

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS: OPPORTUNITIES AND PROBLEMS**

**by**

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

This idea of all education resting upon our relationship to Almighty God, we do not merely give Religious Education because that would seem to imply the possibility of some other education, a secular education. We hold that all education is divine, that every good gift of knowledge and insight comes from above. Religious Education should be for all humanity and that it should form part of our being and find its place in society without judgement or discourse (Mason 2016: 1-3).

Religious Education in South Africa during the 1990s represents a dramatic departure from the religious education, instruction, or introduction of the past. Under the apartheid regime, with its commitment to Christian National Education (Chidester 2006:15), a narrow set of religious interests captured religious education.

In South Africa, with its cultural diverse society, desegregation and the changes in educational systems and educational institutions brought even bigger challenges for educators and curriculum developers (Du Toit 1995: 212-213). Although all education was supposed to include a Christian national ethos, religious education, assuming Christian, Bible-based characters, sought to produce distinctive religious outcomes. Religious Education was driven by a particular kind of Christian confessionalism as triumphalism, a confessionalism that required pupils to embrace prescribed religious convictions and a triumphalism that explicitly denigrated adherents of other religions (Chidester 2006: 15).

During the Apartheid regime, Religious Education was directed towards compelling learners to make a confession of faith. According to a manual for Biblical Instruction published in 1990, learners were expected to embrace a particular version of the Christian faith. Not merely acquiring knowledge, “Children must personally accept, and trust for their personal salvation, the triune God introduced to them in the Bible” (Department of Didactics 1990: 30).

Similarly, a syllabus for Religious Education asserted that the aim for the teachers was to ensure that learners, “through belief in the Holy Trinity”, were able to affirm the Apostles’ Creed with sincerity and conviction (Chidester 2006: 15). Religious Education and Biblical Studies under apartheid promoted a Christian triumphalism. As the manual in Biblical Instruction insisted, “a public school must show tolerance and respect for differing doctrinal convictions, as long as there is no denial of Jesus Christ as the Messiah” (Department of Didactics 1990: 19).

In a widely used textbook for Religious Education and Biblical Studies, this Christian triumphalism resulted in claims to a privileged religious ownership of the nation and its public schools by proclaiming that South Africa “is a Christian country and it is only right that our children be taught in the Christian faith in our schools” (Kitshoff & van Wyk 1995: 5), abandoning any pretense for tolerance or respect for differences. (International Handbook of the Religious Morals and Spiritual Dimensions in Education: Pringer. Netherlands)

With the establishment of a non-racial democratic South Africa in 1994, the ANC government accepted the responsibility for creating and sustaining a society in which all religious persuasions enjoyed the freedom to function, without prejudice (<http://www.info.gov.za> – Accessed on 18 June 2012). The new government has adopted a position of non-alignment to any religious tradition or denomination. Unlike the Apartheid dispensation which privileged Calvinistic Christianity, the current South African Constitution guarantees “freedom of conscience, religion,

thought, belief and opinion” (Department of Education: Policy Document 2008: 5). In terms of the National Education Policy Act of 1996 “Every learner and educator shall have the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief, opinion, speech and expression and the education process shall promote a culture of tolerance”. Religious Observances at public schools have been ensured through the South African Schools Act of 1996.

The latter offers guarantees for the conducting of religious observances at public schools provided that such practices are done fairly and attendance by learners and staff members is free and optional. The new Constitution of 4 December 1996 also provides for the establishment of a commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities. The new educational authorities have come to realize that to address the educational inequalities and injustices of the past, it was necessary to adjust and transform the education system (<http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/interreligious.html> - Accessed on 18 June 2014).

The government placed great emphasis on the development of regulatory policy frameworks to facilitate change, including the establishment of organizations and institutions that created the conditions and structures for effective transformation and reform. During the transformation phase, the Minister of Education Kader Asmal set out to dismantle apartheid structures and creating a unified education system, creating a system that is financially viable, and create a policy framework of values that underpinned the post-apartheid system (<http://www.info.gov.za> – Accessed on 26 February 2011). Thus a new dispensation dawned in the South African school context regarding Religious Education.

## **1.2 Relevance**

During 2002, the South African government decided that Religious Education forms part of Life Orientation. As the curriculum for Religious Education was

developed, learning about religion was located in the context of social development, situated in Life Orientation of Grade R-9 where learners are taught about human rights, democratic participation, diversity, and community involvement (National Policy: Religion and Education January 2008).

To give sense of proportion, however, we need to recognize that the curriculum has actually allowed very little time and space for this educational activity. In Grade R-9, the learning area of Life Orientation includes five outcomes: Health Promotion, Social Development, Personal Development, and Physical Development and Movement and Social Development.

In the learning area only 8 percent of teaching time of the total curriculum has been allocated to Life Orientation. However, Social Development account for 2 percent and Religious Education which resides within the assessment standard for Social Development accounts only for 0.5 percent of the overall curriculum (National Curriculum Statement 2005). Although these calculations cannot be applied mechanically, we can only conclude that Religious Education, the focus of so much controversy and contestation, actually has a very small share of the general curriculum in South African schools. (<http://folk.uio.no/leirvik/OsloCoalition/DavidChidester.htm> - Accessed on 16 February 2009).

### **1.3 Pre-Apartheid Education in South Africa (1948 – 1994)**

Before 1880 education was provided sparingly and unevenly for the children of settlers. There were a few private farms schools and a few boarding schools. These schools were of poor quality, and were run by people without educational training (Hattersley 1936: 226-231). Geographically isolated children were privately tutored to further their education.

The government provided a coherent system of education as early as 1849. In the 1860's and 1870's secondary schools began to develop their own systems in response to the concerns of parents and government.

The earliest European schools in South Africa were established in the Cape Colony in the late seventeenth century by Dutch Reformed Churches who were committed to Biblical Instruction. In the rural areas teachers taught basic literacy and mathematic skills. (Apartheid and Education in South Africa: Select Analyses. Shawn Woodhouse, *Western Journal of Black Studies*, 27(2), 89-97). Throughout this time most religious schools in the Eastern Cape accepted Xhosa speaking students. In Natal many Nguni speaking students were sent to mission schools. African societies placed strong emphasis on traditional forms of education well before the arrival of Europeans.

The Khoisan and Bantu-speaking societies placed a lot of emphasis on the transmission of cultural values and skills within the traditional sphere. Traditional education focused mainly on oral history, tales, treachery and the practice of skills for basic survival. In the Nguni-speaking community, they acquired knowledge and skills which were vital for survival. Religious leaders had positions of prestige in the community. In all other school settings, the transmission of religious values was a vital element of education (Abdi 2003: 89-97).

#### **1.4 Early development**

The earliest mission schools aimed to teach the students literacy, social and religious values, while the schools for European immigrants aimed to preserve the values of previous generations. In the twentieth century, the education system in South Africa assumed economic importance as it prepared young black Africans for low-wage labor and protected the privileged white minority from competition.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century the Afrikaners found their identity and security. With the arrival of the Union, the four self-governing provinces excluded blacks from socio-political participation. Further emphasizing apartheid education and growing racism (Jansen 1990: 200). White politicians and educationalist have recognized the connection between curriculum content and ideology over the years.

From the 1950s to the mid-1990s, no other social institution reflected the government's racial philosophy of Apartheid more clearly than the education system. Schools were required to teach and practice Apartheid and were vulnerable to the weakness of the education systems. During the 1980s many black people were committed to destroy the school system, because of its identity with Apartheid. Student's strikes and vandalism caused great harm to the schools and seriously undermined the schools ability to function. In the 1990s, shortages of teachers, classrooms, and equipment had taken a further toll on education. (Abdi 2003: Apartheid and Education in South Africa: Select Analyses. Shawn Woodhouse, *Western Journal of Black Studies*, 27(2), 89-97).

This curriculum is an example of a power relationship. The curriculum of the four provinces and the Union of South Africa was a blend of African nationalism and religion (Bosch 1986: 209). Bosch (1986: 212) points out that for the first time in South African history, you encounter sustained theological arguments according to which Afrikaners should neither associate with nor break down the walls of racial separation instituted by God. The use of education as political tools is less sustainable because apartheid had become normal and institutionalized. White supremacy was evident in the curriculum, textbooks and learning material (Jansen 1990: 202). Although the curriculum between white and black schools at the time was the same, it did not change the impact of a skills orientated curriculum. It did not change or challenge social and political power structures of apartheid (Jansen 1990: 202).

## 1.5 Bantu Education

Education existed in South Africa long before the Dutch arrived in 1652. During that time Black education was thought by community leaders, by way of storytelling based on cultural transmission that was also closely linked to real life experiences. European settlers introduced slave education based on Christian religious instruction.

Until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, most non-whites were subjected to missionary schooling. By the 1923 it was compulsory for whites to undergo a minimum of seven years of schooling directly provided or subsidized by the ruling party at the time. While it remained optional and exceptionally challenging for blacks to pursue an education (Malherbe 1925: 401). In 1948, the National Party came into power with a strong apartheid agenda of white supremacy and systematic marginalization and exclusion of all black South Africans. The Bantu Educational Act of 1953 was aimed at creating unskilled black laborers. The reason for an inferior education system for blacks was reinforced by the then Minister of Native Affairs, Hendrik Verwoerd, who became known as the architect of apartheid (Pampallis 1991: 184). Verwoerd made it clear, that there is no place for blacks in the Afrikaner community and by providing them with an inferior education system, they will always be behind their white counter parts.

The history of Black education in South African went through five major developmental phases (Jansen 1990: 12-16). Namely traditional African education, slave education, mission education, native education and Bantu education, introduced in 1953. Jansen goes further and described that these phases illustrates the function education played to validate the inequalities and marginalization of blacks (Jansen 1990: 196-201).

Bantu Education was a new form of education created only for black South Africans in 1953. The Bantu Education Act (No. 47) of 1953 was to ensure that

black South African only learn things that the government wanted them to learn. Learners had to go to school only for three hours a day, two shifts of learners every day. It was to be separated entirely from Education itself. During the Apartheid era, only missionary schools accepted black African learners, and refused to implement Bantu Education into their schools.

The government decided that the Education System for all Africans should suite the Bantu environment, which was conditioned by Bantu tradition and tribal ethics. Missionary schools were against the new education system, but were forced to conform or to close down. Various church bodies expressed their view on the subject. Most of the churches in the country condemned the Bantu Education system. Mission schools were in a dilemma, a dilemma because it involved making decisions which would affect the lives of children (Baard & Schreiner 1986:14).

There were visible differences in education by 1889, namely:

- Afrikaners increasingly feared being forced into subservience to the British;
- Whites increasingly competed with blacks for employment;
- The drought in 1880s intensified the need for an education system that could improve the economy and political status of whites over black people (Jansen 1990: 198).

It should be understood that education was used as a vehicle to maintain dominance and Afrikaner superiority. Afrikaners at the time were unsophisticated and barely literate. Education was one ways of holding on to that superiority they had over the black people of South Africa (Bosch 1986: 205).



## 1.6 Christian National Education

Christian National Education (CNE) as an ideology is not unique in world history. The history of religion pays testimony, that religion used a variety of educational and political means to promote itself. Cook (2005: 6) illustrates that the mixture of religious and territorial conquests shaped early Islam. Mamdani (1996: 102-103) tells the story of religious history of a modern nation and its relationship with culture and the notion of superiority. It refers to the role of religion and the mentality of the Afrikaner. Bosch (1986: 208) explains that many decades, the National party and the Dutch Reformed Churches were seen as jointly responsible for keeping the separate religious circle intact.

These alliances were forged to strengthen the weak spots and the morale of the people. After the National Party came into power in 1948, the entire legislative machinery was coupled with this one purpose in mind, namely, to safeguard Afrikaner identity and for all so that it would never again be exposed defenselessly to the onslaughts of the outside world (Bosch 1986: 209).

## 1.7 Problem statement

In democratic, multi-cultural and multi-faith societies like South Africa, Religious Education is a controversial school learning area. Pre-apartheid the learning area was a subject on its own. Post-apartheid the learning area forms part of Life Orientation which is a compulsory subject from grade 4 to 12. Religious Education creates tension between the Church, Society and education. Since our democracy in 1994 the Minister of Education has been at the fore front of religious reform in public education in South Africa.

The Minister and the Department of Education are responsible for the development of all learning material in this regard. Realizing that South Africa is a multi-faith society post-apartheid the government concerned itself with the

challenge of developing a curriculum that will benefit all. How can opportunities and problems conceptualized to enlighten Religious Education in South Africa. The problem statement of this study is Religious Education in South African Schools. Is it necessary, how it is presented in the curriculum and how it should be dealt with in South African schools?

Religious Education is necessary because it makes a big contribution to the school curriculum. It promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners. (<http://www.salford.gov.uk> – accessed on 14 June 2012). Religious Education informs our values and these values are reflected in our attitudes towards life and our beliefs in God.

Furthermore, how we deal with reality and what it means to be human. In practice, the study of religion is nonexistent because only 0.5 percent of teaching time is being used to teach Religious Education in Grade R-9. It is somehow assumed that religion seems to be irrelevant to the development of learners in South Africa public schools.

## 1.8 Time allocation per week:

### 1.8.1 Foundation Phase

SUBJECT	GRADE R (HOURS)	GRADE 1-2 (HOURS)	GRADE 3 (HOURS)
Home Language	10	7/8	7/8
First Additional Language		2/3	3/4
Mathematics	7	7	7
Life Skills	6	6	7

(Revised National Curriculum Statement Grade R-3 2005: 11)

### 1.8.2 Intermediate Phase

SUBJECT	HOURS PER WEEK
Home Language	6
First Additional Language	5
Mathematics	6
Natural Sciences and Technology	3,5
Social Sciences	3
Life Skills	4

(Revised National Curriculum Statement Grade R-3 2005: 18)

### 1.8.3 Senior phase

SUBJECT	HOURS PER WEEK
Home Language	5
First Additional Language	4
Mathematics	4,5
Natural Science	3
Social Sciences	3
Technology	2
Economic and Management Sciences	2
Life Orientation	2
Art and Culture	2

(Revised National Curriculum Statement Grade R-3 2005: 26)

## 1.9 Assumption on time allocation

It is clear that from the tables above the time allocated per week to religious education is not enough to make a real impact on the learners. More attention is given to life skills and about 0, 5 percent of the allocated time is spent on religious education. For religious education to make a real difference in the lives of learners, teachers and the surrounding communities, the focus should be placed on teaching the learners real morals and values.

This is a major challenge for Life Orientation as a learning area. The major concern is that the attitudes of schools is not conducive to the successful implementation of Life Orientation (Van Deventer 2004: 107-121). The fact the Life Orientation is taught by educators that are not specialist is an important aspect. The knowledge and skills these educators possess, may not be in line with the of the curriculum and they might discriminate and inforce their own religious believes on the learners (Talbot 2001: 3-5).

The danger is that if everybody teaches Life Orientation, nobody will teach it, but the learning area will be further incorporated into other learning areas (Van der Walt & De Klerk 2006: 175-193). This would be catastrophic, and the loss of an educational opportunity for Life Orientation to make a vital contribution to learners' success and spiritual well-being.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century learners are faced with many difficult decisions but the curriculum for Life Orientation and Religious Education make provision for the following:

The importance of Religious Education is to enable leaners to:

- learn about different religious and ethical beliefs and practices;

- learn to develop a better understanding why people are motivated to act in the way they do, e.g. engaging in rituals, celebrations, worship and prayer;
- learn to appreciate and reflect openly upon the similarities and differences between various religious views;
- learn about the contributions religion have made to human development over the ages;
- learn to become well balanced and mature citizens who make informed choices about belief and behavior,
- learn to respect people's beliefs and contribute positively to their society and the environment (Revised National Curriculum Statement Grade R-9 2005: 18-19).

Religious education is a deeply controversial assumption, because educational problems occur which cannot be completely ignored by educators. Because South Africa is multicultural and multi religious many different forms of religions exist. Not everyone accepts another persons' religious interpretation; others may accept one or another secular interpretation. People usually don't agree about religion, and sometimes the differences among them often cut deep and cause further disagreement in society (Revised National Curriculum Statement Grade R-9 2005: 20-21)

Yet South African public schools systematically teach students to think about the world in secular ways only. They don't inform them about religious alternatives, apart from what they believe and what they think learners should be exposed to. By so doing public schools are discriminated against and their religious diversity is not recognized which creates further and deeper problems in society. (Nord & Haynes 1999: 8-9). Religious Education should strive to create tolerance, dialogue and appreciation for diversity. However, we must also bear in mind that we would always be faced with possibilities and problems.

## **1.10 Possibilities for the advancement of learners**

The place of Religious Education in the South Africa school curriculum is guaranteed by law (Constitution of The Republic of South Africa No 108 of 1996, Chapter 1 of The bill of Rights, Section 9 sub-section 3, Issue No 32: 7); however it is important to setup a curriculum that provides for the exposure to different religions to win over the support of educational professionals, faith communities, parents and school governing bodies. Reasons include Religious Education within the South African school curriculum above all:

### **1.10.1 Promoting self-esteem**

It is important for children to have a sense of security, emotional stability and to feel part of the school community. For this to happen, the school must demonstrate its understanding and respect for family, community and religious background of its learners. Children must feel free to talk openly about their beliefs and practices. Religious Education should form part of school life where the diversity of beliefs and practices are protected. The religious differences within the school and community should be understood and appreciated.

### **1.10.2 Cultivating tolerance through understanding**

According to Paula Freire's (2005), *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, "Education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes the practice of freedom" (Freire 2005:34). What Freire and others concerned with education neglect to mention is the role of religious education. Although Religious Education has been argued to be divisive and inappropriate for the government school environment, educational curriculums that do not include multi-faith education can perpetuate ignorance (Miller & Engel 2011: 4).

Ignorance about religion can lead to intolerance and injustice, as history has shown. It is therefore the responsibility of schools to prevent ignorance, which leads to intolerance. It is imperative for children who are growing up in a diverse society to be exposed to accurate and sympathetic knowledge of the beliefs and practices of their fellow citizens (Miller & Engel 2011: 4-5).

### **1.10.3 Facilitating spiritual developments**

There is also concern from parents for involvement of the school in their children's spiritual development. The reason for this concern is because there is a connection between religion and spirituality. Parents might fear that the spiritual development will guide learners towards specific religious beliefs and practices. However, spiritual development does not necessarily mean this. The spiritual development of a learner will indeed form a connection and growth within their religious tradition. Where this is the case the school should be respectful of such development. However, for some learners spiritual development relates to something completely different from the existing curriculum. Spiritual development might develop aesthetic and moral sensitivity, to search for meaning, purpose and values in life. Spiritual development in this sense is part of the general school education; religious education, however, has an important contribution to make (Van Deventer 2004: 131-146).

### **1.10.4 Facilitating moral development**

Religious Education and moral education are not synonymous. The promotion of moral development of learners is the responsibility of parents and teachers in all areas of school life. However Religious Education does have a particular role to play in this regard. Learners should be taught about morality and acquire the necessary vocabulary to participate in moral discourse. They should familiarize themselves with words like right and wrong, good and evil, honesty, integrity,

justice, loyalty and honor. Learners will come to understand that moral decision making is not always possible (Rooth 2005: 89-103).

Moral education also involves nurturing in learners a sense of justice, social responsibility, sympathy for the wronged and the suffering. This may be facilitated by encouraging them to work cooperatively, by offering them good role models, by presenting them with examples of the consequences of evil.

Schools can contribute a lot to the moral development of their learners, through the curriculum and through its involvement in social and charitable activity within in the community. Learners must see that teachers and other adults can behave politely and respectfully towards each other and the learners (Botha 2002: 361-371).

Nonetheless, there are a number of possible problems regarding the practice of Religious Education that parents, learners or educators could face that this study will focus on (Everington 1996: 70).

- a) The educator's focus in public schools is more on Religious Instruction rather than Religious Education. The educator in this case promotes one religion or a set of religious beliefs. For example, when a Muslim educator tries to teach learners how to pray as Muslims do the educator would have gone against the policy and the Constitution. In this case the school, parents and learners should remind the educator that Religious Instruction is not acceptable in a Religious Education class (Everington 1996: 70).
- b) The educator must be prepared to teach Religious Education if called upon to do so. The Educators may not refuse. Learners and their parents may demand from the school that educators be provided to teach Religious Education (Everington 1996: 70).



- c) The learners who wish to wear religious symbols to school, for example the Catholic cross, Muslim headscarf, Hindu nose ring or Rastafarian dreadlocks. While this issue does not fall directly within the topic of Religious Education, it is a problem that may be faced by learner's, parents and educators. It is stipulated in the South African School of 1996 (National guidelines on school uniforms 2006: 6-7), that a school uniform or dress code should take into account religious and cultural diversity within the school community. The policy also places an emphasis on measures that should be in place to accommodate learners whose religious beliefs are compromised by a uniform requirement. The Draft National Policy on School Uniforms talks about the issue of protecting pupil's religious expression. Learners must be allowed to wear clothes that they believe are necessary in terms of their religious beliefs. In terms of the Constitution learners should not be denied to the choice to wear their scarves and yarmulkes which form part of their religious practice and obligations to a particular religion. However The Draft National Policy on School Uniform does not mention any other religious clothing except for scarves and yarmulkes (Everington 1996: 71).
- d) Educators discriminate against learners on the basis of their religion. No learners should be discriminated against by educators because of their religious beliefs. For example the educator should not treat a person or a group differently because of what they do or do not believe. It is possible that this kind of discrimination can take place during Religious Education (Everington 1996: 71).
- e) A learner does not wish to take part in religious observance during assemblies. While learners are encouraged to take part in all activities at school, some learners may feel that their freedom of conscience is violated when religious observances are held during assemblies. But not only may these learners in particular, but other learners, who are not affiliated to any

religion, have a problem. Learners cannot be forced to take part in religious observance of a religion that is not their own (Everington 1996: 71-72).

- f) Educators may have a standardized idea of certain religions or adherents. It is possible to think that stereotyping of religious concepts and ideas would take place during Religious Education (Everington 1996: 71-72).

South Africa's democracy and Constitution is very young. The Policy for Religion Education and Life Orientation 2005 is even younger. Therefore, it is likely that there will be problems, mistakes and oversights that will take place. The challenges of participation in a multicultural and multi-religious society is in the process of teaching and learning. Through such participations, learners can explore the diversity of religion and culture in the safety of our public schools systems (Chidester 1997: 161-167).

## **1.11 Objective and aims**

### **1.11.1 Objective**

The objective of this study is to identify the relationship between religion and education in the South African School Curriculum in order to determine opportunities and problems for Religious Education.

### **1.11.2 Aims**

The important aims of this study are the following:

- study the History of Education in South African public school before and after 1994;
- study and evaluate the National Curriculum for Religious Education;

- study the different Religious Education models as we find them in other multicultural countries; to identify the possibilities and problems the Education Department face with regard to this learning area;
- study the opinions of selected individual (Academics and Educators), religious leaders and the South African Society;
- make suggestions to improve Religious Education in an ever changing world,

### **1.12 Methodology**

This is a literature study; this kind of research is done through research of information captured in books, journals, articles and newspaper articles, about the subject or concepts related to the research problem or statement. The first part of this study will examine the history of religion in South Africa, focusing on the role of the Church and Government in the development of the learning area. This will involve the study and analysis of relevant literature and articles.

Mc Millan & Schumacher (1992: 112) wrote that a literary study is an interpretive review of the literature, a summary and synthesis of relevant literature on a research problem.

This study will focus on the critical evaluation of the Life Orientation and Religious Educations policies. It will identify problems within the implementation process and make suggest possible solutions.

### **1.13 Hypothesis**

The Life Orientation and Religious Education Policy was never intended to be udes to create unity in society, community, schools and one self, but intends that religion in education flows directly from the constitutional values of citizenship,

human rights, equality, freedom from discrimination, and freedom of conscience, beliefs and opinion. The constitution provides only a framework for determining the relationship between religion and education in a democratic society. This study will look into the past, present and future and determine whether the provisions made by the constitution and the policies created promoted the core values of a democratic society, through the curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

#### **1.14 Scope of enquiry**

Religion has been central to human history and the diversity of civilizations. The need to understand religion and its function in South African public schools, has never been more pressing than it is today. There is a greater need to assess the environment in which the policy is being used for. The department and other stakeholders should be in constant communication with each other, to improve and adjust the policy where needed. Only through communication and respect will religious tolerance be accomplished.

#### **1.15 Outline of chapters**

Chapter 1: Provides an introduction to the importance of Religious Education which includes relevance, the problem statement, aims, objectives, methodology, terms and chapter outlines and the key concepts are discussed for the purpose of this research.

Chapter 2: Offers a background to Education in pre and post-apartheid South Africa. The different Educational Policies are studied and evaluated.

Chapter 3: Discusses the history of Religious Education in South African public schools, the new curriculum, the implementation, effects and impact thereof. The implementation of the new Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement 2012 in

Government Schools, with particular reference to Religious Education in grade 10-12.

Chapter 4: Deals with the different models of religious education in other countries.

Chapter 5: discusses the advantages and disadvantages of the Religious Education in schools. It will also address the problems and possibilities that the new CAPS documents pose to the educator and learners.

Chapter 6: Will deal with suggestions to improve religious education in a changing society and a summary on findings and recommendations.

## **1.16 Definition of terms**

### **1.16.1 Bible Education**

Bible Education was the former term for Religious Education in the South African education system. The term was introduced into South African government schools in 1985 (Gramley & Van der Merwe 1958: 3). The subject Bible Education focused on the Bible and Christianity. Bible Education in South African schools was more formative and less academic than Biblical Studies. Bible Education was a compulsory non-examination subject that was taught throughout the schools (Botha 1980: 64).

### **1.16.2 Biblical Studies**

Biblical Studies, on the other hand, was a subject that focused on the systematic, scientific study of the Old and New Testament. This subject was more academic and less formative than Religious Education of Bible Education. Religious

Education and Bible Education were compulsory in public schools for all students except for those to whom exception had been granted (Botha 1980: 64).

### **1.16.3 Education**

Pearsall (1999: 455) defines education as the theory and practice of teaching and training in a particular subject (Pearsall 1999: 455).

### **1.16.4 Religious Education**

Religious Education is currently known as Religion Studies. In this dissertation I decided to use the new term over those of more recent origin. The reason behind this was that it enables one to distinguish the formative subject known as 'Religion Studies' from the academically-orientated and elective subject 'Biblical Studies' which was introduced in the 1860s, in the context of Christian National Education. This is also an academic subject and a university elective subject.

### **1.16.5 Religious Instruction**

Religious Instruction teaches about a particular religion and teacher students how to be a good follower of that particular religion.

### **1.16.6 Religious Observance**

Religious observance aims to promote the spiritual development of all members of a school community. Religious observance refers to those activities in the school that provide teachers and students with opportunities for collective worship. (Na-eem Jeenah, Religion and School Booklet – <http://www.erp.org.za/pdf/religion> - accessed on 14 June 2012). For example: prayer, religious singing and devotional scripture reading. (<http://www.erp.org.za/religions/pg17>)

### **1.16.7 Religion Studies**

According to the National Curriculum Statement 2008, the elective Religion Studies is the study of religion as a universal human phenomenon, and of religions found in a variety of cultures. Religion and religions are studied without favoring any one or discriminating against any person, whether in theory or in practice, and without promoting adherence to any particular religion. Religion Studies leads to the recognition, understanding and appreciation of a variety of religions within a common humanity, in the context of a civic understanding of religion, with a view to developing religious literacy.

## CHAPTER 2

# HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

### 2.1 Introduction

The National Party was elected to power in 1948. They immediately started the development of a new education system in South Africa. This system would focus on the needs of the Afrikaans speaking population (Afrikaners). The education system was developed to narrow the gap between the Afrikaans and English speaking population. This gap in the education system occurred at the end of the Second Anglo-Boer War, due to English colonial rule over the entire country. The Anglo Boer War (1899-1902) was between the two white sectors of South Africa, namely the Afrikaans people and others who were sympathetic to their cause. Henrard (2002: 19) describes apartheid as ‘a system of affirmative action for the white population and especially for the Afrikaners. After the Anglo Boer War, the British rule promoted English as the primary language and also ensured that all schools were in effect English medium schools. The result was that the state departments and private sector were mostly in the hands of English speaking people.

With the British “Scorched Earth Policy” (*when the army destroys everything in an area such as food, buildings or equipment which could be useful to an enemy*), during the war most of the farmers lost everything, farms and homelands were destroyed (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/scorched-earth-policy> - Assessed on 13 July 2011). The women and children were placed in concentration camps where thousands died of illness and malnutrition. Through this war time action many Afrikaners were left in poverty after the war. Due to the loss of their farms, homesteads, stock and equipment, Afrikaners were forced



to move to larger economic centers. The relocation provided employment and generated income to support their families in post Anglo-Boer War South Africa.

Due to the influx of people from rural farming communities land was allocated to these people. Poor and over populated suburbs emerged overnight. Work was scarce and the Afrikaners worked long and hard for a very low wage. With over population and limited work opportunities many socio-economic problems arose. Education was one of the main problems. There were not enough schools to accommodate the numbers and not enough money to keep children in schools. Numerous Afrikaner Organizations were established after the war, in order to assist those who lost the most. Politically and economically the Afrikaner was in a very bad position in comparison to the British.

## **2.2 Re-establishing of the Afrikaners (1948)**

This changed in 1948 when the National Party came into power and Afrikaans was established as a medium of instruction. JC Smuts referred to the faith of the Afrikaner, as the faith in their own great destiny. These words were echoed by DR DF Malan, who said that “the history of the Afrikaner reveals a determination and a definiteness of purpose which make one feel that Afrikanerdom is not the work of man, but a creation of God” (Kruger 2003: 104-105). This insistent entreaty grew into the educational vision of the Christian National Education. To reinforce this statement in 1948, the Institute for Christian national Education issued a pamphlet that captured some of the broad principles of Christian National Education. One of these principles stipulated that Afrikaans schools must not merely be mother-tongue schools, but they must be a place where Afrikaner children could be soaked with the Christian and National spiritual culture of the Afrikaner nation. The dual medium struggle has opened their eyes, and there is going to be a struggle about the realization of these ideals. These principles stipulated that there will be no mixing of languages, cultures, races and above all, religion (Marguard 1959: 4).

This 1948 pamphlet describes all the principles of the Christian National Education as follows:

1. All white children should be educated according to the view of life of their parents. This means that Afrikaans-speaking children should have a Christian-National education and furthermore the National spirit of the Afrikaner must be preserved and developed. By Christian, in the context, we mean according to the creed of the three Afrikaner churches.
2. The key subject in school should be religious study of the Bible as interpreted by the three Afrikaner churches and the religious spirit should permeate through all staff and the entire school.
3. Content of Education:
  - All God's creation and man's work must be studied. But the spirit of all teaching must be Christian Nationalism and the subject content should not cultivate anti-Christian or anti-nationalist (Claxton & Carr 2000: 6);
  - Bilingualism cannot be the aim of education;
  - Every nation is rooted in a country allotted to it by God. Geography should aim at giving the pupil a thorough knowledge of his country, in such a way that he will love his country, also when compared and contrasted with others, and be ready to defend it, preserve it from poverty and improve it for future generations (Comber 2000: 46);
  - History should be seen as the fulfilment of God's plan for humanity. God has enjoined each nation its individual task in the fulfilment of His purpose. Young people can only undertake the national task fruitfully if they acquire a true vision of the origin of the nation and of the direction of the national heritage. Next to the mother tongue the

history of the Fatherland is important for cultivating the love of one's own heritage and culture; which in the end leads to nationalism (Carr 2001: 21);

4. Discipline is important as all authority in schools is borrowed from God. The Christian Nationalist end should always be kept In mind (William Myers 2016: 277-287);
5. There must be separate, single-medium schools for Afrikaans and English-speaking children. In each school the right relationship between home, school, church and state should be emphasized:
  - The Home: Education is the right and duty of parents, who must decide, in collaboration with Church and State, what spirit shall impact the school and control schools which will foster their own view of life, they must appoint teachers and keep a watch on the teaching.
  - The Church: The church must exercise the necessary discipline over the doctrine and lives of the teachers. The vigilance must be exercised through the parents. In normal circumstances, the church should not erect schools, but may be compelled to do so;
  - The State: The State must ensure a proper scientific and moral stand in education, and enforce right and obligations in school life. It may not, however determine the directing spirit of education provided that, as judged by God's law, it is not harmful to the state;

6. The teacher:

- Being a substitute for the parent, the teacher does the parents work as the parent himself/herself would do it were he able?
- Our substitutes should be properly trained in Christianity, and in the secular subjects, especially pedagogy. Training College personnel should be Christian and Nationalist.

7. The peace of propaganda also made emphasis on the fact that coloured and native education, would under no circumstances be financed at the expense of the Whites. The task of the Afrikaner is to Christianise the non-White, to teach him to be happy and separate, and instill the Boer nation's view of life.

In the light of the above (Chidester 2003: 265-264) writes that the current policy represents a dramatic departure from the religious education, instruction, or indoctrination of the past. He refers to the objective in the manual of Biblical instruction, that children must personally accept, and entrust their personal salvation in the triune God introduced to them in the Bible (Chidester 2003b: 264).

After 1994 the Afrikaners re-established themselves as a powerful economic group in South Africa. In 1948 the Afrikaner National Party won the election and established itself as the strongest politically. After the victory of the Afrikaner National Party, the first thing to change was the education system. Schools were built to accommodate the many Afrikaans speaking learners. The already established English medium schools had to adjust their curriculum accordingly.

After a few years higher education institutions were established, although English still played a very important role in South Africa.

The National Party government of 1948 made sure that the role Afrikaners played in South Africa gains more importance. With the establishment of schools and university for Afrikaners, it was not long before the state departments and private sector were infiltrated by the Afrikaners.

English and Afrikaans was the main, and later established as official languages for education within the white population of South Africa, and it was seen as a solid foundation with regard to human resources. As with other basic services, the education and training system followed a pattern of contrasts and paradox. South Africa has achieved, the most developed, well-resourced system of education and training on the African continent, with the highest participation rates at all levels of the system. During these years attention was also given to Black – Indian – and Coloured education. This was also the time of separate development and these groups did not participate in the white education system.

In 1971, the NP Government under Prime Minister HF Verwoerd declared South Africa a republic, after winning a whites-only referendum. At that point in time, in virtually every sphere things changed for all non-white South Africans. From housing to education to healthcare, the government took control over black people's lives. HV Verwoerd implemented the Bantu Education Act in black schools, which stipulated that all learners should be taught in Afrikaans.

The consequences of his action lead to the Soweto Uprising of June 16, 1976. During the uprising black learners protested against this wrong and far reaching decision of government. On that day many protesting learners paid the ultimate price. ([www.info.gov.za/aboutsa/history.htm](http://www.info.gov.za/aboutsa/history.htm) -accessed on 20/09/2011).

The vast majority of black, coloured and Indian people stayed in their thousands in townships formally known as locations. Their houses were very small and belonged to the state, the plots were very small and the people literally lived on top of each other. Many townships did not have electricity; most did not have decent sanitation or running water in each house.

The black people could not own property, they did not have the right to vote, they had their own hospitals, schools, and even churches and they were not allowed into white establishments. They worked mainly for white people almost in every sector of society; they worked for the state department as manual laborers. The wages and salaries paid to them were of the lowest in South Africa ([www.info.gov.za/aboutsa/history.htm](http://www.info.gov.za/aboutsa/history.htm) -accessed on 20/09/2011).

There were schools and tertiary institutions for them but in the end the administration and governments of these institutions were done by the whites and the land and buildings belonged to the State. Later large tracts of land, like Transkei, Ciskei, and Venda were allocated to the blacks for self-development, but it was a complete disaster costing millions of rand and this land was eventually reincorporated into South Africa.

Just like the Afrikaner in the struggle to become self-sufficient after the Anglo-Boer War. Black, Indian and Coloured people strived to be equal, to have a right to vote, to truly be a citizen of South Africa to have a true democracy, and to be able to be part of the South Africa's running, steering and governance. They hated separate development ("apartheid") and wanted to be citizens on par with white South Africans.

To achieve this they used organizations like the African National Congress (ANC), South Africa Communist Party (SACP), Pan-African Congress (PAC), and many others, to oppose the government of the day. This "struggle" as it became known had a huge impact on Black South Africans education, and almost a

whole generation got lost with regard to education in the process. The chant of the youth was: “liberation before education”. The white government indeed tried to get the black education system to work, but separate development hampered the whole process. Not enough money was spent on the black education system. There were not enough schools, and not enough properly trained teachers and not enough resources. School, university and other educational institutions became political arenas. (Kallaway & Kruss 1997: 206)

Bantu education and Christian National Education came to an end due to the 1994 transition to a democratic dispensation. The history of education in South Africa illustrates on the one hand education’s role in maintaining notions of white supremacy and on the other hand education as a powerful tool to struggle against white supremacy (Baloyi 2004: 151).

### **2.3 Transformation**

The transition from apartheid to democracy has been described by Tutu (1994) as a despicable model prescribed to a severely damaged society. Christian National Education as described above, was just the educational strategy to enforce apartheid. The number of laws and legislation that were necessary to uphold the social and political order and segregation as predicted by the white minority was massive.

Krüger (2003: 207-264) describes the enormous social engineering process since 1984 in the city of Pretoria. He goes on so say that at the time, no part of the city or the lives of its inhabitants were left untouched by apartheid.

The murder of HF Verwoerd in 1966 signified the “beginning of the end of apartheid”. The rigid reasoning began to unravel. The disentanglement of apartheid caused increased opposition to the white minority nationally and

internationally. This resulted in a revolutionary path to democracy (Krüger 2003: 210).

The first concern in the democratization process was to address the racial configuration of economic well-being of the majority of black South Africans. The second concern was multiparty negotiations and a move to national unity from a deeply divided past (Giliomee 1995: 100 – 101).

In F.W. De Klerk's, former president of the Republic of South Africa, speech in parliament on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 1990, he reinstated the legality of previously banned organizations like the ANC, SACP, PAC and various other organizations. These organizations all worked and fought underground against the ruling National Party. Nelson Mandela, who was in prison since 1962, was set free a few days after De Klerk's speech.

This triggered far reaching events in South Africa. All the parties and organizations started to come together and started having deliberations, debates and congresses to decide on the new road South Africa should take to build a new country for all.

It was clear from the outset that a new, just and fully democratic society needed to be created, in the place of the "old" South Africa with its policy of separate development, "Apartheid". The main talks were concerned with the peaceful transition to democracy.

Education and specifically Christian National Education became central to the apartheid regime's segregation and exclusion programs as discussed above). It comes as no surprise that education, and specifically teachers and students would play a critical part in the mobilization against apartheid and the dismantling thereof (Baloyi 2004: 151-152).



Schools became ungovernable and radical during educational reform in the run up to the 1994 elections (Ramphela 2001: 7). The period of 1989 – 1993 was described by Unterhalter (1998: 355) as a “process of moving two steps forward and one step back”.

The apartheid regime consulted with social forces demanding the complete overhaul of the apartheid state. This process of educational reform resulted in Policy changes and the publication of stakeholders defining the process and its contents. During this period educational change was viewed by the bureaucrats in the administration, representatives of corporate interest in civil society, white trade unions and senior management in large firms.

They focused mainly on economic rationality, social justice, and the inequalities between certain segments in the markets (Unterhalter 1998: 356). The state was seen as a neutral facilitator and the gendering of skills were not addressed at all.

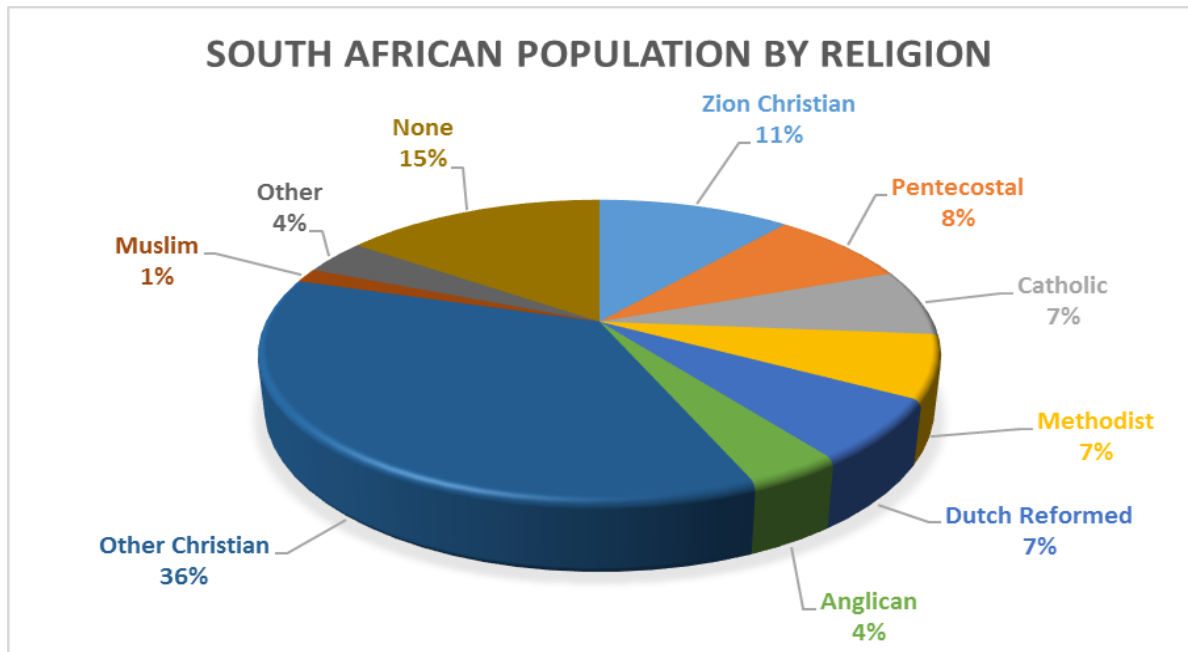
Educational renewal strategy developed a report that was an attempt to move away from the apartheid education (Sedibe 1998: 270). This report focused on the dismantling of the apartheid schooling system and the enormous discrepancy in the provision for black and white education.

The report was however criticized for its vague recommendations about the governance and administration of the education system and its silence about the issues of class, race, religion, gender and inequalities in education (Sedibe 1998: 271).

The African National Congress and Congress for South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) saw education and training as a vehicle to improve productivity and economic rationality. It was also a medium to try and eradicate the injustices of the past, which were connected with ideas about economic regeneration

(Unterhalter 1998: 358). The Centre for Education Policy played an important role in advancing Universalist notions in human rights (Unterhalter 1998: 359).

## 2.4 Religious Demography (2012)



**Figure 1: Statistics South Africa: Population by Religion**

(<http://www.biblebeliever.co.za/South20Africa%20Stats.html>)

## 2.5 Religious Freedom

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and other laws and policies contribute to the general free practice of religion in South Africa. The law protects the right against abuse by the government. The Bill of Rights prohibits government from unfairly discriminating directly or indirectly against anyone on the bases of religion. It states that no person belonging to a religious community may be discriminated against. The right to practice these religions may under no circumstances be denied.

Any person belonging to a religious community may form religious associations with other members of that particular community. Discrimination against a person on the grounds of religious freedom, is seen as a direct infringement of that person's religious freedom and may be taken to the Constitutional Court. The Constitution is religion-neutral. Laws were passed in 2000 that prohibits unfair discrimination on the grounds of religion and the promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (Equality Act).

Good Friday and Christmas are recognized as national holidays. All other religious groups are allowed to celebrate their own religious holidays without interference by the government. Religious groups are not required by law to be registered and qualify as Public Benefit Organizations exempt from income tax.

The government allows, but does not require, religious education in public schools, however, religious instruction, or the advocating of the doctrine of a particular group, is not permitted in public schools. The government respect religious freedom and in October 2007 promoted religious tolerance in a decision by the Constitutional Court.

The Constitutional Court ruled that the Durban Girls High School discriminated against a student's rights to voluntary practice her Hindu religious beliefs. The high school's code of conducts prohibited wearing jewelry and thus has the potential for indirect discrimination because it allowed certain groups of learners to express their religious and cultural identity freely, while denying that rights to others (Smit 2006: 515-528).

A new democratic South Africa has brought awareness of the diverse nature of the country. Handling diversity effectively in education, schools, educators and learners need to recognize and respect differences in society. It requires the reappraisal of personal and institutional ideologies and perception. There is a

need for dedicated educators to facilitate and manage learner diversity (Meier 2009: 180-192).

## **2.6 Transformation: Education and Training**

Education is a basic human right and government is obliged to ensure that rights are afforded to all South Africans, regardless of race, class, gender, creed or age. The choice to be educated also includes the choice of language, culture and religion. During the transformation stage in 1992, it was clear that an education system must be designed to benefit and empower all South Africans and to eradicate the injustices of the past. An education system that is truly democratic, free from any form of bias and discrimination. It was imperative that all South Africans understood each other's history, culture, values, aspiration and also their fears that they may have.

A huge and daunting task lay ahead for the new government at all levels of society and especially in education. The Reconstruction and Development of the Education and Training Programs published a paper in 1993 addressing the problems of how to best rectify the Education System in South Africa. The Ministry of Education took as their starting point the 1993 constitution in particular the closing paragraph that reads as follows:

*“This Constitution provides the historic bridge between the past of a deeply divided society characterized by conflict, suffering and injustice, and a future founded on the recognition of human rights, democracy and peaceful co-existence and equal opportunities for all South Africans, irrespective of colour, race, class, religious beliefs and sex.”* The adoption of this constitution lays the secure foundation for people of South Africa to transcend the divisions of the past, which generated gross violation of human rights, the transgression of humanitarian principles in violent conflict and a legacy of hatred, fear,

intolerance, guilt and revenge.

[www.policy.org.za/govdocs/whitepapers.educ2html](http://www.policy.org.za/govdocs/whitepapers.educ2html)

With this in mind the new Minister of Education Sibusiso Bengu started an Education and Training Program by addressing the problems of the various educational departments that existed in the previous dispensation. In 1983 there were three separate education system for Indians, Coloureds, and Whites. The Whites again were divided into four provincial education departments; South Africa at that stage had four provinces.

The Black South Africans were divided into six governing educational departments and a central department for Black people living in the rest of South Africa and there were four independent state departments and a National Department of Education to oversee all the other departments. Education was indeed fragmented but as previously shown the result and excellent education for White learners were there to show the rest of the world that South Africa has a good education system. In 1994 the first truly democratic election was held in South Africa. Nelson Mandela was sworn in as the President of the Republic of South Africa in May 1994.

The challenge to change education then accelerated and a new education department was immediately instated. The transition of the old education department into a new non-racial system and the separate identities of the old departments had to disappear. The duty of the government was to purge the apartheid curriculum of its most offensive racial and outdated content (Jansen 1999: 57).

There had to be a commitment of all South Africans to make the system work. The work started in 1993 was intensified and there were many changes, one of the big changes was the implementation of a new system. Curriculum reform intended to compensate the people that experienced loss and suffering during

apartheid. The new government needed to validate their actions, to the people of South Africa and the international community.

They were confronted with deep-rooted structural conditions, ethnic cleansing, international capitalism and regional conflict (Jansen 1990a: 31-32).

In exploring South African school curriculum since apartheid, it has been confirmed many a time that all curricula are ideologically laden and publically motivated (Jansen 1990a: 34). Jansen (1995: 57) refers to the symbolic values that change in school curriculum hold in transition societies. The framework of a transitional society with regard to curriculum reform, is not concerned with learning objectives, content, teaching strategies and assessment procedures, but with addressing political constraints, conflict and compromises in and around the government (Jansen 1999: 58).

Education was part of apartheid policies and legislation and the struggle against apartheid and the violence that erupted between the different oppositional forces, may have been ethnical or a mixture of elements in those days of the struggle (Ntshoe 2002: 62). In the 1970's and 1980's learners took to the streets to protest against an education system called 'People's Education for People's Power' which challenged the apartheid regime. While education was used by the apartheid system to indoctrinate and subordinate the natives into servants. The forces opposing apartheid were using schools, teacher colleges and universities as localities of opposition and protest (Ntshoe 2002: 63).

During this time education became the center of political struggle in South Africa. Violent anti-apartheid protest were held in schools throughout South Africa. "Liberation before Education" was the protest mantra that became the battle call throughout South Africa (Ntshoe 2002: 64). Ntshoe (2002: 63) refers to the fact that apartheid created 'a taxonomy of racial classifications'. I believe that the struggle created its own scheme of classification and the distinction between

justified belief and opinions. A culture of violence arose in schools as part of the resistance and was carried over into the learning climate and the way education was viewed.

The culture of violence within the schools did not by any means disappear after 1994. It had great impact on the developmental processes of drafting policies going forward.

Mary Metcalfe, the chairperson of the Curriculum Technical Sub-Committee, proposed a 'short-term' syllabus revision as one way of dealing with the educational crisis (Jansen 1999: 59). This lasted until the post-election period and under direction of the Minister. The essential changes to the syllabuses were made swiftly and in such a way, that the introduction of new textbooks would not be necessary.

The Curriculum 2005 was used as an example of one of the small changes that was made that still effects the whole of South Africa today. As explained in the 1993 paper the new education department fortunately had the best expertise and experience of the old departments. But there were still educational NGO's, community based organizations of education, schools and colleges outside official education systems that had to be incorporated. With their inclusion they provided the new Education Department with new policy research, curriculum design and development, teaching, assessment, evaluation, in service teacher education, educational material production, textbooks, educational media and practical experience in the delivery of education of the neglected communities. (South African History Online – [www.sahistory.org.za](http://www.sahistory.org.za) – assessed on 18 September 2015).

Education Change and Transformation in South Africa, a review in 1994-2001 by the new Department of Education (May 2001) with preface and introduction by

the Minister of Education, Kadir Asmal stated that the Ministry of Education has in 1999 three interrelated tasks:

- dismantling apartheid structures and creating a unified education system;
- creating a more equitable system of financing with limited financial resources;
- Creating a policy framework which gave concrete expression to the values that underpinned the post-apartheid statutes.

## 2.7 New policies

Sibusiso Bengu (1994-1999), the Minister of Education during the first democratic rule was determined to create a sound legislative policy framework for educational transformation. Key policies and legislations in this phase included the following: (South African History Online – [www.sahistory.org.za](http://www.sahistory.org.za) – assessed on 18 September 2012)

1. The SA Constitution (1996) required that education be transformed and democratized in accordance with the values of human dignity, equality, human rights and freedom, non-racism and non-sexism. It guarantees access to a basic education for all through the provision that everyone has the right to basic education, including adult basic education. The fundamental policy framework of the Ministry of Education is set out in the ministry's first white paper, Education and Training in a democratic South Africa.

This was a first step to develop a new system (February 1995). This document was used by the African National Congress in 1994 as the educational policy framework. This policy document was approved by cabinet and has served as the principal reference point for subsequent policy and legislative development.



2. The National Education Policy Acts (NEPA) 1996, were designed to inscribe in law the policy, legislative and monitoring responsibility of the Minister of Education and to formalize the relations between national and provincial authorities. It established the Council of Education Ministers (CEM) and Heads of Educational Departments Committee as inter-governmental forums to collaborate in developing a new educational system for all South Africans. It should provide quality assurance for policies in general, further education and training, curriculum, assessment and the language policy. NEPA embodies the principle of co-operative governance, elaborated in Schedule Three of the South African Constitution (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa No. 108 of 1996: 1331).
3. The South African Schools Act (1996) (“the act”), was drafted to promote access, quality and democratic governance in the schooling system. The act ensures that all learners have the right to quality education without discrimination, and stipulates compulsory schooling for all learners aged between 7-14 years. It provides for two types of schooling: (1) independent schools (2) public schools. The act provides guidelines for democratic school governance through governing bodies in public schools countrywide.
4. The Further Education and Training Act (1998), Education white paper on FET (1998) and the national strategy of FET (1999 – 2001), which provide the basis for developing a nationally coordinated effort to further education and training systems, comprising of senior secondary component of schooling and technical colleges. It requires that further education and training institutions, created in terms of the new legislation, develop institutional plans, and provides for programmed-based funding and a national curriculum for learning and teaching.
5. The Higher Education Act (1997), which makes provision for a unified and nationally planned system of higher education and created a statutory Council

on Higher Education (CHE) which provides advice to the minister and is responsible for quality assurance and promotion. The Higher Education Act and the Education White Paper 3 on Higher Education (1999) formed the basis for transformation of the education sector through an institutional planning and budgeting framework. This culminated into the National Plan in Higher Education in 2001.

6. The Employment of Educators Act (1998), was introduced to regulate the professional, moral and ethical responsibilities and competencies of teachers. The historically divided teaching force is now governed by one Act of Parliament and one professional council, namely the South African Council of Educators (SACE).
7. The Adult Basic Education and Training Act (2000) (ABET), which provides for the establishment of public and private adult learning centers, funding for ABET, the governance of public centers, and quality assurance mechanisms for the sector.
8. The South African Qualifications Authority Act (SAQA) 1995 that provides for the creation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which established the scaffolding of a national education system that integrates education and training at all levels.
9. Curriculum 2005 was envisaged for general education as a move away from racist, apartheid, rote models of learning and teaching to a liberating, nation building and learner centered outcomes. In line with training strategies, the re-formulation is intended to allow greater mobility between different levels and institutional sites, and the integration of knowledge and skills through learning pathways. Its assessment, qualifications, competency, and skill-based framework encouraged the development of curriculum models aligned

to the NQF in theory and in practice. Policy and legislation acted as levels for fundamental changes in the first years, as the indicators below illustrate:

- Access to primary and secondary schooling improved significantly, with 86% enrolment in primary and secondary schooling in 1998.  
([www.policy.org.za/govdocs/reports/education/achieve.html](http://www.policy.org.za/govdocs/reports/education/achieve.html))
- There was a considerable improvement in the qualifications of educators, with the proportion of under-qualified educators reduced from 36% in 1994 to 26% in 1998.
- Educators have been redistributed, through redeployment and post provisioning strategies, to areas of greater need. This has led to vast improvements in establishing more equitable learner and educator ratios from an average of 47:1 in 1994 to 35:1 in 2000.
- Per capita expenditure on learners showed significant convergence across provinces, and overall increase from R 2 222 in 1994 to R 3 253 in 2000.
- Improvements in inter-provincial equity have been achieved by utilizing the inter-governmental fiscal framework and Equitable Shares Formula.
- Expenditure in the Eastern Cape and Limpopo, two of the poorest provinces improved in 1997 by 49% and in 1998 by 36% respectively.
- Through the Reconstruction and Development Programme, R 1.4 billion was allocated for school construction and maintenance between 1995 and 1997. Much progress was made in school electrification, and increase water supply to schools.

([www.policy.org.za/govdocs/reports/education/achieve.html](http://www.policy.org.za/govdocs/reports/education/achieve.html))

The South African Education System, according to the Department of Education, 2001. Education and Transformation in South Africa: a review 1994-2001. South Africa accommodates the following amount of students:

- 12.3 Million learners (50.5% Female);
- 300 000 University students (54.6% Female);
- 190 000 Technicon students (45.5% Female);
- 29 386 Primary and secondary schools;
- 375 000 Educators;
- 5 000 Inspector and subject advisors;
- 68 000 Technical colleges accommodating 125 000 students in the Further Education and Training sector.

([www.policy.org.za/govdocs/reports/education/achieve.html](http://www.policy.org.za/govdocs/reports/education/achieve.html) – 31 March 2002)

## **2.8 Curriculum 2005**

What follows is a brief background of the process that formulated the new curriculum. During apartheid, education was used not only to achieve social separation but was also built around a social philosophy, it was also a legitimating arena for white supremacy and for the complex systems of racial and cultural ordering that evolved around it. Within the old order's traditional educational institutions, the hidden and explicit curriculum were configured to produce, reproduce and validate racial separation and hierarchy. They were established as modern truths about human process and development. These truths provided the ideological foundation upon which apartheid education was built (Soudien and Baxen 1997: 449).

The first curriculum change moment was directly after the 1994 elections. The values guiding the curriculum post-1994 were, non-racism, non-sexism, democracy, equity and redress (Jansen 2004: 59). Jansen continues to state that these values were not really put into operation in curriculum terms, for there was no curriculum. Instead there was a set of broad policy options that would guide decision-making once a new government took power. These values were, if anything, signals and symbols of change that were not all contested for they floated free to the public school curriculum and were not translated into the kind of content that would redefine the substance of teaching and learning in South Africa (Jansen 2004: 59). The White Paper on Education and Training requires the active encouragement of mutual respect for our people's diverse religious, cultural and language traditions. There right to enjoy and practice these in Peace and without hindrance, and the recognition that these are a source of strength for their own communities and the unity of the nation.

The most important development of these policies was based on the Curriculum 2005 document. The Curriculum is central to an educational policy. As set out in the following paper Department of Education, 2001. Education and Transformation in South Africa: A Review 1994-2001. Pretoria, a curriculum is explained as follows:

- Provides a vision of what learning and teaching should be. The Curriculum 2005 includes what the learners should learn, the process of learning, teaching and assessment, relationships, power and authority in the system and in schools. Curriculum 2005 as learners experience it in classrooms, defines their education and hence the quality and achievements of the system. Through the curriculum and learning outcomes, schools and learners' communities know and judge the system.

- Curriculum 2005 is based on these important principles and it was developed through extensive processes of participation by various committees and educational experts which were assisted by various international leaders in education. There were even public discussions in 1997 and after it was approved in that same year it was released as a policy for the new education system in South Africa.
- The difference in Curriculum 2005 from the previous dispensation is that its principles are outcomes-based education and learner-centered education. It is divided into eight learning areas and emphasis is placed on competence and not particular knowledge. It links subject knowledge to social, economic and personal dimensions of learning as well as the multi-cultural characteristics of the South African society. Curriculum 2005 shows to the future and the new education that dawned on South Africa and of its implementation date. (Department: Basic Education Republic of South Africa, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement Life Orientations: 11-45).
- Curriculum 2005 implemented a complete and radical change in education in South Africa. Everybody that had and still has something to do with teaching, from the learners to the teachers, to the heads of education departments have been effected by it. Even the public and private sector, publishers, the Higher Education Institutions like universities and technicons had to take notice of the new way of teaching. The Department of Education informed South Africans on the policy by way of conferences, presentations, meetings, debates, news media, workshops and last but not least teachers, parents and learners. (Department of Education 2001: 16-36).

The document “Education and Transformation in South Africa”: A Review 1994-2001. Pretoria, explained that Curriculum 2005 would concentrate on the following aspects:

- Learners are participants in curriculum and learning, they respond to their learning styles and cultures and in turn builds on their life experiences and needs;
- There is continuous formative assessments in which learners and teacher accept responsibilities for assessment;
- Promotes continuous learning and enable the assessment of competence and complex performances.

Assessment of critical outcomes such as problems solving, teamwork, communication and critical use of information cannot be done simply through written tests. They need to be made in context of real performances. Continuous assessment also becomes the basis for judging overall achievements and reporting to the learners, parents and the system. Thus one could see that this has called for new approaches to programmer design, teaching methods, power relationships, and assessments. It also redefined the role of teachers, learners and school managers, and also that of textbooks and examinations. Implementation of the policy began in 1998 in the grade 1 group; in 1999 the grade 2 group, and in 2000 in grade 3-7.

In 2001 grade 4-8 and 2002 grade 5-9. In all provinces, teacher education and training took place so that everything could work smoothly in the schools. Most of the concerns with the educators and parents were with the correct implementation of this new curriculum. (Department: Basic Education Republic of South Africa, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement Life Orientations: 11-45)

Curriculum 2005 was completely different from the previous education systems. Sometimes the changes were too radical for many of the teachers and there were many complaints. It was too easy or that the learners were promoted without actually understanding the work that they did. There were various interpretations on instructions given to schools. The vision was sometimes not clearly seen by the teachers.

Some teachers did not want to change from their old way of teaching and it took persuasion techniques to change their attitudes. It was clear from the start that most teachers were positive about these changes even though the management structures were not always in place. Where the teachers concentrated on learner-centered education and on the correct implementation of outcomes-based teaching they could immediately see the positive results coming from Curriculum 2005. If there were no clear instructions to work with or if the teachers kept on using their old methods it became just a way of not being a good teacher.

In February 2000 the Ministry of Education reviewed Curriculum 2005 and came up with the following findings as illustrated in the 1994-2001 review paper: (Department of Education 2001. Education and Transformation in South Africa: A Review 1994-2001. Pretoria).

- There was support for the curriculum changes envisaged, but understanding of the policy and its implications were highly varied.
- There were basic flaws in the structure and design of the policy. In particular, the language was often complex and confusing. Notions of sequence, concept development, content and progression were poorly developed, and the scope of the



outcomes and learning areas resulted in crowding of the curriculum overall.

- There was a lack of alignment between curriculum and assessment policies, with insufficient clarity in both areas.
- Training programs in concept, duration and quality, were often inadequate, especially early in the implementation process.
- Learning support materials were variable in quality, and often unavailable.
- Follow-up support for teachers and schools was far too little.
- Timeframes for implementation were unmanageable and unrealistic; the policy was released before the system was ready, with time frames that were too rushed.  
([www.policy.gov.za/govdocs/reports/education/achieve.html](http://www.policy.gov.za/govdocs/reports/education/achieve.html))

The Ministry of Education gave attention to this review and worked on it and is still refining policy documents. They are working to redefine the outcomes, they are giving more attention to progression and context, and they are changing structures to support implementation. Greenstein (1997: 132) asserts that, “the authors of the document chose not to enter this difficult and problematic area for fear of alienating one constituency or another and disrupting the cozy existence provided by the framework of “national unity”.

## 2.9 Conclusion

Curriculum change does not happen overnight and at the rate we are going in South Africa the real danger is that we will be weighed down, and that our education system will not be able to hold up against the rest of the world. The bureaucrats are quite happy to pass off subjects as curriculum change.

In fact they are encouraged by the opportunity to legitimacy in schools as being part of the new but it is really the old.

Curriculum 2005 was advocated as new possibilities, the policy makers never took into account the problems of the past and how it would affect the rest of the education system.

## CHAPTER 3

# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

### 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a brief background will be given about the education systems in place during and after apartheid. Furthermore government policies and legislation towards Religion Studies will be examined in an attempt to justify whether or not government documents published during this period give any indication that there were non-religious aims embedded within the Religion Studies Curriculum for government schools.

The policies and legislation selected will be discussed in their religious, educational and historical contexts. The chapter will trace the historical origin of South African Education, the development of Christian National Education and the religious interest that was embedded in this particular curriculum during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### 3.2 Background of Education in South Africa

Before the arrival of the first European invaders in the South African Cape in 1652, the country was populated by African people such as the San and the Khoikhoi, generally known as the Bushmen and Hottentots (Morris-Hale 1996: 315-317). The Dutch settlers, sent by the East India Dutch Company, and the religious persecution fleeing French Huguenots were not the first Europeans to set foot on South African soil, but were to permanently reside in the country (Behr 1971: 1).

Before the new settlers came, the traditional African society did not have European based systems of learning. What did they have instead, were informal

educational programs that were formulated and selectively implemented by the African population? One could objectively say that these programs of learning, not only in South Africa but also elsewhere in pre-colonial traditional Africa, were responding to the needs of the African environment (Giliomee 1995: 100).

According to Keto, those indigenous programs of teaching and learning African societies in South Africa had invariably created their own institutions and processes of socialization and education before the Dutch settlers arrived in 1652. The process of education began by learning of the young family members. Later the young were trained in manners, roles, responsibilities, and history as well as the importance of military and fighting skills.

Before 1880 education was provided sparingly and unevenly for the children of settlers. In the more densely populated farmed areas there were private schools as well as a few small boarding schools. These were often of poor quality, being run by people with no formal education. These schools were focused mainly on financial gain rather than pedagogical reasons (Hattersley 1936:226-231). For the children who were geographically removed from their parents were forced to get private tutors to further their children's education. Government provided education in the two main towns as early as 1849. There was no 'coherent system' of education (Behr & Macmillan 1971: 10).

Secondary schools begin to develop during the 1860s and 1870 in response to the concern by the parents and central government. Under the apartheid regime, with its commitment to Christian National Education, only a narrow set of religious interest were available in the curriculum. Education for all was supposed to include a Christian national ethos, religious education, with a Christian Bible-based character, and clear religious outcomes.

Religious Education was driven by Christian confessionism and triumphalism. Learners were required to embrace the prescribed religious convictions and the

adherents of other religions. In pre-apartheid South Africa, religious education was directed towards a confession of faith. According to a manual for Biblical instruction published as recently as 1990, learners were expected to embrace a particular version of the Christian faith (Department of Didactics 1990:30).

Learners must personally accept their personal salvation, and the God introduced to them in the Bible. Religious Education was to ensure learners that “through belief in the Holy Trinity,” affirmation for the Apostles’ Creed was sincerity and with conviction” (Chidester 1994: 15).

Religious Education and Biblical Studies under the apartheid system promoted a Christian triumphalism. In a widely used textbook for Religious Education and Biblical Studies, this Christian triumphalism resulted in claims to a privileged religious ownership of the nation and its public schools by proclaiming that South Africa “is a Christian country and it is only right that our children be taught in the Christian faith”, abandoning any pretense of tolerance or respect for other religions (Marx 2002: 52). In a democratic South Africa. Surely the indoctrination of Christianity on children and the dismissal of other religions cannot be sustained. What were the other alternatives?

### **3.3. Missionary Education**

British control in South Africa and other states was to ensure the spread of the British Empire across the world. In South Africa, the British set up a system of government that was similar to that of British colonies in other parts of Africa. The British education system was colonial by nature. The British wanted to use education as a way of spreading their language and traditions in the colony and also as a means of social control (Christie 1988: 16). In all English colonies, English was made an official language, and the church, government offices and schools were all Christianized. In the eastern parts of the Cape Colony, colleges of education such as Lovedale and the University College of Fort Hare were

established under British influence. St Matthews, Clarkebury and other mission schools were established throughout the Cape Colony to foster the British culture.

In South Africa various schools arose in the British tradition and educators were brought from Britain, especially at the inception of many mission schools. In the hidden curriculum of the British there was a need to educate the Africans so that they could take part in church activities. Mission schools were also introduced to spread the western way of life among the Africans and to teach them certain work values (Christie 1982: 57-72). Labaree (1997), states that education serves both private needs and public needs; therefore, whilst the missionaries provide western education to African for the public good, they had many private interests that they wanted to fulfill. The British government and the missionaries used education to attain their political goals. Sir George Grey, governor of the Cape in 1855 said:

*“If we leave the natives beyond our border ignorant barbarians, they will remain a race of troublesome marauders. We should try to make them a part of ourselves, with common faith and common interest, useful servants, consumers of our goods, contributors to our revenue. Therefore, I propose that we make unremitting efforts to raise the natives in Christianity and civilization, by establishing among them missions connected with industrial schools. The native races beyond our boundary, influenced by our missionaries, instructed in our schools, benefiting by our trade would not make wars on our frontiers.”*

The above mentioned quotation summarizes the political intentions of missionary education among Africans. It was geared to make Africans docile and tame through the use of a Christian philosophy. Missionary education has an impact in the African Societies and while they were being Christianized, the Afrikaners started formulating their own education system. This was the start of Apartheid Education.

### 3.4 Afrikaner National Education

Afrikaner Education can be traced from the 1600s when it was still minimal. By the 1800s it was still in the hands of parents and the church. After the Anglo-Boer War between the British and the Afrikaners, the defeated Afrikaners became disgruntled. The Afrikaners were opposed to the British education system; they saw it as a way of alienating them from their own cultural practices. They then decided to establish their own schools based on Christian National Education (Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2004: 36).

By leaving the education of the natives in the hands of the missionaries, encouraged by the White South Africans to Christianize and help them on culturally has broadened the gap of equality and segregation even further. Any system of teaching and education of natives should be based on the same principles as to those of a more superior education system, the White education System. In accordance with these principles the teaching and education of the natives had to be grounded in the life and worldview of the Whites (Krüger 1995: 202).

The objective of education established by Afrikaner nationalists was very similar to those of the missionaries. The politicization of education and the seemingly abuse of religion played a role in both instances (Krüger 1995: 119-220). Apartheid education was a practice of maintaining that status quo and of preserving the master-servant relationship between Africans and Whites.

Apartheid education not only domesticated the people but indoctrinated them as well (Kallaway 1988: 245). This was done to conceal the real reason for the educational programme. In the veld schools, the white boys were taught how important it was to protect their land from other people such as the blacks and communists, and these schools also enhanced the superiority complex of the white South African over Africans.

### 3.5 Background of Christian National Education

Before discussing the National Curriculum Statement for Religion Studies 2008 and the legislation, it will be of importance to examine the background of the Christian National Education concept in a South African Context.

### 3.6 Role of the State

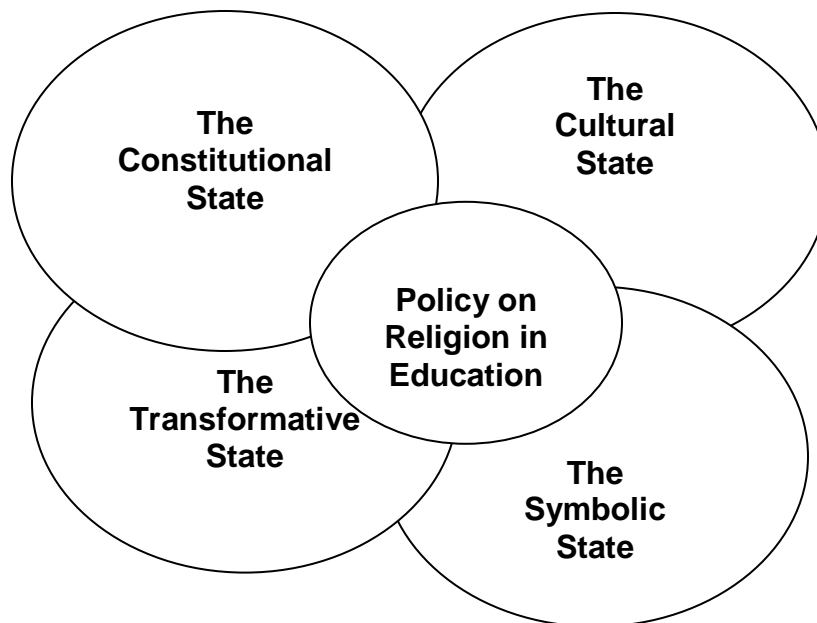
Religion has always been part of life and the policy can be perceived as more than the sum of its parts. The role of religion in public schools needed to be made clear but also had to be in line with the values enshrined in the Constitution. The Constitution was founded on certain values. The commitment between culture of human rights and the protection of human rights, put emphasis on the fact that the government should be both a constitutional and cultural government. The transformative process from apartheid oppression to democracy was a long and difficult process (Chidester 2006: 63-64).

Preparing for the democratic transition as early as 1992, the National Education Policy Investigation considered the options:

- to abandon the previous religious education systems which focus on Christian religion;
- to end all religious discrimination and religious coercion in education;
- to recognized the need for change;
- to eliminate religion entirely from the school curriculum;
- to develop a new programs for religious instruction;
- to introduce a multi-religious education that would increase tolerance and understanding for diversity.



The policy should not only be understood as one for nation building but to build the country and its education system as a whole. The processes surrounding and resulting in the policy is important and it should be measured against a broader discourse of a new democratic South Africa, the constitution, its people and transformation as a whole (Chidester 2006: 67-68). Chidester makes reference to the fact that there are four symbolic states within our society. The figure below illustrates his statement:



The diagram above provides us with a clearer understanding of apartheid reform and the way forward.

## Figure 2: Policy against a broader discourse

### 3.6.1 Constitutional state

The apartheid government saw itself as a 'Constitutional state'. Christian religion was used to reinforce racist legislation and segregation (Chidester 2006: 65). During 1948 the Constitution and its interpretation played an important role with regards to the Policy. The provisions made by the new constitution provided a framework for decision making with regards to religious interest within a secular

state. Some stakeholders did not completely support the Policy, but accepted the Constitution (Chidester 2006: 68).

### **3.6.2 Cultural state**

Unity in Diversity, a motto of a previously divided country. Through this motto the people of South Africa have come to appreciate our diverse country over the many years of democracy. The policy and its content was important to establish respect for religious culture in South Africa (Chidester 2006: 71). Referring to the cultural element of the policy, attention should be drawn to the unique difference between affording equity and religion in the policy. Chidester (2006: 71) refers to the fact that 70% of religious broadcasting was to be Christian. While the policy allowed equal access by all religious affiliations. The official curriculum represented all religion equally.

### **3.6.3 Transformative state**

The birth of the new constitution was accompanied by a mandate of transformation. For the constitutional vision to be attained, the inequalities of the past needed to be addressed urgently.

### **3.6.4 Symbolic state**

Jansen (2008: 86) refers to the educational policy as a political symbol. The symbolic changes that takes place when regimes are often supplements of new regimes to institutionalize victory by changing the symbols of the previous regime. In the case of South Africa, after 1994 the new government started taking down monuments and street names that reminded them of the apartheid era (Esbenshade 1995: 72).

### **3.7 Educational change in South Africa after 1994**

The end of apartheid in 1994 was celebrated nationally and internationally as a victory for democracy and human rights for all South Africans. Democracy offered unique opportunities to reconstruct a deeply discriminatory education system, and to work towards the establishment of a unified system without borders and boundaries, a national system underpinned by democracy, equity and transparency. The reconstruction of the education system had to be linked to economic development, a system that develops responsible citizens that can contribute to the economy of the country. This goal is captured in the mission statement of the Department of Education:

*“Our vision is of a South Africa in which all people have equal access to lifelong education and training opportunities which will contribute towards improving the quality of life and build a peaceful, prosperous and democratic society”* (DoE 1996).

Education is pivotal to economic prosperity, assisting South Africans personally and collectively to escape the poverty trap characterizing many of our communities. The education system should not only be changed for economic growth alone but it should be used to enable all South Africans to improve the quality of life and contribute to a peaceful and democratic nation. Education is a basic human right, established in the Constitution (Section 29, 1996): “everyone has the right to basic education, including adult basic education” without discrimination of any sort.

#### **3.7.1 Phase 1: Educational reform (1994 -1997)**

The government placed a lot of emphasis on the development of regulatory policy frameworks to facilitate change, including the establishment of organizations and institutions that created the conditions and structures for

effective transformation and reform. During this phase, the Minister of Education set out to dismantle apartheid structures and creating a unified education system, creating a system that is financially viable, and create a policy framework of values that underpinned the post-apartheid system.

### **3.7.2 Phase 2: Dismantling apartheid structure**

The first five years of educational reform focused on the dismantling the apartheid created structures and procedures. This involved integrating formerly divided bureaucracies and transferring instructions, staff, offices, records, assets and more than ten million learners and teachers into a new system, without a breakdown in service delivery. The establishment of one national and nine provincial educational departments was achieved by new and old professional public servants, under the guidance of the Council of Educational Ministers. The challenges they faced, was to create a unified system across diverse racial and economic conditions, large geographical areas, in a very short space of time. The new democratic Ministry had to undo more than forty years of formal apartheid education structures and policies within a matter of a few years. This was an important step towards the reform of apartheid structures and policies in place at the time.

It was crucial at this point for policy development and the implementation of an education system for all, bearing in mind different cultures from nineteen racially and ethnically divided departments to be blended and reshaped to meet a common goal, democracy.

Regional Education represents a dramatic departure from the religious educations or instruction of the past. According to the Minister of Education the Policy on Religion Education, as approved by the Council of Education Ministers on 04 August 2003, gives full expression to the invocation of religion in our

Constitution and the principle governing religious freedom. The Minister of education further more states:

*“As a democratic society with a diverse population of different cultures, languages and religions we are duty bound to ensure that through our diversity we develop a unity of purpose and spirit that recognizes our diversity. This should be particularly evident in our public schools where no particular religious ethos should be dominant over and suppress others. The policy ensured to protect the rights of all learners, and recognize and respects. The policy recognizes the rich diverse religious heritage and adopts a co-operative model that accepts our rich heritage and the possibility for creative inter-action between schools and faith whilst, protecting our young people from religious discrimination or coercion.*

*This policy extends the concept of equity to the relationship between religion and education, in a way that recognizes the rich religious diversity of our land. The policy is neither negative nor hostile towards any religion or faith and does not discriminate against anyone. Rather it displays a profound respect towards religious faith and affirms the importance of the study of religion and religious observances.”*

The above mentioned quotation refers to the fact that each and every South African in duty bound to make a difference. It is up the government, schools teachers, learners, parents and communities to strive for a better and integrated live. Whether it is through education or religion, we all need to respect our differences and create positive interaction amounts all the people in South Africa and our education system.

### 3.7.3 Phase 3: The Role of Religion in the public sphere

Religion has always played an important role in the lives of all South Africans. It was important to establish what part religion will play in public schools. Therefore the development of religious policies was very important. In 1992, the Religion in public education policy for a new South Africa was published (Chidester 2006: 66). During this phase preparation for democratic transition and different alternatives for Religious Education was explored within the National Education Policy.

The following options was considered within the National Education Policy:

- *Option 1:* Eliminating religion entirely from the school curriculum. The National Educational Policy concluded that neglecting such a principle feature of South African life would not do justice to the importance of religious diversity in the country and the transformative process (Chidester 2006: 66).
- *Option 2:* Establishing parallel programs in religious instruction, developed by the different groups themselves. This was not an option to consider, because it will only establish a kind of religious apartheid and learners would be required to study a single-tradition religious educational program focused on a particular religion (Chidester 2006: 66).
- *Option 3:* Introducing a program of multi-religion education that would be inclusive of all religions. Teaching learners about religion rather than engaging in the teaching confession, propagation, or promotion of religion (Chidester 2006: 66).

Sachs (1993: 170) indicated that a strict separation between religious and public life would have resulted in severe discomfort, he felt that religion bounds people

together and can be used as a source of strength and comfort. In choosing the third possibility where state and religion are recognized as separate entities, but with a considerable degree of cooperation and interaction between the two.

Sachs' motivation for choosing the third option, provides insight into later formulation of the rationale for the Policy. He further stipulates that the majority of South Africans belong to one of the other faith.

*“It is not something that one wants to deny, but is an important part of reality. If an appropriate relationship can be established, it can be a source of tremendous upliftment for the whole of society, and a means of helping to resolve the considerable damage that has been done (Sachs 193: 171).*

Sachs (1993: 171) mentions a fourth possibility where the state would actually suppress or eliminate religious organizations. This would have been unthinkable, with regards to religious education (Sachs 1993: 173-174).

In 1997 Krüger submitted an article to the Challenge magazine on Models of religious education. In this article, Krüger refers to the formation of the Independent Forum for Religion in Public Education. A group of thirty representative from various churches, department of Religious Studies at the universities, educator, colleges to discuss the future of religious education in South African schools. This was used as a vehicle to promote and implement new policies (Kruger 1997: 1-3).

The article mentioned four possible models (Krüger 1997: 1-3):

- i. the secular model, completely banning religious education from public schools;

- ii. the mono-religious model, adopting one religion as the official or unofficial state religion that would form part of the education system;
- iii. the particular model, differentiating education in religion to the extent that learners will have access to their own religion;
- iv. The integrated-pluralistic model, offering one subject, in which all learners will be educated in major religions in South African society.

Krüger (1997: 5-6) concludes that the solution lies in a combination of (c) and (d) above. The article proposes a model where education in religion should comprise of two disciplines: “Religious Education and Studies in Religion” (Krüger 1997: 5). Religious Education should be character forming, with strong emphasis on factual information and the nurturing of pupils by the way of developing appropriate attitudes and values.

Religious education should be introduced as an examinable subject in schools. The content should give pupils the opportunity to examine their own religion in an educational way. Religious education should provide awareness of religious beliefs and traditions of fellow South Africans.

Studies in Religion however should provide specialized interpretations, historical comparative, critical intellectual and interpretation skills necessary. It should be introduced as an optional, externally examinable academic discipline at secondary level. Krüger (1997: 6), emphasizes that a space should be created for Religious Education in the public education system.



### **3.7.4 Phase 4: Introducing new South African Education Policies**

#### **3.7.4.1 Outcomes Based Education Policy**

The historical legacy of our countries implies that a certain kind of Christian religious instruction in schools were placed above the others, the new policy of religious education has not always been clear to those involved. In June 2001, Deputy Minister of Education Mosibudi Mangena delivered a speech on the future of religion in South African public schools, affirming both the national unity and religious diversity in South Africa; the Deputy Minister also outlined the new policy for religion in education.

The policy was based not on religious interest but on constitutional values and educational objectives. Within the constitutional framework of a democratic South Africa, the role of religion in the public schools must be consistent with core constitutional values of a common citizenship, human rights, equality, equity, and freedom from discrimination and freedom of religion, conscience, thoughts, beliefs, and opinion. On education grounds, public schools have a responsibility to teach about religion in ways that are different from religious education, instruction, or nurture provided by the home, family, and religious community. By contrast to the promotion of particular religious interests in the religious education of the past, this new policy of religious education advances educational goals of teaching and learning about religion, religions and religious diversity (Mangena 2001: 345). Instead of advancing a religious or anti-religious position, this educational policy is underwritten by crucial constitutional provisions that guarantee both the freedom for religious expression and the freedom from religious coercion. Recognizing the vitality and diversity of religion in South Africa, this is clearly protected along with conscience, thoughts, beliefs, and opinion. The Constitution also guarantees freedom from religious discrimination on the basis of religion.

The promotion of a particular religion, a set of religious values or perspectives in the public schools can be seen as a disadvantage towards learners that come from underprivileged religious background. Keeping the Constitution in mind, educational policies must be dedicated not to the teaching, promotion, or propagation of religion but rather the teaching and learning about religious diversity in South Africa and the world.

A clear distinction can be drawn between teaching of religion and teaching about religion, and so often it is misunderstood by the media, public debates and the educators.

Religious Education should be used as a tool to transmit knowledge and values of all religious trends, in an inclusive way, so that each individual learner feels part of the same community. The learner's intern create their own identity in harmony with identities different from their own. There is a huge gap between educational policy and education practice in the classroom. According to Paul Faller this gap should be celebrated, because he has observed that teachers will be "defining and redefining the curriculum every day, in every classroom", so by encouraging teachers to advance a religious education that is formative and not simply informative, he hopes to be able to establish in practice what he could not achieve in policy (Faller 2002: 176). South Africa's new educational policy for teaching and learning about religion is inclusive, enabling learners to explore their own identities within a diverse society, and moving away from Christian religious indoctrination of the apartheid era. The new policy proposes educational outcomes in teaching and learning about religious diversity that promote understanding and critical reflection on religious identity and difference. It is also supported by clear educational outcomes, curriculum statements and assessment criteria. These educational outcomes works towards the increase understanding, reduce prejudice, and respect for human diversity.

### **3.7.4.2 Religious Education and Curriculum 2008 in FET Phase**

Religion Studies is an optional subject for matriculation purposes, and entirely new in the Grade 10-12 curriculum. Prior to the introduction of religion Studies, religion was studied in the form of various subjects devoted to and furthering the interests of specific religions. The 1990s intense research resulting in an educational approach that would treat all religions with the same respect for the common good of all South African. The National Policy of Religion and Education (2003) provided the framework from the new approach on Religion Studies. Life Orientation in the National Curriculum Statement Grade 0-9 and the National Curriculum Statements Grade 10-12 developed a necessary structure, but in the subject Religion Studies the new approach finds full expression. During the development of the curriculum the following Learning Outcomes was identified IN THE CURRICULUM FOR Life Orientation.

The learner is able to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a variety of religions and how they relate to one another;
- analyze, relate and systematize universal dimensions of religion;
- reflect critically and constructively on issues in society from a Religion perspective;
- apply skills of research into religion as a social phenomenon and across religions.

### **3.8 The Purpose of Religious Education**

Religious Education is designed to engage learners in an education process which will:

- develop their knowledge and understanding;
- develop the skills of critical thinking and deciding how to act in accordance with an informed conscience;
- foster the beliefs, values and practices which are compatible with a positive response to God's invitation to faith.

### **3.9 The Relationship between Religious Education and the National Curriculum Statement**

All Government schools have a responsibility to teach about religion and religions in ways that reflect a profound appreciation of the spiritual, non-material aspects of life, which are different from religious education, religious instruction, or religious nature provided by the home, family, and religious community. School together with the broader society, play a role in cultural formation and transmission, and educational institutions must promote a spirit of openness in which there shall be no over or covert attempt to indoctrinate pupils into any particular belief or religion.

### **3.10 Conclusion**

The different policies discussed in the chapter shows a major departure from the previous dispensation's unequal treatment of religions. Christian religion served an ideology of white supremacy. After 1994, the policy resulted in learners having shared a common language regarding their own religion and that of their fellow South Africans. The newly elected government was the part to re-writing the history of South Africa starting with education.

During the Apartheid era, the above mentioned policies was non-existent and the masses had to be content the Bantu and Christian national education which provided inferior education.

## CHAPTER 4

# CONTEXT FOR THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

### 4.1 Introduction

Religious development in children and adolescents is a research area of increasing interest to theorists of religious development, religious education and the religious education curriculum. Religious development received little consideration during growth of psychology, and human behavior. Behaviorism and theorists, with their atheistic presumptions, formed a generation of psychologists with an agnostic attitude towards God and supernatural phenomena. Therefore, religious thinking and behavior were not dealt with as broadly as other psychological manifestations (Rizzuto 1991: 47-60).

Some religious development constructs about the concept of God, prayer, faith, religious identity and religious thinking have been examined by Spilka (1988: 75). He points out that little is known about the environmental factors that influence the stages of religious cognitive development. Although Piaget published a number of books about the cognitive development in different scientific disciplines, he never investigated religious development specifically. However, he made related observations and suggestions in one of his earlier projects: *The Moral Judgement of a Child* (1932: 122), which was adopted by many theorists including development of certain faiths and religions.

### 4.2 Religious developmental phases of the child

It was the work of Ronald Goldman that elaborated on a child's ability to understand religious ideas (Hyde 1990: 23). He maintains that religious thinking is no different from that of non-religious thinking (Goldman 1964: 3) and, therefore described the following religious developmental stages:

- Early childhood, where there is an obvious interest in religion, there is no indication that children may think in any religious sense. Based on the findings, Goldman states, “*this is why I have characterized early childhood as pre-religious*” (1965: 80). In children from five to seven years of age, he found the characteristics of intuitive thinking (Goldman 1965: 80-81).
- By the end of the pre-school year, children adopt a new manner of thinking. They are moving from a pre-operational to a concrete operational mode of thinking. Furthermore they move towards a more realistic view of experience, which means that their religious ideas take on a materialistic and physical expression (Goldman 1965: 103).
- In late childhood and pre-adolescence concrete limitations continue. Children try to adjust themselves to a more realistic theology. It becomes clear that the child begins to recognize the problem of God being everywhere and not at one place at one particular time. To overcome this problem God must be conceived of as a spirit, not bound by physical limitations, but the child’s natural concrete form of thinking makes this concept difficult to grasp (Goldman 1965: 132).

For many people, religious development stops at the level corresponding to a mental age of 10 years. When a two world mentality described by Goldman is developed. A theological world where God exist and is active in biblical times, and a world of science, where God does not exist. At thirteen children appear to be more decisive, they move forward towards adult way of thinking about religion (Goldman 1965: 132-133).

### 4.3 Moral judgement of a child

According to Oser (1991: 10), studying the developmental changes accruing in religious consciousness, which determine that different chronological ages lead people to make different religious judgments.

Oser (1991: 10) state that:

*“if one only takes these facts seriously, one has to draw a fundamental conclusion: not only do fundamental differences exist between adults and children in the logical, mathematical, ontological, moral and social domains but also concerning the interpretations of human existence from a religious perspective”* (Oser 1991: 10).

There is stage 0 where children are still incapable of distinguishing between different forces outside of themselves. They do not yet have different forms of exteriority that can be connected casually (Oser 1991: 69).

Stage 1 is characterized by an absolute religious heteronomy orientation and it extends mainly until the ages of eight and nine.

Stage 2 is predominantly from nine to eleven, when God still is viewed as being external, but can be influenced by good deed, promises and vows (Oser 1991, 10).

Stage 3 manifest absolute autonomy, because they consider God as an entity outside the human reals (Oser & Gmunder 1991: 12). This conception begins to be observed during early adolescence, but also is seen in older people.

Stage 4, which emerges mainly during late adolescence and young adult stage, presents a mediated autonomy where persons now have a decision-making self

which they can bring into a correlationally mediated relation with the ultimate (Oser & Gmunder 1991: 76). Individuals at this stage see themselves as being free and responsible, but freedom now is tied to the ultimate (Oser 1991: 12). In this stage social engagement becomes a religious form of life.

Stage 5 is distinguished by an orientation to religious intersubjectivity and autonomy. According to Oser's model, in stage 5, transcendence and immanence permeate one another and thereby establish the possibility of universal solidarity of all people (Oser & Gmunder 1991: 12-13). Stage 5 is the highest possible structure of reasoning of religious consciousness. At this point conceptualization is based on the views of the individual and its orientation towards universal communication and solidarity (Oser 1991: 79-81).

Ratcliff (1985: 35) suggests, while not minimizing Piaget's contributions, that it may be best to examine the exact nature of the child's religious concepts. There is no reason to differ with the findings from the research on cognitive development. These findings can be used as a guideline for curricular designs for religious teachings.

#### **4.4 Religious diversity in South Africa**

The following models regarding relationship can exist between state and religion:

- A Theocratic Model where the state only identifies with one religious group;
- A Repressionist Model where state would suppress religion. Religion would therefore be marginalized from public life;
- A Separations Model where state has no favor towards any religious group and the state and religion is separated. Religion is not allowed to play any role in public life;



- A Co-operative Model would identify separate areas of influence for religion and state, but would promote co-operation between the two. Citizens are protected from religious discrimination. It also promotes co-operation between religious groups and the religious group and the state.

Considering a large part of South Africans are religious, it is appropriate that our constitution promotes a co-operative model. The policy on religion and education states: *“a strict separation between the two spheres of religion and state is not desirable, since without the commitment and engagement of religious bodies it is difficult to see us improve the quality of life for all our people”*.

([www.erp.org.za/pdf/religion](http://www.erp.org.za/pdf/religion) - accesses on 14 September 2014).

From the following statistics it is clear to see that it was correct to choose a co-operative model.

Denomination	Adherents	% of Christians
Methodist	3,305,404	9.2%
Dutch Reformed	3,005,698	8.4%
Anglican	1,722,076	4.8%
Lutheran	1,130,987	3.2%
Presbyterian	832,495	2.3%
Baptist	691,237	1.9%

Congregational	508,825	1.4%
Other Reformed	226,495	0.6%
<i>Total mainstream Protestant</i>	<i>11,423,217</i>	<i>31.9%</i>
Pentecostal/Charismatic	3,422,749	9.6%
Apostolic Faith Mission	246,190	0.7%
Other Apostolic	5,609,070	15.7%
<i>Total Pentecostal</i>	<i>9,279,009</i>	<i>25.9%</i>
Zion Christian Church	4,971,932	13.9%
Other Zionist	1,887,147	5.3%
Ethiopian	880,414	2.5%
iBandla lamaNazaretha	248,824	0.7%
Other African Independent	656,644	1.8%
<i>Total African Independent</i>	<i>8,644,961</i>	<i>24.2%</i>
Catholic	3,181,336	8.9%
Orthodox	42,251	0.1%

Other Christian	3,195,477	8.9%
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**Table 4.1 a 2012 Religious Demographics of South Africa**

([www.southafrica.info/about/people/population.htm](http://www.southafrica.info/about/people/population.htm) - accessed on 23/05/2015)

#### **4.5 The South African Constitution and religion**

The South African Constitution recognizes all faiths and religions in our society, in the Bill of Rights concerning religion we note the following:

Clause 15: “*Freedom of religion, beliefs and opinions*”, the following statements are made:

1. Everyone has a right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion.
2. Religious observations may be conducted at state or state-aided institutions provided that:
  - a. those observances follow the rules made by the appropriate public authorities;
  - b. they are conducted on an equitable basis, and;
  - c. attendance is free and voluntary.

Clause 31: “*Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities*” he continues and relates the following:

1. persons belonging to a cultural, religious or linguistic community may not be denied the right, with other members of that community:

- a. To enjoy their culture, practice their religion and use their language, and;
- b. To form, join and maintain cultural, religious and linguistic associations and other organs of civil society.

#### **4.6 Religion in South Africa**

In connection with religion it is best to repeat what is stated in the National Curriculum Statement. The revised National Curriculum Statement published by the Department of Education, in an article written by Professor Chidester (2002: 91-102), who is the Chair of Religious Studies, University of Cape Town, the following is stated:

*“Religious Education ... rests on a division of responsibilities between the state on the one hand and religious bodies and parents on the other. Religious Education, therefore has a civic rather than a religious function, and promotes civic rights and responsibilities. In the context of the South African Constitution, Religious Education contributes to the wider framework of education by developing in every learner the knowledge, values, attitudes and skills necessary for diverse religions to co-exist in a multi-religious society. Individuals will realize that they are part of the broader community, and will learn to see their identities in harmony with others.”*

The difference between Religious Education and Religious Instruction can be defined as follows: Religious instruction is education which teaches about a particular religion and religious education teaches how to be a good follower of that particular religion.

This was the policy of the previous government where only Christian Education was allowed to be taught in schools. According to the Policy on Religious Education, this form of education should not be practiced in public schools. This form of education is the responsibility of parents, families and communities.

Religious Education is a form of education which does not focus on any particular religion, but teaches about many different religions. Its aim is to teach learners about the different religions that exist in our country and the rest of the world so that they might be able to understand each other's traditions better.

This is a form of education which should be carried out in public schools. With Religious Education the following aims be reached:

- It can help to build a school community to respect and understand religion. It can help the learners to understand how his or her beliefs are different from that of other learners and it can strengthen the idea of unity in diversity ([www.erp.org.za](http://www.erp.org.za) – accessed on 22/09/2015).

Under the new policy there is no more school assemblies allocated to one religion or topic. Schools can still make their halls and classrooms available for various meetings but different religious societies must be given the same rights to use facilities. The diversity of religions in South Africa must be observed in the new policy.

The New Religious Education Policy (2005) includes the common value that all religions promote for example, social justice and respect for the environment. The focus of the new Religious Education Policy is on the values and moral education that is defined in all religions in South Africa. It encourages growth in the learner's inner spiritual and moral self.

The new policy is based on equity, tolerance and openness. It is accountable to schools and the broader society outside the school system. The emphasis is on the social honor of learners, teachers, principals, school boards and the wider society. It is based on diversity of learners that attend the schools.

The new policy on religion allows for religious observances organized by schools. These observances can be held during school assemblies or at times that can be arranged by the schools. The schools must see to it that there is no discrimination between religious bodies and different religious traditions. The basis must always be on the diversity that exists in schools.

#### **4.6.1 A case study: Diversity High School**

The following case study focus on how one individual made a difference in many of her learner's lives by going back to basics. Before 1994 the school was white and religion was based of Afrikaans Christian Nationalism. After 1994 the school opened for other races and everything started changing and the case study shows how the schools values and morals restored by creating a new schools culture.

*Diversity High, originated as "Hoërskool Suidheuwels" in 1955 in one of Johannesburg's working suburbs. It was later named after the premier, JG Strydom. For four decades the school was white, and religion was based on Afrikaans Christian Nationalism. It created an orderly and peaceful environment, with cadets, rugby, netball which involved parents and Republic and Kruger day was celebrated every year. Then came the 1990's and the inevitable change, and in 1994 the school governing body decided that J.G. Strydom would become a parallel medium school. Large numbers of black learners from the nearby townships of Soweto came over from the township schools. Under a number of successive principles the school experienced some good and average years.*

*Anita Maritz was appointed as principle and she attained help from people with the right knowledge. She organized work sessions for the personnel, started projects to accomplished mutual cultural contact and to create a new culture for the school. Black teachers were appointed and the black parents became involved in the school.*

*The name of the school was changed to Diversity High School, and in 2005 the dream turned into a nightmare. The white learners started to leave the school. In a flash Diversity High staggered under the pressures of violence, murder, pregnancies, alcohol and drugs abuse, a lack of a culture of learning, uninvolved parents, decay in discipline and much more. Within one year the euphoria was no more.*

*Counseling was organized for problematic learners, the support of Reverend Khumalo from the community and people with necessary knowledge (Department of Education) were called upon. Maritz also went on courses and organized further work sessions for the personnel.*

*The quality of being fair and impartial was at work in this school. Diversity that existed was changed because the white learners left the school, and the school started to regress to a type of the lesser good township schools, because the learners started to misbehave and the parents became less involved. This school was also turning into an unruly township school.*

*But the Department of Education and the community stepped in, and things changed for the better owing to fairness and impartiality towards the principle, staff-members, and especially the learners.*

The other important lesson about diversity is how humans are affected by it and how they influence the diversity in the world. The human values that come to the fore are the following:

- The knowledge people have of the world is derived through observations, experimentation and rational analyses;
- Ethical values are derived from human needs and life's fulfillment emerges from the individual's participation in service

of human ideals. Humans are social by nature and therefore find meaning in relationships with other humans;

- Individual happiness is found in work that benefits society to the maximum;
- Schools are micro-cosmos of society and therefore schools form the transformation objectives for now and the future;
- South Africa was unique with its apartheid system and colour-coded past but with integration after 1994 it lost its exclusivity to the benefit of all the people that live in it.

*“The vision of equality, respect for human rights and a world in which human dignity is one that is shared the world over” (Vandeyar and Killen 2005: 125-135).*

All South Africans should strive to create harmony and peace, whether we part of or the once discriminated against. Respect one another and work towards and better South African where all are equal and with dignity.

#### **4.6.2 Diversity terminology**

**Desegregation** is the elimination of laws, customs, or practices under which different races, groups, are restricted to specific or separate public facilities, neighborhoods, schools, organizations, or the like.

(<http://dictionary.reference.com> – accessed on the 28 May 2015)

**Integration** is an act or instance of integrating a racial, religious or ethnic group.

(<http://dictionary.reference.com> – accessed on the 28 May 2015)

**Assimilation** is when people of different backgrounds come to see themselves as part of a larger national family.

(<http://wordnetweb.princeton.edu> –accessed on 28 May 2015)



**Multicultural education** is a process that permeates all aspects of school practices, policies and organization as a means to ensure the highest levels of academic achievements for all learners. It helps learners to develop a positive self-concept by providing knowledge about histories, cultures, and contribution of diverse groups. School curriculums must directly address issues of racism, sexism, classism, religious intolerance and xenophobia.

**Anti-racism education** as an action-orientated strategy for institutional, systematic change, to address racism and the interlocking system of school oppression. It calls for opposing subtle, stereotypes and patronizing attitudes (Vandeyar and Killen 2005: 125-135).

In the newspaper *Rapport* dated 20 September 2009 many people in the broader society complained about the schools that still have scripture reading and prayer.

George Claassen, chairman of Sceptic South Africa is in the forefront of this campaign and wants to monitor these schools that still use these methods. He feels that these schools should be taken to court if they do not stop these practices. He believes that schools that still use words like Christian character and Christian values are wrong. He also explained that teachers use time in class periods to promote the Christian faith and to pray to a Christian God. He feels that schools must follow the national policy on religion.

Many schools reacted against this arguing the following:

Johan van der Merwe, chairman of Stellenbosch Primarily School, said that experts in constitution and education law found that the schools religion policy is correct.

Mr. Hawkie de Villiers explained that religious activities in his school are voluntary.

Many schools have a religious committee that asked churches in the vicinity of the school to participate.

Mr. Malherbe explained that Judge Arthur Clarkson said in the 1990's that the state must allow space where people can express themselves freely in their religion.

In the same article *Rapport* 20 September 2009, many parents said that they are not at all satisfied with schools that still practice scripture reading and prayer and they want it stopped. Other parents felt that if it is not stopped the schools must comply with the new policy.

When the new policy was still in its draft stage many people were totally against it, but now a lot of critics have changed their minds and are enthusiastic about the new policy. They say that democracy demands that all religions must be treated equality and that learners must have the chance to be exposed to other religions without prejudice. They say that people that want the bible in school must make peace with the fact that South Africa is now an open and democratic society.

Mr. Walter Mercuur, deputy director of curriculum development explained that schools are compelled to follow the guidelines of the new religion policy. The outcome of this campaign and possible court cases has, as yet, not been finalized.

Jonathan D Jansen, rector of the University of the Free State said:

*“A long term goal is to create a climate in school that such diversity is celebrated, invited, encouraged and sustained in natural settings, free of coercion. Whether schools reach this goal will depend on the commitment of the school community*

*as a whole, to transforming the educational experience for both teachers and learners”.*

Schools were and still are a microcosm of the society of a country. Before 1994 the schools were divided and segregated into Black, White, Coloured and Indian learners, and the schools were placed in the townships and suburbs where these different people stayed. This negative diversity spilled over into the broader society and the apartheid laws were in place and kept this diversity in place for many years. Violence broke out between the white government and other races. There were violent clashes and the government came down in full force on descending people, this finally came to an end when the ANC won the elections in 1994 and a new government took over.

All the school were integrated and the white schools had a massive overflow of the other races. This happened as many believed that the white schools were better than their disadvantaged schools in the township. Again diversity set the pace in these new open schools and again diversity spilled over into the broader society. A new and open society took over as a new nation in South Africa.

#### **4.7 Relevance of religious education in the curriculum (CAPS)**

In 2011 the following changes were made to the National Curriculum, these changes was implemented in 2012. Outcomes Bases Education was replaced with the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) from Grades R-12. With regards to Religious Education, the Policy suggests that there should be a cooperative relationship between Religious Education and the Curriculum.

The following aspects will be focused on when having a closer look at the policy:

- Experts suggests that when looking at the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement for Life Skills in the Foundation

Phase, an alignment should be formed between Life Skills and Religious Education for Grades R-3;

- The Policy also suggests that the teacher responsible for Life Skills and Religious Education should keep in mind the coordinating of work across the two subject areas;

There is a clear indication in the Policy Document of the linkage between Religious Education and Life Skills. In the Life Skills and Religious Education the assigned topics for “*Beginning Knowledge*” and “*Personal and Social Well-being*” are given with their content as set out in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement for Life Skills.

(<http://www.education.gov.za?Curriculum?CurriculumAssessmentPolicyStatements/CAPS> - Accessed on 22/09/2015)

#### 4.8 The curriculum and learning programme guidelines

The policy provides a framework to guide schools, SGB’s, pupils, parents, religious organizations and the communities surrounding the schools regarding the study of religion and religious observance in schools. It also indicate that although the Policy provide a framework for the development of the curriculum, it was left to curriculum developers to interpret and provide content for the Policy.

The following table provides an overview of the curriculum documents:

<b>Life Orientation</b>	<b>Religion Studies</b>
Revised National Curriculum Statement Grade R-9 (Schools), Overview (DoE 2002a)	National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (General), Religion Studies (DoE, 2005)
Revised National Curriculum Statement Grade 10-12 (General), Life Orientation	National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (General), Learning Programme

DoE, 2002b)	Guidelines, Religion Studies (DoE, 2008b)
National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (General), Life Orientation (DoE 2003a)	
Revised National Curriculum Statement Grade R-9 Schools, Teacher's Guide for the development of Learning Programme Policy Guidelines, (DoE, 2003b)	
Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 Teacher Guide, Life Orientation (DoE, 2006)	
National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 General), Learning Programme Guidelines, Life Orientation (DoE, 2008a)	

The RNCS, NCS and LPGs is more than the sum of its parts. The Policy and the RNCS (2002n) were developed simultaneously. The RNCS (DoE 2002a) was adopted in 2002 and the Policy in 2003. The NCS for Religion Studies (DoE 2005) accepted the Policy. The LPG for Life Orientation (Grades 10-12) and the LPG of Religion Studies (Grades 10-12) were drafted and finally published in 2008. The development of these curriculum documents and guidelines form part of the policy implementation phases.

#### **4.8.1 Religious Education**

The policy for Religion and Education is unique to South Africa. It encourages learners to be part of their own cultures and religions. The learners are confident

in an increasingly diverse society. The Policy provides clear and distinct roles for parents, religious bodies, educators and educational institutions.

Religious Education consist of only a small part of the subject Life Skills and only a small portion of the time allocated to Life Skills is spent on religious Education. It will be an improvement if more time could be allocated to religion so as to develop learners' awareness of cultural and religious differences.

What the policy of Religious Education set out to do, is to make the public schools aware that they have a responsibility to teach about religion and religions in a way that reflects a profound appreciation of the spiritual aspect of life, which are different from the religious instruction, or religious nurture provided at home through families and religious communities.

The policy also focuses on the values of the Constitution which explicitly prohibits unfair discrimination on grounds that include religion, belief and conscience.

#### **4.8.2 Life skills**

Life skills are central to the holistic development of the learner. Life Skills focus on the social, personal, intellectual, emotional and physical growth of the learners. In the CAPS document the subject Life Skills for the Foundation Phase (Grade R-3) has been divided into four areas namely: (1) Beginning Knowledge (2) Personal and Social Well-being (3) Creative Art (4) Physical Education. In this instance Religious Education will form part of Personal and Social Well-being.

#### **4.8.3 Personal and social well-being**

This is an important study area for young learners because they are still learning to take care of themselves and keep themselves healthy. This study area

includes social health, emotional health, and relationships with other people and our environment, including values and attitudes.

This study area of Personal and Social Well-being will help learners to make informed, morally responsible and accountable decisions about health and the environment. Learners will learn to exercise their constitutional rights and responsibilities, to respect the rights of others and to show tolerance for cultural and religious diversity in order to contribute to our democratic society.

#### **4.9 Conclusion**

Learners do not only come from different environments, but are confronted with different contexts (DoE 2008b: 14). Although learner's local environment may be homogenous, learners will be confronted with a heterogeneous national and international environment, which applies also to religion. Learners in urban and rural environments will also face different challenges. In these communities religion may play harmonizing, integrated and psychological supportive roles, or disruptive roles (Geertz 1973: 164).

Religion Education as part of Life Orientation (R-12) and Religion Studies as a subject in the FET phase are foreseen to give learners the necessary tools, but also the awareness of their changing environment. Learners should strive to contribute to their environment and create positive changes that will benefit all involved.

## CHAPTER 5

### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

#### 5.1. Curriculum and Learning Programme Guidelines for Life Life Orientation

The Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS, DoE 2002b: 1-2) states that the Learning Outcomes for the general Education and Training Band for grades R-9 are based on critical and developmental outcomes that are inspired by the Constitution. The RNCS (DoE 2002b: 1-2) describes the critical and developmental outcomes as follows:

The critical and developmental outcomes envisage learners who are able to:

<b>Critical outcomes</b>	<b>Developmental outcomes</b>
1) identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking	1) reflect on and explore a variety of strategies to learn more effectively
2) work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organization and community	2) participate as responsible citizens in the life of local, national, and global communities
3) organize and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively	3) be culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts
4) collect, analyses, organize and critically evaluate information	4) explore education and career opportunities; and
5) communicate effectively using visual, symbolic and/ or language skills in various modes	5) develop entrepreneurial opportunities (DoE 2002b: 2)
6) use science and technology	



effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others; and	
7) demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognizing that problem solving contexts do not exist in isolation (DoE 2002b: 1)	

Religious Education (as part of Life Orientation) and Religion Studies (as subject in the FET band) specifically contribute to critical outcome 7 (demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognizing that the problem solving contexts do not exist in isolation) and developmental outcome 2 (participate as responsible citizens in the life of local, national, and global communities) and 3 (be culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts).

These critical and developmental outcomes are envisaged to be attained in four distinct phases namely:

- Foundation Phase (Grade R-3);
- Intermediate Phase (Grade 4-6);
- Senior Phase (Grade 7-9) (RNCS 2002a: 13);
- Further education and training (FET) (DoE 2008a: 15-16).

In the first two phases, Religion Education is addressed under the learning programme “Life Skills”. During the senior phase, Religion Education is addressed under learning area “Life Orientation”.

Life Orientation as one of the learning areas is envisaged as follows: *“it guides and prepares learners for life and its possibilities. Life Orientation specifically*

*equips learners for meaningful and successful living in a rapid changing and transforming society*“(RNCS, DoE 2002a: 26).

Life Orientation as a distinct learning area is foreseen to fulfil the following purpose (RNCS 2002b: 4):

- Life Orientation learning area aims to empower learners to use their talents to achieve their full physical, intellectual, emotional and social potential.
- Learners will develop the skills to relate positively and make a contribution to family, community and society, while practicing the values embedded in the Constitution.
- They will learn to exercise their constitutional rights and responsibilities, to respect the rights of others and to show tolerance for cultural and religious diversity in order to build a democratic society RNCS 2002b: 4).
- The Life Orientation learning area will enable learners to make informed morally responsible and accountable decisions about their health and the environment. Learners will be encouraged to acquire and practice life skills that will assist them to respond to challenges and to play an active and responsible role in the economy and in society.

Life Orientation has the following five outcomes (RNCS 2002a: 26), the content and assessment criteria for each outcome differs according to the phase in which learners are (RNCS, DoE 2002b: 7-71).

Learning outcomes:

- *Learning outcome 1: Health Promotion*

The learner will be able to make informed decisions regarding personal, community and environmental health.

- *Learning outcome 2: Social Development*

The learner will be able to demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to constitutional rights and responsibilities, and to show an understanding of diverse cultures and religions.

- *Learning outcome 3: Personal Development*

The learner will be able to use acquired life skills to achieve and extend personal potential to respond effectively to challenges in his/her world.

- *Learning outcome 4: Physical Development and Movement*

The learner will be able to demonstrate an understanding of, and participate in, activities that promote movement and physical development.

- *Learning outcome 5: Orientation to the World of Work*

The learner will be able to make informed decisions about further study and career choices (RNCS, DoE 2002a: 26).

## **5.2 Religion Education: Curriculum 2003**

Religion education falls in the second focus of Life Orientation, called Social Development. Social development is described as follows:

*“In a transforming and democratic society, personal development needs to be placed in a social context so as to encourage the acceptance of diversity and*

*commitment to democratic values. Discrimination on the basis of race, origin and gender remains a challenge for learners in the post-apartheid era. To address these issues, this learning area statement deals with human rights as contained in the South African constitution, social relationship and diverse cultures and religions” (RNCS, DoE 2002b: 5).*

Religion Education within the context of “Social Development” is described by the RNCS as follows:

*“The term ‘religion’ in the Life Orientation learning area statement is used to include belief systems and world views. Religion education in the Revised National Curriculum Statement for Grade R-9 rests on a division of responsibilities between the state on the one hand and religious bodies and parents on the other. Religion education, therefore, has a civic rather than a religious function, and promotes civic rights and responsibilities. In the context of the South African Constitution, religion education contributes to the wider framework of education by developing in every learner the knowledge, values, attitudes and skills necessary for diverse religions to co-exist in a multi-religious society” (DoE 2002b: 6).*

In South African the National Policy on Religious Education was accepted and put into law in September 2003. The policy makes it clear that the education provided to learners will only be Religious Education. Religious Instruction will not be allowed.

With Religious Instruction it is understood that it focuses on a specific religion. With the new policy Religious Instruction will not take place at school but that instruction will take place at home. Where parents teach children how to pray, learn the rituals of their religion, their festival days, their dress-attire, their symbols, their traditions and behavior of followers of their religions (DoE 2002b: 6).

At this stage it must again be emphasized that:

- Religious Education is only allowed in schools;
- Focus on no particular religion;
- Concentrate on religious diversity in South Africa;
- No discrimination between religions;
- No discrimination against people belonging to a particular religion;
- No prayers, preaching or confessions are allowed;
- Does not influence learners to belong to a particular religion;
- All religions are treated fairly and equally.

The role of Religious Education is to get learners to understand and appreciate the diversity of religions and believers in our society and to get them to appreciate different religious people, as well as people with no religious affiliation. Learners will be assessed for Religious Education as they are assessed for other subjects and learning areas in the curriculum. The observation, reading, writing and thinking skills are assessed, not their beliefs.

([www.erp.org/pdf/religion%20bookletWEBpdf](http://www.erp.org/pdf/religion%20bookletWEBpdf) – accessed on 13 September 2014).

As David Chidester (2002: 91-102) explains: “*Learning about religion, religions, and religious diversity, is registered in terms of assessment standards. At each grade, summarized here from grade R to 12, the learner demonstrates the achievement of the broader educational outcome of social development with respect to the component of Religious Education*”).

### **5.3 Revised National Curriculum Statement Grade R to 12**

The Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS, DoE 2002b) states that the Learning Outcome for the General Education and Training Band for Grade R-9 are based on critical and developmental outcomes that are inspired by the Constitution (DoE 2002b: 1-2).

#### **5.3.1 Grades R-3**

Life Orientation: Learning Outcome 2  
Social Development Foundation Phase

Grade R – Identify and name symbols linked to own religion.

Grade 1 – Match symbols associated with a range of religions in South Africa.

Grade 2 – Describe important days from diverse religions.

Grade 3 – Discuss diet, clothing and decorations in a variety of religions in South Africa (DoE 2003b: 22).

#### **5.3.2 Intermediate phase**

Grade 4 – Discuss significant places and buildings in a variety of religions in South Africa.

Grade 5 – Discuss festivals and customs from a variety of religions in South Africa.

Grade 6 – Discuss the dignity of the person in a variety of religions in South Africa (DoE 2003b: 23).

#### **5.3.3 Senior phase**

Grade 7 – Explain the role of oral traditions and scripture in a range of world religions.

Grade 8 – Discusses the contributions of organizations from various religions to social development.

Grade 9 – Reflects on and discusses the contribution of various religions in promoting peace (DoE 2003b: 24).

#### **5.3.4 National curriculum statement grades 10-12**

Grade 10 – Displaying an understanding of the major religions, ethical traditions and indigenous belief systems in South Africa, and exploring how these contribute to a harmonious society:

- Major religions (e.g. Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism);
- Ethical traditions;
- Indigenous belief systems;
- Living in a multi-religious society.

Grade 11 - Reflecting on knowledge and insights gained in major religions, ethical traditions and indigenous belief systems, and clarifying own values and beliefs with the view to debate and analyze contemporary moral and spiritual issues and dilemmas:

- Clarifying own values and beliefs;
- Identifying various moral and spiritual issues and dilemmas (e.g. right to life, euthanasia, cultural practices and traditions, economic issues, environmental issues);
- Process of critical analyses;
- Respect different opinions.

Grade 12 – Reflecting on and explaining how to formulate a personal vision and mission statement based on core aspects of personal philosophies, values,

beliefs, religion and ideologies, which will inform and direct own actions in life and contribute meaningfully to society (RNCS DoE 2003b: 31).

- Awareness of own personal views, values, beliefs, religions, ideology;
- Develop own mission statement for life;
- Respect the right of others to hold different views and values.

I have focused on the aspects of the Assessment Standards from the Learning Outcomes that are related to religion. A Learning Outcome is a description of what (knowledge, skills and values) learners should have, and be able to demonstrate at the end of the year. Assessment Standards describe the level at which learners should demonstrate their achievements of the learning outcome. ([www.erp.org/pdf/religion%20bookletWEBpdf](http://www.erp.org/pdf/religion%20bookletWEBpdf) – accessed on 13 September 2014).

## **5.4 Possible Problems in using the Policy**

### **5.4.1 Educators teaching Religious Instruction rather than Religion Studies**

Educators might begin treating their lesson as if they were Religious Instruction lessons rather than Religion Studies. This happens when an educator from whichever faith tries to promote one religion or set of beliefs by preaching the virtues of one of the other rituals in his or her religion.

For example, a Muslim educator who tries to teach learners how to pray as Muslims does. This educator would have gone against the policy. If this happens, the learners or parents should approach the educator and remind him or her that Religious Instruction is not acceptable in a Religion Studies classroom (Giroux 1983: 284).



#### **5.4.2 Educators refuses to teach Religion Studies**

Educators must be prepared to teach Religion Studies if called upon to do so. They may not refuse. Learners and their parents may demand from the school that educators be provided to teach Religion Studies.

#### **5.4.3 Learners want to wear Religious Symbols to school**

While this issue does not fall directly within the topic of Religion Studies, it is a problem that may be faced by learners, parents or educators. The National Policy on School uniforms talks about the issue of protecting learner's religious expression. Learners must be allowed to wear clothes that they believe are necessary in terms of their religious beliefs. This may include, for example, Muslim girls who want to wear scarves or Jewish boys who want to wear yarmulkes to school. These learners must be allowed to wear this religious attire (Freire 1987: 275-278).

It does not matter if other learners or educators within the same religious traditions do not wish to wear such clothes. The National Policy for School Uniforms does not mention any other religious clothing except scarves and yarmulkes.

#### **5.4.4 Discrimination of education**

While all learners are encouraged to participate in all activities of the school, some learners might feel that their freedom of conscience is violated when religious observances are held during assemblies. In particular, but not only, learners who do not allow any religion might prefer not to take part in such assemblies. Learners cannot be forced to take part in the religious observances of a religion that is not their own (Geertz 1973: 29).

#### **5.4.5 Educator stereotyping**

It is possible for this type of stereotyping to take place during Religion Studies. Negative stereotyping is not acceptable in schools. If an educator tells the class that Muslims all want to be suicide bombers, for example, this would be negative stereotyping. Another form of negative stereotyping is in the use of language. For example, if an educator insists on saying that traditional healers (such as isangomas or inyangas) are “witch doctors”, this would be unacceptable negative stereotyping and would be against the Policy (Geertz 1973: 34).

### **5.5 Multiculturalism in Government Schools**

South Africa is a multicultural country, with 11 official languages and many additional recognized ethnic groups. While they have seen tremendous change in the past decade, South Africans recognize that they have a long road ahead before reaching equality. South African leaders are striving to realize the dreams of all South Africans, as they work for reform, a strong economic future, and respect for the religious and cultural differences (Jansen 2002: 84).

#### **5.5.1 What is Multiculturalism?**

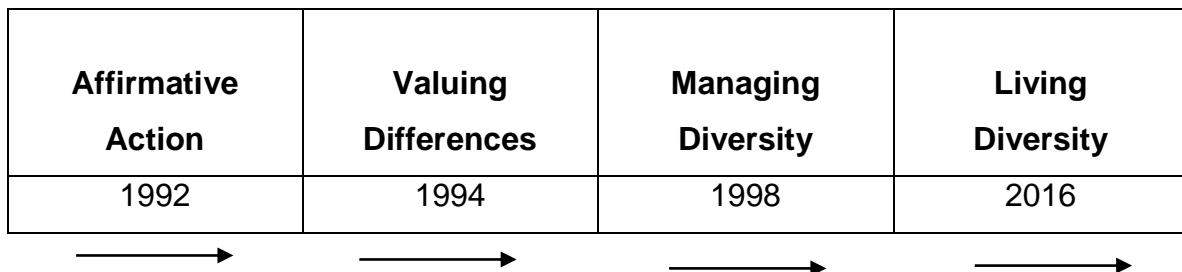
The concept of multiculturalism embodies a new orientation towards the future. Unfortunately, in all the heated discussion around multiculturalism no clear definition has yet emerged. People are left to read into the term whatever their self-interests dictate (Jansen 2002: 86-87).

Caleb Rosado (1997: 8-16) from the Department of Urban Studies defines multiculturalism as:

*“a system of beliefs and behaviors that recognizes and respects the presence of all diverse groups in an organization or society, acknowledge and values their*

*socio-cultural differences, and encourages and enables their continued contribution within an inclusive cultural context which empowers all within the organization or society”*

Multiculturalism is a process of change as demonstrated in the diagram below:



Many schools in South Africa have begun to retreat from affirmative action to living diversity. In an effort to create a more ethnically, and socioeconomically divers environment (Steele 1992: 68-78).

The curriculum for Religious Education make provision for diversity and the development thereof was in line with the constitution. It provides educators and learners with the opportunity to explore other cultures and religions in a safe environment. It equips learners with the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and respect other cultures and religions.

There are four pairs of action phrases that give substance to the definition:

- beliefs and behaviors;
- recognizes and respects;
- acknowledges and values;
- Encourages and enables, and the fifth one, empower.

Multiculturalism is a system, set of interrelated parts, in this case, beliefs and behaviors which makes up the whole of how humans experience today's world. It includes what people believe about others, their basis paradigms, and how these impacts, and is impacted on by behavior (Du Toit 1995: 212-213).

The outcome for this framework of beliefs and behaviors are influenced by these important actions:

- Recognition for diversity in a given society, racial and ethnic minorities, the physically disabled, and women has not been given the same recognition as others. The one-side approach to history and education has been a testimony to that fact.
- With recognition comes respect. Respect and recognition are not the same, since recognizing the existence of a group does not necessarily elicit respect for the group. Our nation has a long history of not respecting the rights of others.
- Multiculturalism also entails acknowledging the validity of the cultural expressions and contribution of the various groups. This is not simply that all cultural contributions are of equal value and social worth, or that all should be tolerated. Multiculturalism thus means valuing what people have to offer, and not rejecting or belittling it simply because it differs from what the majority, or those in power, regards as important and of value.
- Multiculturalism will also encourage and enable the contribution of the various groups to society. The word enable here is important, because what lies behind it is the concept of empowerment, the process of enabling people to be self-critical

of their own biases so as to strengthen themselves and others to achieve their maximum potential.

- The concept of multicultural education is the ability to celebrate with others in manner that transcends all barriers and brings about a unity in diversity, within an inclusive cultural context (Jansen 2004: 126).

Many people fear multiculturalism will bring in “foreign” concepts and ideas which will change its historic course and transform the country into something different from what it has been. South Africa has always been a multicultural society, whether or not many have been willing to admit it.

The new age demands new methods and new structures; change cannot be contained in the old structure, but will replace these (Smith & Oosthuizen 2006: 515-528). It is the old problem of “new wine in old wineskins”. This age-old truism of Jesus Christ is so clear that one wonders how people throughout the ages can continue making the same mistakes in the face of inevitable change. Yet Jesus Himself gave us the reason why people continue making the same mistake. He declares, “*No one after drinking old wine desires new*”; for he says, ‘*the old is better*’ (vs. 39).

What he is telling us here is that even in the face of inevitable change, no one really wants to change; people still prefer the old. Thus those who have the most invested in the old structure are the most reluctant to change, since they stand the most too loose in the new order of things (Meier 2005: 170-171).

### **5.5.2 What makes a school multicultural?**

Many schools regard themselves as “multicultural” simply on the basis of the ethnic diversity present in the particular school. But is this what makes a school

multicultural? And if not, what does and what are the implications for effective schools in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? The mere presence of an ethnically and racially diverse student population, due to legal, moral or social imperatives, does not make a school multicultural. This is merely being concerned with affirmative action (Van Heerden 1998: 110).

In the 1980s the concerns was with “valuing differences”. In the 1990s the push was for ‘managing diversity’. But in the 21<sup>st</sup> century the focus of schools needs to be on living with diversity. What this means is that the number of ethnically diverse students sitting in a classroom does not make a school multicultural. All that this may simply represents is that students have gained access to the school. Neither is it merely a concern for understanding, valuing and celebrating the differences among the various groups represented in the school (Jansen 2004: 117-128). Valuing diversity is important, as it may create awareness and sensitivity to differences.

What makes a school multicultural or not is:

- Perspectives;
- Policies;
- Programs;
- Personnel;
- Practices.

Furthermore, there are four imperatives that form the basis of multicultural education (Jansen 2004: 117-128).

- Reflect the heterogeneity of the school;
- Sensitivity to the needs of the various groups;
- Incorporate their contributions to the overall mission of the school;

- Create a cultural and social ambiance that is inclusive and empowers all groups in the school (Moletsane 1999: 43).

This is an approach to education and curriculum construction that acknowledged and respects the contribution which the various racial and ethnic groups have made to society, and incorporates these contributions in an overall program of instruction which meets the needs of an ever-changing society and is sensitive to the social development of all people concerned (Banks 2006: 59). In other words, what makes a school multicultural lies in the management of diversity and the empowerment of all groups, which includes the changing of mindsets as well as the underlying culture of a school. The point behind this is that unity in diversity needs to be the basic premise of all that is done in education (Van Heerden & Vandeyar 2006: 110).

### **5.5.3 Culturally diverse classroom in South Africa**

Historically former white Model C schools, “Indian” schools and “Coloured” schools have become racially and culturally diverse over the past 10 years since our democracy (Fante 2000: 35). As a result of the apartheid policies, learners from racially diverse backgrounds, as well as their white teachers, have not been exposed to other racial groups. The main objective in the South African classroom should not be to submerge cultural differences. Instead to teach learners respect for each other’s cultures in the hope of creating tolerance and harmony (Squelch 1993: 53).

The Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy by the Department of Education (2004) stipulates the respect for a child’s cultural identity, language and values, as well as the national values of the country in which the child resides or the country from which the child originates (Mier 2005: 170-177). The Manifesto identifies ten fundamental values of the South African Constitution which are:

- Democracy;
- Social justice and equity;
- Equality;
- Non-racism and non-sexism;
- Ubuntu (human dignity);
- Open community;
- Accountability and responsibility;
- Rule of law;
- Respect;
- Reconciliation.

(<http://cnx.org/content/m23007/latest> -accessed on 29 May 2012)

Could South African educators look at multicultural education to instill these values in our learners? All classroom activities, such as, classroom management techniques, instructional strategies and self-concepts, operate on the assumption that are embedded in cultural values, attitudes and beliefs (Mkwanazi-Twala 1998: 28-30).

Teaching experiences derive from the conscious and unconscious assumptions that one makes, and are ultimately based on an individual's cultural perspectives. An understanding of the cultural factors creates the consciousness that is necessary to perceive that transmitting culture and socializing learners are inherent in classroom teaching (Garcia 1991: 1).

Teachers need to take into account the backgrounds of the learners. Learners come from diverse background and South Africa, especially because of its history of segregation and oppression, has created disempowered communities who experience poverty. The enemies of ignorance, disease, famine and poverty are common in all cultures and nations. It is important that teachers remember that we live in a global society and that these enemies are common phenomena in South Africa (Cross & Mkwanazi-Twala 1998: 28-30). Teachers



will always come into contact with learners from diverse and varied backgrounds and the onus is upon the teacher to assist the child by making a difference. Garcia (1991: 7) reminds teachers to accept the reality of their learners and the cultural milieu that these learners emerge:

*“To make a difference in the lives of students you as a teacher must liberate yourself from provincial and narrow conceptions about people; try to elicit excellence within the context of the student’s own cultural perspective”.*

Educators must always enrich themselves with new and current information to make a difference in their learner’s lives. Each and every educator should be open minded and learn as much as possible from the curriculum, learners and the brought society.

## **5.6 Assumption underpinning multicultural education**

### **5.6.1 Religious practices in South Africa**

South Africa has many different religions. African Traditional Religion and the religion of the San peoples well as other religions such as Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism, were brought to South Africa by people from Europe and Asia (Carrim 1998: 31).

### **5.6.2 Indigenous religions of South Africa: Religion of the San People**

Religion is part of the everyday life of the San people. They believe there is a great God who is powerful and good and they either pray to him by themselves or else they pray through a healer who is known as a shaman. The most important Bushmen spiritual being was Kaggen, the trickster-deity. He created many things, and appears in numerous myths where he can be foolish or wise,

tiresome or helpful. The word Kaggen can be translated as mantis, this leads to the belief that the Bushmen worshipped the praying mantis.

However, Kaggen neither is not a praying mantis; the mantis is only one of his manifestations. He can also turn into an eland, a hare, a snake, or vulture; he can assume many forms. When he is not in one of his animal forms, Kaggen lives his life as an ordinary Bushman. The Bushman's beliefs go beyond that. The eland is their most spiritual animal and appears in four rituals: boy's first kill, girls' puberty, marriage and trance dance. A ritual is held where the boy is told how to track an eland and how the eland will fall once shot with an arrow. He becomes an adult when he kills his first large antelope, preferable an eland.

One of the most important religious rituals in San religion is the trance dance. The women sit in a circle around the fire and clap to the rhythm of the spiritual songs that they sing while the men dance. As the San clap, sing and dance, the spirit enters the shamans and they go into a trance where it is believed they get special healing powers. The San people have help on to their religious believe for many years.

With the coming of a new and democratic political regime in South Africa, the San community find themselves at a cross-roads where they have to impress their will on the type of future available to them. One path may involve agricultural economic development but at the cost of their cultural heritage. The other path involves collecting of pieces of a shattered society, empowering those with the knowledge of the hunting and gathering system, and using these resources to rebuild a sense of community and an economic future that rest on an ancient heritage( Webley 2000: 3-19). The San people culture and believe system stretches over many decades, and has been passed down from generation to generation. Their believes and culture are being treated and it's up to the younger generation to make sure that this ancient heritage does not vanish.

### **5.6.3 African Traditional Religion**

Bantu-speaking people brought an array of new religious practices and beliefs when they arrived in the first millennium. Most believe in a Supreme Being, or high God, who could bestow blessings or bring misfortune to humans. African traditional religion believes in ancestor worship and practices Ubuntu which shows itself in treating others kindly, showing concern for them and working for the good of the community. African Traditional Religion focuses on the family and special events in people's lives such as birth, initiation, weddings and death. For special events and to honor the spirits of the ancestors they sacrifice animals. Bantu speaking people brought along with their arrival in the first millennium an array of religions.

Religion is most fundamental, perhaps most important influence in the lives of most Africans. Traditional African Religion is a way of life in which ancestors are part of every major event such as weddings, births and death and less important events. These traditions have been passed from one generation to the next.

## **5.7 Imported Religions of Africa**

### **5.8.1 Buddhism**

The symbol of Buddhism is the wheel of life. When Siddhartha Gautama was a boy, a wise man predicted that he would one day refuse to be a prince and become a monk. The wise man said that Gautama would do this after he had seen an old man, a sick man and a dead man. His father was so worried about this that he tried to protect his son from all the sadness of the world outside his palace. But one day, Gautama slipped out of the palace. He saw an old man, a sick man and then a dead man. Now he knew that there was lots of sadness in the world. Then Gautama saw a religious beggar wearing a simple yellow robe. The beggar looked full of peace and joy. Gautama then realized that while there

was lots of sadness in the world, there were also ways to live a good life. Gautama then decided to travel as a monk, studying with many teachers and meditating. When you meditate you clear your mind of all its thoughts and keep very still. One night Gautama went to meditate under a tree and there he found the answer to the problem of life. After this he became known as Buddha. He taught people that they should be satisfied with very little, and should help and love others. Buddhist teaching has been introduced into South Africa.

The Buddhist traditions are represented in South Africa in many forms. Temples, centers and groups are common in all areas of the country and it is the largest Buddhist community in Africa.

### **5.8.2 Christianity**

Jesus was a Jew who lived 2000 years ago in the country that was then called Palestine and is today part of Israel. Jesus was a teacher and a healer. At the time Palestine was ruled by the Romans and they, plus the Jewish leaders, thought Jesus was a trouble maker and so he was arrested by the Romans and he was crucified in Jerusalem. Christians believed that three days after Jesus died on the cross; he rose again from the dead and is now with God in heaven. Christians take their name from Jesus Christ. They believe that Jesus is the son of God. Their Holy Scripture is the Bible and has a cross as their symbol. Christianity came to South Africa through the missionaries who came to South Africa to start schools so they could teach people how to read and write. These schools were known as missionary schools.

The apartheid system, as well as resistance to it, was both a political and theological matter. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, several Christian churches supported Apartheid and racial division (Elphick 1997: 383-395). But over the years Christianity has become and remains the official religion in South Africa.

### 5.8.3 Hinduism

Hinduism is one of the oldest religions in the world. It comes from India and began about 4000 year ago. Hindus believe that Brahma is the Creator of the universe. They believe in many gods and goddesses who show different parts of Brahma's power. They also believe in reincarnation, which is premised on the faith that when a person dies his or her soul lives on and can be born again into a different body. Hinduism came to South Africa in the 1850's as workers were very much needed in the sugar plantations in Kwazulu-Natal. Soon after they arrived, they built small shrines and temples on the sugar estates.

Hinduism is found in various provinces of South Africa. It is unclear when the first Hindus settled in South Africa. Early Hindu settlements in South Africa suffered discrimination, abuse, persecution and racial segregation (Kumar 2012: 97). After Apartheid Hinduism form part of the national curriculum and many Hindu temples are visible over the South African landscape.

### 5.8.4 Islam

Islam began with the teaching of the Prophet Muhammad who was born in the city of Mecca in Arabia just over 1400 years ago. When he was about 40 years old, the angel Gabriel appeared to Muhammad in a vision and told him that the one true God, Allah, was the same God as the god of the Jews and the Christians.

The Qur'an is the holy book of the Muslims and it contains Mohammad's words and instructions as to how a true Muslim should live and worship God. It also gives guidance to Muslims in their everyday lives. It is written in Arabic. The place of worship for a Muslim is the mosque. Islam came to South Africa when the Dutch needed slaves to help with the work in the Cape; they captured many of these people who brought their religion with them. The Muslim leaders

encouraged their people to keep their religion by erecting schools which taught the Muslims about Islam and their faith. Islam in South Africa is a minority religion, practiced by less than 15% of the total population (Tayob 2014: 104-106). The end of apartheid has marked a greater increase in African Muslims that have arrived in South Africa and are part of the curriculum.

### **5.8.5 Judaism**

The Star of David is the symbol of Judaism. The Jewish people believe they all descended from Abraham who lived about 4000 years ago. They believe that God promised Abraham that one day his descendants would live in the land of Canaan which is now part of Israel. Jews believe that God gave Moses their law (10 commandments) which form part of the Torah (the Jewish Holy Scripture) that tell the people how to live their daily lives according to God's laws. Many Jewish people came to South Africa when the diamond and gold mines started in the 1800's and after the Second World War. They came from Europe and brought their religion with them. They built synagogues so that they could worship God and study the scriptures.

During apartheid, a number of Jews were prominent in the Anti-Apartheid movement and played an instrumental role in shaping the future of South Africa and the schooling system.

## **5.9 Religion Education in Public Schools**

### **5.9.1 Religious Education in Public Schools in South Africa**

The topic of religious education in South African public schools has been quite an issue in the past. Schools in South Africa reflect society's political philosophy and goals.

### 5.9.2 Implementation of Religious Education before 1994

In an article by David Chidester (2002:91-102) he states “*Children must personally accept, and trust for their personal salvation, it is Christian God introduced to them in the Bible*” and also “*a public school must show tolerance and respect for differing doctrinal conviction, as long as there is no denial of Jesus Christ as the Messiah*”.

To achieve tolerance and respect for diversity, public schools made use of the following methods:

- Many schools had and still have in their coat of arms mottos based on the Christian Religion. Learners were taught to know their school’s motto and the meaning thereof and to memories it. They were also taught and encouraged to be true to it and to strive to live by it.
- School assemblies started with scripture reading from a Christian Bible and a “Christian” prayer. The Lesson or message was Christian in character and based on Christian principles and values. It was usually officiated by clergymen from one of the three Afrikaans Reformed Churches or other Christian churches.
- On day that there are no school assembles the first period of every day was devoted to scripture Reading and prayer.
- Religious Instruction was part of the school’s curriculum. The curriculum was based on Christian Education, values and beliefs. The curriculum was provided by the National and Provincial Education Department.

Previously schools also had a subject called Youth Preparedness. The subject taught learners how to prepare themselves for handling everyday life. For example what to do in an emergency where people's lives were at stake for instance by making use of first aid. But the emphasis in most lessons was on how to be a Christian.

Most schools also had cadets, in military uniforms, preparing themselves for military service when they leave school. Young men had to fight for their country and the South African way of life, which include the National Christian faith. Being a dominantly Christian country the men had to defend the country against possible non-Christian countries which could be enemies.

The following informal methods were used to instill Christian Education at schools:

- Schools allowed learners to have different Christian society meetings like the SCA (Student Christian Association) and Church Youth Society during school breaks. The learners of these groups were allowed to address learners on many topics in connection with Christianity.
- The school hall or classrooms were available for various Christian meetings after school hours.
- School camps were organized for the various activities of the school but always with the inclusion of a Christian Religion Instruction.
- Learners chosen by fellow learners and teaching staff such as Head boys, Head girls, prefects as well as sports captains had to be Christian learners who had amongst many other qualities strong Christian beliefs.



- It was strongly suggested that Religious Instruction should start at home with parents and at churches but to instill the Christian will of the state the schools had to have a period on the time-table for Religion Instruction. The other subjects taught, where possible, had a strong Christian base.
- Preference was given to Christian teachers to be appointed on the teaching staff.
- Although 60% of the South African population claims that they are Christians the rest of the populations had to adhere to Christian rules in state schools because South African professed to be a Christian country governed by Christians.

#### **5.10 Implementation of Religious Education after 1994**

South Africa has a new coat of arms and the motto is:

! Ke E: / Xarra // ke, (Unity in Diversity)

This diversity is now in state schools in terms of religions, cultures, languages and traditions. This diversity came about when many black people and other previously disadvantaged people decided to put their children in former white's only schools. The result was that white teaching staff and white learners came into contact with many other cultures and religions. The Religious Education had to adapt to this diversity.

Clause 15 of the Bill of Rights in the Constitution states he following:

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought belief and opinion.
2. Religious observances may be conducted at state or state-aided institutions, provided that:

- a. Those observances follow the rules made by the appropriate public authorities;
- b. They are conducted on an equitable basis; and
- c. Attendance is free and voluntary.

The following methods were introduced to change Religious Education:

- Scripture reading came from different religions and is officiated by learners of many different religions. It is done on different assembly days so that the diversity of South Africa's religions in the Religious Education policy is observed.
- Schools must teach learners what religion is all about and, by doing so, increase understanding among citizens, build respect for diversity and value for spirituality. The role of Religious Education facilitator is not to convince learners that a particular religion is better than another or to convince learners that all religions are good.  
([www.erp.org.za/pdf/religion%20bookletWebpdf](http://www.erp.org.za/pdf/religion%20bookletWebpdf) – accessed on 13 September 2014).
- Schools can still make their halls and classrooms available for various meetings but different religious societies must be given the same rights to use the halls and classrooms and not only one society as before. The availability of the venue may not clash with the schools daily functions.

If learners have the need to pray, to study or to be together as a religious group school breaks can be used for that purpose.

- Religious Instruction is not allowed. The curriculum is based on multiculturalism. Schools teach learners about all religions in South Africa and learners must know South Africa's religious diversity and the religious traditions and history of fellow-learners.
- Chidester (2002: 91-201) explains "*In keeping with the provisions of the Constitution, educational policy must be dedicated not to the teaching, promoting, or propagation of religions, and religious diversity in South Africa and the world.*"
- Leaders amongst learners chosen by fellow-learners and teaching staff must be chosen solely for their leadership qualities, to inspire, to earn respect, to be an example to others, not based on the learner's religious beliefs.
- Most state and private schools have their own school uniforms. After 1996 learners can wear other dress-attire and symbols to express their religion, within reason as stipulated by the school governing body. The Draft National Policy on School Uniforms talks about the issue of protecting pupil's religious expressions. Learners must be allowed to wear clothes that they believe are necessary in terms of their religious beliefs. This includes, for example, Muslim girls who wants to wear scarves or Jewish boys who wants to wear yarmulkes to school.
- "*Religious attire and symbols may include crucifixes, dreadlocks, the Aum symbol, beards, imibhaco or beads, as long as these are used for religious purposes and not because it is the least fashion.*"  
([www.erp.org.za/pdf/religion%20bookletWebpdf](http://www.erp.org.za/pdf/religion%20bookletWebpdf) – accessed 14 September 2014).

## **5.11 Comparison to other multicultural countries**

### **5.11.1 Religious Education in Europe**

Religious Education in Europe is a multi-layered subject, which focus on education into religion, education about religion and learning from religion. Cultural diversity is something that should be enjoyed. It should not become a problem, because of ignorance. It is ignorance that provides the fuel for fear, prejudice and hate in societies and the world (Davis 2008: 15-16). Learning to live together by learning about others, their history, traditions and spiritual life. These differences create knowledge, a better understanding of each other and ultimately peace (Delors 1996: 10).

### **5.11.2 Differences in Religious Education in Europe**

These differences exist because of the countries religious landscape, role and value of religion, education system and history and politics. There is a widespread provision of Religious Education as a school subject in most European countries and the regulations are different. In some countries emphasis is given mainly to education into religion, introducing learners into one specific faith tradition. In a majority of countries this is not seen as a task of public schools, but of families and religious communities.

#### **5.11.2.1 role and value of religion in society**

The religious landscape of Europe has changed rapidly after World War 2 (Henkel 2012: 285). Change in the religious spaces of European cities resulted from the general developments in these cities. During the growth of these cities, many people moved from the inner cities to the outskirts. The churches that where built stayed and continue to be religious symbols in public spaces. Today many of them have become tourist sites and museums.

The influx of immigrants gave rise to new congregations and churches (Park 2013: 118). In many of these new congregations, the number of younger members grew rapidly, in contrast to the composition of church attendees at most traditional churches where elderly people dominate (Casanova 2013: 113-127).

#### **5.11.2.2 relation between state and religion**

The range of approaches goes from no religious education in public schools to models with exclusive responsibility of the state to co-operative models where state and religious communities share responsibility for religious education in schools. In many countries, there has been development from an admission oriented approach to a non-admission one, especially in those countries where a state church was dominant, such as England, Denmark, Sweden and Norway. Where churches and religious communities still have a legal say in public education, they see their involvement in education and religious education in public schools mainly as a service to society and as a field of close co-operation with the state rather than primarily as an activity to nurture church members.

#### **5.11.2.3 structure of the education system**

Currently Religious Education as a subject in schools is taught mainly in line with the criteria of general education, learning about religion (knowledge based) and learning from religion (based on the experience and existential questions of the learners).

#### **5.11.2.4 history and politics**

Before introducing the situation in Estonia as a first example I want to mention three general features of experiences that influence the place of religion in society in central and Eastern Europe today (Casanova 2013: 113-127).

*Memory and yearning for the time before communism.* In the Hungarian society before 1948 religion and church played a central role in the life of people. The religious milieus were strong and well structured. This model has been suppressed due to the direct influence of the Soviet Union in the development of Hungary (Kerkbüroo 1935: 47-53)

- a. *The experience of the contradiction between private and state ideology in education.* The communist regimes tried to educate a new socialist oriented type of human being, weakening the influence of parents and forcing the communist ideology. Those parents who tried to educate the children in a different way had to do that secretly. Out of that experience many do not have a great trust in the public education systems (Remmel & Uibu 2015: 5-20).
- b. *The French or American model.* What level of separation between public and private education do we need especially concerning Christian education? This is a contested issue nowadays (Pickel 2012: 229-256). In how far is religion just a private matter and to which extend does religion influence public life and politics?

The background of a contested situation concerning religion and education has to be taken into account when we look at developments in central and eastern countries. Concerning the religious landscape you can differentiate between mainly Catholic, Orthodox and more or less secularized countries (Zdeněk 2010: 68-84).

### **5.11.3 Religious Education in Estonia**

Estonia's geopolitical position is at the crossroads of East and West, with the history of Danish, German, Swedish and Russian dominions, has resulted in mixed political and cultural impacts. Christian influences from the Orthodox east and Catholic west may be detected in archeological relics (Valke 2007: 159-181).

Estonia was Christianized in the 13<sup>th</sup> century by the Teutonic Knight and in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Estonia became a Lutheran country. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century Estonia had a significant increase of Orthodox Church members, because they promised land to all converts. The impact of atheistic ideology during the Soviet occupation must also be mentioned as a factor in shaping the Estonian religious situation today (Remmel 2015: 359-392). The country has been heterogeneous religiously for a long time.

The Estonian Constitution provides protection to freedom of Religion as set out in art 40-42 below:

*“Everyone has freedom of conscience, religion and thought. Everyone may freely belong to churches and religious societies. There is no state church. Everyone has the freedom to exercise his/her religion, both alone and in community with others, in public or in private, unless this is detrimental to public order, health or morals”.* and

*“Everyone has the right to remain faithful to his/her opinions and beliefs. No one shall be compelled to change them. Beliefs shall not excuse a violation of the law. No one shall be held legally responsible because of his/her beliefs”.*

Religious Education and the relationship between the state and its people are protected by the constitution as discussed below.

The Estonian Constitution follows the principle of equality and neutrality.

Religious Education (RE) is an optional subject in Estonia and it must adhere to the national syllabus. In Estonian legislation a distinction is made between the confessional subject taught only in private schools, and non-confessional subject about world religions, taught in government schools (Skeie 2014: 81-83). The Education Act of 2010 specifies that teaching and learning in religious education

must be non-confessional and voluntary. Schools were obliged to organize religious education classes and parents have to give their consent for children younger than 15 to take Religious Education (Maruste 2004: 24-358).

The enforcement of this legislation up to 2010 was complicated. There was no way to measure the interest in religious education. Schools were not required to introduce it and the lack of clear definition of the obligations of schools to find religious teachers, leaving the status of the “voluntary subject” open to interpretation (Valk 2007: 170).

Today neither the new Education Act nor the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Act gives any regulations about religious education. Instead, the national curricula and Private Schools Act makes provision for religious education. Within the Estonian legislation a distinction is made between the confessional subject which may be taught in private schools, and the non-confessional subject, about world religions, that may be taught in the government schools (Ammerman 2006: 3-18). According to Valke (2003:86-87), Religious Education must be targeted at the social and cultural environment in which the subject is conducted. It has to address people’s specific needs and expectations, deal with learner’s questions and problems and take into consideration the particular society in which it is taught.

Valke (2003: 86-87), refers to the following aspects:

- impact of religion in the cultural and historical development of the society;
- Role and influence of different denominations and religion representation in society, and of legislation related to religious issues;
- Attitudes, expectations, fears, prejudices towards religious education;



- The traditions and positive and negative experience of religious education in the country;
- The development in and experiences of religious education in other countries;
- Religious education in relation to the national curriculum's aims and frames.

Estonia's new Religious Education Act does not contain restrictions to the subject. New laws today in Estonia give teachers greater liberty and responsibility in the provision of religious education. The task of religious education is not to guide the learners towards acceptance of any particular religion, but to be open to religious and non-religious convictions (Jaanus 2012: 167-185).

#### **5.11.4 Religious Education in South Africa**

The Constitution created in reality a secular state based on the modern-day creed of human rights. The Constitution is supported by the Bill of Rights. The religious demography of South Africa after 1994, led to a disconnect between the majority of the population in the country. The people had different views and opinions on issues such as sexual orientations, abortions, capital punishment and corporal punishment in schools (Mphahlele 1997: 81-84). Although it brought about a secular state, the Constitution does not contain an establishment clause to confirm the separation between state and religion (Oosthuizen 2000: 467). Section 15(2) of the Constitution confirms this right by providing for religious observances to be conducted in state or state-aided institutions.

Section 28(2), stipulates: "*A child's best interest are important in every matter concerning the child*", and Section 13, dealing with cultural, linguistic and religious communities, reiterates that persons belonging to a cultural, linguistic or religious community may not be denied the right, to practice their religion

provided that it is in line with the provision contained in the Bill of Rights (Constitution 1996).

The relationship between religion and education was a top priority for the new government in South Africa as it started the restructuring process of education after 1994. Religion forms an important part of the country's commitment to "nation building". After 1994 the new government had to make sure that all are represented in the new education system. In the first White Paper on Education, the government recognized the parent's right to choose the religious basis of their children's education. In line with this, Section 7(1) of the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996), stipulates that every learner and every member of staff of a public school shall have freedom of religion, while Section 7(2) stipulates that religious observance may be conducted at a public school under rules established by that school's Governing Body, and attendance by learners and staff shall be voluntary (Mawdsley 2008: 94-104).

The new National Policy on Religion and Education (Policy 2003: 2), refers to our diverse population and the differences in cultures, languages and religion, and affirms the fact that no particular religious ethos shall be dominant. The National policy therefore provided for a cooperative model of legal separation combined with the possibility of interaction between religion and the state.

#### **5.11.5 Criticism against the policy**

Several points of criticism have been levelled against the policy. This includes the following, namely:

- that the new policy only focuses on spirituality and not on learning about other religions. Assuming that learning about religion will not promote emotional and spiritual development in learners (Chidester 2003, 270);

- that the policy is in conflict with the Constitution and the South African Schools Act (1996), by declaring that it is religiously neutral, but exercises a religious choice. Thereby violating the constitutional right of freedom of religion (Malherbe 2004: 251-252);
- that the policy is based on a humanistic approach, which places humankind at the center of religious studies (Malherbe 2004: 252). Religion is thus regarded only in humanistic terms and disregard Christians deepest convictions;
- that religious education should be compulsory for all learners and will impose a humanistic perspective which is in direct conflict with the view of religion held by Christians, Muslims, Jews and Others. Furthermore violates Section 25(1) of the Constitution that advocates religious freedom (Malherbe 2004: 253);
- that the policy promotes single-faith observance as part of the official school day, which violates Section 15(2) of the Constitution that provides for religious observance in government or government-funded schools (Malherbe 2004: 254).

The policy is in variance with Section 7 of the South African Schools Act (1996), which regulates the conduct of religious observance in government schools (Malherbe 2004: 255).

## 5.12 Synthesis

Education about religion is another perspective. It refers to religious knowledge and religious studies. This is a common aim even if we compare different religious education approaches. In a world where religion is important for the majority of the people we need knowledge and orientation about religion. Education from religion gives people the opportunity to consider different answers to major religious and moral issues to help them develop their own views.

The experience and identity of learners is at the center of teaching and learning. It is a kind of optimistic view because in practice elements from all these perspectives are integrated. Different countries, with their own local, regional or national context have different approaches to religious education.

I believe that it would be in the best interest of that particular country and its people, if they are exposed to a variety of religious and secular belief system, in a well-informed environment, which gives rise to respect.

Teaching about religion and other convictions, together with intercultural and citizenship education for young people should play a very important role. However, the approach to religious education adopted in state schools in Europe still have many challenges. Confessional teaching remains the most widespread approach in Europe and South Africa, with the occasional gesture towards religious diversity (Debray 2002: 10). Knowledge of religion is an integral part of the history of mankind and civilization. Even in countries where one religion dominates, teaching about the origins of all religions must be the norm rather than favoring one above another.

South Africa follows a confessional pluralistic approach towards religious education. Although secularism has taken a double toll from religion in public life most people still belong to some or other faith groups.

Most South African belong to mainstream churches, other smaller sects, and others regard themselves as agnostics, atheists or secular humanist (Fowler 1995: 142). However, each and every person has some sort of religious conviction. Most policies on religion and education have downgraded these personal faiths, and the other related convictions to the private lives of their adherents to the interior of their homes, churches, temples and private or independent schools. According to religious education policy makers, these convictions are sacred values which are personal and private and should not play a role in government education (Fowler 1995: 143).

## CHAPTER 6

# SYNTHESIS

### 6.1 Introduction

This study sought to analyze the Life Orientation and Religious Studies Policies and the implementation thereof in government schools. With particular reference to grade R-0, the policy on Life Orientation and grade 10-12, the policy on Religious education.

This chapter provides an overview of proposed changes that can be made in the Life Orientation and Religious Education policy. These changes will have a direct influence on the lives of every learner, educator and society. The existing curriculum should be globally orientated and should address social changes and prepare all learners and educators alike, to be more inclusive, interactive and proactive. I do recognize that these changes might be difficult, yet it is a force that we all must understand and accommodate, both as individuals as well as educators.

### 6.2 Problem statement

In democratic, multi-cultural and multi-faith societies like South Africa, Religious Education is a controversial school learning area. Pre-apartheid the learning area was a subject on its own. Post-apartheid the learning area forms part of Life Orientation which is a compulsory subject from grade 4 to 12. Religious Education creates tension between the Church, Society and education. Since our democracy in 1994 the Minister of Education has been at the fore front of religious reform in public education in South Africa.

### **6.3 Objective**

The objective of this study is to identify the relationship between religion and education in the South African School Curriculum in order to determine opportunities and problems for Religious Education.

### **6.4 Aims**

The important aims of this study are the following:

- study the History of Education in South African public school before and after 1994;
- study and evaluate the National Curriculum for Religious Education;
- study the different Religious Education models as we find them in other multicultural countries; to identify the possibilities and problems the Education Department face with regard to this learning area;
- study the opinions of selected individual (Academics and Educators), religious leaders and the South African Society;
- make suggestions to improve Religious Education in an ever changing world;

### **6.5 Methodology**

This is a literature study; this kind of research is done through research of information captured in books, journals, articles and newspaper articles, about the subject or concepts related to the research problem or statement. The first part of this study will examine the history of religion in South Africa, focusing on the role of the Church and Government in the development of the learning area. This will involve the study and analysis of relevant literature and articles.

Mc Millan & Schumacher (1992: 112) wrote that a literary study is an interpretive review of the literature, a summary and synthesis of relevant literature on a research problem.

This study will focus on the critical evaluation of the Life Orientation and Religious Educations policies. It will identify problems within the implementation process and make surges possible solutions.

## **6.6 Chapter Division**

Chapter one introduces the importance of Religious Education. This chapter includes the relevance, problem statement, aims and objective and the purpose of this research.

Chapter two offers a background of education pre and post-apartheid South Africa. The different educational policies are studied and evaluated.

Chapter three provides a history of Religious Education in South Africa in government's schools. The implementation of a new curriculum and the effects and impact it has on the education systems, with particular reference to grade R-0 and grade 10-12.

Chapter four integrated Religious Education models in different European countries with a diverse landscape similar to South Africa.

Chapter five discussed the advantages and disadvantages of Religious Education faced in South African schools. This chapter addresses the problems and possibilities of a new policy document pose to educators and learners.

The final chapter makes suggestions to improve Religious Education in a changing society and make recommendations as result of this study.



## **6.7 Suggestions to improve religious education in a changing society**

Before any suggestions should be made, we have to look at change and diversity in the twenty first century classroom. We need to create an interconnected environment, where society, community, school and the individual are developed as a whole and separately (Hodgkinson 2000: 6-11). The following improvements are suggested for learners:

### **6.7.1 Recognize social and cultural changes**

The first step in providing an education that is truly multicultural is to improve the learners understanding of the concept of pluralism in a South African context. Pluralism in this context must look at sources such as cultural identity, nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, socio-economic status, religion further more we must look particularly at how each of these sources has an impact on the individual as well as the group or society as a whole. It requires teacher's understanding of social changes that have historically and are currently taking place in our pluralistic societies. These social changes provide the underlying rationale for multicultural education and are found in the Constitution (McClelland 1993: 61).

### **6.7.2 Understand cultural and learning processes**

After establishing the need for an education system to be multicultural, it is necessary to understand just what is meant by the term. What does the term culture refer to, and how do people come to acquire different cultural identities? With what knowledge do learners already come to school with? Too often schools do not validate the experience learners bring with them to the school. Instead they label some learners as failures because their backgrounds, language and culture, are not seen as adequate (McClelland 1993: 62-63). Educators in this regard must expand their knowledge base of culture and religion to accommodate these different groups and value systems. So often

educators forget that South Africans are living in a pluralistic society and sometime fails to adapt to their environment. The curriculum content must be expanded and pedagogy adapted to make sure that not only the basic are covered but in-depth research and effort should be placed on the development of these shortcomings. It makes no sense for learners to be exposed to other religions on a surface level. These learners go back into their communities and must live with the same people they know almost nothing about. I think that as adults we are too afraid of the unknown, but we have to realize that these learners are born in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that offers so much more. Who gave schools, educators and the government the right to choose for them?

### **6.7.3 Improve intergroup and intragroup interaction**

The main focus of what should be examined is how all learners in society acquire their particular cultural identity and cultural differences. In South African schools today most learners are drawn to other learners with the same background, language and value system. It is time that these learners expand their own knowledge, by interaction with one another and find common ground to improve on these interactions. Government and educators must work to improve intergroup as well as intragroup interaction (Hodgkinson 2000: 6-11). We must learn how individuals develop sensitivity and encourage interaction with other cultures and religions. Attention should be paid to issues such as intercultural sensitivity, cross-cultural understanding and assessment across groups and conflict management.

Educators in particular must broaden the instructional range so that it reflects an understanding of the various groups to be taught. To help educators to understand the interaction between culturally different learners, an intercultural learning environment should be created. Learners would be less sensitive towards their own culture and religion, and more sensitive towards other

learners. Learners would have in this regard a clearer understanding of fellow class members and a better understanding of themselves (Zimpher 1989: 27-30).

#### **6.7.4 Transmit intercultural understanding and skills to learners**

Finally the goal is to help educators transmit to learners the same knowledge and skills of intercultural sensitivity and cross-cultural understanding. This would improve learner's intercultural interaction in order to prepare them to become multicultural citizens, who are able and willing to participate in an independent world. Educators should not only be concerned with developing the knowledge and skill, but also with transferring this knowledge to the learners (McClelland 1993: 62-63).

### **6.8 Core findings**

- The Life Orientation and Religious Education policy was never intended to be used to create unity in society, community, schools and one self. Intercultural and intergroup interaction is just as important as knowledge about different religions. If learners have a better understanding of different cultures and religions on a bigger scale, exclusion and bullying will be minimized.
- The policy for religion and education stipulates that religion in education flows directly from the constitutional values of citizenship, human rights, equality, freedom from discrimination, and freedom of conscience, beliefs and opinion. Within this description of religion in education, the world culture, cultural interaction and cultural tolerance are mentioned. Surely our religious beliefs are formulated within the culture we are born into.

- The constitution provides only a framework for determining the relationship between religion and education in a democratic society. It is up to the government, policy writers and those who implement the policy to make sure that all the important values should be in place. Not only to develop the individual learner but also his/her fellow classmate on a spiritual level but also on a cultural level to have a better understanding of other learners (National Policy: Religion and Education: 2005: 6).
- Within the constitutional framework, public schools have to promote the core values of a democratic society, through the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. It is up to all government schools to promote and make sure that these values are adhered to.
- The application of these values in the public school systems must be embraced in a religious diverse South Africa, whether people agree or not. Section 57 of the Schools Act, makes provision for private schools to determine their own religious instruction and observance and it is not prescribed by the policy. What about those learners in private schools? They also come from different religious and cultural background. They also have to go back to where they come from, and be part of that particular community. How will they be integrated, if the private schools have their own curriculum? By only focusing on particular religion.
- Religious education is about diversity in the classroom and will increasingly become a space of linguistic, cultural and religious diversity. Schools must create an environment that caters for all, whether public or private schools. Schools should show an awareness and acceptance of all cultural background and religious diverse learners. Focusing on one particular religion or just

scraping the bottom on other religions will place the learners in a position where they still do not understand or accept their differences.

## 6.9 Recommendations

- That all educators should make learners aware of changing societies and the growing diversity.
- The educators should be aware of changing classrooms and should adapt to their changing environment.
- The school as a whole should embrace these changes in schools and in the larger society.
- The changes within oneself, for change in the larger dimensions of the society cannot happen without changes in one's own perception, attitudes and skills and that should be encouraged by the school, educators and society.
- The changes took place in the learners, classrooms, schools and society are connected and produce stability.

Educators in twenty first century schools in South Africa, will spend their career in ever-changing schools, schools that will help society make an orderly transitions from one change to another. Schools should make sure that all learners and educators are comfortable and operate effectively within these changing environment. Educators will be equipped with a unique set of cultural understanding and interpersonal skills that go beyond the traditional pedagogy. These skills, perspectives, and attitudes that an educator must adopt in order to comply with the above.

## 6.10 Conclusion

South Africans will never live in a world free from discrimination and bias, but they can try to make it as pleasurable for those who live in South Africa, young and old. Religions are important sources of moral values, and all South Africans should be worried about the decline of moral standards in our country. Every single day we are reminded through the newspapers, television and even in our justice system. South Africans find themselves in need of moral regeneration, and that can only be achieved by starting in schools and communities. Religious education should be use for the transmission of values, morals and ethics. It should teach learners about love, companionship, commitment, and co-operation. It should teach learners to take care of one another, have respect and a sense of belonging. Religious education should be given its rightful place in the South African education system.

This study confirms that the hypothesis that, the Life orientation and Religious Education Policies was never intended to be used to created unity in society, community, schools and one self, but intends that religion in education flows directly from the constitutional values. That the constitution can be used as a framework to guide policy maker and the government to make the right decisions with regard to Religion in Education.

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