interpersonal relationships are not conversion.

The justification of RE as a subject that does not promote the conversion of members of other religious traditions would have been based on its capacity to provide for a method of study that allows critical reflection on religious issues so that students can arrive at their own conclusions. In other words, silence over the importance of this educational tool raises questions about commitment of the religious leadership on the self-education of the child¹⁵³ as opposed to a method that encourages passive reception of information on religious issues. The explicit expression of the intentions of the syllabus of IRE to promote the Islamic religious tradition raises questions on its appropriateness for the multi-religious schools. In addition, the definition of the attainment targets of the

taught, the objectives and the method of study plus taking into account the age and abilities in introducing different concepts to pupils.

¹⁵² For all grant aided government schools, whether religiously founded or purely government founded, the first consideration in making choices for their children is often the academic performance of the school and second discipline record.

¹⁵³ This is a reference to the child being exposed to methods of study that promote debate and critical reflection on religious issues in order to arrive at their own conclusions while giving due credence to the work of a teacher as a facilitator of the learning process.

syllabus with regard to knowledge, skills and attitudes to be acquired is made in light of the expectations of the student becoming a practicing Muslim (NCDC, 2000:600). This is yet another indicator of the syllabus's concerns for the spiritual growth of students within the Islamic religious tradition, an aspect that complicates its potential to address the multi-religious classroom context. In short, despite the good intentions of the syllabus to enable students to become good practicing Muslims who would in turn be good citizens who can promote national unity and harmony, the problem is that the syllabus is to be used in the multi-religious schools where IRE is compulsory in the first and second years of secondary education. It is interesting to note that the religious leadership that designed the syllabus believes that this syllabus can address itself to the multi-religious classroom situation in Uganda as reflected in a response to a point raised by the task force that analysed the 1990-2000 syllabi for RE on the indoctrinatory approach the teachers of RE might adopt to the syllabus:

The Religious education syllabus does not take the indoctrinatory approach. It teaches about a religion and the knowledge given is useful information for everybody.

Although the above touches on the implementation stage of the syllabus, it refers to the RE syllabus (IRE and CRE) as being concerned with the two religious traditions and argues that the information is beneficial to everyone in the multi-religious classes. The question though is, how beneficial can the IRE syllabus be to a Christian when it spells out its main intention of exploring religious issues in light of the Islamic religious tradition? In my view, even if the indoctrinatory approach was not taken in teaching IRE, the syllabus and the text-books, as we shall explore in our subsequent discussion, provide a situation where the benefit of implementing the syllabus goes to the foundation body of the school whose interests are the promotion of the Islamic religious tradition and not the concerns of the students of other religious traditions.

As regards the organisation of the 2000 IRE syllabus, unlike the 1974 IRE syllabus,¹⁵⁴ it is divided into 15 units or topics for a year and these are further sub-divided into five units or sub-topics for each of the three terms in the year. It

is important to note that, unlike the 1974 IRE syllabus, it specifies that the 2000 IRE syllabus takes into account the spiritual, psychological, mental and physical stages of a child's development (NCDC, 2000: 601) in handling different ideas and concepts throughout the child's primary school education. Although this is an issue that is not easy to assess,¹⁵⁵ it is partly reflected in the different instruction methods to be used that include discussion, discovery, research and report, brainstorming which can be applied with due consideration of the age and abilities of the students. Nonetheless, the inclusion of methods like recitation and memorisation which are introduced right from primary one suggests methods of study that may not be appropriate for some year groups. In addition such methods if used with students in upper primary will not promote the critical reflection of students on religious issues, notwithstanding the religious importance attached to the benefits of such methods in learning the Quran.

It is noteworthy that in view of the major intention of the IRE syllabus to promote the Islamic religious tradition, little attention is given to the interpersonal relationships between Muslims and members of other religious traditions. Out of the 105 units to be covered by students in seven years of primary education, only two units are reserved for the exploration of this theme. In my view, if the IRE syllabus was to have 'helpful information' for students of different religious traditions, it would have given prominence to this aspect so that the units that cover this subject are spread through out the seven years of primary school. The difficulty in this seems to be the argument advanced by religious leaders and some academicians in Uganda during my interviews of them, arguing that students of primary schools are too young to engage in studies about different religious traditions. The issue to be addressed, in my view is, what is confusing about exploring other religious traditions? It is possible that the 'created myths' about other religious traditions is the issue that stands in people's way of

¹⁵⁴ The 1974 IRE syllabus is not definitive of the number of topics to be covered in a term or a year and at what point in the term or year they are to be covered. It just lists topics and sub-topics to be covered by the syllabus.

¹⁵⁵ An evaluation of the suitability of particular parts of the curriculum in light of a child's spiritual, physical, mental and psychological development is a subject for debate. As reflected in chapter seven concerning the study of different religious traditions, the religious leadership argues that students are still young to cope with them and that they could be confused by them, however the methods of study and/ or topics, concepts that pupils are exposed to in the IRE pupils books at lower levels of primary seem to put in doubt the assertion that primary pupils can be confused by studying other religions.

considering a 'bigger element' of exploring other religious traditions, especially those represented in Uganda so that tools of respect and tolerance can be developed in the process of learning about them, an issue that we shall reflect upon in our discussion on the multi-faith option. This of course is not to suggest that IRE downplays the importance and/or exploration of the Islamic religious tradition.

In short, the denial of Muslim students a chance to explore the Christian religious tradition and other faiths limits their chance to appreciate them as unique. In addition, such denial deprives them a chance to develop skills of respect and tolerance towards these faiths. On the other hand, Christian students who are 'forcibly' subjected to the Islam might either convert to it or develop antipathy towards it. Both options are not in the best interests of promoting national unity and harmony since they have implications for the fragile Christian-Muslim relationships. Important to note is that, despite the arguments given above, the provision of the syllabus for studying about other religions is a positive step in exploring interrelationship between Islam and other faiths.

While the 2000 IRE syllabus provides for the exploration of different religions, the objectives of this study are defined in terms of understanding the similarities and differences between Islam and faiths namely Bahai, Hinduism and Christianity (NCDC, 2000: 661) and do not include the development of skills of respect and tolerance of these traditions, an essential aspect of promoting good interpersonal relationships between members of faith communities. It is important that the characteristic nature of various religions is explored before differences and similarities with Islam are considered so that the distinctive beliefs, practices and values of these faiths are appreciated for their worth in the first place.

5.2.2. *The Content of IRE Pupils' Books and the Multi-faith Context*

The pupils books for IRE¹⁵⁶ do not engage with the exploration of other religious traditions and therefore have limitations for the multi-religious schools. On the other hand despite the stand point of the IRE pupils' books to present Islam as a fulfilment of Christianity (which is an Islamic theological point of view that is normally found offensive to Christians), the pupils books for IRE are written in a good tone and cannot easily cause offence to Christians or members of other religious traditions.

The seven pupils' books of IRE for use during each of the seven years of primary education and Umar Nsereko's books which will be used in implementing the revised IRE syllabus do not engage with the subject of other religious traditions and this is not going to change as per my telephone conversation with Dungu Lwanga (see footnote 156). This is surprising in view of the revised aims and syllabus of IRE that have provision for the exploration of other religious traditions. The implication of this stand point is that the books are meant for the spiritual growth of Muslim students and that they are inappropriate for use in the multi-religious schools. The government directive of publishing IRE and CRE may therefore not serve any meaningful purpose for religious dialogue since IRE does not address itself to other religious traditions and cannot enable Muslim students to learn about them.

The pupils books are explicitly concerned with the study of the fundamental beliefs of the Islamic religious tradition as contained in the Quran, Hadith

¹⁵⁶ In my interview of Dungu Lwanga on 6/08/2002, the administrative secretary for Uganda Muslim Education Association (UMEA) he informed me that the main pupils books of IRE to be used in schools and endorsed by the Ministry of Education are the *Monitor* IRE books. Although the *Monitor* IRE pupils books are fully endorsed by UMEA as reflected in the preface, Lwanga informed me that (UMEA's) favoured choice were the ones written by Umar Nsereko. Both sets of books were published in 1999 and, of the two sets, the *Monitor* IRE uses simple and clear language and has a pupils book for every year group while the four books of Nsereko are more descriptive and do not seem to take into account the year groups of the students. They seem to be mainly suitable for preparing pupils for exams as is suggested in the introduction of the four books and not for pupils study. In terms of 'content' they do not differ from the monitor IRE. Interestingly, in a telephone interview with Lwanga on 20/11/2002, he informed me that the Ministry of Education had now passed a directive that Umar Nsereko's books were the ones to be used in implementing the revised syllabus and in his words 'the Roman Catholic, the Church of Uganda religious education syllabi (a possible reference to the Joint Christian syllabus) and IRE content were to be published as separate entities but in the same book for the first time. He observed however that the

(teachings of Prophet Muhammad), the history of Islam and the recitation of the Quran. The monitor IRE pupil's books specify IRE's main intention in the preface of all the seven books which reads in part:

The books will also enable pupils to appreciate, and adopt the Islamic code of life through its moral and spiritual values, and also be able to understand the history of Islam (*Monitor IRE*: 1999:1).

As for Umar Nsereko's four books, they have an introduction which refers to three major parts of the book namely the coverage of 'tawheed' or fundamentals of Islam, practical aspects of Islam and history of Islam'. In other words the major concern of the books is a presentation of religious faith and practice according to the Islamic religious tradition. In short it reflects the importance of the books in enabling students to become practicing Muslims, an issue that portrays the dilemma in their possible use in the multi-religious schools.

It is noteworthy that the text-books of IRE, in particular with regard to history of Islam, do not take an antagonistic approach of referring to Uganda's historical religious conflicts with a view of vindicating Muslims while condemning Christians, an approach taken in the secondary school IRE text-books. The *Monitor IRE* pupils books contain a history of Islam in Uganda (*Monitor IRE pupils book seven*, 1999:10-11, 21-22; *Monitor IRE Pupils book six*:1999b: 24) which do not demean the Christian religious tradition and so do Nsereko's *IRE pupils books' three* (1999b: 72-74) and book four (1999c: 35-50). It is interesting to note that the history of Islam has a part to do with Prophets of Islam, many of whom are key Christian religious personalities. The *Monitor IRE pupils book four* (1999a: 12) and Nsereko's pupils book one (1999a: 95) contain the story of Nuh (referred to as the first prophet of God by Muslims and he is the Noah of the Christian religious tradition).

Similarly *Monitor IRE pupils book six* (1999b: 16) and Nsereko's book three (1999b: 67-70) contain the story of prophet Isa, (the Jesus Christ of the New Testament). Important to note is that most of what is described about these

'content' of Nsereko's books would remain the same and no specific attention was to be given to the exploration of other religious traditions.

religious personalities in IRE pupil's books is the same as that contained in the Bible, the Christian's Holy book. Nonetheless, the IRE pupil's books do not take an approach of bringing in comparisons between Islam and Christianity in understanding of the role of these personalities. In short the prophets are reported on from an Islamic perspective. In light of the revised aims and syllabus of IRE that specify the objective of exploring other religious traditions, it is pertinent that the pupils books bring in an element of comparison with say Christianity so as to enable pupils to appreciate the commonality of the two major religious traditions despite the differences in theological interpretations of the role of these messengers of God.

5.3. The New Government Policy for RE and the Multi-faith Context

The reviewed CRE and IRE syllabi will not provide a satisfactory solution to the issue of addressing the multi-religious context of the grant aided government schools since the foundation bodies of the respective schools will ultimately have the final say on what branch of RE is taught.

The policy statement reads:

The religious education syllabus is composed of two parts namely, part A: Christian religious education (CRE) and part B: Islamic religious education (IRE). Individual schools will decide which part(s) they want to teach, depending on their religious population and facilities available (NCDC: 2000:515).

The policy statement is a reflection of the dilemma that the government has in attempting to influence policy in the religiously founded schools. This policy seems to be an attempt to 'shift the blame' from the Ministry of Education to the religiously founded schools for failure to cater for students of other religious traditions. This is because the government has not been resolute in impressing upon the foundation bodies the urgency of addressing the multi-religious nature of the schools (refer to foregoing discussions on this issue). The above policy gives power to Christians for example to promote the teaching of CRE and it is highly unlikely that Christian founded schools will this time round provide for the

teaching of IRE and so will Muslims in providing for CRE in their schools. During my field work trip to Uganda, I visited Nyamitanga Muslim Primary school and discovered that although the school had Christians, it did not offer CRE. In my interview with Sheik Isa (a teacher of IRE who is not professionally trained¹⁵⁷), he informed me that in primary seven there were five Christians and in primary six eight Christians plus similar numbers of Christians in the different classes who were studying IRE.¹⁵⁸

On one of my visits to the school, the most exciting incident during my field work took place and this was because it epitomised the lack of a consistent approach to issues of teaching RE in schools. It seems the Head-teacher of the school, a Muslim, as is characteristic with all religiously founded schools to have a head-teacher who belongs to the foundation body, realised that it did not augur well for the school to have Christian pupils and yet have no provision for CRE. I was later to be introduced to a teacher who was a Christian and who had been expressly asked to introduce the teaching of CRE in the school only days after my visit to the school and from my conversation with the 'new teacher of CRE', I deduced that my field work role had been mistaken for being a government spy or a ministry of education official and this was despite my formal introduction to the school administration.

In my view, the new policy of RE will compound such situations instead of addressing the anomaly simply because the schools will now have the terms of reference to provide for the promotion of their religious traditions instead of those of the minority however genuine the demand might be. It seems that the case before has been that there was an assumption that all religious traditions were catered for by the RE curriculum in the different schools and that is why the Head-teacher of the school struggled to provide for the teaching of CRE as a reflection of the multi-religious nature of the school, lest he be reprimanded

¹⁵⁷ The teacher himself confessed to me that he was not a professional teacher but he was in the process of going for training. In a related interview of Sasirwe Stephen held on 12/10/2001, an Education officer of Mbarara district he informed me that some IRE teachers were not professionally trained and that Education officials have always advised them to go for training. His observation was that although it was not a good practice to employ unprofessional teachers, it was the 'unavoidable pressure' of the religious leadership that created such situations.

¹⁵⁸ It was surprising to note that he told me that Christian students loved IRE and that some of them, especially girls end up becoming Muslims.

by the government or ministry of education officials for failing to cater for the Christian students in his school.

The new policy's implications are that CRE and IRE will become fully fledged subjects, each with its own examination paper and/or questions. In an interview held with Francis Kaleba, Co-ordinator for Improving Curriculum Delivery, NCDC¹⁵⁹, he informed me that, in view of the new policy for RE in schools, the fully fledged examinations for IRE and CRE would start in the year 2005. The case before has been that CRE and IRE have been contained in one examination paper that comprised CRE, IRE and Social Studies and since candidates and/or students previously had an option of either attempting questions on Islam or Christianity¹⁶⁰, this will not be possible beginning 2005. The implications of this policy is that Christian students will have to explore less information on Islam (refer to foregoing discussion on CRE syllabus coverage of Islam) while Muslims will not have an opportunity of exploring Christianity (refer to discussion on content of pupils books for IRE).

As regards the decision of what branch of RE to be taught, it is important to note that at the school level it is very difficult to arrive at a decision that can favour the minority religious population or even the majority who may not belong to the foundation body (refer to point raised by the task force in our foregoing discussion on CRE syllabus). This is mainly because the foundation body in this respect will (and has always) taken decisions on what branch of RE is taught in their schools and, in view of their main intention of the spiritual growth of students within their religious tradition, one can envisage a situation where provision for other religious traditions will not be considered, notwithstanding the religious population of the school.

¹⁵⁹ This officer was referred to me by the Coordinator of NCDC since the post of RE specialist NCDC has been vacant for about two years and it would seem that the choice of who heads this department is always a contentious one in view of what religion they profess. The last RE specialist at NCDC was a Muslim and during my field work some observation made by one interviewee was that 'how could a Muslim have been head of the RE curriculum when Muslims comprise only a small percentage of Uganda's population?'

¹⁶⁰ In an interview with teachers of the three Christian founded primary schools in Mbarara in which I carried out field work, they informed me that according to the examination paper that comprised of Social studies, IRE and CRE, students were expected to answer questions on either CRE or IRE and since questions on one religious tradition could be more difficult than on another, it was a common practice for them to teach both CRE and IRE so that students could answer whichever branch of RE had easier

The school management committees have always been composed of four members of the foundation body, three representatives of the Commissioner for Education (who are normally nominated by the Head-teacher from among key personalities in the local area and these are often members of the religious tradition of the foundation body since the head-teacher takes 'this factor' into account), two parents representatives (whose choice at parents general assemblies are often marred by lobbying of the foundation body) plus a member of the local council and the head-teacher (who is officially appointed by the Ministry of Education but approved by the foundation body) In effect, it seems a pretty big challenge for a motion to be moved to introduce IRE in a Christian founded school for example and in such a respect the minority Muslims will not have IRE provided. The issue of pupils books referred to by the government policy statement does not fully arise since after all none of the teachers that I came across in the field for both secondary and primary had books for use by students and yet for example teachers at the three Christian founded primary schools that I visited were teaching IRE based on their own research and not literature availed by the Christian founded schools.

Another interesting point that was raised by the task force that analysed the 1990-2000 curriculum for RE that largely reflects the dilemma of government on the provision of a fair RE curriculum for the students is on the issue concerning other religious traditions, apart from Islam and Christianity. While the government policy seems to be silent on this aspect or assumes that it falls in the category of CRE and IRE, this cannot be the case since some other religious traditions are 'so tiny' that democratically they cannot even win a vote, unless protected by policy. In my view the question that was raised by the task force on this issue remains unanswered. It went thus:

There is an unanswered question about what happens to other religious groups that do not identify with the two mainstream religions.

The response of the religious leadership far from being satisfactory, 'shifts the blame' from themselves to the government which makes policies concerning curriculum. Their response was:

This issue is beyond the curriculum developer's scope of influence. To a greater extent, the feelings of other religions have been accommodated through focusing on Religious principles and not denominational biases (see Response 6.6).

Although CRE and IRE syllabi refer to application of educational tools of taking into account students' spiritual, physical, psychological and mental levels of development in designing the syllabus, the major intentions of the syllabi are the promotion of students within their religious traditions. This in turn makes CRE and IRE inappropriate for students who do not belong to those respective religious traditions and to argue that 'their feelings are accommodated' through Religious principles is not plausible. In addition, the denial of a responsibility to dialogue on the issue of other religious traditions that belong to minority groups is not helpful since in the first place the government bestowed on the religious leadership a rare chance of developing the RE curriculum. It is very clear from all this that provision for students who belong to religious traditions, other than that of the foundation body will not be possible. In my view, Christian and Muslim leaders ought to have argued for an option of excluding students of other religious traditions from their classes of CRE or IRE at worst instead of arguing that 'their feelings are accommodated in CRE and IRE'.

5.4. Conclusion

The foregoing discussion has shown that despite the government intention to realise an RE curriculum that addresses itself to the multi-religious classroom context, the CRE and IRE curricula have not given prominence to the issue of the inter-relationship between the two major religious traditions, Christianity and Islam. In addition, the exploration of the diversity within the Christian religious tradition has not been given due attention and this is bound to affect the inter-relationships between members of the Christian family. On the other hand the exploration of other religious traditions has also not been given due attention and this implies that students are not being equipped with tools of respect and

tolerance for people of other religious traditions, an important aspect of addressing religious intolerance and discrimination characteristic in Uganda's multi-religious society. Mindful of the complications that are poised in the way of implementing the revised syllabus, especially in view of the new policy statement on RE, the current format of teaching RE in schools does not adequately address the multi-religious context of the schools and therefore calls for a reflection on alternative ways of teaching RE in a multi-religious society. The next chapter explores government attempts to introduce Moral Education as a substitute for the 'divisive RE' curriculum.

CHAPTER SIX

MORAL EDUCATION – AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE 'DIVISIVE' CRE AND IRE

This chapter will explore the view that, although the NRM government in Uganda led by Y.K Museveni denied that it intended to exclude RE from the primary school curriculum and replace it with Moral Education, there are enough indicators to suggest that this was the intention. The main argument of this chapter will be that the government's intention of introducing Moral Education was to provide a substitute to the 'divisive CRE and IRE' reflected by its confessional nature in the foregoing discussion. Secondly, it will be argued that, although CRE and IRE are overtly concerned with the promotion of good moral values, these are based on religious beliefs of the respective foundation bodies of the schools and do not acknowledge the possibility of good moral values outside their religious traditions nor the controversial nature of religious moral values. Thirdly, I will reflect on the scholarly debate on Moral Education as a subject that is concerned with values in education. In the light of the above discussion, I will argue for the consideration of Moral Education as an independent subject on the Ugandan curriculum. Nonetheless, in view of the overwhelming public support for RE as a subject on the curriculum, I will argue for the consideration of a multi-faith RE that would acknowledge 'common ground'¹⁶¹ and diversity in interpretation of moral issues, not to mention the potential for promotion of national unity.

6. The NRM's Political Philosophy of Unity and Secular Morality

Since the advent of the NRM government, there has been a deliberate effort to address the 'divisive' role of religion whose origins are traced to the historical religious conflicts (see chapter two). Part of this effort has been directed to the school curriculum. The proposed introduction of Moral Education referred to in the subsequent discussion concerning the Uganda Government White Paper

¹⁶¹ This is an expression of shared or uniform moral values between different religious traditions.

on Education largely seems to have its origin in the NRM government's political philosophy of promoting unity and secular morality.

The promotion of national unity is point number three of the NRM government's political programme, popularly known as the Ten-Point programme. Point 3 is expressed as 'consolidation of national unity and elimination of all forms of sectarianism' (Museveni, 1997: 217). While reflecting on the rationale behind the NRM's cardinal point of promoting national unity, A.K Mwesigye (1987:19) observes that:

The principal cause of strife in Uganda has been lack of unity. The NRM intends to eliminate all forms of sectarianism through education of the masses on who their true enemies are....The NRM composes all sorts of people from all walks of life. These are Catholics, Muslims, Protestants, African culturalists and pagans. Others are ultra-capitalists in thinking and others are communists. They are united by the Ten Point Programme.¹⁶²

Mwesigye's remarks on the NRM's stressing of national unity reflects the diverse religious and political standpoints of the founding members of the NRM government and points to their determination to address the issue of lack of unity, the principle cause of strife in Uganda.¹⁶³ It further casts some light on their position towards religion which is a trivial issue that could be 'sacrificed' for the sake of national unity. This position is made clear by the NRM's politicization programme introduced in 1986 for the benefit of Ugandans.¹⁶⁴

In defining what politicization is, Mwesigye (1987:9) quotes an NRM commander Ondoga Amaza who defines it thus, 'the act of inciting individuals or whole populations into taking some political action.' In expounding on this definition in view of Uganda's political history, Mwesigye cites the addressing of ethnic, religious and political divisions among Ugandans as being one of the

¹⁶² This is an Unpublished Diploma in Theology dissertation for the year 1987 of Makerere University on the topic 'The Political Training Programme of the National Resistance Movement and its Relevance to the Church in Uganda Today.'

¹⁶³ Apart from lack of religious unity, there is lack of tribal unity another major dividing factor in Uganda politics. However as I will observe in chapter seven on multi-faith RE issues, religious identity in Uganda seems to be taking precedence in the lives of the majority in comparison to tribal affiliation.

¹⁶⁴ Ordinary citizens, civil servants, students have all been encouraged and sometimes 'forced' (especially civil servants) to attend Political education programmes. Even today University and College graduates are 'encouraged' to attend and in many cases attendance is considered an advantage in being considered for some jobs.

main objectives of the NRM government's politicization programme. It is indeed true that the political programmes of NRM have been very critical of the divisive nature of religion in society and its diminished importance in modern times.¹⁶⁵ The deliberate concern of the political education programmes to address moral issues through secular moral values in their political education programme is an indicator of the possible inter-relationship between this programme and the subsequent threat to exclude RE from the school curriculum and replace it with Moral Education.

6.1. The Uganda Government Education White Paper's Recommendation on Moral Education

The recommendation made by the Education Policy Review Commission (EPRC) contained in the Uganda Government Education White Paper 1992, to introduce Moral Education on the school curriculum for Uganda primary and secondary schools, is a pointer to the origin of Moral Education and its being a threat to RE as a subject.

The Uganda Government Education White Paper is a product of an EPRC appointed by the Minister of Education in 1987. The Education White Paper was debated by the cabinet which made some amendments and authorized its publication. The ministerial appointment of members of the EPRC was political since it was done by the then Minister of Education, Amanywa Mushega, who was a founder member of the NRM, the political organisation that took over power in 1985. Similarly, the cabinet comprised of political appointees of the President, the majority of whom were members of the NRM save for some few members of the 'defunct' political parties who were included in the spirit of national unity. The characteristic pattern of political appointments then was a preference of people who had attended political education courses and most important those who were considered sympathetic to the NRM political ideology.

¹⁶⁵ I have personally listened to about three senior NRM government officials at public functions who have ridiculed religious belief systems and in particular their divisive nature in society. In addition some of the interviews that I held with some NRM government officials reflect this attitude.

One of the main intentions of the curriculum review process that enables one to appreciate the context in which the recommendations of introducing Moral Education were made reads:

To appraise the existing system of education from pre-primary level to secondary/ tertiary and recommend measures and strategies for improving the system so that it can: progressively embrace, as appropriate modern curricular and pedagogic trends and developments (Uganda Government: 1992: x).

The NRM government's initiative to review curriculum was greatly in line with the political vision that they had for the country and this touched on the role of religion in the national life of the country which included schools. The political appointment of members of the EPRC (notwithstanding their professional qualifications) is a factor that should have played some part in the decision to introduce a neutral subject that was akin to the NRM's out-look on addressing issues of morality and promoting national unity and harmony.¹⁶⁶ The term of reference to 'embrace modern curricular trends and developments' provided the background against which Moral Education as a new subject on the curriculum was considered. This is because, prior to 1985, the only subject through which Values Education was promoted was CRE and IRE. Moral Education was, and continues to be, a major alternative to Religious Education mainly preferred in the United States of America as a safeguard against provision for Religious Education which raises questions of differences from the outset.

The method of work of the 28 members of the EPRC was mainly one of 'top to bottom' approach of initiating changes in curriculum which is reflected in the case of Moral Education, finally presented alongside Religious Education for the first time. Part of the government failure to consult widely on Moral Education is reflected in the interviews that I carried out with individuals from different sections of the Ugandan society (referred to in the subsequent discussion) who complained about the way Moral Education was being undemocratically considered for introduction in schools.

¹⁶⁶ The (Uganda Government White Paper, 1992: 6) specifies that Uganda's first national goal of education 'promoting national unity and harmony' is in line with the NRM's Ten Point Programme and

Although the EPRC consisted of government officials, representatives from education institutions and experts who advised on issues of curriculum and other educational issues at different levels of education (Uganda Government, 1992:xi), their mode of operation seems to have relied on their capacity to assess the existing curriculum on the 'drawing board' without carrying out widespread consultations. This is expressed by the Minister of Education Amanywa Mushega in the preamble of the Education White Paper signed in 1992 after its compilation, following discussions by the cabinet, whereby he observes that the Education White Paper was from then on open for public debate at local and national level. It is worth noting that this public debate should have come at an earlier stage. This would have forestalled the complaints against the threat of exclusion of RE and its replacement with Moral Education. Since the compilation of the Education White Paper, the Uganda Parliament has debated various sections of the Education White Paper and made resolutions on them but there has never been any formal public debate on the issue of Moral Education, except informal ones.

While out-lining the recommended changes for the primary school curriculum, the Education White Paper specifies Moral Education as a new subject to be part of social studies¹⁶⁷. Previously the Uganda National Examination Board provided for a score of 100 marks in Social Studies and RE was part of Social Studies. According to the recommendation of the Education White Paper, the distribution of marks for Social studies is defined thus:

Of the 100 marks (awarded to it together with Religious and Moral Education), a larger proportion will take into account the new element introduced as a foundation for Development Studies' (Uganda Government, 1992:53).

The new element, Moral Education in this respect is given special preference to Religious Education since it is expected to provide a basis for Development Studies at secondary school level. While the rationale for introducing Moral Education as a foundation for Development Studies is not articulated, the

this suggests that the NRM Ten Point Programme and its political ideals were a basic term of reference for curriculum review.

¹⁶⁷ Prior to the recommendations, this subject comprised Geography, History, Civics and Religious Education (CRE and IRE as alternative options for students doing the same exam).

anticipated relationship between Religious and Moral Education in primary schools was not defined.¹⁶⁸

The distinctive mark of the secondary school recommendations for RE is its relegation from being a 'compulsory subject' to an optional one. Although in theory RE had not been made compulsory by the government since the nationalization of schools, in practice the curriculum format in secondary schools rendered it compulsory since all subjects in the first and second years of secondary education, CRE or IRE inclusive, are compulsory. However according to the planned system of education, the Education White Paper refers to three types of secondary schools namely Vocational, Comprehensive and General secondary schools which will have different implications for RE.

The General secondary school curriculum is indicated as offering five core subjects to students, five vocational subjects from which students will pick one and two sets of science and Arts based subjects from which students will pick two subjects, making a total of eight for each student. A conclusive note is given which reads:

A student need not offer more than eight subjects but if he so desires, he can choose one or two of the following subjects: a) A Ugandan language b) Religious Education c) A foreign language (Uganda Government: 1992:72).

The implication of this arrangement for students is that RE will no longer be offered by many of them, if any. It is normally some few extremely bright students who offer more than the prescribed minimum. As a consequence, it will most likely affect a huge number of students who have been choosing RE as an option at Advanced level basing on their performance at secondary school level. The curriculum for comprehensive secondary schools similarly reflects the diminished significance of RE. Although the Education White Paper does not specify if RE is to be an optional subject at senior one level, it is presented alongside Moral Education as the thirteenth subject in a list of sixteen subjects.¹⁶⁹ At Senior two and Senior three it is a specified as optional

¹⁶⁸ While Moral Education is essentially concerned with values issues, Development Studies in Uganda is basically concerned with economic issues, notwithstanding its concern with ethical issues.

¹⁶⁹ This is the first time that Moral Education appears on the secondary school curriculum.

subject alongside Moral Education. The vocational secondary school curriculum does not contain RE but has Development Studies, a new subject on the secondary school curriculum referred to as an out-growth of Moral Education at primary schools (see foregoing discussion). Development Studies is designated a compulsory subject in Vocational and Comprehensive schools.

A reflection on the foregoing discussion reveals the origins of Moral Education as a subject considered for introduction in the primary and secondary schools much earlier than the debates ignited in 1999 on the threat of exclusion of RE from the curriculum and its replacement with Moral Education. As will be observed in the subsequent discussion, the threat for exclusion of RE or its marginalization at secondary school did not arise and yet the recommendations of the Education White Paper have far reaching implications for the place of CRE and IRE in secondary schools since they suggest its relegation from being an 'informal core subject' to an optional extra that may or may not be offered by students in secondary schools.¹⁷⁰ The major reason for the systematic relegation of RE from its 'informal core status' by the NRM government (as evidenced by the cabinet endorsement of the Education White Paper recommendations on Moral Education and RE which have far reaching implications for the latter) is its failure to re-invent itself so that it can address the multi-religious nature of the religiously founded public schools. The subsequent in-house debate between the government and religious leaders on the status of RE for the religiously founded public schools, the eventual publicisation of this debate and final decision to retain RE in its original format by the government, is to be appreciated from this perspective.¹⁷¹

6.1.1 Government Criticism of the Primary CRE and IRE Syllabuses

The 1993 curriculum review task force on religious education was meant to seek dialogue with religious leaders about the format of RE for the religiously founded public schools. Its commissioning after the publication of the 1992

¹⁷⁰ The recommendations for curriculum review at secondary school level concerning the introduction of three types of secondary schools are awaiting implementation and delays are likely to be related to availability of resources, an issue referred to in the Uganda Government White Paper (1992:2).

¹⁷¹ In-house debates refer to behind the scenes discussions about the format of RE suitable for school curriculum of religiously founded public schools.

Education White Paper recommendations on the future of RE for the school system is an indicator of the oversight in holding dialogue at a late stage.

The Government Task Force's critique of the primary CRE and IRE syllabuses with reference to their confessional and thereby potentially 'divisive' nature was responded to by Christian and Muslim religious leaders through their affirmation of its appropriateness for students of different religions (see chapter five). The dialogue could not go further since the religious leaderships' interests were incompatible with those of the government. The underlying problem seemed to lie in the question concerning the foundation status of the schools *vis-à-vis* government control of schools. This is a problem that is likely to continue at different stages of the schools' administration and specifically with reference to the RE curriculum. The religious leaders' response to the government criticism of the CRE and IRE curriculum as 'divisive' was not followed by any debate until 1999.¹⁷²

6.2. The Publicisation of the Moral Education Debate

The first public mention of the threat to exclude RE from the Ugandan school curriculum and replace it with Moral Education was in a *Monitor* newspaper article of 1st April, 1999. The article quoted the then Assistant Commissioner of Education, Fagil Monday as saying, 'Uganda was a secular state and therefore had no time to waste consulting religious leaders.'¹⁷³ He was further quoted as saying that his commission was going to find some neutral persons to work on a neutral syllabus to unite pupils.

The public revelation of the senior government official's dissatisfaction with the CRE and IRE syllabuses, made to participants at an education seminar, expresses the government position on the matter. The bold statement of saying

¹⁷² Although I was not able to find any documentation or proof of activities concerning the debate on the format of RE for primary schools, the interviews I had revealed that discussions continued between government and religious leaders to resolve the problem raised for students of different religions who had to be exposed to the CRE and IRE syllabuses in the religiously founded public schools. Alongside this, it was suggested by some interviewees that they believed that government was at the time secretly drawing up a syllabus for Moral Education.

¹⁷³ Fagil Monday is a political cadre of the NRM government and served as a District Commissioner before moving to the Ministry of Education.

that government need not consult religious leaders seems to reflect the procedure through which Moral Education was recommended in the Education White Paper. Although Fagil Monday did not mention Moral Education as the subject on his mind, it might not be far fetched to deduce that it was, especially in view of its having already been endorsed by the cabinet according to the contents of the Education White Paper.

In an informal discussion with Fagil Monday, now a presidential advisor on rural economy, he informed me that the CRE and IRE revised syllabi for primary schools and the format of teaching them had not yet addressed the issue of the 'divisive' nature of RE.¹⁷⁴ While he observed that Christians and Muslims would have to study religion separately according to the revised primary RE syllabus format (see chapter five), the situation was being compounded by the Muslims emphasis on Quranic teaching (which was a reference to stressing doctrinal rather than educational approaches).¹⁷⁵ In addition, he referred to the Archbishop of Church of Uganda's pronouncement that all Church of Uganda schools should be led by Church of Uganda members as another indicator of the 'divisive' nature of religion.¹⁷⁶ He summed up his views by referring to the likelihood of sectarianism continuing in Uganda. This is yet another indicator of the complications raised by the subject of RE since it is accompanied by the debate on the ownership and/ or management of religiously founded public schools.

The views of Monday were largely reflected by his successor, Moses Otyek, whom I asked what he considered to be the strengths and weaknesses of the

¹⁷⁴ Interview with Fagil Monday held on 25/07/2002 at the Presidential Advisor's office in Kampala. He was replaced by Moses Otyek (see subsequent discussion)

¹⁷⁵ In my interview of Dungu Lwanga Administrative Secretary for Uganda Muslim Education Association held on 6/08/2002 at his offices in Kibuli-Kampala, he informed me that while one of the major differences between Madarasat (purely Islamic schools) and secular Muslim founded schools was the learning of Islam in English in the latter schools, he observed that, 'We have introduced Arabic in secular secondary schools and we are now going to start in primary schools.' A development that seems to be closely related to Fagil Monday's observation since it lays emphasis on learning the Qur'an in Arabic language as opposed to its interpretation in English language, the language of communication in education.

¹⁷⁶ The New Vision newspaper of 24/07/2002 quoted Archbishop Nkooyoyo as having said the above statement during the inauguration of Church of Uganda Head-teachers Association at Mukono. This is a reflection of the ongoing conflict based on the Church founded status of the schools and their public nature as national education institutions.

current CRE and IRE syllabuses in Ugandan primary and secondary schools.¹⁷⁷ He referred to the freedom of worship each religious community had in teaching RE with respect to the foundation body of the school. He further observed that, 'the Ministry of Education is not against the teaching of RE. It is not abolishing RE.' However he hastened to add, 'after teaching it, we are not seeing any difference.' He further observed, 'how many Christians steal?' 'You don't need to be religious to be moral, we have seen people who are not religious yet very moral!' He further observed that he was supportive of Moral Education as a neutral option compared to RE which had the potential to divide people and he illustrated this by referring to the Ministry of Education plans to purchase text-books of RE which were met with problems of Christians and Muslims failing to agree on the format of their publication.¹⁷⁸ The public statement made by Monday concerning the RE curriculum and other public statements by senior NRM government officials (refer to foregoing discussion) about the divisiveness and limitations of religion, are largely responsible for igniting the Moral Education debate.

Another incident which was crucial in opening up the public debate on the threat of excluding RE from the primary school curriculum and replacing it with Moral Education followed the publication of a lead article in the *Monitor* Newspaper of 2nd October, 1999 which read 'Religious Education in schools abolished?' Although the title was tacitly expressed in question form, the big bold letters plus the contents of the article did not leave anything to imagination about the supposed 'abolishment of RE in primary schools and its replacement with Moral Education.' The article quoted a reliable source from the Ministry of Education as saying 'the Christian and Islamic Religious Education syllabi for primary schools were officially phased out by the Academic steering board of the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) on 2nd May, 1999.'¹⁷⁹ The article associated this development with remarks made earlier on by Monday

¹⁷⁷ Interview held on 7/11/2001 at Kampala Ministry of Education headquarters. I considered this appointment the most difficult to make and one of the most important since it was with one of the most senior education officials in Uganda. In addition it had been postponed for about five times and yet I had to travel over 160 miles to the capital city from my research station in Mbarara on each occasion.

¹⁷⁸ This is an allusion to the issue of primary school text-books discussed in chapter five whereby the government expected the content of CRE and IRE to be published in the same book in order to minimize costs and probably basing on the 'inter-linkage' between religious traditions.

¹⁷⁹ The Academic steering Board is the supreme body concerned with curriculum designing and it is the one to which the different specialist subject committees report.

then Assistant Commissioner for Education at an education seminar when he referred to Uganda as a secular state which was under no obligation to consult religious leaders on issues of the curriculum. While the lead article of the *Monitor newspaper* quoted some people interviewed in its survey, it concluded by quoting a UJCC official who is reported to have expressed dismay at the prospects of RE being banned from schools:

The government will have an uphill task of telling convincingly the Ugandan public known to be God fearing the foundation or basis of the so called Moral Education.

The subsequent public reaction is to be seen as a direct response to the contents of this article. The writer of the article (who was only referred to as a *Monitor* correspondent) reflected a strong link between Monday's remarks about the secular nature of the Ugandan state and the plans for a neutral syllabus with the introduction of Moral Education at the expense of RE. Reference to 'a neutral subject to unite students and neutral people to design it' fitted in with Moral Education which, after all had earlier on been recommended in the Education White Paper. In addition, it is worth noting that a memorandum from the Minister of Education to Archbishop Jonah Lwanga of the Orthodox church in Uganda, also Chairman of the UJCC, of 10th February, 2000 in response to a petition written by Christian and Muslim leaders on the threat of excluding RE from the curriculum and its replacement with Moral Education, expresses the government's denial of being behind the introduction of Moral Education. The memorandum acknowledges that misleading remarks were made by a senior government official who referred to Uganda as a secular state and criticized the diminished role of foundation bodies in education. This information verifies the contents of the *Monitor* newspaper article of 1st April, 1999.

Interestingly the Ministry of Education memorandum to religious leaders of 10th February 2000 goes further to acknowledge that while a module on Moral Education had been introduced in Primary Teachers Colleges under a special programme (SUPER), it had been used only as reference material and had not

been authorized by the Ministry of Education.¹⁸⁰ Although the memorandum states that the Ministry of Education had henceforth stopped the implementation of a Moral Education syllabus in Primary Teachers Colleges, it is difficult to appreciate a situation where National Teachers Colleges would introduce new curriculum in their schools without an endorsement by the Ministry of Education Inspectorate that is concerned with curriculum issues in schools.

The inter-linkage between primary schools and the threat of excluding RE from the curriculum and replacing it with Moral Education is further to be appreciated from this perspective. It reveals another step in the systematic provision for Moral Education, considered a neutral subject as opposed to the 'divisive' RE, this time on Primary Teachers Colleges' curricula. The religious leaders and subsequent public views on the threat of the government exclusion of RE from the primary schools curriculum and its replacement with Moral Education was a realistic one. On the other hand, the religious leaders' failure to provide an RE curriculum that addressed the needs of a multi-religious school situation should have been a signal of such government efforts to resolve the problem.

6.3. The Political Factor in the Moral Education Public Debate

The main characteristic of the public opposition of Moral Education is that it took place in the run up to the presidential elections of 2001.¹⁸¹ The most significant mark of the public response to the threat of excluding RE from the curriculum and its replacement with Moral Education is illustrated by a Factual Joint Statement that dismisses senior government officials' attempts to allay fears of the Ugandan public about the threat to exclude RE from the curriculum. It was written by representatives of the different religious traditions, parents,

¹⁸⁰ In an interview held on 5/08/2002 at Kyambogo University with Margaret Kakongoro, a lecturer at Kyambogo University, she informed me that the Primary Teachers Colleges had embarked on a special scheme funded by donor funds for developing the Moral Education course. However she observed that this scheme had been phased out after a short while.

¹⁸¹ Although I was not able to get information about the different memoranda that were presented to the president and senior government officials at different forum plus documentation concerning the different protest marches held in the country concerning campaigns against the anticipated banning of RE in schools and its replacement with Moral Education, these were a common feature in the period of political campaigns.

teachers and pupils and is dated 20th December, 1999.¹⁸² The Joint Statement quotes the *Monitor* Newspaper article of 2nd October, 1999 in presenting its case but goes ahead to observe that independent surveys were carried out on the subject. One of the key issues raised in the Joint Statement was the criticism of the government's failure to consult widely on the issue of Moral Education and this was attributed to possible influence of 'donor funds or external pressure.' From the time of the publication of *The Monitor* newspaper article of 2nd October, 1999 concerning Moral Education and RE, many formal and informal comments at public and private functions were made by political and religious leaders and even members of the public on the subject.¹⁸³

The influence of the political factor in determining the course of RE in primary schools is reflected in the *New Vision* article of 15th January, 2001 in which an article entitled 'Museveni to keep Religion in schools' was published. The article reports that President Museveni was hailed by delegates attending an annual religious convention of Pentecostal Christians at Buganda Road Primary school in Kampala saying 'praise the Lord, Man of God, No change.' The article further observed that while responding to Pastor George Mulinde's complaint about NRM government's plans to drop RE from the curriculum, Museveni responded by assuring them that the subject would not be abolished from the school curriculum and that in any case consultations would have to be made. Similar information was carried in the *Monitor* newspaper article of 16th January, 2001 although the *Monitor* article pointed out that Mulinde encouraged 'all Christians to register and vote in the March Presidential elections.'

The two newspaper reports illustrate the concern of the religious community on the threat to RE at the time. Museveni's response to attend such Christian conventions may not only be viewed as a state duty but an attempt to solicit votes, which was his main duty at the time. In addition his assuring of the Christians that RE was not to be removed from the curriculum without raising

¹⁸² The document is entitled 'Factual Joint Statement by the Religious Community in Uganda on the Proposed Abolition of Religious Studies in Primary School and Replace it with Moral Education.' The mobilisation of the different sections of the Ugandan community and the protest marches which were held in Kampala, the capital city, took on a political significance since politicians were involved.

¹⁸³ It is characteristic that at religious functions such as marriage ceremonies or baptisms or public functions such as independence day celebrations, religious and political leaders or even ordinary citizens

the challenge it poses in view of all government recommendations and/or efforts to address it could be a political step not to affect his presidential bid. The eventual release of Volume two of the primary school curriculum with CRE and IRE as subjects on the revised curriculum on 5th February, 2001, more than one year after the release of volume one and just one month before the presidential elections can be attributed to political timing more than logistical reasons. In any case, no accompanying reason was given for the delayed release of the syllabus. It would therefore not be far fetched to concur that as expressed in the Joint Statement of the religious community in Uganda there were 'strong signs that the final hammer' (an expression used in the Joint Statement) was about to be hit on RE had it not been for the pressure exerted by the different sections of the Uganda community.

The public silence on the threat to the marginalization and/or even exclusion of RE from secondary school curriculum may largely be a result of not fully interpreting the implications of the Education White Paper recommendations on RE and the fact that the three secondary school systems are yet to be introduced in Uganda.

6.4. The Understanding of Moral Education by Different Sections of Ugandan Society

The common standpoint expressed by religious leaders in the interviews that I conducted expresses their perception of good moral values as being the product of religious belief, a similar view reflected in arguments advanced by sections of the Ugandan community.¹⁸⁴ Against this background Moral Education whose basis is the promotion of secular moral values is opposed.

can make comments on politically laden issues such as government plans on curriculum or any other field which oftentimes finds its way in the press and at other times is not.

¹⁸⁴ This is the same line of argument advanced in the Factual Joint Statement of the religious community and the different fora at which the subject came up.

6.4.1. Religious Leaders Support of Religious Moral Values

Ten out of eleven religious leaders that I interviewed indicated their opposition to the consideration of Moral Education as a subject on the Ugandan school curriculum (see appendix for list of religious leaders) basing on their preference for religious moral values.

In my interview with Paul Bakyenga of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Mbarara, while responding to the threat of exclusion of RE from the Uganda school curriculum and its replacement with Moral Education, he emphasised the importance of RE in promoting good moral values and argued that RE should not even have been taught as part of any other subject due to its uniqueness. He observed that:

The problem of RE losing its foothold started when it was taught as part of Social Studies in primary schools. Christianity and Islam are religions that ascribe to a revelation from above that impinges on the individual and dictates his conduct in society. In contrast, Social Studies is a subject that is man made and changes, so it has limitations.¹⁸⁵

Bakyenga's argument was echoed by Bishop Kyamugambi of the Church of Uganda who observed:

Moral Education without religion remains bare, it does not penetrate. Religion is the only way through which man, knowing his accountability to God, can be socially responsible. People are reckless when they are not accountable.

Both religious leaders stress the uniqueness of religion in influencing people's morals in society. Bakyenga's standpoint not only reflects the secular nature of Social Studies but that of Moral Education whose underlying principles are 'man made' compared to CRE and IRE that derive their authenticity from a special revelation from God. In the view of Rev. Kaiso, the Executive Secretary of UJCC, the introduction of Moral Education was resisted because 'religious leaders felt that morality was a product of certain values.' He referred to Christians as basing theirs on the Christian religious belief while Muslims on the

Islamic religious belief.¹⁸⁶ This view was echoed by Sheik Amir Ssekimpi who observed that there cannot be talk about morality without religious belief.¹⁸⁷ Moral Education therefore was viewed as a subject that would promote secular moral values that do not derive their authenticity from belief in God.

A memorandum written by Christian and Muslim religious leaders to the Minister of Education (concerning the threat of excluding RE from the primary school curriculum and its replacement with Moral Education), referred to the religious foundation status of the schools and stressed the uniqueness and sacred nature of Christianity and Islam upon which any study of morality in schools should be based. Point number 1.3 of the memorandum reads:

The teaching of morality must be based on belief in God/Allah as revealed in the Holy Scriptures such as the Bible and Koran.¹⁸⁸

Similarly point 1.4 attempts to justify CRE and IRE syllabuses as adequate vehicles of promoting moral values essential for good citizenship:

The current CRE/IRE syllabus is just beginning to be used effectively and it is very well integrated with all the moral issues which the government is advocating for: these values include justice, civil rights solidarity, sharing, tolerance, respect for the beliefs of others, population and other issues. Therefore there is no need for replacing it with a new syllabus.¹⁸⁹

On the other hand, the representatives of the Bahai faith in Uganda are the only religious leaders who supported the idea of introducing Moral Education in Uganda primary and secondary schools.¹⁹⁰ It was interesting to note that their responses reflected an inter-linkage between the teachings of the Bahai faith, the debates surrounding the introduction of Moral Education and foreign aid

¹⁸⁵ Interview held on 4/07/2000 at the Arch-diocesan offices in Mbarara

¹⁸⁶ Interview held on 19/10/2001 at his offices in Kampala

¹⁸⁷ Interview held on 17/10/2001 with the leader of the Tabligh Muslim religious group at his office in Kampala

¹⁸⁸ The memorandum is of 14/10/1999 and was submitted by a delegation of Christian and Muslim religious leaders through the UJCC and the UMEA

¹⁸⁹ Citizenship is a reference to the capacity of the syllabuses to promote social responsibilities among students essential for nation building. The reference to a new syllabus is surprising at this point since the revised syllabus was not yet launched and it might be a reference to the draft of the revised syllabus which could have been experimented upon prior to its official launching much later in 2002.

from USA to support curriculum review related to the new subject. Masaldo and Kasule informed me that the Bahai community in Uganda fully supported the idea of introducing Moral Education in primary schools since it emphasises morality and not religion which is more often a source of differences among people. One of them said, that 'the Bahai teach that all religions are one and come from God.' They referred to Christians and Muslims as not being progressive in their opposition of Moral Education.¹⁹¹ The teaching of Bahai therefore reflects a teaching of moral values that is not necessarily restricted to any particular religious or even non-religious tradition. It infers an 'inclusive belief system' compared to Christianity and Islam and this is the reason why the Bahai supported Moral Education.

When I asked the two officials if it was true that the Bahai community in Uganda with the support of foreign donors had been behind the plans to introduce Moral Education as a subject in Uganda, they were non committal but informed me that the Bahai in Uganda supported the idea and that the Bahai especially in America are always ready to contribute to any project that promotes Bahai principles. One of them observed that, 'money from Bahai must do Bahai things, a non-Bahai can't contribute to a cause of Bahai.' This response, although inconclusive in determining if donor funds were solicited by the Bahai for the purpose of funding curriculum in Uganda that promoted Moral Education, enables us to appreciate the possible influence of donor funds referred to by several interviewees.¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ Interview held with Masaldo and Kasule officials of the Bahai faith on 18/01/2001 at Bahai Temple in Kampala. The two officials informed me that it was a Bahai tradition for two or more members to represent the views of the faith community and not one thus the joint interview.

¹⁹¹ This remark seemed to allude to the Christian and Muslims' effort to support the two religious traditions for inclusion on the curriculum at the expense of any others such as the Bahai and in any case theologically they would benefit most from curriculum review that provided for Moral Education.

¹⁹² In my interview with Sr.Kengyero Roman Catholic Provincial Education Advisor on 20/09/2001 she referred to the Bahai as having powerful influence when I asked the question concerning the possible origins of Moral Education. Jenny Ottewell then Assistant Provincial Education Secretary Church of Uganda whom I interviewed on 21/09/2001 referred to a possibility of pressure from donors in determining RE's future on the curriculum while Sheik Katuramu and Mrs. Kakongoro lecturers at Kyambogo University interviewed on 5/10/2001 and 5/08/2002 respectively cited possible influence of donors in suggesting Moral Education as a new subject on the curriculum, a practice which is not uncommon in defining the use of donor funds.

6.4.2 Public Support of Religious Moral Values

The Factual Joint Statement written by representatives of the religious community in Uganda, including parents, teachers and pupils of 20th December 1999 also stressed religious moral values as the basis of good moral values. The statement specifies that, 'All morals must be based on belief in God. In effect, the Christian and Muslim religious leaders plus the religious communities' interpretation of morality is restricted to their respective religious traditions. This might complicate the realisation of 'good citizenship' since those outside the circle of religious faith may be despised while as Otyek observed some of those people might possess good moral values while some religious people may not.¹⁹³ This seems to be the basis of concern for government that seems to consider a failure to provide for a subject that promotes respect and tolerance of other people's religious or non-religious views a short-coming in the realisation of national unity. The presentation of Christian and Islamic religious moral values as the ideal in multi-religious schools cannot easily promote the objective of promoting respect and tolerance of other people's beliefs as argued in the religious leaders memorandum (point 1.4) since it implies that non-Christians in a Christian founded school will only be exposed to Christian moral values and that all students would not have the opportunity of considering other religious or non-religious moral value systems as possible sources of good moral values in society.

6.4.3. Head-teachers' Support of Religious Moral Values

Along similar lines, the secondary Head-teachers views suggest that religion is the ideal medium of learning about moral values.¹⁹⁴ However one of the five interviewed pointed out an inter-relationship between religious moral values and the African culture. The Head-teacher of Mbarara College, Bahirirwe said, 'Moral Education needs to be part of RE and not to replace RE.' He further

¹⁹³ The *Monitor* newspaper of 19/02/2001 carried an article that quoted the Transparency International 2001 report as ranking Uganda third among the most corrupt countries in the world that it had surveyed. Following that article, several letters in the press and statements by some religious and government personalities sarcastically referred to how a country that prides in 'strong religious faith' of its citizens (most of the corrupt who are in positions of authority can be considered to be graduates of the religiously founded but public education institutions) could be a glaring example of unethical behaviour.

observed that, 'individual freedom ought to be based on cultural patterns or collective responsibility.'¹⁹⁵ While he acknowledges RE as the ideal medium of learning about moral values, he seems to conceive of this activity as a promotion of particular moral values thus defining morality in terms of a community oriented ideal instead of a pursuit of personal ideals.¹⁹⁶

In a multi-religious context, it may not be easy or possible to agree on particular moral values that the different religious traditions can subscribe to. In addition, the point of view raised by Bahirirwe has limitations since it refers to 'individual freedom' which normally acknowledges the autonomy of the individual, however, which he reflects in subservience to the 'community directed moral value system.' Nonetheless, it is important to note that individual freedom or personal autonomy, which is not often highlighted by the African cultural value system is an important aspect of Christianity and Islam as reflected in their theologies.¹⁹⁷ It is worth noting that while the Head-teachers of Ntare School, Mbarara High School and Mary Hill High School argued that the teaching of moral values should be based on religious beliefs, the last two Head-teachers went further to suggest that RE with its concern to address moral issues should not be examinable since there was more emphasis in schools on passing the RE exam than in stressing its spiritual benefits.

6.4.4. Lecturers Support of Religious Moral Values

Eight out of eleven lecturers of universities and colleges that I interviewed expressed their opposition to government plans to exclude RE from the curriculum and replace it with Moral Education. While referring to Moral Education as a subject, Sheik Waiswa observed that, 'its main defect was secular. In the secular world there is no yardstick for morality. It was fought and the intention was may be unification of people'.¹⁹⁸ Waiswa's response echoes Archbishop Bakyenga's understanding of morality and the Christian and Muslim

¹⁹⁴ The questionnaire responses of teachers revealed similar arguments as those of the Head-teachers.

¹⁹⁵ Interview held with Bahirirwe 10/07/2001 at Mbarara College, a private founded school.

¹⁹⁶ This refers to a commonly accepted African view that good moral behaviour is what society approves of and this is often in line with cultural norms of a given society.

¹⁹⁷ The concept of personal salvation in the Christian religious tradition and that of submission to Allah by a Muslim reflect individual piety which nonetheless is expected to be shared with believers.

¹⁹⁸ Interview held on 15/10/2001

religious leaders expression of morality as being based on either the Christian or Islamic religious traditions. The reference to the secular world not having a yardstick for morality denotes the outlook on moral values as deriving their significance or validity from personal preference (Mark Halstead: 1996), one of the options of interpreting moral values. Waiswa therefore fails to acknowledge the possibility of personal preference being in consonance with society's values.

Waiswa's equating of Moral Education to the promotion of secular moral values seems to be based on an assumption that it is a 'foreign subject' and that it probably signals the emergency of a permissive society. The outlook on Moral Education as a foreign subject is shared by Kaija¹⁹⁹ and Rukundo²⁰⁰ who associate its introduction to influence from America; Katuramu²⁰¹ who refers to influence from the 'west', a term denoting the first world countries and in particular European nations. Sheik Sengendo²⁰² on the other hand observed that, 'Moral Education has its roots in communistic tendencies amongst some politicians.' The speculative debate on the possible origins of Moral Education by the lecturers interviewed serves to illustrate the unclear circumstances under which Moral Education was about to be introduced in Uganda, sarcastically summed by Ruyendo who observed that, 'it would be immoral to introduce Moral Education.' This was a reference to the lack of meaningful or adequate consultations in the proposed introduction of such a subject. It is surprising that none of the lecturers seemed to cite the internal developments in Uganda concerning the recommendations of Moral Education as a subject on the Uganda curriculum made in the 1992 Education White Paper much earlier than the Moral Education debates ignited by the Monitor newspaper article in 1999.

6.5. Reflection on the Scholarly Debate on Moral Education

Moral Education as a subject traces its origins from religiously plural and secular societies and is mainly linked to USA although there are ongoing debates concerning its possible introduction as an independent subject in UK

¹⁹⁹ Interview held on 7/11/2001 at Kyambogo University.

²⁰⁰ Interview held on 29/10/2001 at National Teachers College, Kakoba, Mbarara.

²⁰¹ Interview held on 5/11/2001 at Kyambogo University.

(Wilson, John: 1990). Moral Education is a subject that is essentially concerned with addressing values issues in education.

While there is no widespread agreement on the definition of the term 'values', the bottom line in its interpretation seems to be between an outlook on the possibility of having shared values (Warnock, M. 1996) and that of values as a promotion of personal preferences (Mark Halstead: 1996). Values issues can therefore be explored in other subjects like Ethics, Personal and Social Education as in the case of UK (Edwards, J. 1996) and even Citizenship Education as in the case of UK (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority: 1998). According to Hersh *et al* in the USA, Moral Education has spanned three centuries and has been closely associated with democracy as understood and practiced in a secular and multi-religious society. The concept of democracy is explained thus:

Democracy places heavy demands on the moral capacities of individuals. It confronts each person with the need to choose among competing values and life styles. It expects of people to treat one another with decency without the pressure of external authority or fixed custom (Hersh *et al*: 1980: 13).

The inter-linkage between democracy and Moral Education above serves to highlight the 'respect and autonomy' that is accorded to an individual irrespective of religious, cultural or racial background. It acknowledges the controversial nature of moral values and seeks to safeguard the individual student from external authority (which can refer to religious authority and other 'authorities') and fixed custom (which can refer to cultural or other groups expectations of the individual).

The uniqueness of Moral Education and its concern for autonomy is echoed in a statement by the Schools Council Moral Education Project in their effort to justify Moral Education as an independent subject for consideration in the United Kingdom since it had an edge over RE:

A field of study in its own right with its own concepts, skills and techniques, and is concerned with encouraging a considerate style of

²⁰² Interview held on 15/10/2001 at Islamic University in Uganda, Kampala Campus.

life amongst all pupils irrespective of their creed or religion (McPhail *et al.* 1972: 20).

The rationale behind Moral Education is presented by McPhail as promoting of good moral values among pupils without necessarily raising questions of religion. It is from this perspective that Moral Education and other values education subjects such as Citizenship Education in the UK are meant to address moral and ethical issues without recourse to religious beliefs. Similarly, Citizenship Education through the Social Action Model of Moral Education is reflected by Hersh *et al.* (1980: 2) in their definition of the six models of Moral Education generally acknowledged as being in use in USA public schools.²⁰³ Hersh *et al.* argue that the six models are complementary to each other and that they are only representative of all the possible models of Moral Education.

The Social Action model of Moral Education stresses the importance of citizen involvement in social change. The major proponent of this model Fred Newmann, according to Hersh *et al.* (1980) argues for an inter-relationship between moral responsibility and good citizenship. This is explained by Hersh *et al.* (1980:163) while referring to some value laden issues like injustice regarding the environment, civil rights and economic exploitation students engage with. They observe that students need to actively participate in making a difference towards addressing such social ills in society. In other words, mere theoretical reflection on moral issues is inadequate if it is not accompanied by social action. This model of Moral Education echoes the key intentions of Citizenship education and the teaching of Democracy in UK schools, a new course on the school curriculum (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority: 1998). Most important it reflects not only the neutral status of Moral Education (since it doesn't raise questions of religious differences in responding to moral questions) but also its inter-disciplinary nature which allows for exploration of political, environmental and human rights issues.

²⁰³ The other models cited are Values Analysis Model, Consideration Model, Rationale Building Model, Values Clarification and Cognitive Development Model.

6.6. Prospects of Moral Education in the Ugandan Curriculum

The rationale behind Moral Education as a subject suitable for a religiously plural and democratic society seems to have been preferred by the NRM government since it reflected their political philosophy of promoting secular moral values.

The principles underlying the subject (refer to foregoing discussion) point to its application of concepts, skills and techniques to explore questions of moral and ethical importance without taking into account religious differences of students. This makes Moral Education a plausible option to the confessional RE which, although having a potential of promoting good moral values and thereby promoting responsible citizenship (the major concern of government), does not acknowledge diversity in interpretation of moral values in society.

The inter-linkage between democracy and Moral Education (Hersh *et al*, 1980: 13), especially its acknowledgment of the autonomy of individuals in exploring moral questions, largely gives a response to the controversial nature of moral values. It suggests that in the multi-religious Ugandan schools each individual would appropriately respond to a Moral Education curriculum whose prime concern would be to enable students to acquire skills of making moral judgments irrespective of religious backgrounds.

Although the Ugandan society has a religiously sensitive society and probably a more widely agreed stand point on the role of RE in promoting religious moral values, the new out-look on moral issues as reflected by the proponents of the secular morality of NRM makes it imperative to critique the privileged position of CRE and IRE in being the only vehicles through which moral values can be studied in the multi-religious schools. It is therefore worth considering Moral Education in view of its neutral and thereby inclusive character echoed in the words of (Wilson *et al*, 1969:11) while summing up the rationale behind Moral Education thus, 'though arising out of a liberal and pluralistic British society, it can apply to any society that is dynamic'.

Moral Education with its neutral character can acknowledge that there can be morality within and outside religious beliefs and as a result can appeal to both the religious and non-religious alike, notwithstanding its criticism from some religious people who may not accept morality outside religion. The main argument of morality within and not outside religious beliefs fails to acknowledge the *Christian Living Today* syllabus's treatment of the African traditional religious experience as an important resource for RE. The syllabus defines the African cultural heritage thus:

By reaffirming our traditional humanist ideals, we hope that our African culture can provide meaning, continuity, identity in our lives, as it has done in the lives of our ancestors (Pastoral Institute of Eastern Africa, 1975a: 3).

This statement formulated by the religious leaders is an acknowledgment of African moral values as a resource for RE and this implies that apart from religious moral values, traditional African moral values that promote humanist ideals can be promoted in society. Along the same lines, the secular out-look on moral values reflected in the remarks of the Assistant Commissioner for Education who argued that 'there is morality outside religion' can be accommodated in a Moral Education curriculum that could allow for the exploration of religious, African traditional and secular perspectives of interpreting moral issues.

The capacity to engage with controversial issues is another advantage that Moral Education can have in contrast to RE which in Uganda is confessional in nature and therefore not fully pre-disposed to allowing for open discussion on moral and ethical issues. An illustration of this can be made with specific reference to the most recent national debate concerning homosexuality, the most widely discussed issue according to the *New Vision* newspaper.²⁰⁴ The

²⁰⁴ *The New Vision Online* discussion board was created on 14/03/2003 following Silyvia Tamale's remarks (a Makerere University lecturer) in support of homosexuals' rights. It indicates homosexuality as leading in all topics of discussion such as Museveni's seeking of a third term in office, a very explosive political issue. Prior to Tamale remarks and the release of information on Bishop Senyonjo, there had been some coverage of isolated incidents on suspected homosexual practices among some sections of the Ugandan community specifically the urban population and boarding schools. In July 1999, alongside other staff members, I handled a case at Ntare School whereby some students had taken the law in their hands and roughed up students whom they alleged to be homosexuals. Although proof of the allegations was not easy to establish and since our major concern at the time was the safety of the victims of mob justice plus the punishment of the culprits (who had broken school rules of inflicting physical harm to their

background to this debate is information that appeared in a *New Vision* article of 30th April 2001. In this article the Archbishop of the COU revealed that investigations were under way to establish the truth about a retired COU bishop who was in contact with an American gay rights group to sponsor the promotion of homosexual practices through 'preaching positively about homosexuality and providing counseling to gay people in the church.' The investigations culminated in ostracizing of Bishop Senyonjo of the COU, a matter reported in a *New Vision* article of 5th May 2001. Despite Bishop Senyonjo's plea to provide pastoral guidance and counseling to homosexuals, he has since then been ex-communicated from the COU.

The numerous articles by different individuals published in the press and most importantly the recent ones following Tamale's advocacy of gay rights for homosexuals in Uganda is an indication of the controversial and emotionally charged nature of the subject.²⁰⁵ Noteworthy it suggests that the debate about homosexuality is of primary interest and relevance not only to the public but curriculum planners. The general pattern that emerges in these discussions is the question raised with respect to different 'world views' of the discussants. This includes reference to the 'African' moral and ethical out-look on homosexuality, the Roman Catholic, the Church of Uganda and Islamic religious official views on homosexuality, Uganda government law (which forbids the practice) and questions of human rights concerning homosexuality.

The pertinent question is, since homosexuality is becoming a significant moral and ethical issue for Ugandan society, in what part of the curriculum would students explore it?²⁰⁶ Can the confessional CRE and IRE provide for students to reflect on such controversial moral and ethical issues? If they provide for this topic, isn't their standpoint likely to be heavily skewed to the official position of the religious communities (the designers of the RE syllabus)? Would this provide for an exhaustive exploration of the subject? If CRE and IRE do not

colleagues), the incident served as an eye opener to the existence of the problem in the world view of the students.

²⁰⁵ The majority of articles on the *New Vision* online discussion board are written using derogatory and non-compromising language.

²⁰⁶ The debate on homosexuality in the Anglican Church (and the Roman Catholic Church that has addressed the issue for some time) is currently taking on great significance as reflected in Kevin Ward's

address the subject, as is the case today, is it not a disservice to the students who continue to encounter questions of homosexuality through the media and probably other public discussions. The limitations of RE and the potential of Moral Education to explore the African traditional, the different religious views, the secular and/or scientific view about homosexuality is therefore evident. One of the key advantages of Moral Education in this respect is that it can employ an interdisciplinary approach to the study of moral issues in Uganda compared to RE which is confessional in nature and thereby may not easily provide for different perspectives. It is important to note that while some sections of the Uganda population are strongly opposed to Moral Education in view of its anticipated emphasis on secular moral values, controversial moral issues have often been part of the whole curriculum through subjects like Biology, Health Education or even Geography.²⁰⁷

6.7 Limitations of Moral Education as a Subject in the Ugandan Curriculum

The interviews held with religious leaders, lecturers, Head-teachers and questionnaire responses of CRE teachers reflect the different perceptions of what Moral Education is or should look like. In other words, there is no uniform understanding of what such a subject should constitute or what its aims should be. This could partly be the reason why it was rejected.

The complexity of defining Moral Education involves the key question of whether it is proper to promote particular values in an educational environment and what kind of values they should be (Warnock, M. 1996: 13-16). In addition, there is the question of whether such an act of promoting particular moral values is educational or reflects the potential for any values education subject to be used in indoctrinating students in particular values. The standpoint of looking at moral values as a 'pre-designed code of conduct' reflected by the majority of views given by the Ugandan public would seem to complicate the

article on 'same-sex relations in Africa and the debate on homosexuality in East African Anglicanism' in the *Anglican Theological Review*, Vol. 84: 1, pg. 81-112.

²⁰⁷ The geography text-books in use for example discuss issues such as population explosion and the attempts to control world population through methods like family planning control techniques such as

question of what type of Moral Education one would design for Uganda. The community oriented perspective of looking at moral values, which seems to be derived from the African traditional concept of morality and ethics (Mbiti, J. 1991) does not seem to easily fit in with a commonly held conception of Moral Education as discussed in the foregoing discussion.

Moral Education as a subject is overtly concerned with the promotion of the autonomy and integrity of the individual. This point of view largely seems to go against the value system that interprets moral action of an individual in light of the community needs or aspirations. In other words, among societies where the community is considered the authentic source of defining good moral conduct, Moral Education may not necessarily be viewed as neutral since it uplifts the individual above the community. In this respect, it could be a source of re-defining the moral outlook of 'African society' which would be contentious. Benjamin Ray (2000) reflects the clash between the educated African and their social and moral pressures by drawing on some examples of individuals who were faced with dilemmas of allegiance to the clan or personal ideals.

The clan is presented as the ideal term of reference in any decision concerning the individual's moral or social decision thus Mbiti's popular maxim about African philosophical understanding of the individual *vis-à-vis* the community, 'I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am' (Mbiti, 1967). This point of view reflects one of Mary Warnock (1996) who criticizes the problem of relativism in the modern world and argues for 'commonly shared values' to be promoted in a school system. While her context is the school, it enables us to appreciate the possibility of agreement on some society values that can be promoted in a given society, notwithstanding the controversial nature of values in society. Nevertheless for curriculum purposes, introducing such values in Moral Education would be an uphill task since, even within the African traditional understanding of morality, there are differences in interpretation of morality based on tribal, clan or ethnic groups. The multi-religious schools that comprise students from different cultural groups therefore cannot provide for a communal oriented curriculum that addresses uniform moral values and in any

taking pills, abortion and other potentially controversial morally laden methods that are often criticised by religious leaders.

case, the dynamic society in which we live renders some of the traditionally accepted moral values unacceptable and in some cases even illegal.²⁰⁸

Perhaps the most challenging aspect about the prospects of introducing Moral Education in Uganda is the direct relationship it has with the threat to the exclusion of RE from the curriculum. This is the unfortunate linkage that the Ugandan public have attached to it and the NRM government's support of it (while at the same time denying it) at the expense of Religious Education, notwithstanding its merits as discussed in the foregoing discussion, is more of a disservice than an advantage. It is a very difficult 'product' to sell now although as we have reflected in the foregoing discussion efforts can be made to introduce it or another values education subject with a new name. Nonetheless, RE with its limitations remains one of the most advantaged subjects, although this is going to be subject to its opening up and addressing of the multi-religious context of the schools. While justifying the continued existence of a multi-faith RE on the school curriculum in UK, Hull (1975) echoes the point of attaching value to peoples religious beliefs thus, 'religion is too important a part of the history, culture and current experience of mankind to be left to believers alone'.

The foregoing argument reflects the importance of RE on the school curriculum and suggests that its substitution with Moral Education or another subject concerned with exploring values issues denies students, irrespective of religious or non-religious backgrounds in a country like Uganda, a chance to explore the rich religious heritage of Christianity and Islam plus an appreciation of the impact that religion has on people's morals. In short, despite the need and/or the urgency of introducing a neutral subject that engages with a wide scope of values issues, it need not affect the continued importance of RE as a subject on the curriculum. As McPhail *et al* (1972) observe on the inter-relationship between Moral Education and Religious Education, the two subjects are not identical and should not be in competition.

²⁰⁸ Some cultural values like wife beating are now no longer acceptable since the laws of the country forbid their practice.

6.8. A Multi-Religious and 'Multi-Value RE'

The realities of the controversial nature of religious moral values not only between different religious traditions but within one religious tradition, as reflected in the foregoing discussion, points to the need for a consideration of a multi-faith RE that acknowledges the controversial nature of religious moral values. On the other hand, the exploration of shared moral values between different religious traditions can be an essential part of promoting unity in diversity in the religiously founded public schools.

A multi-faith RE that can take into account the controversial nature of religious moral values is one that can promote respect and tolerance of other peoples' moral values as the basis of a harmonious society. In Uganda's context this implies that CRE and IRE would be concerned with exploring each other's religious moral system and in the process acknowledging the differences that exist in interpretation of moral issues. CRE and IRE aims in primary schools for example refer to the exploration of each other's religious tradition, and moral values can be a key component of a multi-faith RE. The exploration of differences in the interpretation of morality even within one religious tradition is of paramount importance since the failure to acknowledge and respect such differences has often been a source of unnecessary conflict among members of the same religious tradition. The Church of Uganda for example includes different revivalist religious groups. These are the Revival brethren (*Balokole*), Re-awakened group (*Bazukufu*) and the Anglican Renewal Christians (Pentecostal in nature and mainly associated to some University and College graduates). While the Revival brethren may consider it morally right to borrow money or take a bank loan, the Re-awakened brethren do not. In addition, while the Revival brethren may not take a loan without first sharing information with the fellowship, the Pentecostal Christian may not have to. This example within one religious tradition serves to illustrate the ethical issues raised in the three different religious groups.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁹ It is commonly known in Uganda that members of the three religious groups often look down upon each others moral and ethical values and all subscribe to the group of Christians that consider themselves born again. The case is similar to the Roman Catholics in Uganda who have the pioneer movement, Legion of Mary, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and other groups with different interpretation of moral and other religious issues.

A multi-faith RE that concerns itself with multi-religious and multi-value issues can have as its goal the promotion of shared moral values between the different religious traditions which can be part of contributing towards religious and national unity. David Chidester (2003) refers to Namibia and South Africa whose multi-faith RE model is linked with Moral Education as part of a search for common values essential for national and global citizenship.²¹⁰ The foundation of this model of RE seems to be that religious people cannot satisfactorily define themselves in terms of 'their own' religious tradition but also in terms of their multi-tiered membership to the society in which they live, which may include local, national or global status. It seems to reflect the 'intrinsically shared nature of human values.' It is for this reason that Chidester (2003) makes reference to a South African policy in the making on the role of religion in public schools that is expected to draw its potency 'from core constitutional values of citizenship, human rights, freedom from discrimination, and freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion,' (Chidester, 2003: 39).²¹¹

While the above mentioned values are expected to be upheld in South Africa, they are not any different from those reflected in the constitution of Uganda or any other country in the world. It therefore reflects the importance of the interrelationship between the countries constitution and policy concerning the teaching of religion in schools. This is the same point of view that the government of Uganda has seemed to have in resisting RE and supporting subjects like Moral Education. Most important these constitutional values are reflected as the basis of appreciating 'the intrinsically shared nature of values' and the justification not only of global citizenship but the contribution of a multi-faith RE to this cause.

²¹⁰ This is a concept that has been embraced in curriculum of countries like United Kingdom which stresses the 'limitless' definition of an individual in the modern world of communication or travel who cannot adequately be restricted to national citizenship status, duties or responsibilities.

²¹¹ The proposed new policy is a product of consulting Workshop on Religion in Education held in May 2000 that reflected on religious diversity and the role of the citizen in nation building

6.9. Conclusion

The foregoing discussion has shown that the threat of exclusion of RE from the primary and secondary school curriculum was, and continues to be, a real one. The government systematic plans to introduce Moral Education can be appreciated in view of the failure of CRE and IRE to re-invent themselves and address the multi-religious nature of schools in which they are taught. While the 'widely supported view' in Uganda of 'there being no good moral values outside religious beliefs' is queried for its limitations especially in a multi-religious and multi-value Ugandan society, Moral Education has been presented as a neutral subject through which students can explore moral and ethical issues that may not be adequately or comfortably handled under a confessional RE.

Moral Education or another subject named differently to explore values issues has been proposed. Alongside this possible new subject, and mindful of the challenges that may be met in introducing it, a multi-faith RE that gives prominence to multi-religious and multi-value issues has been supported especially in view of the central importance of religion in the majority of peoples lives and the potential it has for promoting national unity, a key issue that is explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RECENT SIGNS OF RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION AND INTOLERANCE IN UGANDA: JUSTIFICATION OF 'A MULTI-FAITH RE CURRICULUM'

This chapter will explore the view that in the light of the overwhelming preference of CRE and IRE over Moral Education by the religiously sensitive Ugandan society, RE should be maintained as a key subject on the primary and secondary school curricula. In this chapter I will argue that following the recent complaints about religious discrimination and intolerance in Uganda and the limitations of implementing a single faith RE in the multi-religious schools, a multi-faith RE is the most suitable option.²¹² Drawing on the rather similar British experience of attempting to address the multi-religious nature of community schools, this chapter will highlight what I consider to be the major themes in the gradual development of a multi-faith RE climate in Religious Education in England and Wales and the possible lessons for Uganda. Using questionnaire responses of lecturers, teachers and students (key stakeholders of any curriculum review), this chapter will reflect upon the 'voices' supporting a multi-faith RE that are, apparently, largely in line with what I consider to be the key aims of a multi-faith RE. The complications raised by other 'voices' opposed to a multi-faith RE, prominently among religious leaders, will be argued to be a major challenge to the implementation of a multi-faith RE.

7. Complaints about Religious Discrimination in the Restructuring of Primary Teachers' Colleges

The conflict that recently arose between the Roman Catholic Church and the Ugandan government concerning the closure of Roman Catholic founded Colleges during the restructuring of Primary Teachers Colleges in Uganda

²¹² The recurrence of the social ills of religious discrimination and intolerance in society greatly reflects on the educational system since a confessional RE is taught for the seven years of primary school and the first two years of secondary school. Since the old girls and boys of these schools provide the backbone of the public and civil service, the persistence of the mentioned social ills suggest that a syllabus review needs to address this aspect.

echoes the historical religious conflicts. It is an indicator that the issue of religious discrimination in society is rife and needs to be addressed, among others, by RE curriculum reviewers.²¹³

Following the recommendations of the 1992 Education White Paper on Primary Teachers Colleges' curriculum review, resource utilization and geographical location (Uganda Government, 1992:142-146), the restructuring process saw the withdrawal of government support from some colleges and the selection of some for financial support. The implementation of the recommendations was contested by the Roman Catholic Church citing unfair handling of the issue by the government believed to have favoured the Church of Uganda religiously founded Colleges and against the Roman Catholic ones.²¹⁴ According to *The New Vision* article of 29th July, 1999, Cardinal Emmanuel Wamala, the leader of the Roman Catholic Church led a delegation to meet President Museveni over the government's withdrawal of support from Roman Catholic founded Primary Teachers Colleges. The Ministry of Education had withdrawn support from at least 14 Roman Catholic founded PTC's, retaining only seven, while twenty two Church of Uganda colleges were to be supported. The meeting with the President and subsequent lobbying on the matter by different sections of the Roman Catholic Church was to culminate in the setting up of a Parliamentary Commission to investigate the matter and make recommendations for action.

The Parliamentary Committee on Social Services using its research department investigated and compiled a report dated 8th February, 2000 entitled 'Restructuring of National Teachers Colleges and Teacher Training Colleges

²¹³ *The Monitor Newspaper* of 2/8/2002 quoted Hon. Johny Bulamu a member of Parliament who was appearing before the Committee for Social Services as having complained that the 'Ministry of Education does not consult with Protestant Bodies before posting Head-teachers to Anglican founded schools. And yet it does consult with Catholic and Muslim bodies. There is now open discrimination because the policy makers are mainly Muslims and Catholics.' Yet another contentious issue in the recent past has been the complaints made against President Y.K. Museveni for discriminating against Roman Catholics in making political appointments. The Monitor newspaper of 23/7/2001 published an article entitled 'Catholics unhappy with cabinet appointments' and the Monitor of 1/10/2001 published another article quoting Hon. W. Byanyima Member of Parliament for Mbarara Municipality (where all the five schools where I did my research are based) as saying that Museveni was ignoring Catholics and Muslims in his political plans.

²¹⁴ The major discontent seems to have been specifically targeted at the Minister of Education Hon. Kiddu Makubuya (a member of the Church of Uganda) directly in charge of the restructuring programme and probably in general to the NRM government led by President Y.K. Museveni, a member of the Church of Uganda.

(also known as PTCs)' which revealed the criteria on which PTC restructuring was based.²¹⁵

1. Cost effectiveness for maximum utilization of resources;
2. Parity of treatment which seeks to grant a PTC per district;
3. Promotion of relative equity in the share of government supported PTCs among major religious denominations.

The Parliamentary committee did not report religious influence as a factor in the restructuring of PTCs. In addition the Minister of Education Makubuya had earlier on been quoted by *The Monitor Newspaper* of 18th October, 1999 as having said that the 'closure of PTC' s wasn't done on sectarian grounds'. Surprisingly, in an updated Parliamentary report of the investigation committee of 18th April, 2000, citing the Ministry of Education revision of the restructuring process of PTC' s in Uganda, it is specified that six Roman Catholic PTCs had been re-opened.²¹⁶ Important to note is that the updated report quoted the Ministry of Education as having encountered a problem of 'public mistrust' of the intentions of government in closing some colleges.

The questions that arise are, if the system of restructuring PTC' s had not been affected by unfairness in the decision making process, how is it that six Roman Catholic colleges were re-opened following pressure from the Roman Catholic Church? What could have gone wrong in the failure to follow closely the third term of reference for the restructuring exercise which was specific about the need to take into account relative equity concerning the religious factor in the closing of religiously founded colleges? How is it that the Parliamentary investigation committee failed to identify unfairness on the part of the Ministry of Education and yet later on the Ministry of Education had to rescind its decision? There is no doubt that irrespective of the technical issues underlying the problem of PTCs restructuring, the problem of religious discrimination, real or imagined, expresses itself in society. A multi-faith RE curriculum for Uganda can, among other things, enable students to engage in discussions on such social ills and to develop skills of respect and tolerance as a counter measure

²¹⁵ Source: Report on Restructuring of NTCs and PTCs of 8/02/2000

²¹⁶ Source: Updated Report on restructuring of PTC' s in Uganda of 18/04/2000

(see chapter 1). One of the key resource materials for this study, alongside religious material, would be the Uganda constitution which addresses this subject and also has implications for students' interpersonal relationships.

7.1. Signs of Religious Intolerance in Ugandan Society

One of the most glaring examples of religious intolerance or, one could argue, resultant effects of religious discrimination against Muslims in Uganda, is in the emergence of a militant wing to 'resolve' issues of 'religious mistreatment' by members of the Christian religious tradition.²¹⁷ The formation of the Uganda Islamic Revolutionary Party in 1993 to seek political power following the rise of Islamic fundamentalism was to be followed by the formation of the Allied Democratic Forces, an Islamic led and dominated rebel group that sought to use force to establish an Islamic state in Uganda.²¹⁸

In a Ugandan Television documentary telecast on the 1/10/2001, a number of former ADF rebels were paraded on the national television and interviewed.²¹⁹ The interview was meant to publicize to the nation the ill intentions of the rebels and their 'confessions' to the crimes of urban terrorism which had led to the death of 67 people and the injury of 200.²²⁰ The most important revelation concerning the religious factor is the reference to the desire to fight for the cause of Islam in Uganda, expressed by several of the rebels. One of them, Muhammed Katamba said, 'they told us that we were going to fight for Islam. To defense our Islam', (a reference to their leaders).

²¹⁷ Kayunga in Mamdani (1994) attributes the rise to Islamic fundamentalism to historically disadvantaged position of Muslims right from colonial times through successive Christian led governments.

²¹⁸ The Allied Democratic Forces was formed in 1996 and it waged a war on the democratically elected government of President Y.K. Museveni until very recently when it seems the ADF is a spent force. Interestingly, *The New Vision* and *Monitor* newspapers' of 18/04/2003 quoted a British newspaper, the *Daily Telegraph* citing documents that had been seized in Baghdad providing hard evidence of the link between ADF and Iraq and therefore a reflection of a link between religious fundamentalism and terrorism.

²¹⁹ The captives included Muhamed Kigundu, Twahiru Zubali, Rashid Kawawa, Yusuf Nyanzi and Muhamed Katamba.

²²⁰ The motivation of the captured rebels to confess to their crimes seems to have been ignited by an expectation of lenience on the part of the government since they mainly expressed how they had been misguided by their leaders.

The armed conflict is an extreme expression of religious intolerance on the part of some Muslims whose desire is to establish an Islamic state in a majority Christian populated country. However it points to the extent that some people can go to redress religious discrimination and the need to forestall such actions through sensitive educational or other policies by successive Uganda governments. It is possible that such negative religious attitudes on part of some Muslims could be arising out of IRE lessons like the one I observed (whereby Muslim students could be led to view their problems as having been caused by Christians) and these can be overcome by a multi-faith RE whose concern would be sensitivity while exploring questions concerning religions.²²¹

7.1.1 Signs of Religious Intolerance in Ugandan Schools

The religious tensions in schools that are often brought to public attention reflect the religious intolerance between members of different religions in schools. In many cases, they remain implicit as in the case of Ntare school.²²²

The three interviews that I carried out with student religious leaders of the Roman Catholic and Church of Uganda churches' and the Islamic religion at Ntare School might serve as a microcosm of the tension that exists between members of the different religions in the different multi-religious schools in Uganda.²²³ In an interview with Innocent Kazooba, the Roman Catholic student leader, he informed me that most Roman Catholic students kept a low profile and did not want to identify with their faith due to the man-to-man evangelistic campaigns of Protestant students.²²⁴ He observed that some of these

²²¹ The communiqué of the Islam in Africa organization that held its meeting in 1989 in Abuja, Nigeria and to which Uganda is a member state addressed issues concerning the need for review of syllabi in Muslim founded schools so that it 'conforms with Islamic goals and principles' and further called for 'eradication in all its forms and ramifications all non-Muslim religions in member nations'. These are the possible influences on the IRE curriculum in Uganda that need to be addressed by an RE curriculum that promotes respect for religious beliefs of other people.

²²² George W. Ehuri (2000) in a Diploma in Theology dissertation submitted to Makerere University discusses the provisions made for Anglican students in non-Anglican schools. Using the Roman Catholic founded Namugongo S.S.S, he reveals how, among other things, the Anglican students argue that their religious practices are not tolerated in the Roman Catholic founded but public education institution.

²²³ While Ntare School is one of the few government founded schools, the majority of schools in Uganda are religiously founded and as an assumption are likely to reflect more cases of religious intolerance than Ntare School.

²²⁴ Interview held with the Chairman of the Young Christian Students Association, Innocent Kazooba held on 1/11/2001. The YCS is the most significant association concerned with the promotion of Roman

'evangelistic campaigns' were bent on demeaning the Roman Catholic Church through criticizing the use of rosaries in prayers and what is referred to as the cult of 'worshipping the virgin Mary'.²²⁵ Kazooba further observed that although the school had a policy of freedom of worship, the students did not uphold this ideal. He cited the open ridiculing of Muslims especially after the massacres of thousands of people in America at the world trade centre.²²⁶ He said, 'it is worse for them. There is persecution from fellow students', (a reference to Christian students). In other words, the Muslims at Ntare School were blamed for the wrongs committed by the Islamic terrorists thousands of miles away and this is reflective of indiscriminate intolerance on the part of students, of members of a religion, who had nothing to do with a particular incident. This portrays an attitude of a student population that has not fully appreciated respect of other people's religions and their integrity. It is part of the complex religious-political conflict which needs to be addressed by an RE curriculum that prominently addresses issues of interrelationships between members of the different religions.

Similarly, the Chairman of Ntare School Muslim Students Association, informed me that some Muslim students in Christian founded schools regard identification with Islam as of low social status.²²⁷ According to him such Muslims students try to avoid the 'superiority complex' of the Protestants who would be out to evangelize and convert them or it could be a calculated response to an expectation of preferential treatment from the teaching staff or majority students who are Christian.²²⁸ Mulindwa's observations mainly reflected the low self-esteem that some members of Islam develop as a result of not having systems that promote or acknowledge their integrity and social

Catholic ideals. It is essentially an ecumenical organization but in practice is Roman Catholic led and oriented.

²²⁵ The rosary is an artifact used in religious worship by Roman Catholics. The 'cult of worshipping the virgin Mary' is a derogatory reference to the high position accorded to the Virgin Mary in the Roman Catholic Church by some Protestant critics of the Roman Catholic faith who view the 'intercessory role of Mary' as a threat to the centrality and uniqueness of Christ in his intercessory role for Christians.

²²⁶ The interview was conducted one month after the now much publicized September 11 incident in which hijacked planes were used to destroy the American World Trade Centre by an all Muslim group.

²²⁷ Interview held with Mulindwa Imam on 31/10/2001 at Ntare School in which he revealed to me that some Muslim students change their names prior to joining Church of Uganda founded or 'dominated schools' like Ntare school, giving examples of Islamic names like Isa that are changed to Isaac and Musa that is turned into Moses.

²²⁸ Preferential treatment can range from anticipated 'support' from Christian staff members in case of resolution of disciplinary cases or students politics when one expects to use the religious card in gaining the majority Christian student support.

position as members of the same community. He illustrated this point by referring to an incident when he, as a student councillor, was astonished when his classmates (majority Christians) wanted him to forward a resolution to the students' school council of introducing pork on the school menu.²²⁹ Although he did not inform me how he resolved the moral dilemma of either forwarding his classmates' views or refusing on account of his religious faith, this issue in part reflects the student's lack of respect for his religious beliefs. It serves to illustrate the limitations of a single faith RE (to which they are all exposed) to enable students to develop an attitude of and skills of respect and tolerance for other people's religions. It suggests that since non-Muslim students do not engage with the Islamic religion, they may not know what it involves to respect their religious beliefs.

The leader of the Scripture Union, an ecumenical though Protestant led and oriented association, referred to the challenges met by 'born again' students from other members of the school community.²³⁰ This is paradoxical since the Roman Catholics and Muslims through the interviews of their student leaders portray the Protestants as reflecting an air of superiority especially through their evangelism. Nonetheless, it reflects the religious tensions that exist between students who belong to different religions. The challenges met by the 'born again' or evangelical students seem to be mainly a response to a 'holier than thou' attitude some of them are known to display to the rest of the student community.²³¹ Such an attitude can be symptomatic of religious intolerance and is an indicator of the student's lack of appreciation for respect of the religious

²²⁹ *The Monitor* newspaper of 17/07/2001, 28/8/2001 and *New Vision* newspaper of 25/08/2001 carried articles on what became to be popularly known as the 'Gayaza Pork Saga' whereby Muslim students had complained about pork being prepared in the same saucepans as food for Muslims. Gayaza is a Church of Uganda founded but public education institution. The school administration argued that Christians could not be denied the chance to eat pork since there was even a school piggery unit and that care was taken to provide an alternative meal for the Muslims. Later on a Parliamentary committee on Social Services was asked to investigate the matter. In my interview of Kisaame Aphan, Muslim leader of Makerere University Students Association concerning the issue he said that Gayaza was a public school funded by tax payers money and therefore had to seriously consider Muslims religious rights which necessitated provision of separate utensils whereby there was no mix up with utensils used for preparing pork.

²³⁰ In my estimation the criticism is bound to be more from the 'nominal members' of the Church of Uganda than from the Roman Catholics or even the Muslims.

²³¹ In my interview with the Headmistress Mary Hill, E. Bagambakyi on 4/07/2001 at Mbarara, she informed me that Scripture Union members (a reference to the evangelical Protestant students in her school) are often overzealous of converting other students and even staff members and that their greatest problem was overlooking other people's religions.

beliefs of others, a key expectation of a multi-faith RE reflected upon in the following discussion.

In short, religious intolerance is a characteristic feature of a school that prides itself in a policy of freedom of worship and unique provision of religious facilities for the three main religions.²³² Since the school offers a single faith CRE syllabus which does not enable students to engage fully with other religions or even the significance and implications of the diversity within the Christian religious tradition, the complexity of the 'religious debate' is confined to the school compound instead of the classrooms where it would be put to meaningful discussion. Mindful of the magnitude of the problem of religious discrimination and intolerance in Uganda and the inability of a single faith RE to address the multi-religious context of schools, the following discussion explores the major themes in the gradual development of a multi-faith RE climate in RE in Britain and the rationale behind a multi-faith RE curriculum as promoted in community schools in England and Wales, in an attempt to draw some lessons for the Ugandan RE curriculum.

7.2. Background to the Development of Multi-faith RE in Britain

The introduction of a Multi-faith RE in county schools in England and Wales in the early 1970s was a product of a long process whereby the teaching of religion in schools moved from being a preserve of the different Christian religious denominations to an acceptable subject on the school curriculum of state schools (*The Fourth R*, 1970; Cruickshank, 1963; SCP, 1971). Before 1870, elementary education was provided by two voluntary agencies, first, the National Society for Promoting of the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church, and, ^{second,} the British and Foreign Society, which comprised mainly of members of the Free Churches (non-conformists), who advocated for simple Bible teaching in schools instead of denominational religious instruction (Cruickshank, 1963: 2).

²³² Ntare School is the only school or even educational institution in Uganda to have a purposely built Joint Chapel for Roman Catholic and Church of Uganda members, in addition to purposely built Mosque for Muslims on the school compound.

The first step towards state involvement in education, and subsequently its having to address the issue of teaching religion in schools was in 1833 when the government provided grants to the two voluntary agencies for running their educational activities, that involved on the part of the established Church, the teaching of a denominational RE (*The Fourth R*, 1970: 4; Cruickshank, 1963: 3). In other words, the state support of a denominational educational system reflected the state endorsement of a denominational RE, a position it was subsequently to review. The State support of a denominational school system later on became a point of contention mainly for the non-conformists who protested the use of public funds to finance denominational education, which favoured the established Church since it had many schools (Cruickshank, 1963: 26). Opposition to the denominational education system and its religious instruction came also from radicals who supported a secular state system, one that would have nothing to do with the teaching of religion in schools (*The Fourth R*, 1970: 6). The rationale of the radicals' criticism of teaching religion in state schools reflects the debate about the indoctrinatory nature of RE *vis-à-vis* that of all educational activity (*The Fourth R*, 1970: 353).²³³ The problem of state support of denominational education, alongside other numerous complex issues, provided the background to discussions and eventual formulation of *The Elementary Education Act of 1870*, (*The Fourth R*, 1970: 6).

The 1870 Elementary Education Act is referred to by Cruickshank (1963: 36) as 'a landmark in the history of religious education in England and Wales' since from then, onwards, the issue of teaching about religion was treated more sensitively. While voluntary schools continued to teach denominational RE and to receive grant aid from the state, the Local School Boards which were set up, following the 1870 Government Education Act, were not expected to teach denominational RE. Therefore, a key feature of the 1870 Education Act was the decision to set up Local School Boards in areas where voluntary school provision was inadequate and the introduction of a non-denominational instruction in these schools in accordance with the 'Cowper Temple Clause' which required that 'no religious catechism or religious formulary which is distinctive of any particular denomination shall be taught' (*The Fourth R*, 1970: 7). The aim of teaching religion in Local School Boards (which designed their

²³³ Basil Mitchell, in *The Fourth R* (19970) discusses the issue of indoctrination in some detail.

own religious instruction syllabuses) could therefore be viewed as, the option of promoting the Christian faith and in particular Christian moral values, based on the Bible, instead of membership to particular religious denominations.

The first agreed syllabus of religious instruction for the state founded schools was produced by Cambridgeshire Local Education Authority in 1924 and this was followed by those of other local education authorities. This development is referred to as 'a sign of a new era-that of cooperation rather than competition between the Churches in the field' (*The Fourth R*, 1970; 10). The non-denominational religious instruction in state schools (which became known as provided schools) was endorsed by the 1902 Education Act. However, the new resolution of the state to fund voluntary schools (re-designated as non-provided schools), sparked off protest mainly by non-conformists since it was seen to favour the promotion of the Established Church (*The Fourth R*, 1970: 8). There was also discontent from some members of the Established Church who did not favour state support of denominational education (Cruickshank, 1963: 7).

Following the 1944 Education Act (which provided for the expansion of elementary education through the introduction of a universal secondary education), the local arrangement concerning religious instruction in county schools (previously provided schools) was replaced by the 'mandatory provision of religious education in accordance with syllabuses drawn up, or adopted, by a conference of the main parties concerned in each local authority' (*The Fourth R*, 1970: 10). The 1944 Education Act, therefore, concretized the place of RE on the school curriculum of county schools (now community schools) and empowered Local Education Authorities to design agreed syllabuses. This was to become the acceptable format of teaching religion in county schools until the early 1970s when the new element of studying about other religions became a significant factor in the RE debate.

7.3. The Justification of RE in Public Education Institutions

The introduction of a multi-faith RE in Britain was closely associated with the debate concerning the educational value of a single faith Christian education in

state secondary schools. If RE was to be maintained as a subject on the school curriculum, it had to be of educational value to students in the state controlled schools. The original aim of spiritual nurture of students within the Christian religion or the implications the subject had for conversion of non-Christians could no longer be justified on educational grounds. This debate is reflected by Ninian Smart (1968) who argued for a resolution of the 'conflict' of teaching a 'closed Christian education' in a secular education system that deserved to accord equal respect to religious and non-religious beliefs. In other words, for a harmonious British society, it was important for the British education system to promote justice and fairness, characteristic features of a liberal and pluralistic society (Jackson, R. 1997: 139). The response towards the resolution of this 'conflict' is greatly reflected in recommendations made by the Schools Council Working Party on Religious Education concerning the need for a shift from the confessional RE to an RE that promoted exploration of religion with due respect to the multi-religious and secular nature of the British society (SCP, 1971: 21).

The provision of an inclusive RE for members of the different religious or non-religious belief systems is an essential perspective from which to view the educational value of a multi-faith RE. Cole and Mantin, while reflecting on the consideration of Christianity and Islam, among other religious traditions, as subjects on the state school curriculum observe:

The only justification for RE must be educational. Children have a right to study and explore the beliefs, values and practices upon which many people base their lives and which underpin many cultures and individual lives as much as they have a right to learn about humanity's past, literature, music, art, science and religion (Cole and Mantin, 1994: 11).

The main argument of the quotation is that in a multi-religious, multi-cultural or even multi-value society, the RE curriculum needs to be as inclusive as possible if students are to benefit from exploring the various belief systems that are of ultimate significance to the lives of people in society. In other words, a deduction can be made that if one is to qualify as 'a religiously educated person' (see Chapter three), then one cannot afford to be exposed to only one religion.

Similar to the British context, the inadequacy of a single faith RE to address the multi-religious context of Ugandan schools largely reflects the educational limitations of RE in Uganda's religiously founded public schools. The question of the educational value of RE in Uganda has been raised mainly by the NRM government which has queried the inappropriateness of teaching a single faith RE in the public education institutions (see Chapter six). The arguments raised by the NRM government are worth considering in providing an RE curriculum that takes into account the multi-religious nature of Ugandan society and the state neutrality in religious matters in much a similar way to the British experience. This is because the educational limitations of a single faith RE in Uganda in addressing the multi-religious context of schools is not much different from those of Christian Education in Britain in failing to address the multi-religious context of schools before it was replaced with a multi-faith RE.

7.4. The Growing Significance of Studying World Religions

One of the key factors responsible for the gradual creation of a multi-faith RE climate in RE in Britain is the global interest in the study of world religions pioneered by Smart at Lancaster University from 1966 (Jackson, 1982: 54; 1997: 73).

Interest in the study of world religions in Britain gained more significance following the immigration of Afro-Caribbean and South Asian families belonging to Hindu, Sikh and Muslim communities mainly from East Africa countries in the wake of their declaring of independence and policies of 'Africanisation' (Hammer, 1982: 54; Jackson, 1997: 73). The inter-relationship between interest in the study of world religions in British Universities and the realities of an increasingly multi-cultural and multi-religious society were to provide a favourable climate for the gradual development of a multi-faith RE that would best suit the state school system. The key underlying principle in the study of world religions and the subsequent consideration of a multi-faith RE for schools in Britain was promotion of understanding of other people's religions for better human relationships.

An interesting parallel between the British and the Ugandan societies is the multi-religious nature of both. As referred to in the introduction, Uganda has three major religious traditions, namely the Christian, Islamic and African traditional religion. However the existence of minority religious groups like the Bahai, the Jains and the increased arrival of people of different nationalities and in particular the return of people of Asian origin (some of those referred to by Jackson, 1997: 73) raises questions on the need for the RE curriculum to explore other people's religions for understanding and better social relations.²³⁴ In addition, the increasing incidences of religious cults and sects, one of which recently resulted in the massacre of about one thousand people in western Uganda is a point for consideration in reflecting on the horizons of the subject of religion and how best students can benefit from exploring its width and breadth.²³⁵

Perhaps one of the key distinctions between Britain and Uganda concerning the RE curriculum for primary and secondary schools, is that the lecturers at Ugandan Universities have not been wholly involved in debates concerning the principles that underlie the teaching of the subject.²³⁶ In addition, although there are University courses on world religions, there has been no link between this department and Religious Education secretaries' offices. The 'debate' concerning the RE curriculum has been confined to a single faith RE mainly through correspondence between Religious Education secretaries (representatives of religious leaders) and the Ministry of Education officials. It is pertinent that lecturers of Religious Studies at Ugandan universities, which have explored the benefits of teaching about world religions, join in the debate about the most suitable RE curriculum for Uganda's multi-religious schools. This might be one way of salvaging the status of the subject, which as in the case of Christian Education in Britain, prior to the introduction of a multi-faith RE, was

²³⁴ The new policies of economic liberalization have encouraged foreign investors to come into the country in big numbers and this has implications of not only learning about their religions but providing for their education under the Ugandan school system which raises the question of the kind of RE they would be exposed to in state schools. The 1959 Census for Uganda for example reflected Sikhs and Hindus before the 'Africanization policies' of Idi Amin led them to leave the country (see introduction).

²³⁵ The Uganda Human Rights Commission Monthly Magazine: *Your Rights* of August, 2000, Volume three, number seven was dedicated to the subject of religious cults in Uganda and the question of freedom of religion and religious rights of citizens.

²³⁶ There have not been debates for example concerning the justification of a single faith RE in multi-faith schools. While it is true that some lecturers have on occasions been co-opted on the UJCC which designs

contested. The unique nature of a multi-faith RE debate for any society, however, is stressed by Jackson:

Multi-faith RE is a continuing and emergent field-an ongoing debate and a discipline, rather than a body of factual information-and each debate is sure to reflect the historical and political situation of the society in which it takes place' (Jackson, R. 1997: 141).

While there are points of similarities between the multi-faith RE climate of Britain and Uganda, Jackson's statement throws some light on the unique situation of the Ugandan RE debate, reflected mainly in the interviews and questionnaires that are referred to in subsequent discussion and are the basis of recommendations for the way forward.

Notwithstanding, the next discussion explores what I consider to be the key aims of a multi-faith RE in Britain and which draw their significance from the underlying principle of the study of world religions. The following discussion provides a background to the Ugandan debate on the prospects of a multi-faith RE and interestingly reflects key issues raised by students in their questionnaire responses on the question of a multi-faith RE referred to in the subsequent discussion.

7.4.1. Promotion of the Understanding of Religion

Promotion of the understanding of religion can be considered to be one of the most important aims of a multi-faith RE in state secondary schools in Britain. The objective of promoting the understanding of religion is built on the premise that religion is a phenomenon of human experience and that its importance can only be fully appreciated in an educational environment by exploring it. In addition, this exploration is to become more meaningful if it is not only restricted to the exploration of religious beliefs but even non-religious belief systems. The bottom line in either case is presented as an engagement with these beliefs in order to understand them and in particular the importance they have to their adherents (Grimmit, 1978). It is for this reason therefore that Jackson (1997)

the primary CRE syllabus, they are people recommended by the religious denominations and not co-opted independently as professionals in their field.

probably observes that the promotion of understanding of other people's religions and cultures was the primary aim of establishing a multi-faith RE in Britain. This stand point is echoed by Watson who sums up what I consider to be one of the key aims of RE in a multi-faith context:

The aim of RE according to phenomenologists is promoting respect for, and understanding of religion and its significance for behaviour in such a way as to leave intact pupils integrity-it is not educating into religion in a way; but educating about religion understood more than information because of involving a positive and creative approach to pluralism (Watson, 1993: 44).

The understanding of other religious traditions to be studied therefore suggests that students are not being persuasively encouraged to adopt these religious traditions but to appreciate them as unique religious traditions. Closely associated with the objective of exploring these religious traditions is the 'positive and creative approach' of appreciating the significance of these religious traditions in the lives of their adherents. In other words, the learner is not only an observer but an active participant who is expected to 'bracket himself or herself out' (Grimmit, 1978) and take on the role of a believer in a particular religion. This is what Chris Arthur describes as:

Getting into other people's beliefs and trying to see what they are all about, rather than standing at the door step and judging them from external appearances alone, is a vitally important task as the multiplicity of beliefs contained in the world's religions becomes ever more a day-to-day reality and less of a distant, scarcely intruding, fact of life lived else where (Arthur, C. 1990: 65).

Arthur's description of the process of engagement with other religions suggests that a multi-faith RE has a major concern of not only enabling students to appreciate the external features of a religion but also to enable them 're-live' the experience of a particular religion one is exploring. The rationale behind this is that the understanding of religion may be incomplete until a student 'experiences' what it involves or means to be a member of particular religion. The multi-faith approach to RE portrays its intentions as the attainment of 'maximum dialogue' with people of other religions in an attempt to 'empathize with them' (Jackson, 1997: 46; Watson, 1993: 7). This is an essential pre-

requisite of promoting good interpersonal relationships in society since students of a particular religion will come to realize why members of a particular religion attach great importance to their religions.

The promotion of the understanding of religion in Uganda's case is reflected in the questionnaire responses of the students in our subsequent discussion. However, the debate concerning how best one can understand and appreciate the religious beliefs, cultures and values of members of another community is complex, especially as undertaken by phenomenologists of religion and anthropologists (Jackson, 1997).²³⁷ There is the question of the anticipated complication for students to contend with the intellectual demands of a multi-faith RE (Jackson, 1997; Watson: 1993). Is it not possible that the pupils or students will be 'confused' by the different religions or be given superficial knowledge about them, even as referred to by Ugandan students in their questionnaire responses concerning the prospects of a multi-faith RE? May be not, especially in view of the systematic approach of promoting the understanding of religion and in particular the acknowledgement of age and abilities of students in planning a multi-faith RE syllabus (Cole and Mantin, 1994; Grimmit, 1978).

7.4.2. Respect and Tolerance of Other People's Religions

Respect and tolerance of other people's religions can be considered to be another key intention of a multi-faith RE in the multi-religious and 'secular' British society. It seems to be based on a presupposition that a multi-faith RE promotes good interpersonal relationships between members of the different religious or non-religious belief systems.²³⁸ According to Jackson (1997: 74) the 'increasing of tolerance and sensitivity towards people of different faiths' was a secondary aim in the introduction of a multi-faith approach to RE and that it was

²³⁷ Grimmit (1978) R. Jackson (1997) discuss the different approaches such as the dimensional approach through which students can become familiar with the six dimensions of religion (since then, supplemented by the artistic and material dimensions of RE)

²³⁸ Baroness Udin while addressing herself to the topic 'Educating our children for a multi-faith society: reflections on the importance of educating for mutual respect and social harmony' at a seminar held by the inter-Faith Network UK in association with the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils for RE (2001: 11) argued that the RE curriculum in UK (reference to the agreed syllabus) had not necessarily

closely associated to the primary aim of promoting the understanding of religion. In other words, the student's understanding of a person's religious beliefs, practices and values enables him or her to develop a positive attitude towards people of those particular beliefs.

In Uganda's case, this has been the aim of a single faith RE and there are limitations of fulfilling it if other religions are not explored as in the case of a multi-faith RE. According to the multi-faith RE approach, in a situation where a student may have been prejudiced about a particular religion, he or she is led to an appreciation of the deeply held beliefs of such a religion. This, in turn, leads them to respect the religions in question and the religious views of its adherents. In addition, while discussing the concept of children and religious dialogue, Julia Ipgrave (2001: 7) observes that where open discussion is encouraged between children of different religions, children will not only respect their colleagues' religious beliefs but also develop the attitude of attaching value to what they say. The *Leeds Agreed Syllabus for RE*, an example of a multi-faith RE syllabus, expresses its second key aim of respect and tolerance for other people's religions thus:²³⁹

To develop within pupils/ students respect and sensitivity towards other people and their beliefs and philosophies (*Leeds Agreed Syllabus*, 1996: 2).

The development of 'respect and sensitivity' is therefore not restricted to religious but even non-religious 'philosophies of life' that people may hold. This is a key expectation of a student in a multi-religious and 'secular' society. In view of our definition of the 'secular' nature and multi-religious nature of Ugandan society and coupled with the multi-religious context of the schools, it is not an expectation that would be unrealistic. Read, G. *et al* on their part similarly point to the role of a multi-faith RE in developing attitudes that can lead to a 'harmonious and tolerant society'.

contributed to promotion of social harmony, an indication that a multi-faith RE is not a magical solution to religious discrimination, intolerance or injustice.

²³⁹ The *Leeds Agreed Syllabus* has two major aims. The first one is 'to encourage pupils/students to acquire and develop an understanding of beliefs, values and practices.'

An essential part of this development is an awareness of, and respect for, the beliefs and ways of life of people whose cultural background and traditions differ from those with which we are familiar (Read, G. *et al.*, 1995: 5).

The awareness of other people's beliefs and respect for them therefore is supposed to remove any barrier in the mind of the student and lead to good relationships in society. The underlying intention of the development of such attitude and skills therefore would be most appropriate when it is used to explore the religions or beliefs that are represented in a given society. In Uganda's case therefore it seems to suggest that a multi-faith RE needs to give attention to the different religious or other beliefs represented in society if the intention behind the concept of respect and tolerance of other people's religions is to be fully appreciated.

7.4.3. 'Learning From Religion'

This is what I consider to be another important aim of a multi-faith RE that is reflected in the British RE curriculum and expressed as a key attainment target in the Model syllabuses.²⁴⁰ The rationale behind this key concept of a multi-faith RE is that although it is not the intention of a multi-faith RE to lead to the conversion of students to the religions or philosophies that they engage with, they can 'creatively engage with them' by learning something of value from them or be able to make informed judgement about them. The benefits that can accrue from the exploration of other religions can be deduced from the argument advanced by Smart (1982) in his editorial remarks in support of the study of world religions in multi-religious and multi-cultural schools by observing thus, 'it is better for people to face this pluralism and benefit from its riches rather than to retreat into too closed a commitment'. On his part, Jackson uses the term 'edification' but acknowledges the term 'learning from RE' in explaining the potential benefits for a student who explores another religious tradition:

Whatever differences there might appear to be, culturally or religiously, between the student's way of life and the way of life studied, there may also be points of contact, cross over-points and

²⁴⁰ SCAA Model Syllabuses for RE Model Two Questions and Teachings (1994: 6) specifies 'learning from RE as a model attainment target of any agreed syllabus.'

points of commonality. What might appear to be entirely different and 'other' at first glance, can end up linking with one's own experience in such a way that new perspectives are created or unquestioned presuppositions are challenged. An inevitable product of the interpretive process, (Jackson, R. 1997:130-131).

Jackson shows the potential for a multi-faith RE to be of benefit to a student who will encounter areas of commonality between his or her religion and the one being studied. Such a student can therefore 'borrow some ideas' from the religion studied and be able to enrich his or her own beliefs. In addition such a student will be in a position to dismiss any prejudices he or she may have held before, concerning a particular aspect of a belief. In short, 'learning from' a particular religion is an important aspect of a multi-faith RE since it enables students to appreciate the good in other religions or beliefs and thereby can easily lead to the promotion of good interpersonal relationships in society. It is interesting to note that some of the questionnaire responses of students to be discussed in the next sub-section point to the possible benefits of a multi-faith RE citing reasons that are akin to the concept of 'learning from religion'.

7.4.4 Choosing a Faith 'To live by'

Although multi-faith RE in Britain is not portrayed explicitly as having an intention of enabling students to choose a religion 'to live by', it can be construed from arguments defining the purpose of RE in a multi-religious and 'secular' society. While referring to students as the object of any educational activity, Watson observes that:

The purpose of RE is to help them genuinely reflect upon religion, opening up for them the possibility of a self-chosen commitment, religious or otherwise, so that the individual can freely play his or her role in the wider community, whether this be a faith community or society as a whole (Watson, 1993: 51).

The underlying argument of Watson seems to be that, in a religiously plural and 'secular' society like Britain, RE can provide an opportunity for students to explore different religions and ultimately choose one of them or opt not to. This stand point is reflected by Fred Hughes in his reflection on the justification for an open RE in a multi-religious and secular British society:

Another reason for open RE is that it gives pupils appropriate dignity as human beings and as vulnerable young people. This view emphasizes that RE, must be open, so that all pupils are free to respond as they wish (Wright and Brandom, 2000: 36).

Free response is portrayed as a characteristic feature of an open RE. Although this is an expression of the atmosphere of enquiry whereby the academic integrity of students is provided for, it can equally reflect the choice of a student to respond to RE lessons by choosing a religion of his choice. This is even more so since there is no one who can prohibit a student from doing so and since the teaching is 'open' and does not unfairly expose students to a particular religion. However, the greatest challenge to the freedom to choose a religion of one's choice from those being studied is in the implication that a 'religious view of life' is the most ideal for a student. This is a point raised by (Grimmit, 1978) who questions the educational justification of highlighting the 'religious view of life' over the promotion of other philosophies in a 'secular' society. This is therefore not only a challenge that can be raised in Britain but even in Uganda whereby some voices like those in favour of promoting secular morality have challenged a confessional RE which promotes only a religious view of life. On the other hand, any consideration of the possibility of students choosing another religion in school would not easily be supported since in the first place this is why religious leaders and parents (see chapter six) are supportive of a single faith RE.

The interview and questionnaire responses of religious leaders, lecturers, teachers and students reflect this stand point in different ways as their major criticism of the prospects of a multi-faith RE. Notwithstanding, as observed in our foregoing discussion, choosing a faith 'to live by' is not a key intention to a multi-faith RE but in any case the key aim of promoting the understanding of religion renders the choice of religion a credible one since the student will have made the choice after being exposed to the alternatives and without undue influence from any one. Interestingly, some of the questionnaire responses of students in Uganda indicate the choice of a religion 'to live by' as a potential benefit of a multi-faith RE and echo the thinking behind the UNDHR statute on the religious freedoms and conscience of the individual (see chapter one).

7.5. Primary, Secondary Teachers' and Lecturers' Support of a 'Multi-faith RE'

Six out seven teachers that I interviewed in primary schools in Mbarara Municipality expressed their approval of the consideration of a 'multi-faith RE'.²⁴¹ It was interesting to note that although the official position of the religious leaders of the Christian founded schools did not reflect an expectation of IRE to be taught in their schools, in practice the teachers were teaching it.²⁴² In a Joint interview of three teachers of Uganda Martyrs Primary School (Roman Catholic founded-RC) I was also able to establish that 'some IRE' as one teacher termed it, was being taught mainly for examination purposes.²⁴³ The three approved of this decision to teach 'some IRE' since after all Muslims are often represented in their classes.²⁴⁴ An interesting revelation came from the teacher of Mbarara Municipal Primary School (Church Of Uganda – COU) who observed that while Christians were so eager to learn about Islam, the Muslims were not as enthusiastic to be taught Islam. He attributed it to lack of confidence in him, a non-Muslim to teach about Islam.²⁴⁵ He observed that, 'when you teach Islam, you are like teaching paganism (which he referred to as *halam*), they look at us (a reference to him as a Christian) as mere pagans'.

It is possible that the negative influence could easily come from some parents, a characteristic of Ugandan society (see foregoing discussion), it could be a result of the Muslim students' realization that a Muslim cannot stand a chance of being allowed to teach CRE and 'some IRE' in a COU founded school. It is

²⁴¹ References are made to their identities in the discussion. The judgement of what a multi-faith RE is, derives from my deduction made following their responses to the question of studying about other religions and not on their conception of what a multi-faith RE is by RE scholars.

²⁴² First, it seems that in most cases, the religious leaders may not be fully aware of what is taught 'under the subject of CRE' and this is referred to by Karugaba, a CRE teacher at the COU school of Mbarara Junior whom I interviewed on 10/8/2002 and he said that, 'in the past seven years that I have taught the subject, I have not seen any one from the Diocesan office (with which they share a compound) calling us for a seminar or a meeting' He further said, 'the COU neither monitors not facilitates the teaching of CRE'. Karugaba and other teachers of CRE in Church founded schools have been teaching IRE due to the UNEB examination format that allowed for students to answer either a question on CRE or IRE. Since teachers found that, in some cases, the IRE questions were easier to answer, they took the initiative to teach it primarily for examination purposes.

²⁴³ Interview of Yvonne Nankunda, Charles Muzorewa and Perry Tugeine held on 10/8/2001

²⁴⁴ The Primary Seven teacher informed me that he had about thirty Roman Catholics, twenty Church of Uganda members and five Muslims.

²⁴⁵ Interview held with Alex Guma on 11/9/2001

also possible that perhaps without realizing, the teacher might have offended the Muslim students in some way, since he has not been fully equipped with the skills of teaching a multi-faith RE. This is possibly a pointer to the need for proper training of teachers in the area of multi-faith issues instead of assuming that by having aims that promote exploration of other people's religions (as in the case of CRE), teachers can teach about these religions without 'special training'.

The Mbarara Pentecostal Primary School teacher (Pentecostal foundation) and the Nyamitanga Primary School teacher (Islamic foundation-IF) perceive themselves more as evangelists than teachers of RE.²⁴⁶ Ntabara criticised the textbooks published by the Uganda Joint Christian Council observing that they are more 'academically oriented than spirit based' (a reference to their 'failure' to provide for students becoming 'strong believers or born again'). She observed that, 'for me I look for the real thing'. She said that she aims at teaching the child so that he or she 'receives Jesus as personal Saviour'. She referred to her role in the school in support of Scripture Union activities and observed that there had been even one Muslim who had got saved and his parents were happy.²⁴⁷ While she approved of a multi-faith RE, it is worth noting that her overt interest in promoting a particular version of the Christian religious tradition is neither in line with the intentions of the Joint Christian syllabus nor a 'multi-faith approach to RE'. Alongside the IRE teacher, she serves to illustrate the dilemma of the subject in not being well-coordinated in view of mixed 'strategies' by the different teachers and most important the absence of monitoring by foundation bodies or education officials. This limitation though, cannot prevent students from appreciating the potential value of a 'multi-faith RE' for primary schools and its key intentions especially as out-lined in our foregoing discussion.

²⁴⁶ Interview with Rovinsa Ntabara who also teaches 'some IRE' held on 19/9/2001 and Sheikh Semanda Isa who did not approve of a multi-faith RE (see Chapter on Primary RE about his confessional approach to RE) 22/7/2002 respectively

²⁴⁷ In my interview of the Head-teacher of the school on 7/9/2001, he referred to an incident in which another teacher of CRE in the school had caused an uproar when he offered ten kilos of pork for a Primary Seven farewell party organized for students. Eight Muslim girls had threatened to boycott the party at which pork was to be served and the Christians had insisted on pork as a delicacy. According to the Head-teacher the issue was sorted out when the Christian boys realized that they needed girls to dance with and they accepted to remove pork from the menu and the party went ahead. This indicates that all Muslim students or even parents may not accept a situation where their children may change religion or be subjected to 'Un-Islamic practices'.

All the fourteen secondary school teachers in the five secondary schools where I conducted research consented to the option of students learning about other people's religions. The question responded to in the questionnaire was, 'is it good for students to learn about other people's religions? e.g. Muslims learning about Christianity or Christians learning about Islam? The responses pointed to the possible benefits of a 'multi-faith RE'. These can be said to include the students' understanding of religion as a phenomenon, the appreciation of and tolerance of other people's religions plus the possibility of choosing a faith 'to live by', all key elements of a multi-faith RE discussed in the foregoing discussion. One of the teachers of MHS (RC) who addressed the need for students to appreciate religion as a phenomenon (see question set) observed that:

'Yes, b'se they try to learn and compare similar ideas from both religions and see whether they contradict or if they are similar for proper answers.'

Another teacher from Ntare School (Government founded) observed thus:

'Yes, for academic purposes since some may do Religious Studies.'
(at University)

The teachers out-look on the study of the different religions is that it is a way of gaining more knowledge on the principles that underlie religious belief systems and man's understanding of his relationship with God according to these religious belief systems. The benefits of this, seem to be suggested as the appreciation of the religious beliefs of other people, an aspect that is emphasized by some of the teachers. A teacher from MHS (RC) observed:

'Yes, it will help them appreciate the beliefs (religions) of the other people.'

A colleague from the same school similarly observed:

'Yes, b'se it helps them to accept and appreciate other religious beliefs.'

A teacher of Ntare School responded in a similar way to the two MHS (RC) teachers recognizing the possibility of a 'multi-faith RE' being a source of conflict:

'Yes, because this instils in them the attitude of respecting other people's beliefs. This creates harmony in society. But if not taught well it can create criticisms and hatred hence chaos.'

The teacher of Ntare School reflects the issue discussed with respect to the Primary school teachers who were more of evangelists than RE teachers and it is an indicator of the need for teachers of a 'multi-faith RE' to be aware of its intentions and to be equipped with the necessary skills of teaching such a curriculum. This would safeguard against a situation whereby a 'multi-faith RE' is looked at as an opportunity to prove which religion is better than the other, as is implied in the response of a teacher of Nyamitanga S.S.S (IF) who responded to the question thus:

'Yes, it is good because students will be able to know who is wrong and also is right, that is by comparing the books' (a possible reference to the Quran and the Bible).

The triumphalist attitude of one religion over another is not suitable aim of a 'multi-faith RE' since it suggests that some religions are right while others may be wrong. This can 'create criticism and hatred hence chaos' as expressed by the teacher of Ntare School. It goes against the promotion of tolerance of other people's religions or acceptance of living in harmony with people of other religions, a key expectation of a 'multi-faith RE' referred to by teachers in different ways. A teacher from Ntare School observed that:

Yes, this tries to encourage religious tolerance among the people.'

While a colleague from Mbarara High School (COU) responded thus:

'Yes, to give a deeper understanding of religion and to learn to relate to and tolerate people of different beliefs.'

Another teacher from Mbarara High School stressed the importance of a comparative study of religion in contributing to promotion of patriotism or national unity and harmony:

'Yes, b'se students will learn the differences and similarities about these religions and this can build nationalism.'

The principle underlying the above responses seems to be that a 'multi-faith RE' is not only a vehicle of promoting respect for other people's beliefs but is also in turn a key avenue of ensuring good interpersonal relationships. This is specifically mirrored in the response of the teacher of Mbarara High School. This is an important perspective from which to view a 'multi-faith RE' since it would therefore address the problems raised in the first part of this Chapter and in any case, is in accord with the key expectations of a 'multi-faith RE' as discussed in the foregoing discussion.

Choosing a religion 'to live by' is also another possible benefit of a 'multi-faith RE' cited by two teachers. These are interestingly the teachers whom I referred to in Chapter four as having taken an objective approach to teaching RE. In other words, although other teachers also approve of a 'multi-faith RE', their perception of such an RE seems to be an RE that is conducted for comparative purposes and not for choosing a faith 'to live by'. The two responded thus;

'Yes, it enables students of different religious beliefs to understand the major doctrines of each religious belief and it will help in future which belief to follow after finding the 'truth' about each.'

Another said:

'Yes, they should compare and get their own choice.'

The two teachers of MHS (COU) and Mbarara College (Private foundation-PF) respectively have expectations of students to choose a religion after exploring the different religious traditions, an expectation of a 'multi-faith RE' as reflected in the discussion concerning key aims of a 'multi-faith RE'. However, as observed in the case of Britain, this is not a key intention of a 'multi-faith RE' and while it is supported by some students in our subsequent discussion, it is

likely to have some challenges in a religiously sensitive Ugandan society that is yet to fully appreciate the benefits of religious dialogue.

A half of the University lecturers interviewed who supported the possible introduction of a 'multi-faith RE' expressed their views with specific reference to the potential for a 'multi-faith RE' in promoting respect and tolerance of other people's religions. The emphasis on the realities of the multi-religious nature of Ugandan society and the need to study about other religions as a pre-requisite for social harmony is stressed. Musana observed that, 'we live in a society of many cultures and religions. It is important to learn to live with others and respect their beliefs.' Rukundo on his part said, 'it is good for students to learn about other faiths. Bahai is here to stay so it is vital to introduce it to students.'

7.5.1. Students' Views in Support of a Multi-faith RE

The student's responses to the set question concerning their views on the whether they supported a possible introduction of a 'multi-faith RE' are quite revealing in that the majority agreed. In the five schools where I conducted interviews, out of the 203 questionnaires considered, 68.5% of the respondents supported a 'multi-faith RE'.²⁴⁸ The question to senior one students was, 'Do you think it is good for students to be taught about other people's religions? a) Yes or No and b) Give one reason for your answer in (a)'. For senior five, the question was similar but phrased differently. 'Do you think it is good for students to be taught about religions that are not their own? e.g. Muslims studying about Christianity or Christians studying about Islam? a) Yes or No and b) If, Yes, mention one reason, or if no, mention one reason'. I was able to categorize the responses of the students under the different headings that corresponded to the key components of a 'multi-faith RE' as reflected upon in the discussion of the multi-faith RE as understood in Britain.

²⁴⁸ Of the 295 questionnaires, 92 do not provide helpful answers and were not taken into account (see introduction for comment on students expression of themselves in the English Language).

Table 7: Summary of students' views in support of or against a multi-faith RE syllabus.

Answer	Total	%
Yes	139	68.5
No	64	31.5

Pie-chart 2: Summary representation of students views in favour of and against multi-faith RE (see table above).

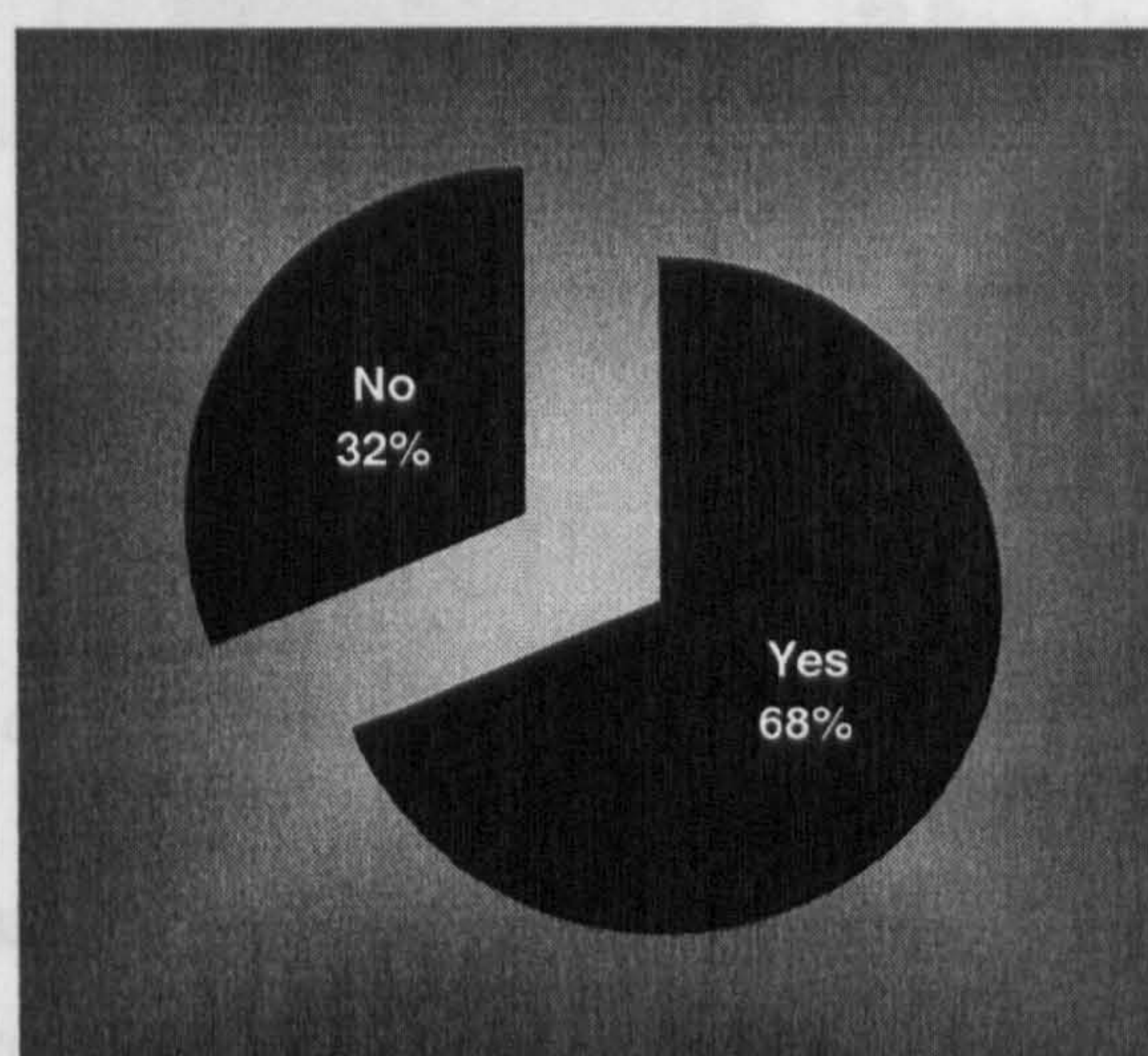
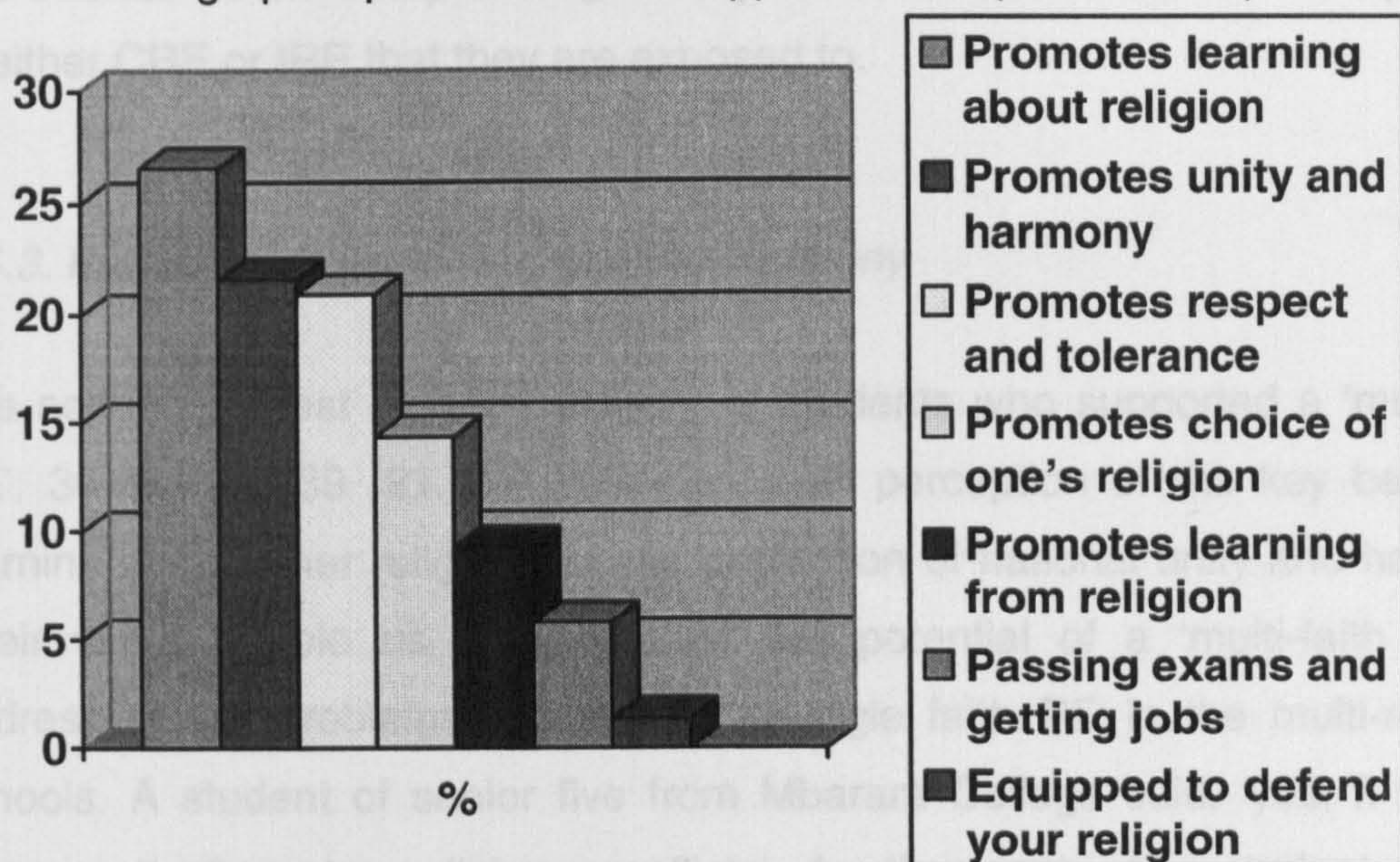


Table 8: Students Views Expressing Support for Multi-faith RE

Reason in support of Multi-faith RE	No. of students	%
Promotes learning about religion	37	26.6
Promotes unity and harmony	30	21.6
Promotes respect and tolerance	29	20.9
Promotes choice of one's religion	20	14.4
Promotes learning from religion	13	9.3
Passing exams and getting jobs	08	5.8
Equipped to defend your religion	02	1.4
Total	139	100

Table 9: Bar graph representation of support for RE (see Table 8)



7.4.2. Appreciation of Religion as a Phenomenon

37 students out 139 (26.6%), the highest number of those who supported a 'multi-faith RE', gave responses that stressed the importance of learning about religion so that students can get a comprehensive view of the different religions. A senior five student from Ntare School cited one of the benefits thus: 'Yes, to know the behaviours and aspects of different religions'. In his view, it seems, exploration of different religions enables students to learn about different religious beliefs, practices and values. On her part, a senior five student from Mary Hill observed, 'Yes, it helps them attain wider knowledge of what all religions contain and aim at'. This response reflects the importance of exploring the underlying principles of religious traditions. One such principle is referred to by a senior five student of Nyamitanga S.S.S, who says, 'Yes, it teaches people of different religions to know about each other's religions which helps them to identify differences'. This aspect is also referred to by a senior one Ntare School who said, 'Yes, they learn various differences and similarities between these religions'. These responses reflect some of the issues that would be involved in the understanding of religion as a phenomenon and in particular as discussed under the sub-section concerning the origins and key intentions of a

'multi-faith RE' in Britain. Most importantly they portray the students' appreciation of the study of religion beyond the narrow confessional approach of either CRE or IRE that they are exposed to.

7.5.3. Promotion of National Unity and Harmony

The second highest ranked category of students who supported a 'multi-faith RE', 30 out of 139 (21.6%), reflected their perception of the key benefit of learning about other religions as the promotion of national unity and harmony. Their views enable us to appreciate the potential of a 'multi-faith RE' in addressing the problems created by a single faith RE in the multi-religious schools. A student of senior five from Mbarara College said, 'yes, it is good because it eliminates religious conflicts'. Another senior five student of MHS (COU) said, 'yes, it allows the sharing of religious schools thus solving the problem of sectarianism and religious differences'. The second student seems to consider the introduction of a 'multi-faith RE' as a solution to the dominance of one religion over others in religiously founded public education institutions.

In other words, if Islam is introduced in a Christian founded school, Christianity will no longer be perceived by students as the dominant religion. This is why he argues that this will greatly contribute to solving the problem of 'sectarianism and religious differences'. The underlying argument is similar to that of the student of Mbaco since it indicates that a 'multi-faith RE' can lead to solving conflicts in society and thereby create unity among people of different religions.

Similar responses were given by students of senior one . A senior one student of Ntare School (Government foundation – GF) specifically said, 'yes, it creates unity' while another one from the same school said, 'yes, to cooperate together whether you are a Muslim or a Protestant or a Catholic'. An interesting and quite revealing response about the openness of students, as compared probably to the 'religiously conscious adults' on multi-faith issues was from a girl of Nyamitanga S.S.S (IF) who said, 'yes, it is good because if you're a girl in future you can be married by a Christian man'. These responses reflect the benefits of good interpersonal relationships that can accrue from a study of different religions. It would seem therefore, that a 'multi-faith RE' in their view,

has a potential to remove the barriers that are 'created by' the single faith RE which suggests superiority of one religion over others and thereby prevents the promotion of national unity.

7.5.4. Respect and Tolerance of Other People's Religions

Respect and tolerance of other people's religions ranked third in the choices made by students who supported a 'multi-faith RE'. 29 out of 139 students (20.9%) gave this as a benefit of studying about other religions. A senior five student of Nyamitanga S.S.S observed, 'yes, if one is taught different religions, it can help a person in different societies and also their customs easily'. Another student of a similar class from MHS (COU) observed likewise, 'yes, we learn tolerance when we get to know some of the common features (principles) that our religions share'. These two responses indicate that information about different religions enables one to appreciate the commonality across them and as a consequence the realization that people of different religions have a lot to share due to the characteristic nature of religion as a phenomenon of human experience.

This realization is in turn bound to facilitate the development of respect for religious beliefs, customs and values of other people. A senior five student of MHS (RC) illustrates the advantage of the development of respect for other people's religions in her response to the set questionnaire, 'yes, knowing about other religions leads one to being neutral and not having a bias like saying only Muslims will go to heaven'. In other words, the student of Mary Hill, believes that the study of other religions removes prejudice from students and ensures that different religious experiences are accorded respect. Her response echoes the complaint raised by the leader of the Roman Catholic students at Ntare School and the Headmistress of Mary Hill about some Scripture Union members who hold a 'holier than thou attitude' over members of other religions.

Similarly, another response of a senior one student of Mbarara High School (COU) enables us to appreciate the benefits of a 'multi-faith RE' in the promotion of tolerance of other people's religions, since he says, 'yes, to know if the people of your neighbour how they behave and how they pray if they

shout for you not to be harsh to them'. This is a description of mainly 'born again' Pentecostal Christians who pray while 'shouting, wailing' and making all kinds of noises. The student's argument is that a student of a 'multi-faith RE' will tolerate such an 'otherwise annoying' method of praying since he will have explored this in class. This reflects such a student's attachment of value to the religious practices of other people, a key expectation of a 'multi-faith RE'.

7.5.5. Choosing a Faith 'To live by'

It is important to note that choosing a faith 'to live by' was given as a major benefit of learning about other religions. This seems to be in sharp contrast to the general understanding of the purpose of RE in schools which is the promotion of the religious traditions of the foundation bodies. It serves to show that a significant proportion of students may not mind exposure to other religions even to the point of choosing another religion of their choice (as opposed to one 'adopted' at birth due to the common practice of infant baptism for Christians and circumcision for Muslims). 20 students out of 139 (14.4%) supported the view that a 'multi-faith RE' can be an avenue of choosing a religion to 'live by.' A senior five student of MHS (RC) said, 'yes, it helps a student to decide which religion is best for her hence exercising freedom of worship'. Her fellow student similarly observed that, 'yes, it helps one compare the two religions and it is easier for her to make her decision on which religion she wants'. The stand point of the two girls seems to be that the exposure to the different religions in a 'multi-faith RE' enables students to make 'informed choices' about a religion of their choice.

The responses of senior one student's brought up an issue of students who may belong to African traditional religions and might consider joining one of the major religious traditions. A student of MHS (RC) said, 'yes, because if one is believing in African tradition, he can get a chance of hearing about God and change his behavior'. Similarly, a student of Mbarara College (PF) said, 'yes, they couldn't have any religious they belong in, they could get it'. Although it may be looked at as patronizing to consider people who subscribe to the African religions as 'non-believers' who need 'proper religious faith', the two

students bring up an interesting point that could even interest the religious leaders whose interest is the promotion of their particular religious traditions.

Nonetheless, in a multi-faith RE all the religions need to be accorded more or less equal status, especially in view of Uganda's religious-political history and the 'secular nature' of the state. In this respect the 'enthusiasm' of the religious leaders would not be justified but the point raised by the two students serves to remind us of the adherents of the African traditional religions who are attested to by the government population statistics. The emphasis on autonomy of students in religious choice pointed out in the students responses is evidence of the possibility of choosing a religion 'to live by' being a realistic aim of a 'multi-faith RE'. However, as we shall observe in our subsequent discussion on student's views opposed to a 'multi-faith RE, the fear of students changing their religion, is the most cited reason.

7.5.6. 'Learning From Religion'

13 out of 139 students (9.3%) referred to the possibility of students appreciating and learning good moral lessons from the different religions they would study. These responses emphasize the key element of 'learning from' a particular religion being studied. Their argument seems to be that there is often something of value to learn from the different religions one explores and this is a key expectation of a 'multi-faith RE'. A senior five student of MHS (COU) observed, 'yes, this enlightens us to different morals and cultures where we find all religions targeting one goal'. Similarly, a student from MHS (RC) observed, 'it helps them to know about other people's faith which at times can positively change their lives morally'. The two respondents express their view that good moral values of a particular religion can be 'adopted' by a student of a 'multi-faith RE' without necessarily implying his or her changing of religion. The first respondent even raises the point of commonality across religious traditions as another key motivating factor of appreciating the good in other people's religions or cultures.

The responses of senior one students included one from Ntare School whereby a student observed, 'yes, it enriches their religion as they may borrow ideas

from the other religions' while his colleague from Nyamitanga .S.S.S said, 'Yes, because you learn different things from different religions'. In other words, although these students may not have been acquainted with the concept of 'learning from religion' as interpreted in a 'multi-faith RE' their responses bring out the benefits of this key aspect of a 'multi-faith RE'. 'Borrowing ideas' echoes the point of 'learning from' RE as used by the Model Syllabus for RE and 'edification' as raised by Jackson R (see foregoing discussion).

7.6. Religious leaders and lecturers' views against a Multi-faith RE

Seven out of ten religious leaders (an overwhelming majority) interviewed about the possibility of introducing a 'multi-faith RE' in Uganda did not approve of it and two expressed reservations about the suggestion although they indicated 'some support' for it.²⁴⁹ Only 'one religious leader' agreed to a 'multi-faith RE' without hesitation.²⁵⁰ The main argument of the religious leaders who were opposed to a 'multi-faith RE' mainly emphasized the interrelationship between the intention of the foundation bodies in starting schools and the subject of RE in ensuring the promotion of the religious ideals of the foundation body. Their views are given from the same perspective from which they defended a single faith RE as opposed to Moral Education, considered a threat to the confessional status of the subject in the schools (see Chapter six). Perhaps this is best reflected in a response by Jenny Ottewell a recently retired Assistant Provincial Education Secretary (COU) who seemed to refer to the complications of the confessional nature of the single faith RE in Uganda by citing her inability to teach Islam even if she was to be asked, remarking, 'for example I cannot recite the suras.' This is a reference to the doctrinal nature of IRE which includes the teaching of students how to recite the Holy Quran.

In other words, she is suggesting that it is a practicing Muslim who is best suited to such a job. The challenge of introducing a 'multi-faith RE' is therefore intimated by Ottewell as being the possible review of the content of what is

²⁴⁹ See appendix for names and dates of interviews.

²⁵⁰ This is a reference to the 'duo' of Masaldo and Kasule of the Bahai faith who had no problem with a 'multi-faith RE' (see Chapter six).

taught in schools if a 'multi-faith RE' is ever to be considered. The question is, is it absolutely necessary for students in a 'multi-faith RE' to learn how to recite the *suras* in the Quran? Is it of educational value to the students or is it merely of religious value to the students and therefore best reserved for Muslims? These are some questions that can be reflected upon by the designers of such a 'multi-faith RE' syllabus. Most important is the initial agreement on the aims of a 'multi-faith RE' and the content can be of secondary but significant importance.

Two religious leaders expressed reservations about a 'multi-faith RE' and these included Sheikh Kaduyu of Mbarara district who was in favour of a 'multi-faith RE' in secondary schools but argued that Primary school children were too young to engage in 'multi-faith' studies. On his part, Ismael Ecum the Secretary for Education and Social Services Uganda Muslim Supreme Council (UMSC) expressed his approval of a 'multi-faith RE' on the ground that it is for 'comparative purposes only' but not for classroom debate. He argued that, 'religion is a matter of life and death, it is not a joking matter!' His response reflects the 'sanctified nature' of perceiving the Islamic religion and it infers that debate about religious truth-claims is not acceptable. It is a pointer to the areas of possible 'negotiation' or compromise by curriculum designers of a 'multi-faith RE' for Uganda. In other words his view is that a study of other religions is acceptable provided that it is not aimed at 'desecrating the religious beliefs of other people'. In principle this does not seem to be an unrealistic expectation of a 'multi-faith RE' although it raises questions on the educational nature of such a study if it cannot allow for students to raise questions or discuss the 'truth-claims' of religions.

Half of the lecturers who responded to the questionnaire on the possibility of introducing a multi-faith RE indicated their opposition to a multi-faith RE. The reasons given ranged from the children being young at primary and secondary levels (an issue reflected upon in the foregoing discussion), the emphasis on the foundation body status of the schools and the anticipated 'fear' of bias of some teachers of a 'multi-faith RE' (see foregoing discussion), to the out-right presupposition that the 'status quo' or state of affairs concerning the influence of the major religions will never change. The last point is raised by Doris Kaija

and Sheikh Katuramu, lecturers at Kyambogo University and Mbale IUIU. While Kaija observed that the foundation bodies were so influential that she could not envisage a situation whereby the syllabus format could change, Sheikh Katuramu similarly pointed to the successive failure of the Ministry of Education (MOE) in initiating multi-faith RE studies.

Katuramu observed that right from independence, the MOE had tried to introduce a comparative element in the learning of religion but the major obstacle was the strong allegiance of people towards their religions (a reference to the 'religiously sensitive society'). He said, 'the idea was good if it had sincere promoters. In higher institutions we can openly discuss issues of religion, in lower levels there is a lot of bias, one is not able to address objectively the good in another faith'. Without going into details about the implications of this overt statement depicting the religious intolerance of some teachers, Head-teachers, Board of Governors members or even religious leaders, the challenges of a 'multi-faith RE' are reflected in this statement. In short, there is need for 're-orientation' of people's attitudes before a fully fledged multi-faith RE is considered. However the reality (and I would add urgency) of a multi-faith oriented RE in contributing towards the resolution of the problems of Ugandan society and in particular as reflected in the views of people who support a multi-faith RE need not be over-emphasized.

7.7. Students Views Against a 'Multi-faith RE'

7.7.1. 'Fear of Conversion' to Other Religions or 'Decline' in Religious Faith

The most highly ranked reasons given by students who opposed a multi-faith RE was based on their perception of such an RE curriculum as bound to negatively affect their 'adopted' religious belief. In short, to them it seems to go against the purpose of RE in schools that they have been used to and that is spiritual growth within their religions. 28 out of 64 students (43.8%) expressed their reservations to a 'multi-faith RE' as being the fear of conversion to other religions. A senior five student of Nyamitanga S.S.S said, 'Christians should not be taught Islamic religion because if some one is not stable can come to be

bored of his/her religions hence switching to another'. Another student of a similar class at Mbarara College said, 'no, it may lead one to migrate from his or her own religion'. While these responses reflect the 'adopted' religion of the student from the parents, the senior one students made it more clear by explaining the 'adoption status' or natural membership to a religion with reference to their parent's religions.

Table 10: Students' Views against a Multi-faith RE

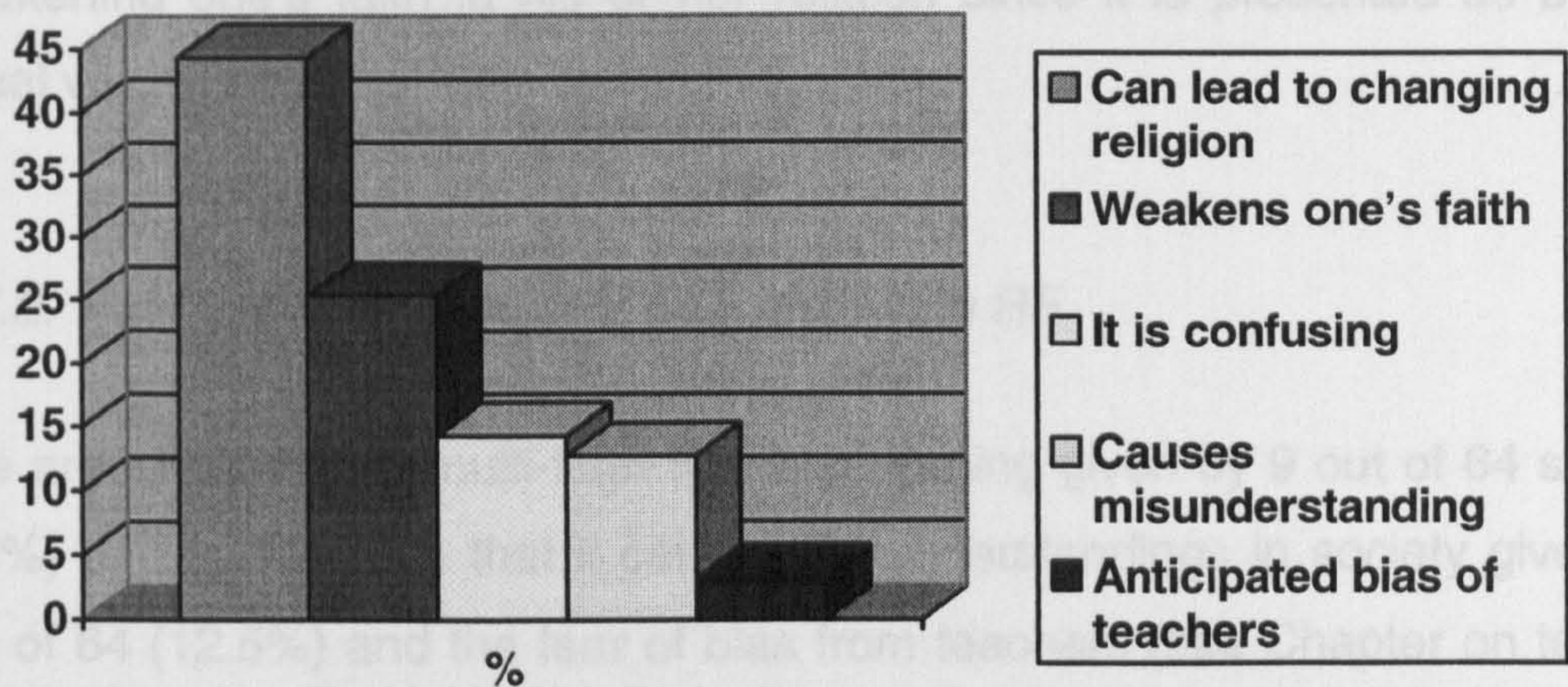
Projected weaknesses	Senior One	Senior Five	Total	%
Can lead to changing religion	14	14	28	43.8
Weakens one's faith	08	08	16	25
It is confusing	01	08	09	14
Causes misunderstanding	01	07	08	12.5
Anticipated bias of teachers	01	02	03	4.7
Total	25	39	64	100

A student of Ntare School observed that, 'no, some student may change to other students' religion and which would not please their parents'. Similarly, a student from Mary Hill said, 'no, they can easily change from their religions to other religions without their parent's permission'. The implications of these responses are that students do not have a right to choosing a religion. It largely seems to derive from the commonly accepted view of society that a child will always follow his parents religion and there is not only the cultural factor of 'having to belong to' or to consent to the elders decisions for you, but even economic reasons.²⁵¹ This raises the challenge whether parents should have the prerogative of deciding which religion their children adopt? Can this be interpreted as an infringement on the religious rights of the students? To what extent can parents police the religious life of the student? It is important to note that much as the child is able to listen (or pretend to obey the parents), what is ultimately important is religious belief based on the understanding of religion.

²⁵¹ There was a case of a student at Kibubura Girls S.S.S whereby a Roman Catholic student became born again and she was disowned by the parents. This implied that she could not even receive school fees from the parents until she 'repented' of her wayward behaviour and returned to the Roman Catholic faith.

This might even suggest that as expressed by some students who supported a multi-faith RE, freedom to choose a religion might not be dismissed as a possibility.

Table 11: Bar graph representation of students' views against multi-faith RE



The closely related reason of fear of 'decline' in one's religious faith is ranked second with 16 out of 64 students (25%) citing it as their reason for opposing the consideration of a 'multi-faith RE'. It is interesting to note that even students doing Higher School Certificate cited this reason, an indication probably of the strong attachment they have to their religions. A senior five student of Ntare School said, 'no, some students may decline their belief in their religions because of teaching them new religions'. Likewise, a student of Mary Hill observed that, 'no, it may weaken their belief in their own line of religion'. A student of senior one from Nyamitanga S.S.S said, 'no, somebody can even forget his religion' while another from MHS (COU) observed, 'it is not good b'se students will never know much about their religions but know more about other people's religions'.

The fear expressed in the responses of these students about the effect of studying about other religions on one's own religious tradition cannot be dismissed. This can be one of the challenges to a 'multi-faith RE' and probably it is an issue to be acknowledged by curriculum designers of such a curriculum for Uganda. 'Borrowing of ideas' from a religion can ultimately lead to 'adversely

affecting' one's religious faith through the adoption of syncretistic religious ideas. The development of 'relativist' attitudes about religion is a key criticism from critiques of 'multi-faith RE' (Jackson, R. 1997). Nonetheless, it can be greatly addressed by the intentions of a 'multi-faith RE' whose aim is to promote the understanding of religion in an open and fair manner which does not present one religion as better than others thus 'reducing the chances' of weakening one's faith in his or her religion since it is presented as being of equal value to others.

7.7.2. 'Fear of Being Confused' by a Multi-faith RE

The argument that a 'multi-faith RE' is confusing given by 9 out of 64 students (14%) or a similar one that it causes misunderstandings in society given by 8 out of 64 (12.5%) and the fear of bias from teachers (see Chapter on teachers issues) are arguments that a 'multi-faith RE' as discussed in the foregoing discussion would be able to address or dispel.

7.8. Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the realities of religious discrimination and intolerance in Uganda as mirrored in the social, political and educational sectors of society call for urgent response by RE curriculum designers. This chapter has shown that since religion is a powerful force in Ugandan society, and since it is also the intention of the major religious traditions to promote good interpersonal relationships in society, a new outlook on the format of teaching about religion should be taken.

Parallels between the gradual development of a multi-faith RE climate in RE in Britain and the Ugandan multi-religious environment that continues to affect debates on RE have been made. This has been further supplemented with exploration of questionnaire responses of students, teachers of religion at primary, secondary and University level in arguing a case for a 'multi-faith RE' for Uganda.

However in view of the strong opposition to a 'multi-faith RE' by mainly the religious leaders, some lecturers and students, plus the anticipated reaction of a religiously sensitive society, I propose initial steps of working towards a single but multi-faith RE syllabus instead of a fully fledged multi-faith RE as promoted and understood in Britain.

CHAPTER EIGHT

'A SINGLE FAITH SYLLABUS WITH A MULTI-FAITH ELEMENT': THE WAY FORWARD FOR UGANDA

In view of the strong attachment of religious communities to retaining the single faith character of the RE syllabus, this chapter argues for a middle ground in re-defining the purpose of RE. 'A single faith syllabus with a multi-faith element' whose intention is the promotion of spiritual growth within students' respective religious traditions and the exploration of other people's religions is recommended as the way forward. This chapter will propose key and subsidiary primary and secondary school CRE and IRE aims that can address the new multi-faith element and proceed to reflect on the projected benefits and limitations of the recommended syllabus.²⁵² Finally suggested areas of further research will be identified and an overall conclusion to the thesis made.

8.1.1. Suggested Key Aim of a Primary School CRE Syllabus with a Multi-faith Element and its Subsidiary Aims

Since the current Primary CRE syllabus and aims have some provision for exploration of other religions, a revisiting of the syllabus' intention would not be a radical proposal. It is an attempt to address the shortcoming of lack of prominence of exploring other religions, a crucial aspect of the CRE curriculum.

Mindful of the problem of religious discrimination and intolerance prevalent in Ugandan society and schools, the key aim of the CRE syllabus of producing practising Christian pupils needs to be supplemented with an aim that stresses interrelationships with people of other religions. It would therefore be important that the key aim of 'a primary CRE syllabus with a multi-faith element' reads:

²⁵² The current CRE and IRE aims concerned with spiritual growth of students within students' respective religions do not need review since their intention meets the first half of the recommended single faith syllabus with a multi-faith element.

The overall aim is to produce a practising Christian pupil who has also had the opportunity of exploring other religions and begun to appreciate the importance they have to their adherents.

The overall intention of the 'single faith syllabus with a multi-faith element' would therefore combine the key intention of the designers of the syllabus to promote spiritual growth within their religions and the expectation of the government to expose pupils to a curriculum that contributes to the promotion of good interpersonal relationships. The aims of 'a single faith syllabus with a multi-faith element' need to give prominence to the promotion of an understanding of other religious traditions. The current primary CRE aim is committed to exploring only the comparative element within religions. Although an appreciation of commonality among religious traditions is an essential aspect of a multi-faith RE (see chapter seven), it need not be the main aim of exploring other religions.

It is important that the characteristic nature of these religions is explored first. In other words, pupils would need to learn about the religious beliefs, practices and values of the different religious traditions before they can adequately be in a position of drawing comparisons. Grimmit (1978: 28) refers to the exploration of the six dimensions of religion (formulated by N. Smart) namely the doctrinal, mythological, ethical, ritual, experiential and social if one is to adequately understand what a given religion is all about. The aim of promoting understanding of religion (see chapter seven) needs to take precedence over exploring the comparative element. Consequently, the first suggested subsidiary aim of CRE that would give prominence to the multi-faith element is:

To enable pupils gain knowledge and understanding of the Islamic and African traditional religious traditions plus other minority religious traditions in Uganda and how these influence the lives of their adherents.

This can be an important aim that would enable pupils throughout their seven years of Primary school to be exposed to the characteristic nature of different religious traditions so that they are able to identify them. In addition, this aim would promote sensitivity towards other people's religions since the pupils would appreciate why particular people hold firmly to their beliefs. In short, this

aim would enable the pupils to acknowledge that other people's religions are of value to them. The above suggested aim therefore might make a key contribution to addressing promotion of national unity and harmony, Uganda's first national goal of education and the key concern of government.

The second suggested subsidiary aim of 'a primary school single faith CRE syllabus with a multi-faith element' is one that would overtly be concerned with promoting good interpersonal relationships between members of different religious traditions:

To enable pupils develop the skills of respect and tolerance towards members of other religious traditions so that religious intolerance and discrimination are addressed within the curriculum.

This aim reflects the key expectation of a multi-faith RE (see chapter seven) and is tagged to addressing the greatest social ills of Ugandan society in order for the RE curriculum to be relevant to the identified needs of society. This aim has implications for the content of pupils books since the religions that are practised in Uganda would need to feature and be a focus of exploration by students. This suggests that pupils will learn better when the focus of their study refers to the people they know and whom they encounter on the school compound, on the way home or in the neighbourhood.

Similarly, the exploration of respect and tolerance with regard to members within the same religious tradition, for example Christianity, is essential. This is important in view of the thesis findings that religious discrimination and intolerance have often been more intense between members of the same religious tradition than across religious traditions.

8.1.2. Suggested Key Aim of a Primary School IRE Syllabus with a Multi-faith Element and its Subsidiary Aims

Although the current primary IRE syllabus and aims provide for the exploration of other religions, they need to give more prominence to this aspect so that the syllabus reflects the value it attaches to exploring other religions.

In view of the prevalence of the problem of religious discrimination and intolerance and the anticipated benefits of a multi-faith RE explored in chapter seven, it is important that the primary IRE and multi-faith syllabus revisits the key aim of teaching about other religions. The current primary aim of the syllabus to produce 'a learned, practising and morally upright individual basing on the teachings of Islam' (NCDC: 2000: 599) needs to be linked with the intention of promoting good interpersonal relationships in society. The suggested key aim of 'a Primary IRE syllabus with a multi-faith element' is:

The overall aim is to produce a practicing Muslim student who has also had the opportunity to explore other religions and begun to appreciate the importance they have to their adherents.

It is important that the key aim of the syllabus gives prominence to the aspect of exploring other religions since the current IRE syllabus is overtly concerned with the spiritual growth of the students within the Islamic religious tradition. In other words, even if the syllabus content provides for an exploration of other religions (see chapter five), it is a token exploration that is not only limited in scope but is not given prominence in the syllabus' content.

The sixth aim of the current IRE syllabus, which is the only provision for exploring other religions, is only concerned with enabling pupils to make comparisons between Islam and Christianity. The sixth aim is spelt out as, 'to enable the student to grasp basic concepts of Islamic theology so that he or she can recognise where Islam and Christianity overlap and where they differ'. The exploration of Christianity alone among other religious traditions raises some questions on the scope of religions to cover. Isn't it proper also to include the exploration of the African Traditional Religion, a major religious tradition (see chapter one) and other minority religious traditions found in Uganda? If Muslim pupils are to benefit from the study of other religions, it is important that they explore religions that are practised in Uganda, some of which, like the African Traditional Religion continue to influence the religious world view of many Ugandans (see chapter one and three). Most important, as with CRE, is the social benefit of exploring other people's religions so that good interpersonal relations are promoted in society.

Another shortcoming of the current sixth IRE aim is that it does not have a provision for exploring the characteristic nature of other religions. As argued in the case of primary CRE, it is important that the Primary IRE syllabus with a multi-faith element promotes understanding of the religious beliefs, practices and values of the different religions. This in turn would enable pupils meaningfully to make comparisons from an informed view. It is in this respect that the first suggested subsidiary aim of 'a Primary school IRE syllabus with a multi-faith element' is given as:

To enable pupils gain knowledge and understanding of the Christian religious tradition, African religious tradition and other minority religious traditions found in Uganda and how these influence the lives of their adherents.

The above mentioned aim, unlike the current IRE aim, would enable pupils to explore other religions so that they become familiar with what constitutes the key aspects of the religious beliefs, practices and values of these religions. At the same time, this aim would enable pupils to appreciate the significance of the different religious beliefs, practices and values to the adherents, a pre-requisite of holding in high esteem the religious beliefs of others. Subsequently the second suggested subsidiary aim of 'a Primary school IRE syllabus with a multi-faith element' is:

To enable pupils develop skills of respect and tolerance towards members of other religions so that religious discrimination and intolerance are addressed by the curriculum.

The promotion of respect and tolerance of other people's religions refers to one of the key elements of a multi-faith RE (see chapter seven) and can address itself to Uganda's most challenging social ills, religious discrimination and intolerance. An implementation of the above mentioned aim therefore would need to take into account the religions explored in the first subsidiary aim. This is an essential aspect that needs to be addressed by the RE curriculum in Uganda so that pupils can apply what they study in real life situations. This is of importance since as I observed in chapter five, primary school pupils meet with and have to respond to fundamental questions of religious importance on the school compound. A key aspect that needs not to be overlooked with respect to

promotion of respect and tolerance of other people's religions is that of interrelationships between members of the same religious tradition. A case in point for the Islamic religious tradition is the existence of different Islamic religious groups in Uganda such as the *Tabligh* that live alongside the mainstream Islamic religious community, but often have antagonism between one another based on theological or ethical differences.

8.1.3. Suggested Key Aim of a Secondary School CRE Syllabus with a Multi-faith Element and its Subsidiary Aims

The lack of provision for exploring other religions within the secondary school CRE syllabus and the realities of religious intolerance and discrimination suggest the need to revisit the syllabus' intention.

Alongside the explicit key aim of the secondary school CRE syllabus to produce 'responsible mature Christian students', it is important that a re-definition of this aim gives prominence to the interrelationship between the Christian student and members of other religions. The suggested key aim of 'a Secondary school CRE and multi-faith syllabus' is:

The overall aim is to produce responsible mature Christians who have had the opportunity to explore other religions and begun to appreciate the importance these have to their adherents.

The key aim of the Secondary CRE syllabus is not different from that of the Primary CRE syllabus because the latter is essentially concerned with producing 'a better Christian student' as is the former. Subsequently, since the recently revised primary CRE syllabus has a provision to explore other religions, it is logical that any reviews of the secondary CRE syllabus provide for a continuation of this important aspect.

In view of the discussion in chapter six concerning the viability of a multi-value RE, it would be worth considering provision for secondary school students' exploration of moral and ethical issues from a multi-faith perspective. This would be more in line with the current *Christian Living Today* syllabus whose main interest is reflection upon contemporary social, moral and ethical issues

and how students can respond to them. A suggested subsidiary aim for 'a Secondary CRE syllabus with a multi-faith element' is:

To enable students to explore social, moral and ethical issues as understood by the different religious traditions.

It is important that secondary school students explore the above mentioned issues that are not only of importance in society but even in their school life experiences. Students not only debate questions of social, moral and ethical importance but as observed in chapter six and seven engage with them on the school compound.

While *Christian Living Today* provides for exploration of the African traditional religions, the same gesture can be extended to Islam and other religions practised in Uganda. The Church History reference section, an appendix to the first text-book of *Christian Living Today* contains the prophetic words of James Holway (Pastoral Institute of East Africa: 1975: c23) who proposed 'dialogue and a better understanding of Islam' and referred to the need for dialogue between Christianity and Islam as 'the most urgent religious issue in modern Africa'. Islam, African Traditional Religion, and other religions practised in Uganda, need to be explored so that secondary school students better understand their teaching on social, moral and ethical issues so that they can relate to them. A second suggested subsidiary aim of 'a Secondary school CRE syllabus' with a multi-faith element is:

To enable students develop skills of respect and tolerance of the moral and ethical values of people who do not belong to their religions.

The implementation of this aim would be crucial in ensuring good interpersonal relationships in Ugandan society since as was observed in chapter six the controversial nature of moral issues does not only strain relations between members of different religions but even among those within the same religious tradition.

8.1.4. Suggested Key Aim of a Secondary School IRE Syllabus with a Multi-faith Element and its Subsidiary Aims

Despite the provision within the secondary IRE aims to provide for the promotion of respect and tolerance among Muslim students for people of other religions, this aspect is not given prominence by the IRE syllabus and needs revisiting.

The genuine provision for an exploration of other religions needs to be grounded in an acknowledgment of the importance of studying other religions. The suggested key aim of a Secondary school IRE syllabus with a multi-faith element is:

The overall aim is to produce practicing Muslims who have had the opportunity to explore other religions and begun to appreciate their importance to the adherents.

The above aim can be a key standpoint from which to design aims that can enable students to benefit meaningfully from the exploration of other religions. Similar to the secondary school CRE syllabus with a multi-faith element, the secondary school IRE syllabus with a multi-faith element can explore social, moral and ethical issues with respect to their articulation by the different religious traditions. This would be an important contribution towards students' acquisition of knowledge and understanding of the interpretation of moral and ethical issues by different religious traditions. A suggested subsidiary aim would therefore be:

To enable students to explore the understanding of social, moral and ethical issues according to the different religious traditions.

An implementation of this aim would enable students to engage with the diversity in interpretation of social, moral and ethical issues not only between religious traditions but even within the same religious tradition. This would be an essential background to an appreciation or acknowledgment of diversity as part of the religious realm. Conversely, students would be in position of appreciating the commonality between interpretation of some moral and ethical issues across religious traditions. A closely related suggested subsidiary aim would be:

To enable students to develop skills of respect and tolerance of the social, moral and ethical values of people who do not belong to their religions.

The development of skills of respect and tolerance is essential in view of the religious discrimination and intolerance in Ugandan society. Such an aim can address itself to the increased negative attitude towards people of other religions which has not only led to religious discrimination and intolerance but even violence (see chapter seven).

The prominence and significance of a multi-faith element in 'the Secondary school IRE syllabus with a multi-faith element' has implications for the current IRE textbooks since they portray the Christian religious tradition as inferior to Christianity (see chapter three). It is imperative that textbooks that take into account the key aim of a Secondary school IRE syllabus with a multi-faith element are published. This would ensure that other religious traditions are presented as fairly as possible. Positively, Quraishy (1987: 238), the editor of the secondary school IRE textbooks, concludes his books by referring to increased optimism concerning Muslim-Christian dialogue (which needs to be extended to other religions in Uganda) for a better understanding of each other's religion.

8.2. Projected Benefits of the Recommended 'Single Faith Syllabus with a Multi-faith Element'

The unique contribution of 'a single faith syllabus with a multi-faith element' is in its attempt to address both the expectations of the religious leadership (responsible for designing the RE curriculum) and the government that is directly responsible for the overall management and administration of schools. The suggested retention of the aim of catering for the spiritual growth of students within their respective religious traditions would go down well with the religious leadership and communities. In addition, since the revised primary CRE and IRE syllabuses have some provision for the exploration of other religions, giving prominence to exploring other religions whilst seeming to be a radical suggestion is made on the basis of the willingness shown by religious

leaders to explore other religions. On the part of the government, the prominence given to the study of other religions would be appreciated since it reflects respect for other people's religions and commitment to promoting good interpersonal relationships.

'A single faith syllabus with a multi-faith element' re-defines the purpose of learning about other religions and therefore meaningfully addresses the role of studying religion in a multi-faith context. While the current CRE and IRE syllabuses are concerned with exploring the comparative element between religious traditions, 'the single faith RE with a multi-faith element' gives prominence to the aims of promoting the understanding of religions in their own right and the development of respect and tolerance. These aims are essential since they enable students not only to explore the characteristic nature of religious traditions but in promoting good interpersonal relationships in society. This would ultimately address Uganda's first national goal of education, promotion of national unity and harmony.

The provision within 'a single faith RE with a multi-faith element' to explore different religions practised in Uganda, including the minority religious traditions like Bahai and religions like the African traditional religions (a major religious tradition but often overlooked on the RE curriculum) is a worthy development. This is an important step that reflects the concept of justice and fairness to all religious traditions (see chapter four). Adherents of minority religions alongside the different Christian religious denominations and Islamic religious groups, some of which have adherents in schools, would feel that their 'religious communities' are valued. The participation in RE lessons by members of some of these religious groups would be assured in a case where their religious traditions are represented. In short, the multi-faith context of schools is largely addressed since students of all religious traditions will be in a position to relate to the RE curriculum.

8.3. Possible Limitations of the Recommended 'Single Faith Syllabus with a Multi-faith Element'

The single most challenging aspect of 'a single faith syllabus with a multi-faith element' is that its standpoint is the promotion of the religious tradition of the respective foundation bodies' of the schools. In other words, Muslim pupils for example who study from a Christian founded primary school would have to engage with the first half of the key aim of a Primary CRE syllabus with a multi-faith element that expects of pupils to become 'practicing Christians'. In this respect, Muslim pupils would be unfairly exposed to an RE syllabus that may have implications for proselytization or even conversion (see chapter three and five) notwithstanding the prominence given to exploring other religions.

The syllabus content for CRE that is aimed at promoting spiritual growth within the Christian religious tradition as reflected upon in chapter three and five has a potential for leading to proselytization or conversion. This is even more possible in situations like the one reflected upon in chapter four whereby some teachers of RE use personal religious convictions to promote particular religious ideals. In short, the concept of justice and fairness to all religions discussed in chapter four cannot be fully realized under 'a single faith syllabus with a multi-faith element' but in a fully fledged multi-faith RE that would accord equal status to all religions on the curriculum.

The view mainly held by the religious leadership that parents naturally prefer to send their children to schools of their religious affiliation is partly but not wholly true. It is partly true since the arguments reflected in chapter six by the different sections of the Ugandan community stress the need for moral teaching based on the respective religious traditions of the different religious communities. While this can be a justification for promotion of a single faith syllabus with a multi-faith element (that provides for spiritual growth within respective religious traditions) there is an increased interest among parents to send their children to the best performing schools in national examinations, irrespective of religious foundation. Coupled with this is the government policy of admitting students in religiously founded public schools on merit. How justifiable then for example would it be to teach an IRE with a multi-faith element in a school whereby at

some point Muslim students will be the minority in a given Muslim founded school while Christians would be in the majority? This points to a possible future consideration of a fully fledged multi-faith RE to forestall unnecessary mathematical calculations of the composition of students in religiously founded public schools.

8.4. Suggested Areas for Further Research

A key area that needs further research following my field work findings is the area of schools' ethos and the question of religion. While the interview of the Islamic, Roman Catholic and Church of Uganda student religious leaders at a government founded school was able to reveal a certain measure of signs of religious intolerance, an extensive study would have revealed more. Such an investigation would even reveal more information about interrelationship of students in religiously founded public schools. The role of students' religious clubs in religiously founded public schools (which are many) and their influence on the religious lives of students of different religions is a case for investigation. Similarly, there is also the question of school assembly in these schools where more often the religious leadership of the foundation body has the preserve to conduct prayers and give a homily.

The 'mushrooming' private founded schools that are founded mainly with financial interests, notwithstanding the many claims of educating the nation's children are a potential area of research concerning their policy on RE. While I was able to include one of these schools in my research (out of about fifteen in Mbarara Municipality alone) a question remains as to how the issue of teaching religion is being conducted in these schools. Isn't it possible that some of them may be founded by enthusiastic religious personalities with vested interests in RE and in particular influencing the religious lives of the students? This possibility cannot be ruled out in view of the religiously zealous Ugandan population that is witnessing the establishment of numerous Churches that are seeking to gain as many converts as is possible. Policy on teaching RE in these schools is crucial since these schools admit students irrespective of religious background. Although the general curriculum of these schools is approved by

Ministry of Education officials, the choice of what branch of RE to teach depends on the school management.

8.5. Conclusion to the Thesis

The thesis has shown that the question concerning the format of teaching about religion in schools is of fundamental importance in view of the implications it has for individual students, the school system, parents, government and Ugandan society in general. Teaching about religion in government schools, religiously founded and private schools therefore needs not be divorced from the national aspirations of the country.

While there is still a lingering problem of religious discrimination and intolerance among members of the same religious tradition and between members of different religious traditions, the findings of the thesis are reassuring. There is an increased manifestation of voices in support of religious dialogue as evidenced by the interviewees and questionnaire responses on the prospects of a multi-faith RE. While the preference of studying other people's religious traditions to a single faith RE may not necessarily infer religious harmony nor be a magical solution to addressing of religious discrimination and intolerance, it is certainly a key indicator of the desire to work towards promoting national unity and harmony. Most importantly, the voices of the interviewees and questionnaire respondents can, therefore, be considered the prime movers of my recommendation of a 'single faith RE with a multi faith RE element' in the religiously founded public schools and not so much the literature that I have explored.

Despite the religious leaders' overwhelming opposition to a multi-faith RE, the recommendation for a single but multi-faith RE as a middle ground is made on the basis of the positive attitude of religious leaders towards the desire to explore other religions. The provision within the primary CRE and IRE aims to explore other religions is enough evidence. The thesis has therefore attempted to portray the dilemma of religious leaders as their concern for the original intention for which schools were founded. The over-zealousness for fulfilling

this original intention of spiritual growth of students within their religious traditions has been shown to be the fountain of the antagonism between religious leaders and government in defining the purpose of RE in religiously founded public schools.

Conversely, the thesis has shown that the government is a key stake-holder in the religiously founded public schools since it is concerned with the overall funding and administration. It is for this reason that the thesis has appealed to religious leaders to acknowledge the 'secular nature' of the schools and allow for an RE curriculum that reflects the concept of justice and fairness to all religions. At the same time, mindful of the reasons for which these schools were found, the thesis has shown that the government can allow for the retention of the aim of spiritual growth within students' religious traditions. In short, the thesis has shown that, at the moment, neither the foundation bodies nor the government can wholly sacrifice its own interests on the question of what type of RE to be taught in the schools.

While a single faith syllabus with a multi-faith element has been recommended as the way forward, it is pertinent that the long term plans of teaching about religion in Ugandan religiously founded primary and secondary schools envisage the possibility of a fully fledged multi-faith RE. As regards the purely government founded primary and secondary schools, there is no logical reason as to why they continue to offer a confessional RE syllabus instead of considering to follow a fully fledged multi-faith RE as discussed in chapter seven. Similarly, private founded schools that are started purely on financial grounds (different from those that may be founded by religious orders) and admit students from different religious traditions ought to exercise the concept of justice and fairness to all religious traditions by considering introducing a fully fledged multi-faith RE.

The thesis' reflection on the recent problem of religious discrimination, intolerance and violence is food for thought not only for RE curriculum review processes but the political life of the nation. These social ills have dominated the political life of the Ugandan nation (see chapter one and two) and need an urgent response so that the social, political and economic progress of the

nation is not hampered by them. On the side of religious leadership and communities, the social ills are a challenge since they derive their identity from religious quarters. This suggests that the original goals of the Uganda Joint Christian Council need to be assessed so that weaknesses are addressed. This would be an important step in cementing relationships between Roman Catholics and Church of Uganda members and members of other Christian religious denominations who are yet to be fully incorporated in the UJCC. Likewise the great need for strengthening relationships between Christians and Muslims cannot be overemphasized and further between Christians and Muslims and members of the minority religious traditions in Uganda. This is even more important since the designing of the recommended syllabuses largely depends on the good will of the religious leadership and communities that are involved. It is only then that religious pluralism and conflict will no longer be issues in Religious Education in Uganda.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Interviews

Dates of Interview, Names of Interviews and their Status plus Venues

04/07/01	Bakyenga, P.	Roman Catholic Archbishop	Mbarara
09/07/01	Tibasiimwa, Y.	Secondary Head-teacher	Mbarara
10/07/01	Bahirirwe, G.	Secondary Head-teacher	Mbarara
09/08/01	Rugasa, H.	Secondary Head-teacher	Mbarara
10/08/01	Tinka, P.	COU Education secretary	Mbarara
14/08/01	Jendia, C.	University lecturer	Kampala
14/08/01	Ecum, I.	UMSC Education secretary	Kampala
15/08/01	Kaduyu	Islamic religious leader	Mbarara
21/08/01	Ahimbisibwe, E.	COU school chaplain	Mbarara
24/08/01	Mwesigye, A.	University Lecturer	Mbarara
24/08/01	Kwishiima	RC Education secretary	Mbarara
07/09/01	Mugisha, A	Primary school Head-teacher	Mbarara
11/09/01	Noowe, H	Pastor of the Pentecostal Church	Mbarara
11/09/01	Guma, A.	Primary CRE teacher	Mbarara
11/09/01	Mwesigye, A	Primary school Head-teacher	Mbarara
17/09/01	Otyek, M.	Ministry of Education official	Kampala
19/09/01	Ntabara, R.	Primary CRE teacher	Mbarara
19/09/01	Katalemwa, A.	Muslim Sheikh Ntare school	Mbarara
20/09/01	Rugyendo, M.	University Lecturer	Kampala
20/09/01	Kengyero,	RC Education Supervisor	Kampala
21/09/01	Ottewell, J.	COU Ass. Education secretary	Kampala
21/09/01	Kamukama, W.	COU Education secretary	Kampala
21/09/01	Matovu, K	Secondary school IRE teacher	Mbarara
22/09/01	Kisaame, A.	Muslim Student leader	Kampala
05/10/01	Kaija, D.	University Lecturer	Kampala
05/10/01	Katuramu	University Lecturer	Kampala
10/10/01	Kamuhanda	Secondary school head-teacher	Mbarara

10/10/01	Yaawe	Pastor of a Pentecostal Church	Mbarara
12/10/01	Sasiirwe, S.	Ministry of Education official	Mbarara
13/10/01	Atwiine, M.	Christian Union Student leader	Mbarara
13/10/01	Mulindwa, I.	Muslim Student leader	Mbarara
15/10/01	Kazooba, I	Roman Catholic Student leader	Mbarara
15/10/01	Sengendo	University Lecturer	Kampala
17/10/01	Sekimpi	Muslim religious leader	Kampala
18/10/01	Kasule & Masaldo	Bahai religious leaders	Kampala
19/10/01	Kaiso	UJCC Executive Secretary	Kampala
20/10/01	Kyamugambi, E.	COU Bishop	Mbarara
29/10/01	Rukundo	College Lecturer	Mbarara
20/03/02	Tirwomwe, S.	COU religious leader	Leeds
22/07/02	Kyarikunda, E.	Primary CRE teacher	Mbarara
25/07/02	Monday, F.	Presidential Advisor	Kampala
25/07/02	Kibenge, A.	Ministry of Education official	Kampala
01/08/02	Agaba, J.	Ministry of Education official	Kampala
05/08/02	Kakongoro, M.	University Lecturer	Kampala
05/08/02	Kaleeba, F	Ministry of Education/ NCDC	Kampala
06/08/02	Dungu, L.	UMEA General Secretary	Kampala
10/08/02	Karugaba	Primary CRE teacher	Mbarara
10/08/02	Nankunda, Muzorewa & Tugeine (joint interview) of Primary CRE teachers at Mbarara.		

Appendix 2: Sample Questionnaires

A. Sample Format of Questionnaire for Senior One Students

SUBJECT: TEACHING OF RELIGION IN SCHOOLS

1. What is the name of your school?
2. What is the foundation body of your school?
3. a) What is the motto of your school?
b) Of what importance is it to you?
4. Is Religious Education compulsory in your school?
 - a) Yes or No
 - b) Do you enjoy studying Religious Education? Yes or No
 - b) Give two reasons for your answer in b above.
5. Is Religious Education useful in society today?
 - a) Yes or No
 - b) Give two reasons for your answer in (a).
6. Do you think it is good for students to be taught about other people's religions?
 - a) Yes or No
 - b) Give one reason for your answer in (a) above.
7. Do you belong to any religious society / club in the school? e.g SU, YCS or UMSA?
 - a) Yes or No
 - b) If Yes, give two reasons, If no, give two reasons
8. Do you know what Moral Education is?
 - a) Yes or No
 - b) If Yes, explain what it is

*B. Sample Format of Questionnaire for Senior Five Students***SUBJECT: TEACHING OF RELIGION IN SCHOOLS**

1. What is the name of your school?

2. What is the foundation body of your school?

3. Mention the motto of your school (or mission statement), If in Latin or Greek, explain its meaning in English.

4. Is Religious Education compulsory in your school?
 - a) Yes or No.....
 - b) In which class is it compulsory?
 - c) Did you study Religious Education in the class mentioned in 4 (b)? Yes or No
 - d) Did you like the subject or Not? Give two reasons

5. Of what benefit do you think Religious Education is in secondary schools? Mention two reasons.

6. Do you think it is good for students to be taught about religions that are not their own? e.g. Muslims studying about Christianity or Christians studying about Islam?
 - a) Yes or No
 - b) If yes, mention one reason and if no, mention one reason

7. Does your school have clubs and society's that organize religious activities?
 - a) Yes or No
 - b) If your answer was Yes, in (a) above, mention at least three clubs you know
8. Do you know what Moral Education is?
 - a) If yes, say why it should be introduced in schools or if no, say why you think it should not be introduced.

C. Sample Format for Questionnaire for Teachers

SUBJECT: TEACHING OF RELIGION IN SCHOOLS

Foundation body of school

1. Which classes do you teach?

2. How do you describe your working relationship with

a) School administration

A. Excellent

B. Very Good

C. Good

D. Poor

b) Students of Religious Education

A. Excellent

B. Very Good

C. Good

D. Poor

3. Do your students show interest in studying Religious Education?

a) If yes, give two reasons or if not, give two reasons

4. What challenges do you face from students in teaching Religious Education? Give two reasons

5. Are you happy with the current Religious Education syllabus?

a) If yes, mention your reason and if not mention your reason

6. Do you think it is good for students to learn about other people's religions?
e.g Muslims learning about Christianity or Christians learning about Islam Yes
or No and give your reasons.

7. Should Moral Education be introduced in secondary schools in Uganda?

a) If yes, mention two reasons or if No, mention two reasons

8. Does the foundation body of your school play any role in the teaching of Religious Education in your school or do you they have expectations from you?

10. In your view, what kind of person is best suited to teach Religious Education in secondary schools?

D. Sample Format for Questionnaire of University Lecturers

SUBJECT: TEACHING OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Names of Respondent (optional)

Department:

Position held:

1. Did you study Religious Education while in secondary school?

a) Yes or No

b) If yes, did you enjoy it? Explain

c) If not, explain

2. Do you think it is proper to teach Religious Education to all students in secondary school?

a) Yes or No

b) If yes, mention two reasons or if no, mention two reasons

3. If you are aware of the current syllabus for Religious Education in secondary schools, do you think it is good for students in 'modern' Uganda?

a) Yes or No

b) If yes, mention your reason and if no, mention your reason

4. Do you think that it is good for students in secondary schools to learn about other people's religions? e.g Muslims learning about Christianity and Christians learning about Islam

a) Yes or No

b) If yes, mention two reasons and if no, mention two reasons

5. Is it good for Moral Education to be introduced in Ugandan primary schools?

a) Yes or No

b) If yes, mention two reasons, and if no, mention two reasons

Does your University or College teach about different religions in Uganda?

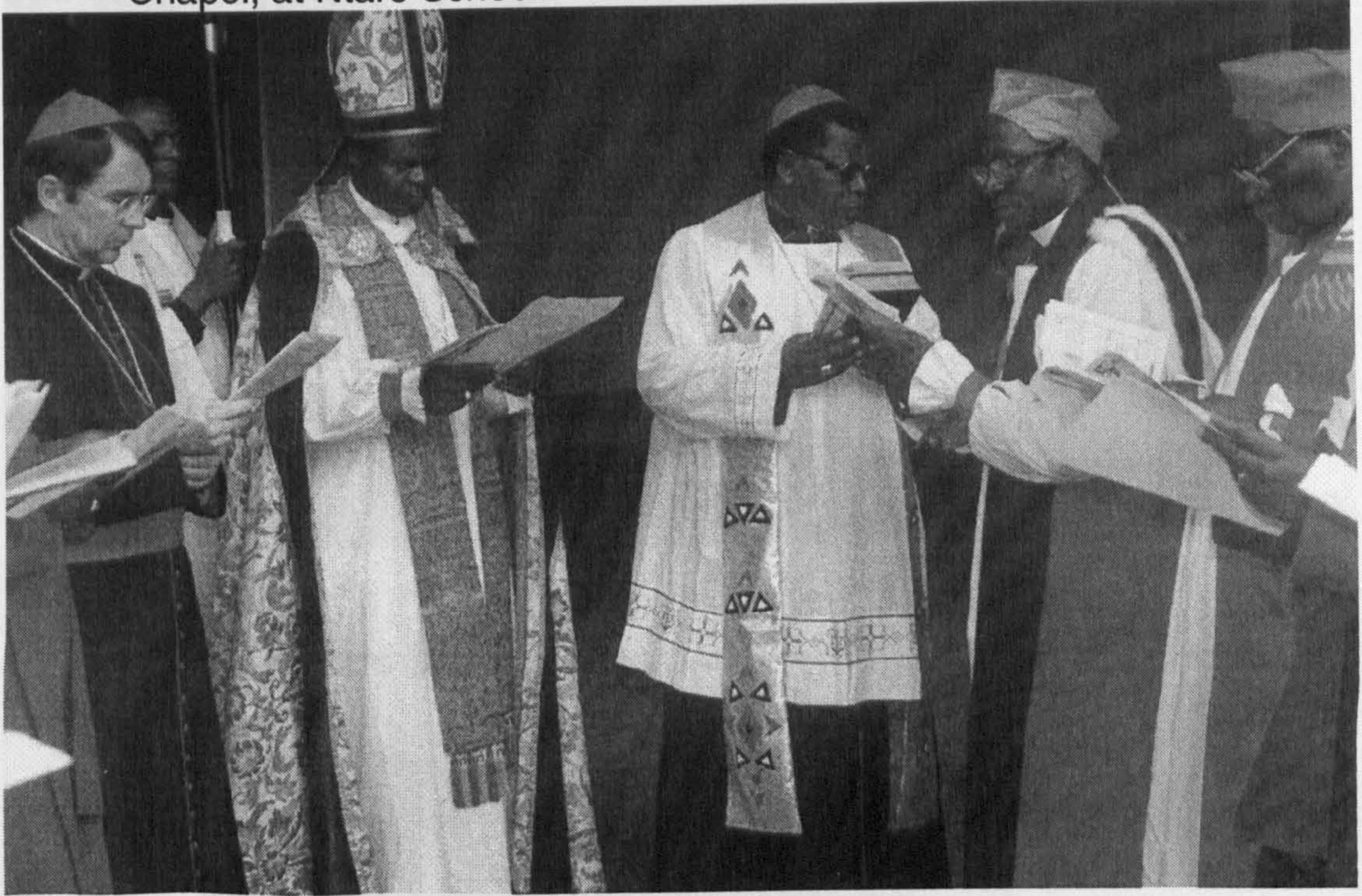
a) Yes or No

b) What is your opinion as a professional teacher of religion about this issue?

(c) The mosque at Ntare School

Appendix 3: Photographs

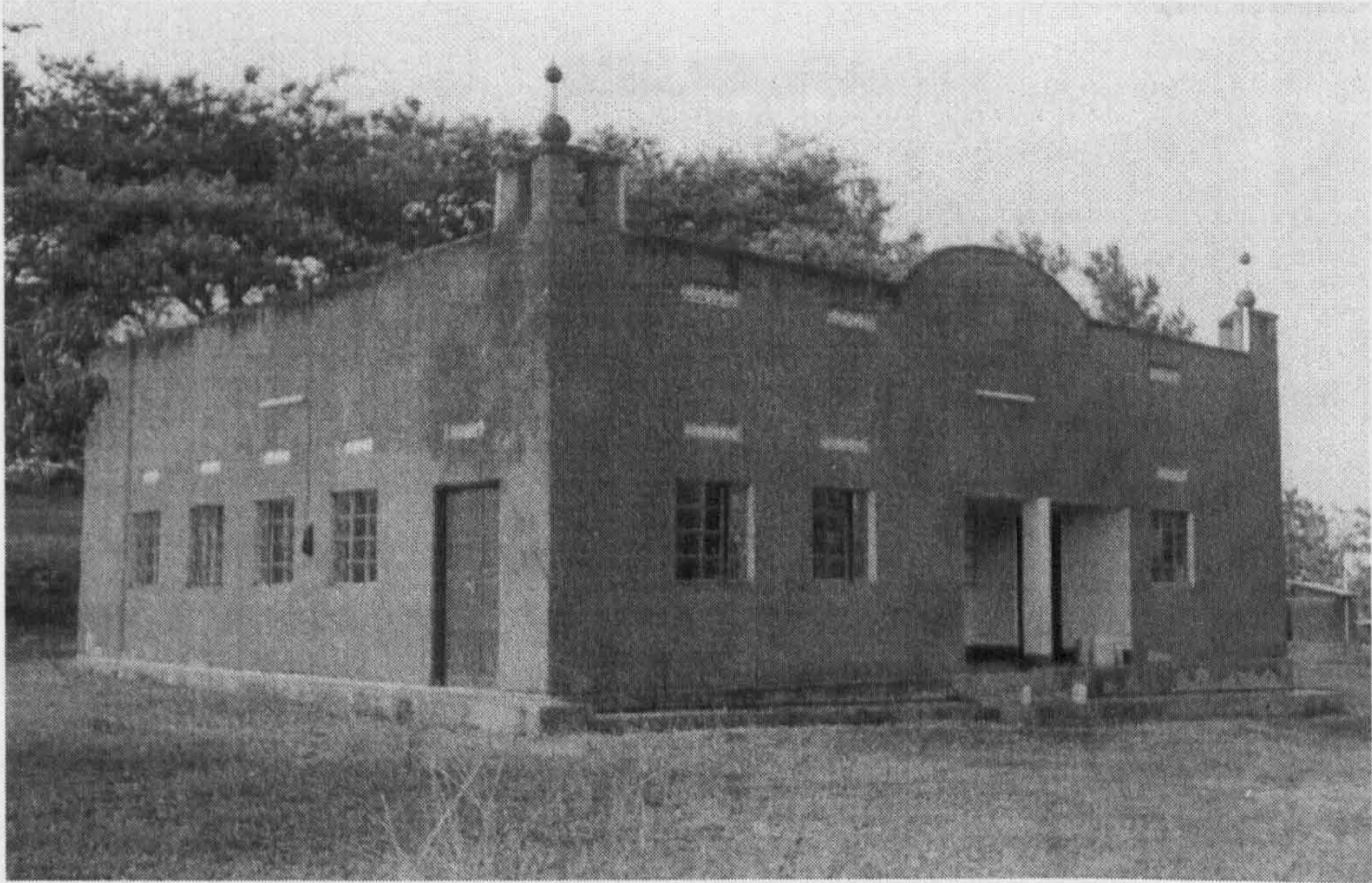
(a) Ugandan Church leaders at the opening of the joint chapel, St. Mark's Chapel, at Ntare School.



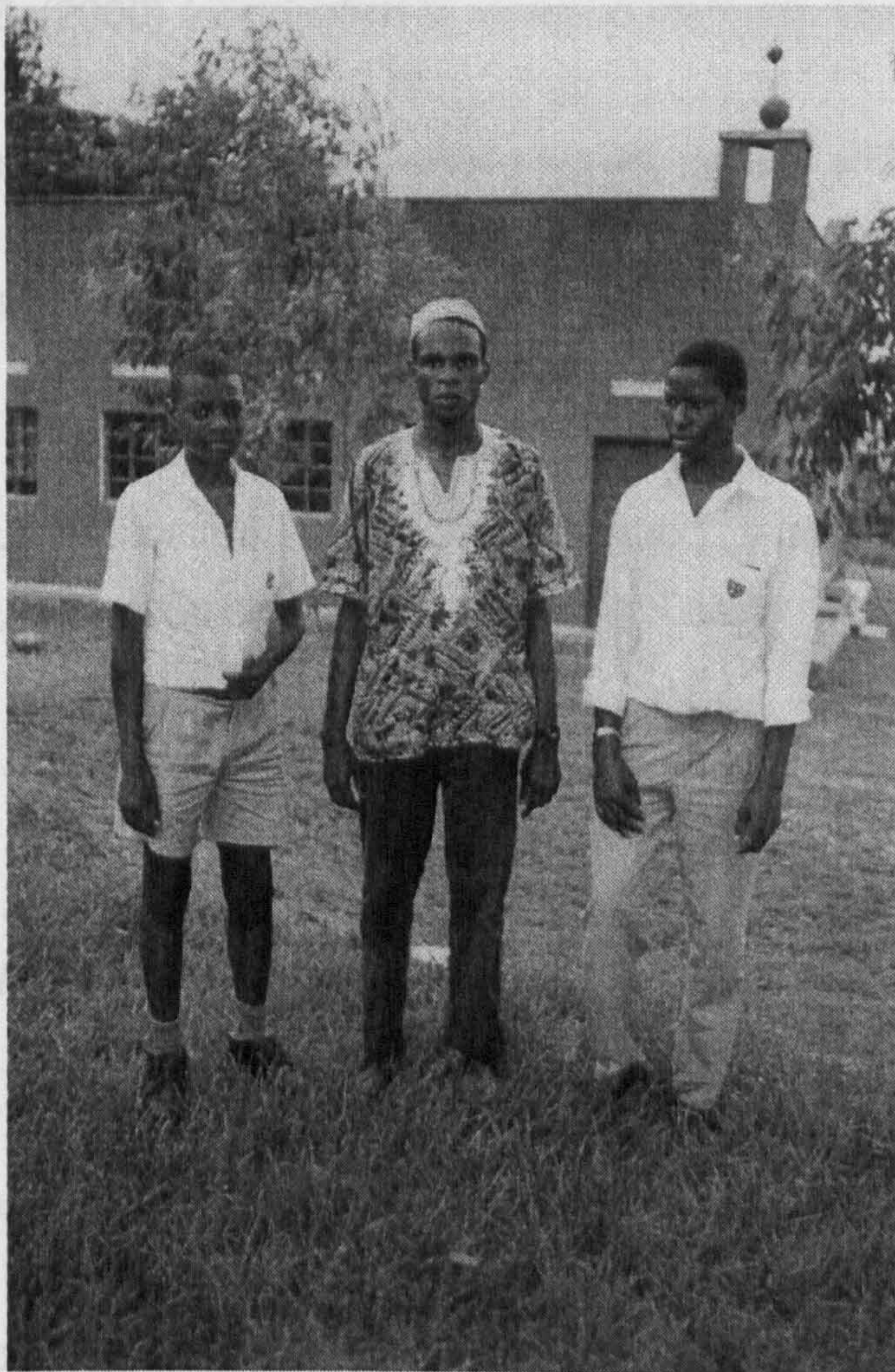
(b) Front view of St Mark's Chapel, the joint chapel at Ntare School.



(c) The mosque at Ntare School (Uganda)



(d) The Imam at Ntare School mosque with Muslim student leaders.



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