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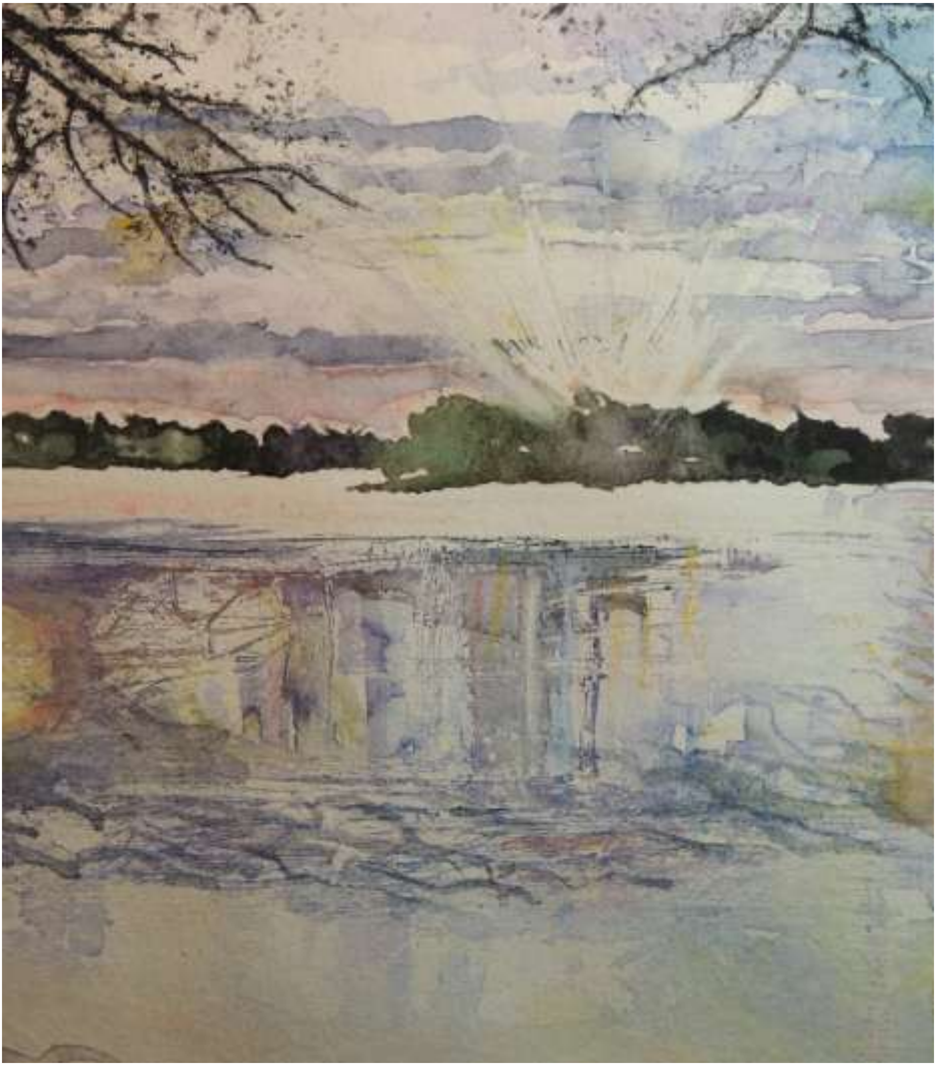
Research in Religion and Society



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*Alter*nation

Interdisciplinary Journal for the Study of the
Arts and Humanities in
Southern Africa

Research in Religion and Society

Guest Editors
Johannes A. Smit,
Denzil Chetty and
Beverly Vencatsamy

2013

CSSALL
Durban

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Editorial: Religion and Society

Johannes A. Smit
Denzil Chetty
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The rising significance of the focus on scholarly discourse development on ‘religion and society’ is evident from a number of recent initiatives. For instance, the Religion and Society Programme is a £12m research initiative funded by UK research councils between 2007-2013. To this we can add the growing significance of the *Journal of Religion and Society* published by Berghahn Journals in both Oxford and New York, the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Society* of the American Academy of Religion, and the fact that we shall have a fourth international conference on Religion and Spirituality in Society in 2014 at the Universidad Nacional Costa Rica Heredia. The founding of programmes for postgraduate research (University of Aberdeen for instance), and research Centers for Religion and Society at universities (Notre Dame University, US; Victoria University; and University of Western Sydney Australia are examples) also speak to this fact. This can rightly be termed a renewed interest for scholarship in the New Millennium. This is also borne out by the seminal book, edited by Gerrie ter Haar and Yoshio Tsuruoka in 2007, viz. *Religion and Society: An Agenda for the 21st Century* (2007).

In their book, Ter Haar and Tsuruoka deal with a number of themes that they regarded as seminal for discourse development on religion and society back in 2007. *Firstly,* it makes some seminal contributions to two of the most pressing issues that confront the religions. These focus on the study of the religious dimensions of conflict – ‘War and Peace’ – and the articulation of technology with ‘Life and Death’. *Secondly,* it contributes some seminal perspectives on the articulation of local cultures with their global religious counterparts as well as the vexed issue of boundary making and marginalisation which is part and parcel of much of how religions function socially. *Thirdly*, it contains sections on method and theory in the study of religion and the study of religion in one country, viz. Japan. In some detail, each of the articles in this volume of *Alternation*, makes a contribution to these different focuses. The main contribution of this volume though, is that it quite consciously engages the issues from within the southern African context or at least from consciously positioned postapartheid and postcolonial perspectives[1].

In his presidential address of 2012, Johannes A. Smit points out that whereas the struggle for liberation was characterised by the prominent participation of religious formations vis-à-vis the apartheid state, their significance in the public domain has significantly diminished since 1994. For him, this raises questions not only about the state's relationship and articulation with the religions, but also about the relationship and articulation of the religions with the state and with one another as part and parcel of the one state. His article tries to carefully think through some of the challenges that not only face religious formations but also academe. Drawing on insights that derives from the academic programmes developed and scholarly work done by a few colleagues in the discipline of Religion, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College campus, he then charts a way forward. At the level of the academic study of religion, the challenge is to develop scholarly programmes that involve all the religions equally, also taking their specific sensitivities and emphases vis-à-vis theoretical generalisations and stereotyping into consideration. He then provides seven seminal perspectives that may contribute to this developing discourse. The ultimate two questions that are addressed, therefore relate to both how the religions in the state relate to the state, but also to one another in the state. On both levels, academic contributions to the development of the discourses from within the religions have seminal roles to play.

In his article, Farid Esack provides a perspective and analysis of the notion of 'redeeming Islam' - Islam as the subject of attempts by others to save it. The paper challenges the contemporary scholarship undertaken in the academy in respect of the Study of Islam whereby such scholarship operates within a context that endorses the agenda of Empire, particularly in regard to the construction of the 'good Muslim' who is consistent with contemporary notions of human rights, pluralism, non-violence and Western modes of thought and being. The 'bad Muslim' is one who does not endorse or support this project. The consequence of this type of scholarship is that it is uncritical and unaware of the context in which it operates as well as the historico-political legacy of Muslim societies in relation to colonialism and Western violence. In addition, it ignores the pertinent questions of poverty, sustainable development, and the voices of the marginalised – important questions for much of the Muslim and Two Third World – while concentrating on questions that are framed by a Northern context.

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[1] For one of the latest contributions but still a very Western perspective, see Hjelm, and Zuckerman (2013).

Reflecting on the notion of 'Comparative Theology', P. Pratap Kumar assesses and evaluates the prospects of this notion making a constructive contribution towards building a general theory of religion. While he acknowledges the relationship between the two disciplines he examines the relationship between faith and religion which he believes is crucial to for coming to some conclusions with regard to the relationship between Comparative Theology and Religious Studies. For him, the crux of the matter is the influence of theology on the study of religion and he then addresses this issue referring to some seminal critical dialogues in the field. This problematization of the method of Comparative Theology then shows what the limits are of the theological method for comparative analysis in the study of religion. He concludes by suggesting that Comparative Theology can only serve an internal theological purpose of one religious tradition but cannot serve as the central focus and approach for a general theory of religion.

Starting from the definitional problem related to the phenomenological approach to the study of religion, Nisbert Taisekwa Taringa points out that the phenomenology of religion has been criticized for failure of identity and critical nerve. Scholars who use this approach have been accused of taking a role that amounts to not more than a reporter, repeating the insiders' unsubstantiated claims while invoking methodological agnosticism as justification for doing so. Against this background, his article explores the problems and possibilities of balancing critique and caretakership by critically examining the aims and methods of a particular nuance of phenomenology of religion called the historical-typological phenomenology of religion. The article’s finding is that by taking a critical stance on the aims and methods of the phenomenology of religion, religious studies scholars can be able to insist on the *sui generis* nature of religion and at the same time be able to move from caretakership to critics. This has great significance on the issue of the role of the scholar of religion as a public intellectual.

In her contribution, Nelly Mwale points out that studies on the public role of religion in Zambia have largely concentrated on the history of Christianity in the third republic when political expressions of religious beliefs became more apparent. The issue is that Christianity was firmly embedded in the Zambian society at independence and its mission-educated leaders fully understood the importance of the consent and blessings of the churches. Against this background, and using qualitative document review and thematic analyses, the article explores the role of the Roman Catholic Church in Zambia’s political independence (1890 to 1964). The general impression is that Christian missionaries in Africa supported colonial rule is pervasive and historians as well as students of mission history seem to have taken it for granted that missionaries were agents of colonialism. The Catholic Church, which from the 1990s to the present has been championing human rights and democracy in Africa, is not exempted from this ‘charge’. In general, mainstream Christian churches and organisations were in fact opposed to African independence but were ultimately won over the idea. The article positions the Roman Catholic Church in the political affairs of Zambia amid its apolitical claims. It argues that the Church contributed to Zambia’s political development (here taken to mean the emergence of national sovereignty) directly and indirectly through the provision of education, health and pastoral services and the publication of pastoral letters though not to say it never erred. On this latter point, the article points out that the church also had lost opportunities and that it could learn from these and do better in the 21st century in Zambia.

The role of women in Economic development is important to the building and the sustenance of African communities. Nevertheless in most African countries, participation in the economic sphere has been dominated by men with a few women participating in both the private and the public sector. In her article, Beatrice Okyere-Manu addresses this issue and points to the factors that have contributed to this gender gap, as well as analyse the ethical dimensions of this problem. She argues that various economic policies have failed to benefit black women because of the deeply embedded patriarchy in South African society, and the different ways that patriarchy is implicit even in policies that are supposed to promote restorative justice. She then explores the patriarchal barriers that prevent black African women in post-apartheid South Africa from fully participating in the economy and challenge the diverse faith communities comprising of Christianity, Islam, Hindu, and African Traditional Religion to revisit the teachings of their core values in order to provide a contextual voice within this complex patriarchal society. They should aim at building a just economy in the new South Africa. For any informed discussion on contextual and socially relevant economic development policies in the country, an exploration of patriarchy from a comparative ethical perspective is important she argues.

Auwais Rafudeen focused his research on the Orion Cold Storage Sage. In November 2011, Cape Town meat importers Orion Cold Storage was accused, principally by the South African National Halaal Authority (SANHA) – a major halaal certifying body in the country – of deliberately mislabelling certain non-halaal meat products and then selling these off as halaal to its customers. Some of these products included pork which was then relabelled as sheep or veal. Since Orion had a large Muslim customer base, and because some of its products had been certified halaal by another major halaal certifying body, namely the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC), there was a considerable public outcry amongst Muslims, which was exacerbated by national television coverage of the issue and social media. The issue rapidly extended beyond the initial court case against Orion and became a public debate about halaal procedures and standards in general and the legitimacy of the MJC as a halaal certifying body. Against this background Rafudeen's article analyses reasons for why the saga unfolded in the way it did. Utilising an analytical framework developed by Shaheed Tayob in a seminal work on halaal in South Africa, it argues that the positioning and public engagement of protagonists during the saga was importantly shaped by market considerations in a competitive halaal industry. The article also argues that an analysis of the relevant players' actions primarily in terms of such considerations does not take into account the theological dimension to this saga and so it seeks to illuminate this dimension by relating halaal to legal and methodological discourses within the Islamic tradition.

Garth Mason's paper focuses on Frances Banks' spiritual life and her education career which has significance for the embellishment of both the historical landscapes in spirituality and progressive educational thought in South Africa. It argues three points: first; Frances Banks is an important figure in the history of South African spirituality and education; second her struggles with patriarchal authority have important repercussions for gender studies. Third, her leaving the Community of the Resurrection has implications for an understanding of orthodox spirituality.

In his article, Irvin G. Chetty addresses the question of whether indeed a new configuration has surfaced that has been called the 'New Apostolic Reformation' (NAR), within South African Pentecostal/ Charismatic circles, since 2000. The adherents of this movement have sounded a call for the Pentecostal/ Charismatic church, in particular, to return to what they describe as the 'Apostolicity' of the church. The emergence of this New Apostolic Reformation is more than a South African phenomenon. C. Peter Wagner, almost a decade and a half ago, in his book, *Churchquake* contended that there were, at least forty thousand 'Apostolic' churches representing approximately eight to ten million members in the USA. He asserted that this New Apostolic Reformation is also rapidly growing in all of the six continents and is the 'greatest change in the way of doing church since the Protestant Reformation'. In South Africa the following New Apostolic Reformation groupings have emerged, namely the New Covenant Ministries International (NCMI), Grace International (GI), Congress World Breakthrough Network (C-WBN), International Strategic Alliance of Apostolic Churches (ISAAC) and Judah Kingdom Alliance (JKA). A number of theories have attempted to explain the emergence of new religious movements (NRMs), inter alia, deprivation, revitalisation, and brainwashing. This study focuses on one of these theories, namely, revitalisation, but also favours a holistic approach to an understanding of the NAR. The article also engages the nature and extent of their deviation from 'mainstream' Pentecostal doctrines and practices.

Herbert Moyo's article argues that current research and scholarship in pastoral theology in Africa is influenced by Western knowledge systems (WKS) and culture at the expense of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems

(AIKS) imbedded in African Traditional Religions (ATRs) that are contextual relevant and can be valuable to pastoral care givers. Moyo argues that Christian pastoral care givers can benefit from objective research of AIKS imbedded in ATR and culture as this will unearth African paradigms, worldviews, and Ubuntu/ botho traditional concepts. The author looks at current research in ATR being done by Christian theologians, the training of pastoral caregivers based in western paradigms and the resilience of ATR and African culture as treasure for social construction and state construction in Africa. Western knowledge systems are different from African knowledge systems therefore WKS cannot be pre-packed as solutions for African challenges. The article also seeks to propose research and teaching in pastoral theology that can be relevant and effective for African challenges. Instead of the Christocentric form of inculturation that we currently have, the article proposes a dialogical approach that will treat the two religions objectively through research and teaching.

In their article, Welly den Hollander and Madhubala Ishvir Kasiram describes part of a doctoral study that developed a training programme for pastoral counsellors for assisting persons infected with and affected by HIV and AIDS. The Intervention and Research Intervention Research Model (IRM) as developed by Rothman and Thomas (in De Vos *et al.* 2001) was used to review pertinent literature informing the development of the product (the training programme). The article is based on two aspects: firstly the literature that was considered relevant in guiding the development of the training programme, in this instance, post foundationalism, contextual and narrative therapy; and secondly, the pilot programme itself used Muller’s (2003) post foundational framework, to accommodate its refinement and ongoing development as a product.

In their research-based article Madhubala Ishvir Kasiram, N. Ngcobo and D. Mulqueeny outlines how HIV/AIDS affects men’s and women’s adjustment to positive living. It explores issues of challenge, survival and sexuality and offers culturally appropriate and sensitive life skills that may be adopted in schools, families and communities. Life skills education for risk reduction and living positively in the area of HIV and AIDS needs to be carefully planned and executed, or else it runs the risk of increasing risk taking behavior (Visser 2005), an important consideration that this article heeds.

Finally, Peter Sandy focuses his research on the fact that nicotine addiction is a public health problem that increases medical morbidity and mortality. Individuals with mental distress have higher rates of smoking and poorer cessation outcomes than those without mental distress. Individuals with schizophrenia tend to smoke more than those with other diagnostic categories. They are also more likely to smoke high-tar cigarettes than individuals with other forms of mental distress. They are therefore not only more likely to be addicted to nicotine, but they are also at an increased risk of developing serious health complications. Despite this, individuals with schizophrenia are generally unlikely to seek help to quit smoking, a function of a decreased level of motivation and inability to do so. In spite of this, this service user group is rarely involved in smoking cessation activities.

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Editorial: Religion and Society

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Research in Religion and Society[1]

Johannes A. Smit

Abstract

Whereas the struggle for liberation was characterised by the prominent participation of religious formations vis-à-vis the apartheid state, their significance in the public domain has significantly diminished since 1994. This raises questions not only about the state's relationship and articulation with the religions, but also about the relationship and articulation of the religions with the state and with one another as part and parcel of the one state. This article carefully tries to think through some of the challenges and attempts to provide a way forward. It provides a few insights that derive from the academic programmes developed and scholarly work done by a few colleagues of the discipline of Religion, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College campus. Over the last decade, colleagues have developed programmes that involve all the religions equally, also taking their specific sensitivities and emphases vis-à-vis theoretical generalisations and stereotyping into consideration. The article provides seven seminal perspectives on how this approach could make a seminal contribution to research in the religions. The ultimate two questions that are addressed, therefore relate to both how the religions in the state relate to the state, but also to one another in the state. On both levels, academic contributions to the development of the discourses from within the religions have seminal roles to play.

Keywords: religion, 'pillars of culture', public culture, unity in diversity, common narrative, democratic and human rights culture, moral and ethical code of science, imagining a common future, challenge to religious formations

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[1] Presidential address, 34th Annual ASRSA Congress, 18 June 2012, Pietermaritzburg.

Introduction

This article problematizes a few issues that are important for Southern African researchers and scholars of religion and society[2]. One focus concerns the positioning of the religions in terms of their articulation with each other in the state. This is done from a very specific and a very limited South African perspective[3]. My main reason for this is that we should carefully think through not only how the state relates to the religions[4], and the religions to the state[5], but how the religions interactively but also functionally relate to one another as part and parcel of the postapartheid state. They all form part of public culture – i.e. as clusters of institutions with their specific activities in which citizens participate. And, the question concerns their specific articulation with the main public cultural systems and structures that all South Africans share – including fellow religions and religious formations.

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[2] Distinct from problematisations from elsewhere, two of the most central questions in postapartheid South Africa concern research problematisation and knowledge production from within our own context and secondly, the contextual significance and relevance of the knowledge we produce. In this regard, a primary assumption is to ask questions from within our own spaces of action and interaction and produce the requisite knowledge that make constructive contributions to the improvement of the quality of life of our people irrespective of religion, gender, class, or race.

[3] Socio-historically understood, the specific institutional challenges the different SADC, but especially sub-Saharan African states face, differ remarkably. The significance of this article may therefore be applicable to fellow SADC states only in a limited sense.

[4] This topic is normally addressed under the rubric of 'church and state' relations or questions focusing on the variable articulations between the official organs of state and of the religious formations. In his very significant 2013 article, Simanga Kumalo traces some of the dynamics and the organs of state the postapartheid state has instated in its endeavor to bring the religions on board with regard to engaging the social challenges we face.

[5] One of the main outstanding features of the liberation struggle in South Africa, was the very prominent place religious formations had in the struggle for liberation from white racist rule. The question is how this feat can also be replicated in the postapartheid state in the interests of seminal existential values such as freedom, equity, human dignity, social justice and the broader common projects of nation building and state formation.

In academic context, the counterpoint of this question concerns the role of research and the scholarly study of the religions in this nexus. In this regard the main research question is: How do the religions (and their denominations and orders) relate to fellow religious formations, as well as to the common systems and structures we share in society and in the state?

The subsidiary questions are two-fold. *Firstly*, how do the religions relate and articulate with 'public culture'. *Secondly*, and this focus follows on the first one, concerns the seeking of possible points of contact around which one could develop some themes of modicum consensus with regard to the wide diversity of religions, their orders and denominations, and their institutions and structures, as well as the spiritualities[6] we have in South Africa. Given the widely recognised diversity of our society, the concern is that we may lose sight of that which binds us together. In this context, what are the common rationales that all of the religious formations are challenged to confront in our common search for building the postapartheid state? Given this question, I address topics with regard to unity or that which we bind us together or we commonly share[7].

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[6] Cf. *Religion and Spirituality in South Africa* edited by Duncan Brown (2009) for instance in this regard.

[7] This focus does not in any way detract from the main concern of in-equity and in-equality we are faced with in postapartheid South Africa. The question of unity and that which we commonly share precisely aims at providing a few constructive perspectives on where we for all intents and purposes hope to be heading to. As such, it is also a question about the hegemony we need, if we want to radically transform from a state still plagued by the joint legacies of the knowledge and practices of colonisation and apartheid as well as the endemic poverty related to the continuous underdevelopment since 1974 (cf. Terreblanche 2012). In this regard the question concerns especially our indigenous religions and indigenous knowledge systems (cf. Smit & Masoga 2012; Kaya 2013). How can we centrally position the previously disadvantaged religions and religious formations in this common new hegemony such questions presuppose?

If these are some of the seminal questions that confront us, then the main question concerns alternative futures. In this regard, we may be able to learn from especially the European experiments with regard to what has been termed the 'pillarisation' of culture(s).

Towards Research in Religion and Public Culture

The notion of the 'pillars of culture' was popular in Europe during the 19th and early 20th centuries. This was part and parcel of the division of Europe in mainly Roman Catholic and Protestant regions. Practiced especially in The Netherlands, Belgium and Austria, 'pillarisation' meant that religious formations replicated themselves in the public sphere in terms of the secular services it rendered to its religious communities. For instance, each of the Catholic and Protestant formations would have their own religiously-founded political parties, public media such as radio stations and newspapers, educational institutions such as schools and universities, hospitals, banks, trade unions, etc. In short, we could say that each religiously-founded organisation, mainly invested in its own politics, economics, education, morality, aesthetics, kinship systems and obviously, religion[8]. The investment in the development of communities and their wellness beyond religious enclaves, only happened by default, i.e. being part of a specific state. The main needs of the communities were met by religiously-founded and inspired social systems.

In the public sphere, and more particularly on the broader front of the developing nation states, these developments meant that you could speak of religiously-based blocks and their influence but also competition. Each religious formation invested financially in the infrastructures, public services and in teaching and learning benefitting its members while excluding members from rival religious formations. Each invested in its own cultural systems, i.e. the political, economic, educational, moral, aesthetic and family systems, but also in its religious systems. In this environment, the 'pillars of culture' came to signify the main religiously-based arenas in which the nation invested for its own development and then use these as conduits for developing its international networks. The wide variety of ways in which they invested in these 'pillars' meant that the pillars, together, would uphold the 'house', which constitutes a specifically religiously founded and influenced section of the state (if we have to extend the metaphor). With regard to the nation-state idea, this continued the centuries-old divisions and animosities along religious lines[9].

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[8] For a brief exposition of the function and impact of 'pillarisation' as it operated in the educational arena, in the Netherlands, cf. Bakker (2013).

The excess of such systems is that they continue to foster animosity between religions, unhealthy inter-religious competition with regard to available resources, and actual marginalisation of those religiously-inspired groups which are less resourced than the richer and more prosperous ones. Especially during the twentieth century, this met with much discontent. In time it gave rise to many social-democratic and other non-religiously aligned political parties and organisations coming into being – organisations aimed at serving the people of each country irrespective of their religious persuasion or commitment[10]. These European developments and system of thinking also impacted on South Africa.

Even though the notion of the 'pillars of culture' ideology was not the primary consideration of the architects of apartheid, it obviously fit their ideology of 'Christian-national' education and their 'separate development' blueprint for South African society. In terms of this design, the reasoning for this ideology was that each ethnically separate group in South Africa could develop in its own time and on its own terms by investing distinctly in its own development – its ‘pillars of culture’ so to speak. Similarly, this would mean that each ethnic group should invest in and develop its own cultural systems. What was not said in terms of this assumption was that these systems most closely depended on the racist Afrikaner and English apartheid systems and companies – the Mineral Energy Complex (MEC). This meant that only those systems and institutions the protagonists of apartheid ideology wanted to grow and develop, would be invested in. The result the apartheid ideology envisioned, was then a system of separate ethnicities or ‘tribes’ each with their own pillars of culture – their own semi-autonomous political, economic, moral, education, aesthetic, religious and kinship systems. Moreover, since white hegemony controlled all these cultural systems through its monetary and bureaucratic systems[11] – the resources that became available for investment in one’s own culture were owned and controlled by white culture and white capital – this meant that the only culture which could truthfully develop and advance in South Africa was the culture in which white culture capital invested. The apartheid ideology’s funding machine obviously only invested in those aspects of culture which benefitted white culture in turn in accordance with the racist ideology of the time. Where investment was made in ‘other’ cultures in South Africa, this was done only to the degree that it served the racist ideology of apartheid, in the Bantustans and historically black tertiary institutions for example[12]. But this mis-directed ideologically-driven investment in the peoples of South African had its own excess. This is constituted by those cultural formations that were not co-opted into the ideology – which constitutes the majority of the people of the country.

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[9] Cf. especially Platvoet's (2002) extensive essay in which he covers aspects of the history and functioning of pillarization.

[10] Terreblanche (2012:20 - 25) identifies this social democratic period in Twentieth Century European history as stretching from the post-World War II rebuilding of Europe, to the later 1960s/ early 1970s. For about twenty five years, the 'social-democratic consensus' among Western powers impacted positively on economic growth and job creation. From economic perspective, Terreblanche points to especially two 'social democratic contracts', viz.: 1) 'a domestic social democratic social consensus to create greater social justice and social stability in the domestic affairs of all the capitalist countries in the West'; and 2) 'an international social democratic consensus to stabilise capital flows and economic relationships between Western capitalist countries'.

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[11] The most devastating of these were the pass-laws system that controlled and prohibited freedom of movement and association. A national bureaucracy was set up to manage and control this inhumane system in the ministry of one of the architects of apartheid, and later Prime Minister, H.F. Verwoerd. On the one hand it controlled the labour supply to the MEC. On the other hand, it was a major socio-economic system that created state-controlled jobs for whites.

[12] Even here, jobs were reserved for whites, and the local populations of the Bantustans only educated and empowered marginally.

Due to its race-based mono-cultural investments, the house of apartheid ideology failed to accommodate the ethnic, linguistic and religious in one integrated cultural unit. Apartheid's 'pillarisation' of cultures, in fact marginalised the real ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity of the country. The effects of this ideology were that it did not only fail to provide for a unified understanding of the cultural diversity of South Africa. It also failed to draw South Africa's cultural formations closer together in single systems of governance and articulation – democratic systems and structures – that would span across the ethnic, linguistic and religious divides. But this is what we enjoy in our still very young new and democratic South Africa. Since 1994, the people who make up the ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity in South Africa, have the opportunity to foster such unified systems and structures that span our diversity, configure and organise them in single systems that empower and serve all equally[13].

At this broad and general level of abstraction, this means that none of the knowledge and religious systems that exist in the country have had occasion to develop in the public and open democratic systems we enjoy in the new South Africa. This must be qualified though. In distinction to certain Christian and Muslim organisations and institutions, that drew back in their own religious enclaves following the struggle period, indigenous systems developed cultural capital that served the poor and marginalised. This mostly functioned at survival levels of existence. I believe that this constitutes a very important resource for democratic South Africa as well as for eh fostering of related research. The indigenous religions and knowledge systems have had to develop and articulate with a variety of systems in the country – in many cases these have not been researched or developed academically. Except for political formations, and institutions such as burial societies and stokvels amongst others – pioneeringly researched by Prof G.C. Oosthuizen (2002) –

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[13] It is my contention that the most significant system that contributed towards the systemic dissolution of the legacy of apartheid and the initiating of systems and attitudes fostering equity and equal opportunities, is the national education system. The new unified system - which is still plagued by some of the residues of the apartheid legacy, e.g. the different school 'models' still in operation - was the most significant system that drew children together from all walks of life in the same classroom.

the formation of indigenously founded modern systems and institutions during the apartheid era were limited by the apartheid state. Since people did, wanted to and had to engage the modern world, they have had to develop seminal perspectives on a wide variety of issues in the modern public sphere[14]. And here I must mention the pioneering work of Prof G. Setiloane in the still unpublished materials of his later years[15].

If we now skip to today, nearly twenty years after the dawn of our own democratic dispensation, then the question is two-fold.

- *Firstly*, if South Africa's apartheid protagonists of the 1940s and 1950s took the route of race-based investment in the pillars of white racist culture – which meant oppression, exploitation and the cultural production of underdevelopment, poverty and inequality – what should constitute the basic system of ideas that should inform democratic South Africa and what should be the 'pillars of culture' of the 'house' of the new democratic South Africa in which the country should invest? Alternatively said: Does modern South Africa have a common house which should be upheld by investing in a commonly-shared and not religiously-exclusive, pillars of politics, economics, aesthetics, morality, kinships systems and religions?

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[14] Significantly these religious systems could not be confined to only one religion but were 'ecumenical' due to the fact that the poverty and need of people caused by and impacted on by the apartheid state meant that they had to work and live together independent of religious persuasion or commitment. Oosthuizen's research reflects his insights into this socio-economic reality in the religious domain. Cf. especially Oosthuizen (1995; 1996; and 2002). In the first article, he reflect on how this ecumenicty could positively impact the church (in all its denominations and orders); and in the second how the AICs are impacting the 'social environment'. In the 2002 publication, emphasis is on the significance this home-grown ecumenical spirituality has for 'secular empowerment'.

[15] In these just more than twenty still unpublished papers from the 1980s, Setiloane pioneeringly and critically and constructively reflects on topics in need of research development from within African context. These include African religious engagements of the social significance of the ancestors, African community, the family in Africa, *Ukubuyisa*, Civil Authority, the secular, land, African traditional views on death and dying, relations between the Methodist Church and AICs, the continued significance of the traditional World-view in African culture, the need for the developing of a bio-centric Theology and ethics, and how Ubuntu challenges the corporate sector.

- *Secondly*, given our ethnically, linguistically and religiously diverse national constitution – established and entrenched by the apartheid ideology – what are the main challenges facing us if we want to foster and invest in a common modern South African culture? What are the main challenges of producing the conditions of possibility of the acceleration of development, equality, social justice and the recognition of human dignity and wealth creation – especially in those communities that suffered most severely under the racist oppression of apartheid? Do we not need a home-grown social democratic consensus with one or two of our own African social-democratic contracts that could equally serve us in nation building and the developing of our countries and communities?

On the *first question*, the answer is clear. Citizens should invest in a common public culture and not a sectorally-committed and sectorally-driven one. In our sphere of influence, we, the academic researchers and educators of South Africa, should draw on our common South African Constitution and develop its foundational ideas in terms of our own research and education. If we have to talk about the pillars of culture, we should talk about a common national culture with common national pillars of culture, namely politics, economics, education, morality, aesthetics, religion and kinship systems. This means that we should collectively invest in the pillars of culture, of the 'house' which is South Africa. If this means that more investment is needed in certain geographical and sectoral areas than others, then we need collective commitment to that. Ultimately, such investment should be characterised by leaders who should produce the requisite conditions of possibility for the acceleration of development, equality, social justice and the recognition of human dignity, and wealth creation in our generation.

The *second question* equally, already has its own answer embedded in the history of our discipline. In order to answer it, we need to draw on and continue to develop the initiatives researchers and scholars took with regard to our discipline. Prof Gabriel Setiloane was the first who initiated the founding of a Department of Religious Studies at the University of Botswana in 1969, and Prof G.C. Oosthuizen, the Department of Science of Religion two years later at the erstwhile University of Durban-Westville. On one level, we need to continue to study their seminal contributions to the beginnings of our discipline that unifies people across ethnic, linguistic and religious divides in the African context. On another level, we need to continue the seminal contributions of a wide variety of scholars and researchers who actively participated in our discipline since the 1970s. There are a wide variety of issues and concerns that need to be further developed to their full conclusions.

If these are the common objectives, then we could equally ask what the role of the religions and research in religion is in terms of such broad scholarly goals and ideals.

The Challenges Faced by Research in Religion and Public Culture

If 'religion' as collective noun includes all the religions and religious formations of southern Africa, what is the role of religion in the acceleration of development, the fostering of equality, social justice and the recognition of the dignity of all, and wealth creation in our generation? And, if we have such expectations of our religions, what is the role of the academic study of religion in this broad-based cultural endeavour? My contention is that we as researchers and scholars of religion should be at the forefront of answering these questions.

Firstly, given our history of racist exploitation, underdevelopment and the unequal distribution of power, we, the people of South Africa, is underdeveloped in terms of how we collectively understand the significance of our religions in the public sphere[16]. Institutionally our religious formations are unable to comprehend the fact of working collaboratively in terms of addressing issues of national concern – be they political, economic, educational, moral, social, aesthetic, or related to health and wellness. Our religious formations are often not able to comprehend that we have a common obligation to collectively address such issues. They also do not have the requisite discourse in terms of which to envisage and practice such collaboration.

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[16] Cf. Smit and Vencatsamy (2013) for some initial analyses with regard to the articulation of Religion with fellow disciplines in the Humanities and Smit [2014] with regard to the intellectualising of the religions in the context of the developing discourse on Religion and Society.

Secondly, given the fact that we come from a history where the religions were not challenged to think and intellectualise their involvement in the modern public sphere from within their own traditions and texts, all the religions to various degrees, find their own critical and interpretive tools with regard to their interpretation of their religions in terms of the challenges in the modern public sphere deficient[17]. Our intellectual and scholarly study of or development of our intellectual traditions associated with our religions are underdeveloped. Even though we may hold that they are sufficient and that they in principle carry the fundamentals of our beliefs and hopes – our religious foundations of meaning – they are not sufficiently developed to fully engage the specifically postcolonial and post-apartheid modernising challenges our region faces[18].

Thirdly, the scholarly discourses surrounding our religions are not sufficiently engaged in the requisite areas and fields, to provide academic support, mentorship and guidance to the religions in engaging our modern world. (This is a major drawback of the phenomenological approach to the study of religion.) It is a central challenge to the academic study of religions to foster and produce the intellectual and scholarly theoretical frameworks necessary for the full participation of the religions in the public sphere. The requisite developing and fostering of such intellectual frameworks should serve the religious believers of our country to fully engage the challenges posed by our democratic dispensation in intellectually-informed ways[19]. The way to do so is to interlink and articulate the requisite knowledge traditions in the Arts and Humanities and our religious traditions and texts[20]. The most obvious area which could be affected would be in the service professions[21]. Similar effects and influences could obviously also be created in other relevant areas in the Arts and Humanities (cf. Smit and Vencatsamy 2013).

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[17] It is my contention that the best way to engage this challenge, is to draw on the seminal insights and scholarly work of Ninian Smart (1973; 1997). Smart’s distinctions between the worldview ‘dimensions’ of beliefs, narratives, moral values, rituals, organizational structures, experiences and symbol systems provide a helpful tool to constructively engage the critically constructive conceptual development of our religions in terms of the modern challenges we face. Whereas Smart still stayed within the confines of ‘beliefs’ or broadly speaking ‘the religious’ – which includes secular worldviews deriving from Marxism and Communism for instance – the challenge is to develop these to engage the common social challenges all people from the religions face, e.g. with regard to the development, conflict, the environment, urbanization, gender, modernization, and the media for instance.

[18] But see Smit [2014].

Religion in Public Culture (in Southern Africa)

Given the current post-apartheid and post-military challenges southern Africa face, there is much optimism. This mainly derives from the cessation of militarised hostilities and the constructive engagement of the re-building, local investment, development and modernising of our region. A not insignificant promise concerns the infrastructural development envisaged by our government, as became evident in the 2012 State of the Nation address of President Zuma. If we can talk of opportunities, the promise is that there will be many. Furthermore, and this from the perspective of our religions, the religious formations themselves constitute a rich heritage to accompany these envisaged developments. To be kept captive by a narrow scientific and technocratic vision of the world and of the challenges of our region is not an answer. The collective indigenous but also intellectual and academic development of the religions as intimated above constitute a rich resource for the developing of the religions as a constitutive part of the modern intellectual capital we have in the country. From our discursive developments of our religions, we can expect the interdisciplinary inquiry necessary to accompany these developments and modernisation of our region. Given their investment in people's meaning and value systems, it is though incumbent on the religions to explore and develop their significance in the various areas of culture the envisaged socio-economic development will impact on – including institutions and the various forms of intercultural exchanges in the public domain. The religions need to accompany the people in the constructive engagement of the socio-economic transformation of our region away from the legacy of poverty and underdevelopment to equality, social justice, human dignity and wealth creation.

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[19] In this regard, it is not the secular development of scholarly discourse but the developing of concepts and insights from within the religions that are needed. This approach and the engaging of this challenge go beyond the dated work of Russell T. McCutcheon (1999) on the ‘insider/ outsider’ question in the religions.

[20] With regard to indigenous religious and knowledge systems, it was especially Prof Gabriel Setiloane who pointed the way as mentioned above. His intellectual endeavours of the 1980s can truly be regarded as one of the forerunners in this regard.

[21] My argument with regard to the promotion of indigenous languages can in this regard equally apply to African Indigenous Knowledge Systems and African Religions (cf. Smit 1997).

Since religions are most closely associated with people's identity and how people see themselves, it is especially important to study this connection throughout the next phases of the developmental processes that will impact our region. Below, I provide a few even provisional pointers in this direction.

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1 Unity in Diversity

It is true that religions normally have holistic views of society. Modern scientific and ideologically-constructed political systems have tried to do the same. This brought the religions in conflict with these systems. The question we need to ask is whether it is possible to ask of religions to see themselves as inhabiting and participating in our pluralistic modern public culture together with and alongside other religions. If we have to develop a holistic system of society, it should be inclusive of diversity. This means that we do not have religion-specific or discipline-specific problems but cultural problems that the religions and disciplines share and that one could challenge them to engage collectively. This means we move away from a hegemonic view of society where one religious formation determines public culture, but also from a fragmented view of society where the diversity is not acknowledged, or if it is acknowledged, suppressed[22]. The common phenomenological significance of the religions is herewith acknowledged as well as their sharing of certain values as well as rituals and even beliefs[23].

2 A Common Narrative

The equal recognition and participation of the religions in public culture then means that one does have a holistic and integrated expectation of society, even though it be inclusive. In Southern Africa, it is the narrative of equality, equity, dignity and social justice which has as aim the liberation of all humanity to their true potential beyond the strictures of the hegemonic systems of exclusion, suppression and repression. In their own ways, the religions and the denominations/ orders share this narrative[24]. If we would succeed in this endeavour, we would have to explicate the relations between notions of self, culture and society, as well as history[25], along lines which together constitute a common contemporary but also historical narrative[26]. Such narratives of origin, developments and potential futures would necessarily have to be interdisciplinary and they have to be developed as contributions coming from within the different religious formations.

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[22] Cf. Smit (2009) where I have tried to briefly outline the significance of our Constitution (1996) vis-à-vis the system that the apartheid governments developed, inculcated and promoted.

[23] An important rider to this perspective is that the different ‘dimensions’ of the religions – to use Ninian Smart’s 1997 notion – do not function with the same strength, or intensity, or do not have the same significance in the different religions and within the religions, in the different religious denominations and religious orders. The weighting of each of the dimensions are not the same in all religions; and the weighting is also not the same in each order/ denomination within a religion. Smart failed to bring this sufficiently to the fore, even though his book’s main contribution was in its exploring and survey of the wide variety of beliefs related to a wide variety of worldviews.

[24] We could here also look at similar integral emancipatory narratives dating from the time of the ancients, traditional African knowledge systems, but also more recently, some of the classical scholarly traditions, such as those emanating from Critical Theory amongst others.

3 A Common Scientific Project

Given the task of developing a common scientific discourse which is inclusive of religious diversity, it stands to reason that it should be developed from within qualitative conceptual and theoretical paradigms of analysis and interpretation, include critical philosophical, and ethical and moral reflection, and combine with methodologies and approaches in the domain of empirical and quantitative research. A primary objective of the development of such a public-focused discourse or discursive formation would mean that it is developed by researchers and scholars in religion and culture. However, it should not only be practiced by these researchers in the echelons of higher education and learning, but equally practiced by public intellectuals as part and parcel of public culture. In other words, its primary audience does not remain with the experts and within the walls of academe and exclusively learned societies and academies. Rather, it aims at the training of public intellectuals as well as the production of an educated and informed intellectual public or citizenry. This however does not mean that these public cohorts should not be trained in the requisite technical concepts and vocabulary. Far from it. It means that they should have been educated in the appropriate culture-analytical and critical hermeneutical theories and concepts with which they can collectively analyse and interpret the public cultural complexes society is confronted with[27].

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[25] For some of the latest critical reflections on these themes, cf. especially the volume edited by Jones and Mtshali (2013), their editorial, as well as the essays by Matolino, Dastile & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Oyowe, and Idoniboye-Obu and Whetho.

[26] Even though it does not include African perspectives, I find the collection of essays edited by Shaun Gallaghar (2011) helpful in so far as they transcend earlier and outdated theoretical reflections on perspectives of the 'self'. Cf. the contributions in Gallagher (2011), and especially Barresi and Martin on Western theories of the self; Cassam on the embodied self; Campbell on personal identity; Shechtman on the narrative self; Pacherie on self-agency; Shoemaker on the moral responsibility of the self; Gergen on the social construction of the self; Hermans on the dialogical self; Lawlor on the postmodern self, focusing on 'anachronism' and powerlessness'; and Code on the self, subjectivity and the instituted social imaginary.

4 A Common Democratic and Human Rights Culture

In addition to developing public discourse with regard to the religious traditions, their interlinking, and their significance, it would also lead to the fostering of a democratic and human rights culture. Not only are the variety of diverse religious formations recognised publically; the people who belong to them, are committed to and believe in their tenets and practice their rituals, are equally recognised and acknowledged as equally human in all aspects of human life, endeavour and aspirations[28]. It would also mean that the educated public are full participants in the public discourse on the various issues society is confronted with. It therefore follows that it is incumbent on academe to train and produce intellectuals who can function as public intellectuals with regard to the areas in which they specialise for their research. Together with these intellectuals, religionists are therefore not the sole experts but form an integral part of the intellectual citizenry focused on matters of common concern in society at large. These may range from the wide variety of social problems emanating from poverty, xenophobia, the prevalence of HIV/ Aids, the phenomenon of street children, the variety of problems related to drug abuse experienced by people in society, family violence and abuse amongst others.

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[27] It stands to reason that this endeavor is not the private privilege of academics. As pointed out above already, much of such activity has already been engaged in by people in society, especially people from indigenous and traditional cultures. The reason is that our fellow citizens who have suffered most under the oppressive systems of apartheid, have had to negotiate and constructively engage these systems of power, in many cases, for survival's sake.

[28] Cf. the volume titled *Engaging New Analytical Perspectives on Gender in the African Context* brought together by Sithole, Muzvidziva and Ojong (2013) and especially contributions by Sithole, Ojong, Muthuki, and Muzvidziva. Cf. also the very significant work Cornelia Roux has done in terms of the fostering of a Human Rights culture as it articulates with Education. Cf. Roux (2009) and especially the references to her seminal contribution of the developing of the discourse with regard to Religion in Education. Cf. also Roux, Du Preez and Ferguson (2009); and, Roux, Smith, Ferguson, Small, Du Preez and Jarvis (2009). With regard to gender, cf. Roux (2012) and Simmonds and Roux (2013).

5 A Common Moral and Ethical Code of Science

Following from the above, is that we do not opt for a scientific system in line with the previously valorised positivist quantitative scientific approaches in the Arts and Humanities which leave a very large part of what actually concerns human society and human life – the ‘Humanities’ – unengaged. But we also do not opt for an exclusively religiously-founded or moral-ethical system which dominates other moralities and their associated religious and moral-ethical systems. For the positivists, we need to say that, their so-called positivist commitments include moral values, norms and commitments – namely to exclude, ignore and negate that which are central to the full complexity of human life and endeavour in their research projects. The Arts and Human Sciences should not try to avoid or purge the presence of moral values and norms in their research. Rather, the presence and function of value judgements and norms in so-called objective science need to be fully recognised and acknowledged. We should admit to the value-laden and ideological nature of scientific ideas and projects – that they promote specific worldviews with their accompanying beliefs, and practices. They are never value-free[29]. The assumptions underlying the theoretical and conceptual explanatory models of a science represent the outlook, expectations and future prospects and expectations of a specific group in that society. At base, they are in the service of a specific social formation or more particularly, a socio-economic community. We should acknowledge the fact that so-called objective science expresses and propagates a vision that serves societies mostly only sectorally. The scholarly community practicing that science is its vanguard. This is even more true of religious worldviews. Given that religious formations have their own religion- or order- or denomination-specific moral and legal value systems, they, too, should equally recognise that their sectoral worldviews should not be regarded as the be-all and end-all of the whole society. As such, they should acknowledge the role and function but also the limitations of such values in both private and public culture[30].

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[29] Cf. especially the little work that contains some of the seminal ideas dating from 1973 of the French philosopher of Science, and lecturer of Michel Foucault in the 1950s, Georges Canguilham – *Wisenschaft, Technik, Leben: Beiträge zur historischen Epistemologie* (2006). It also contains a German translation of his report on Michel Foucault’s main Thesis for his doctoral degree (1960), which deals with this same problematic.

6 Imagining a Common Future

In terms of the ideological-critical views of someone like Althusser for instance (cf. Smit 2010), such an approach would mean that religious scholars and intellectuals would imagine themselves not as the sole beneficiaries or protagonists of only one religion and culture within the state, but in fact of many[31]. From their perspective, the ways in which they would imagine themselves would reflect and represent the diversity in society without advancing one at the cost of another, or seeing the one as superior and the other inferior. They would function with the general commitment to all in the sense that at the broad-based phenomenological level, all the religions and religious formations provide people with the same webs of meaning and significance and should be recognised as such[32].

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[30] In South Africa, it is especially prominent in that religions and their orders or denominations are determined by their historically-produced social location, with the accompanying structural features related to class, gender, ethnicity, etc. To some degree this has changed since 1994 due to migration and the freedom of movement and settlement that came with our new democratic dispensation.

[31] At this level, we could address the common ideals (and practices) enshrined in the Constitution. Jarvis (2009a; 2009b; 2013) has been dealing with this challenge at the level of the multi-religious classroom and how the teacher (and pupils) could articulate their own understanding amidst diversity. It stands to reason that to limit her arguments only to the school level, is reductionist. It certainly also has purchase in the university lecture hall.

7 The Challenge to Religious Formations

Viewed from within each of the religious traditions, this means that they engage in a two-way conversation. The *first* is focused internally, on a dialogue with the religious tradition and tradition streams within that religion and its orders or denominations and how they relate and link up with the commonly shared public culture. As certain tradition streams originated and developed in history in certain circumstances, current circumstances which are similar to such circumstances would activate those tradition streams which are relevant today. This may equally render some that certain social formations currently adhere to, redundant or unnecessary. Moreover, as this happens our own generation would add to the interpretation and significance of these (re-)activated traditions streams in our commonly shared culture formation[33]. The *second* is a public conversation and focused on the conversation between the different religious formations and their traditions and texts. Given certain public indicatives, the challenge is to engage them collectively. This, however, should be done in terms of a commonly-shared, developed as well as contested conceptual and theoretical discursive grouping of knowledge – with the related notion of projecting its future potential in enhancing and advancing the quality of life of the people of South Africa and all who live in it. This is the major challenge ahead.

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The vision is then of the functioning of a common, integral and even synthetic public culture in which religion is not suppressed or marginalised or relegated to the private sphere but fully acknowledged as a constituent significant and equal participant in public culture. Granted that its public nature derives from the numerous institutions, structures and systems the religious and faith-based organisations create to care for their adherents, but also to serve the broader communities, it is especially public, because of the publically-developed concepts and theoretical approaches in academia and by intellectuals. This obviously does not mean that all the religious formations do not also have elements that remain privately or communally believed and practiced. Participants in the public domain, therefore, speak from within their religious traditions as members of that tradition (which could obviously include a secular tradition). Since the point of departure is that of the recognition of diversity, this, approach also means that it would not lead to a certain form of social schizophrenia, where religious people must leave their religious convictions at the gate or at the door so to speak. It is rather an inclusive view of society that does not repress and exclude but includes in an integral, holistic and integrative manner.

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[32] Even though it only has one contribution from Africa, that of Wiredu – I find the collection edited by Chad Meister (2011) helpful. Cf. especially the essays by Marty, King, Griffiths, Swidler, Beyer, Yancey, Smith and Vaidyanathan, Wiredu, and Anderson.

[33] This has been the approach of the discipline of Religion and its programmes at the University of KwaZulu-Natal for the last 10-plus years.

For religious-specific research focuses, this means that, from within each of the religious traditions, we have developed the concomitant understandings that can school and educate our next generation in fully recognising both their citizenship, as well as their religious formation as part and parcel of public culture. The webs and networks of meaning and significance are developed in such a way that their systems of beliefs, narratives, values, rituals, symbols and religious experiences form part of the common cultural heritage. It also follows that for some (in certain geographical areas for instance) there would be greater convergence in the view and experience of their meaning system. The fact, however, is that these would link with both the public cultural formation as well as the own religious formation in its own ways[34].

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[34] Oosthuizen's work has been a very significant forerunner, especially his Research Unit for the Study of New Religious Movements and Independent Churches (NERMIC). Cf, his brief explanation of the rationale and research focus of NERMIC in Oosthuizen 1990b. Cf also his seminal essays of 1985; 1987a; 1987v; 1987c; and 1987d. With our own intellectual endeavour, we have obviously moved far beyond his seminal contributions.

We should, as religionists and citizens, aim to clarify and interpret the public cultural vision from within each religious tradition and formation and develop this vision for our lives in South Africa. How do our specific ideas of equality, freedom, dignity, and social justice inform and shape our social systems and lives? How do they inform our understanding of self and community? And, what are the social transformations we need to effect in our systems and institutions to give full expression to the ideals, values and hopes expressed in our constitution? Ultimately, as we embark on this road as researchers and scholars of religion, how should we engage the public conversation many talk about and be publically accountable? Not only how we participate but the fact that we are engaged, become an issue of public accountability.

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Redeeming Islam: Constructing the Good Muslim Subject in the Contemporary Study of Religion

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Abstract

This paper provides a perspective and analysis of the notion of 'redeeming Islam' - Islam as the subject of attempts by others to save it. The paper challenges the contemporary scholarship undertaken in the academy in respect of the Study of Islam whereby such scholarship operates within a context that endorses the agenda of Empire, particularly in regard to the construction of the 'good Muslim' who is consistent with contemporary notions of human rights, pluralism, non-violence and Western modes of thought and being. The 'bad Muslim' is one who does not endorse or support this project. The consequence of this type of scholarship is that it is uncritical and unaware of the context in which it operates as well as the historico-political legacy of Muslim societies in relation to colonialism and Western violence. In addition, it ignores the pertinent questions of poverty, sustainable development, and the voices of the marginalised – important questions for much of the Muslim and Two Third World – while concentrating on questions that are framed by a Northern context.

Keywords: redeeming Islam, Empire, 'good Muslim', Western modes of thought and being, historico-political legacy of Muslim societies

> A customer is the most important visitor on our premises. He is not dependent on us; we are dependent on him. He is not

> an interruption in our work; he is the purpose of it. He is not an intrusion in our business; he is a part of it. We are not doing him a favour by serving him; he is giving us an opportunity to do so (‘MK (Mahatma) Gandhi’)[1].
>
> Islam is peace (George W Bush)[2].

Introduction

This paper primarily provides a perspective and analysis on the notion of ‘redeeming Islam’ or Islam as the subject of attempts by others to save it. The title is a slightly mocking play on the irony of religion which is usually itself in the business of offering redemption. ‘Constructing the Good Muslim’ suggests a) that this ‘Good Muslim’ is manufactured by an external agency, b) that there is a project to distinguish between a ‘Good Muslim’ and a ‘Bad Muslim’ which may be related to the philological meaning of the word ‘*muslim*’ (Arabic for ‘someone who submits’) but not in the manner in which Muslims have ‘traditionally’ understood it, in, for example, the distinction between a pious (*salih*) Muslim on the one hand and a sinful (*fasiq* or *fajir*) one on the other, and c) that this Muslim is an object of enquiry. The borrowing of the term from Mahmood Mamdani’s *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror* (2004) further suggests two things: first, that this Muslim is the subject of a larger ‘civilizational’ project located within an hegemonic project; and second, he or she is a subject in the sense that subjects of monarchs exercise their rights at the pleasure of the monarch rather than as citizens of a republic.

After some introductory overview remarks about the current context of the Study of Islam in the academy and some of the major issues around its development and place in relation to the Study of Religion, two major factors which contributed to a significant irenic tendency in the field will be looked at. Following the work of Richard Martin and Carl Ernst (2010), I will argue that the publication of Edward Said's book, *Orientalism* in 1978 and some of the more spectacular revolts against the West by Muslim actors (primarily the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran and the September 11th 2001 attacks in the United States of America) impacted significantly on Islamicists - both in terms of how they viewed their primary obligations in the academy and the content of much of their work. I concur with the view that these events contributed immensely to the growth of irenic scholarship which saw Islamicists increasingly getting into the trenches to help save the Muslims and their image as they were coming under attack from different quarters, primarily Western governments and armies and the mass media in these countries[3].

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[1] I saw this quote - which did not originate from Gandhi - on a poster at a pharmacy in Accra, Ghana in November, 2006. It is a good example of how prophetic figures are routinely appropriated for causes entirely unrelated to the ones for which they lived and died.

[2] http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/ 2001 0917-11.html. (Accessed 27 July 2012).

This defensive engagement of many contemporary Islamicists raises significant questions about fidelity to the post-Enlightenment foundations of critical scholarship. More than simply being an irenic approach to Islam that does not take these foundations seriously or assisting Muslims to redeem the image of Islam, I argue that such scholarship often plays a significantly accommodationist role[4] in co-creating compliant Muslim subjects in a larger hegemonic project[5]. I critique the idea of essentialist approaches to both Islam and these foundations and argue that the focus should shift from epistemology to hermeneutics to take cognisance of the ideological dynamics at play in the construction and representation of Muslims as reliable subjects and of Islam as an empire-friendly faith. Finally, I argue for an engaged scholarship attentive to the radical inequality between the partners to the conversation and conscious of the political, cultural and economic conditions that shape the terms of the dialogue.

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[3] See for example the following statement by Ron Greaves in his *Aspects of Islam*: 'After a decade of close contact with Muslims in Britain and elsewhere in the Muslim world I find myself horrified by the opening of a Pandora's box whose contents are over-simplification, overwhelming ignorance, and blatant racism directed at a religious community; This is combined with a fear of the 'other', which at the beginning of the twenty first century, it is to be hoped that any thinking member of the human race would view with great distrust and suspicion, especially as we are all familiar with the historic consequence of the anti-Semitism that so blighted the twentieth century' (2005:1).

[4] The term 'accomodationist theology' has been used in various senses (cf. Green 2004; Hendrickson 2006). It is used here to describe the attempts to present Islam in a form acceptable to dominant powers by removing elements that are found offensive by the shifting needs of those powers.

An Overview of Contexts and Issues in the Study of Islam and the Academy

First, the academic study of religion remains a largely Western endeavor although far greater numbers of Muslims, (relatively few of them in Muslim majority countries) are emerging as leading figures in the discipline. More specifically it is increasingly a US-centric field. For example, a major question that academic or trade publishers consider before proceeding with a particular manuscript on Islam is ‘How well will it do in the States?’ Priority is provided to what may be described as ‘Northern questions’ (e.g. ‘Tell us about Islam and reconciliation?’) with an attitude of ‘irrelevance’ or disinterestedness in Southern questions (e.g. ‘Does Islam have anything to say about pandemics, poverty/ impoverisation, or death by starvation?’). Notwithstanding this, ‘contemporary’ - as in the ‘Contemporary Study of Religion’ title of this paper - is largely confined to observations of the academy in North America and in recent introductory works to Islam published there or geared towards that audience. This is due in large part because the work done in this regard in North America is increasingly shaping Muslim self-understanding across the globe.

Second, there has been significant increase in interest and literature on Islam and the Muslim world in the last thirty years both at a public and an academic level. This is evident in bookstores, openings and offerings at universities, journals and members of professorial societies etc[6]. However, as Carl Ernst and Richard Martin point out, 'while Islamic studies as a field has been powerfully affected by political events, debates within the academy have had a longer and more pervasive role in shaping … this area of inquiry.' (2010:1). (Cf. Martin, Empey, Arkoun & Rippin 2010).

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[5] An example of such accommodationist theology is supporting theological justification for jihad as armed insurrection in Afghanistan during the Soviet occupation (1967-1989) and then offering alternative non-violent interpretations of jihad when the dominant power becomes one with which you identify.

Third, Islamic Studies (*dirasah al-Islamiyyah*) – notwithstanding the claims of the faithful to ahistoricity or the divine origins of that 'other occupation' of the same name, 'Islamic Studies' (*islamiyyat*) in the *madrasah* (Islamic seminaries), may make – has a relatively recent history. Like several of its siblings in other fields and/or disciplines in the humanities, it is still undergoing a struggle to be 'not-a-step-child'. For now, much of this struggle[7] takes place within departments of Religious Studies, a discipline itself not entirely beyond suspicion, both from its internal 'others', such as the Church and the managers of the sacred, and its external others such as sociologists, anthropologists, and psychologists. At a deeper level though, this quest is also connected to the academic impulse for greater specialisation and deepening commitment to post-Enlightenment scientific rationality – which remains the uncritiqued *raison d'être* of the modern university and the intellectual foundations of the academic study of religion. This deepening commitment to enquiry which is 'descriptive, phenomenological and theoretical' (Smart 2001: xiii), rather than confessional or faith driven, is reflected in the shifting nomenclature where 'Islamic Studies' and 'Religious Studies' becomes the 'Study of Islam' and 'Religion Studies' or the 'Study of Religion' respectively. 'Our work', says Ninian Smart, 'is morphological; it presents an anatomy of faith, … for the application of *epoche*. It is an intentionally bracketing method which tries to bring out the nature of believers' ideas and feelings.' (Smart 2001: 3). While this 'involves walking in the moccasins of the faithful' (Smart 2001:3), we are not supposed to be the faithful - at least not the faithful ones in whose moccasins we are walking[8].

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[6] Ernst and Martin note that as 'recently as the last decades of the twentieth century … interest in, and room for, curriculum on Islam and Muslims could be found in barely one-tenth of the approximately 1200 academic departments of Religious Studies in North America … and it was not so long ago that Islam did not even have a primary presence in the major professional society for faculty of religion, the American Academy of Religion' (2010:1).

[7] The idea of the hierarchy of knowledge is that the basic fields of the sciences and mathematics can be organised from its least specialised and most derivative manifestation to its purest form. In relation to Islam the lowest level in the hierarchy of knowledge would probably be the *slamseskool*, followed by the local *madrassa* or *maktab* (the equivalent of Sunday School for Christians), the *dar al-`ulum* (seminary or yeshiva), then the faculties or departments of *ilahiyyaat* (divinity) or Divinity School and finally Religious or Religion Studies located in departments in non-confessional or secular institutions where it forms part of a humanities cluster. Then the pecking order continues in the academy in roughly the following chain: Sociology < Psychology < Biology < Math < Chemistry < Physics.

Fourth, while in the *darul 'ulum* (the Islamic religious seminary), the yeshiva or the seminary's one's work and quest may be sought from the Transcendent or some sacred foundational texts; in the study of religion where the debates shift primarily between methodological atheism or agnosticism, affirmation is sought from our peers, more particularly from the species above us in the academic pecking order. This conscious shift in the source of affirmation inevitably – arguably also 'ideally' – places the faithful/believing academic in a comprising position. She exists in a state of tension with her peers, who may suspect her of *nifaq* (proclaiming one view while believing in another) or rational *shirk* (associating a power with or as equal to God or in this case Reason)[9]; with the faithful; and herself all wondering how the believing academic manages to simultaneously ride multiple horses[10].

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[8] At a time when *Religionswissenschaft* was having its own struggle for acceptance as a serious social discipline the idea of obeisance to distance – of *epochē* (to stand apart, to hold back) – was crucial. The debate ranged largely between phenomenologists of religion who argued for methodology-cal atheism (scholars must deny the possibility that the objects of religious faith are true or real) on the one hand and Ninian Smart's alternative of methodological agnosticism, on the other. 'Not knowing how the universe really is organized – not knowing if it is organized at all – the scholar of religion seeks not to establish a position in response to this question but to describe, analyse, and compare the positions taken by others' (McCutcheon 1999:216-17).

Fifth, the development of disciplines in the humanities takes place within what are presented as ideational contestations as well as fiscal and budgetary constraints. A common argument would be concerning the dominance of revelation or theology over reason or Western modes of thought. While the Study of Islam rather than 'Islamic Studies' and the critical Study of Religion rather than Theology or 'Religious' Studies' are emerging as victorious; these victories are not necessarily won because of an intrinsic [secular, objective, post-Enlightenment] superiority of the Study of Islam over 'Islamic Studies' or theology but because it is a subsidiary recipient of a larger enterprise and part of a 'web of economic, cultural, and political forces which propagates and perpetuates a mode of production' (Brodeur 1999:9). It is to this larger enterprise that Edward Said (d. 2003) spoke so eloquently about and which I want to address in considering how the Muslim is increasingly constructed as a 'moderate' and 'harmless' subject.

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[9] In recent years, this suspicion of unduly warm relationship between the academic/enquirer and the subject (sometimes also 'subjected') community being researched or of the believing scholar has waned somewhat in a number of fields in the humanities as is evident in the presence of committed feminist women in Gender Studies, gay people in Queer Studies, and black people in African Studies. There is still, I suspect, a much deeper suspicion of people with a religious commitment located in the Study of Religion.

[10] From time to time one reads fiery warnings against studying Islam at 'secular universities' and these are usually dismissed as the ranting of extremists. I am not sure if, in terms of the worldview of these traditionalists, and the inevitable and necessary critiquing of faith and its marginalisation in the academy, these fears are entirely ungrounded. It is somewhat disingenuous for academics to consciously promote 'objective' and non-faith enquiry and then to complain when others find this threatening to their worldviews and power paradigms.

Orientalism

For more than three decades, the term ‘Orientalism’ has cast a long shadow over the study of religion in general and Islamic studies in particular. The term acquired its overwhelmingly pejorative connotations in scholarly discourse largely due to Edward Said’s groundbreaking book *Orientalism* (1978). In looking at the development of the field of the Study of Islam and the other disciplines where Islam and Muslims were studied over the last century or so, the general demarcation – the dangers of simplification and reductionism, notwithstanding – is often described as pre- or post-Saidian[11].

In summary, Said argued that Orientalism constitutes ‘not only a field of investigation but an exercise of power’, ‘part of the story of cultural hegemony’ over the ‘other’ against which European culture is asserted. In the context of radical inequalities of power Orientalism was more revealing of the formation and presence of Euro-Atlantic power than as a truthful discourse of the Orient itself. European culture not just managed but produced the Orient and Western analytic categories not just reflect but also produce facts. A rationalist analysis is not simply the application of non-normative, ahistorical constructs to apolitical phenomena but involves the translation of all culture through the filter of Western categories of knowledge. The terms ‘Orient’ and ‘Occident,’ ‘East and West’, thus do not refer to real entities or essences, but rather to bodies of knowledge that have been constructed in the service of particular aims, foremost among them, the domination of the Middle East by European imperial powers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and by the United States in the twentieth century. Said presented Orientalism as a rather disaggregated monolith, 'a constellation of false assumptions underlying Western attitudes toward the East', (mashrabiyya.wordpress.com) and 'a subtle and persistent Eurocentric prejudice against Arabo-Islamic peoples and their culture' (mashrabiyya. wordpress.com). Despite Said's disdain for orthodoxies, his ideas became the basis for a new orthodoxy and his critique of Western scholarship on the Orient has too often been reduced to a Manichaean division of opposing sides. This transformation, in the words of MacKenzie, has turned Orientalism 'into one of the most ideologically charged words in modern scholarship' (MacKenzie 1995:4) 'and remains for most scholars the *bête noir* in the expanding family of Islamic studies today' (Ernst & Martin 2010: 4).

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[11] Said’s work was also, and not unsurprisingly, greeted by a chorus of criticism from virtually all of the well-known Orientalists at that time including Ernest Gellner, (1993) Albert Hourani, (cf. Hopwood 2003) Mark Proudman (2004), Maxime Rodinson, Robert Graham Irwin (2006), and, most famously, Bernard Lewis (1993). Said was criticized for presenting, in fact, constructing, a monolithic ‘Occidentalism‘ to oppose a similarly constructed ‘Orientalism’ of Western discourse, of failing to acknowledge the diversity in impulse, genres and ideological and scholarly orientations of the various scholars that he treated uniformly. For a critique of the Irenic approach to the study of Islam and a review of the Said-Lewis debates see Aaron W Hughes, *Situating Islam: The Past and Future of an Academic Discipline*, London: Equinox, 2007.

The Turbulent Gulf, then New York, and Kabul, and Bali, and Lahore, and the Horn of Africa and …

The successful framing of Orientalism as a disreputable profession by Edward Said coincided with the Revolution in Iran in 1979 and the hostage taking drama which lasted for a year. This event and, even more so, the spectacular displays of raw violence against the empire on September 11th 2001 rather rudely altered the spatial dimensions of the narrative of Islam as a volatile Middle Eastern phenomenon, prone to militancy and brought it 'closer to home'. September 11th, particularly, saw the beginning of a frenzy of Islamophobic caricatures of Muslims and Islam as an enemy of all civilised values in the print, audiovisual and virtual media. Everyone remotely connected to the study of Islam and Muslims were marshaled in to service the desperate need for clarity about the religious impulses of 'these people' who had the *chutzpah* to challenge the empire on its home ground. Their motives had to be located somewhere outside the reasoned and 'normal' behavior of Western human beings. The mass media does not suffer complexity gladly and many were drawn into what Said had lamented as 'a culture of headlines, sound-bytes, and telegraphic forms whose rapidity renders the world one-dimensional and homogenous' (Bhaba 2005:11). The 'subject' communities of the Islamicists – the Muslims - were and (indeed are) constantly under attack and Islamicists felt an enormous compulsion to push against the ‘misrepresentation’, misinformation, and politically incorrect attitudes of citizens who ‘formed opinions about Islam from media fixations on sensationalism and a grossly inadequate and Eurocentric textbook industry.’ It was understandable that many of those who had insights into the tradition would step in as its interlocutors[12].

This defending of Islam though is also located within a particular ideological project, a project like Orientalism, not without its hegemonic interests. It is common cause that identities, including religious ones, are constantly in a state of flux. Conversation, in all its tentativeness and heurism in the academy, more characteristic of hermeneutics rather than the essentialism of both traditional religion and supposedly objective scholarship, is certainly valuable. However, it is important to note and pay attention to how the ‘bad Muslim’ of Orientalism is being supplanted by the construction of the ‘good Muslim’ as a citizen of the Empire with all the essentials of what constitutes the Empire still in place (occupations, greed, imbalanced power relations, exploitation, etc.).

In researching for this paper, I considered about fifty op-ed pieces written by generally serious scholars in Islam in various United States, Canadian and British publications; more than a dozen introductory books on Islam produced in the last six or seven years; and another dozen selected anthologies which aimed at introducing the latest ‘good Muslims’ and their ideas to the [Western] world. A few general observations about the work which I considered are noted below. In addition, the question of the relationship between what is being cast as the post-Enlightenment basis of

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[12] This form of scholarship, as Clifford Geertz had pointed out as early as 1982, is certainly not new in the history of Islamic studies: ‘The tendency has always been marked among Western Islamicists … to try to *write Muslim theology from without*, to provide the spiritual self-reflection they see either as somehow missing in it or as there but clouded over by routine formula-mongering. D.B Macdonald made al-Ghazzali into a kind of Muslim St. Thomas. Ignaz Goldziher centered Islam in traditionalist legal debates, and Louis Massignon centered it in the Sufi martyrdom of al-Hallaj … A half-conscious desire not just to understand Islam but to *have a hand in its destiny* has animated most of the major scholars who have written on it as a form of faith’ (e.a.) (Geertz 1982).

Religionswissenschaft of methodological agnosticism or atheism versus an engaged or embedded scholarship needs to be interrogated.

First, most authors writing on Islam in the academy are largely still non-Muslim although they have been joined by a growing number of younger Muslims, nearly all of whom – with notable exceptions – are located in the North. A significant number have also started their scholarly journeys as non-Muslims and have since become Muslims. The dominant pattern of edited anthologies and accredited journals dealing with Islamic Studies is still one where the Non-Muslim is the editor, bringing Muslim and non-Muslim voices – and occasionally, only Muslim voices – together. Where books are co-authored the primary author is usually a non-Muslim.

Second, while a number of these younger scholars have indeed been able to saddle multiple horses, many have remained wedded to the irenic scholarship of their mentors in the post-Saidian academy. The work of Kecia Ali (2006), Ebrahim Moosa (2008), and Anouar Majid (2006) do reflect a relatively rarer Muslim willingness or ability to deal seriously and critically with the traditions of Islam (or the tradition of *Islams*).

Third, there is a growing emphasis on Sufism in the academy. While the motivations of this remain largely unexplored I relate this to a) the modern interest in individual experiences and fulfillment, b) the perceived pliability of Sufism as amenable to various cultures, gender friendliness, and religious and sexual diversity, c) the interest in Islam as a lived reality rather than a dogma located in texts, and d) a part of a desire to see Muslims 'calming down' and returning to a mythical innocence where Islam is perceived as inherently inward looking, apolitical, gentle and non-confrontational (cf. Nixon Center 2004). Related to this is a discernible pattern of assigning the Shari`ah (Islamic law) a less important role in Islam. When the Shari`ah is actually covered it increasingly is done within a framework of re-thinking its contents and privileging its supposed spirit and objectives (*maqasid*).

Fourth, with some notable exceptions (e.g. Waines 2005; Rippin 2005; Sheppard 2009), Islam is largely still reified and presented in essentialist terms (Islam 'properly understood' means this or that) – even if that essentialisation is now adorned with the currently fashionable virtues of inclusivism, multi-culturalism and religious diversity along with the assumption that all Muslims do or should aspire to these values. The desperation to prove ‘real’ Islam’s ’compatibility’ with contemporary political and western cultural values has resulted in a plethora of affirmations of gender equality, democracy, religious pluralism, human rights and more recently also of sexual diversity that are often not nuanced.

Finally, and most importantly for purposes of this paper, the major contestations are often presented as one between Muslims where internal Muslim identities are at odds with one another, a ‘battle of ideas’ taking place between ‘moderate’ and ‘literalist’ or ‘extremist’ Islam (Abou El Fadl 2005), a ‘civil war’ taking place within the religion, and a struggle between ‘reactionary Islam’ and ‘moderate, mainstream Islam’ (Lewis 2003; Aslan 2005). Islam had to be taken back from those who had hijacked it (Wolf 2002), wrestled back from the extremists who captured it in ‘*The Great Theft*’ (Abu El Fadl 2005). This portrayal is largely silent about any possible Western responsibility for any of the current crises around the Muslim world and displays not only a rather ahistorical and equally unscientific ignorance of the interconnectedness of cultures, but also a willful blindness to the impact of colonialism and its socio-political engineering of colonised societies. To raise this question risks politicising what is usually presented as disemboweled scholarly cultural, theological and civilizational critique and opens the door to the possibility that that there may even be something that requires fixing inside western society itself[13]. The fundamental values underpinning the imperial impulses are, for now, not on the table for discussion – at least not in the project of dealing with the Muslim barbarians.

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[13] In March of 2007, the RAND Corporation, a major US think tank issued a widely discussed paper ‘Building Moderate Muslim Networks.’ The paper defines ‘moderate’ or ‘good’ Muslims as ones who support democracy and internationally recognised human rights, including gender equality and freedom of worship, notions of non-sectarian sources of law and oppose terrorism. The report’s stated objective is to promote an alternate version of Islam that is compatible with American policies in the Muslim world by painting ‘moderate Muslims’ as a marginalised group that has been silenced by a radical minority. To counter radical networks, Western governments need to actively help ‘moderate Muslims’ better articulate and disseminate their views (Rand 2007).

Disinterested Scholarship

The first question that warrants reflection is, if in the keenness to ‘walk in the moccasins of the faithful’ – to return to Ninian Smart’s metaphor – does the ‘disinterested’ scholar risk becoming one of the faithful?’ The second question is whether an increasingly accommodationist academy has simply moved on to another kind of essentialism with its construction of the ‘Good Muslim’ and ‘Islam is peace’ – a project as fused to an ideological agenda as the Orientalism critiqued by Edward Said – an approach which while it presents itself as objective really seeks to construct a particular kind Islam, a non-threatening or, to use Slavoj Zizek’s term, ‘decaffeinated faith’ (Žižek 2004) without raising any questions about the imperial, ethical nature or sustainability of that which is threatened?

Post-modernity and post-colonialism have raised some serious questions about the Enlightenment basis of learning, its assumptions of rationality and of the mind as a clear slate, or as capable of being cleansed from the ‘distortions’ of personal commitment. Not only has the assumption of objectivity come under sustained criticism by a host of new entrants into the academy, such as feminists, liberation theologians, and post-colonial scholarship, but leading philosophers have argued that ‘the notion of knowledge as an accurate representation … needs to be abandoned’ (Söderström 2005:12). Rather than conceiving of knowledge in terms of the accurate representation of a ‘nonhuman reality,’ with which the mind interacts, often within a falsely assumed ‘permanent, neutral, framework for inquiry’ (Rorty 1979:8) we should conceive of knowledge in context[14] a) in terms of a conversation between persons, and b) a conversation that takes place within particular power relationships. Scholars operate within history along with their critiques of the theories of both knowledge and the way it is produced and the intellectualist responses to the material that they study or communities that they observe. As such, we cannot view communities, traditions and ideas historically and then take an ahistorical view of ourselves and of our critiques.

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[14] Context is something particularly privileged by feminist and liberation theologians. Writing in another context, but with relevance to our subject here, Gustavo Gutierrez (1973:25), the famous liberation theologian, describes this appeal to ideological neutrality in the following terms: ‘The last systematic obstacle for any theology committed to human liberation is ... a certain type of academicism which posits ideological neutrality as the ultimate criterion; which levels down and relativizes all claims to absoluteness and all evaluations of some ideas over others. This is the theological equivalent of another great ideological adversary of liberation: the so-called quest for the death of ideologies or their suicide at the altars of scientific and scholarly impartiality’.

Said offers a clear statement of what he finds problematic about Orientalism in the *Afterword* to *Orientalism* at the fifteenth anniversary of its publication. Those who thought they had the requisite distance to produce knowledge about the 'Orient' were, in fact, imposing their own agendas without subjecting those agendas to any kind of critical scrutiny.

> My objection to what I have called Orientalism is not that it is just the antiquarian study of Oriental languages, societies, and peoples, but that as a system of thought Orientalism approaches a heterogeneous, dynamic, and complex human reality from an uncritically essentialist standpoint; this suggests both an enduring Oriental reality and an opposing but no less enduring Western essence, which observes the Orient from afar and from, so to speak, above. This false position hides historical change. Even more important, from my standpoint, it hides the *interests* of the Orientalist (Said 2003:333).

Feminists, liberation theologians and post-colonial scholar do not propose that the alternative to Orientalism is 'scholarly disinterest.' After all, they argue, such disinterest is a mere fiction. 'There is no innocent interpretation, no innocent interpreter, no innocent text' (Tracy 1987:79). Instead they appeal to a spirit of relentless critique of tradition, religion, academicism, but also of modernity and ourselves. Knowledge, like any other social tool, while it can and must be critical, is never neutral. The issue here is not with the idea of empathetic scholarship that characterises much of essentialist irenics and liberal material produced in the contemporary Study of Islam, but with its uncritical position towards the larger ideological and power structures wherein it is located, or in other words its embeddedness in those structures and how it contributes to provide them with meaning[15]. The question is therefore not one of the faithfulness of the academic or lack of faith but rather of ‘Which faith?’ and ‘In whose service?’

The Construction of the Decaffeinated Muslim

There is more to embedded scholarship than a desire to simply dispel misconceptions or help create a better understanding of Islam for the general public. In attempting to ‘write Muslim theology from without,’ this approach implicitly provides a sympathetic yet essentialised view of Islam that casts ’good Muslims’ against ‘bad Muslims’. The ‘real’ Muslims follow the ‘true’ Islam and the main detractors, who obscure this essentialised goodness of Islam, it is argued, are both the neo-Orientalist scholars – in the Saidian sense – from a variety of disciplines (such as Daniel Pipes, Ibn Warraq, and Bernard Lewis) who ‘misunderstand’ then ‘misrepresent’ them, as well as the ’bad Muslims’ themselves (Osama bin Laden or the Wahabis)[16] who resort to ‘extremism’ or other ‘false ways’ because they do not represent the ‘true’ Islam which is moderate, peaceful, and inoffensive[17].

This kind of essentialism does have a role in the life of faith communities much of which is based on belonging which necessarily entails constructing or embracing ideas of who constitutes an outsider and insider. The disciplines of dogma and heresiography, after all, have well-deserved places in most religious traditions. The post-Saidian problem though is the assumption that once that (Non-Muslim) scholar is convinced that he or she is positively disposed towards Muslims, he or she can now participate in the reconstruction of the Muslim identity and Islamic tradition in ways which are more acceptable to the largely Northern/Western society or context in which that scholar is located and with which dominant ideology he or she identifies is more comfortable. For the Muslim scholar, the problem is often an inability to ask critical questions of his or her socio-political context on the one hand and a seamless embrace of the dominant politically constructed assumptions about what is a 'good Muslim' on the other, indeed, an often blissful ignorance of the fact that there are conscious political and economic forces initiating and supporting these assumptions.

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[15] The term ‘embedded journalism’ first came into vogue with media coverage of the US invasion of Iraq in 2001 when selected journalists were given privileged access to military units after undertaking to censor information that could negatively impact on the war performance of those units.

[16] Wahabism, a more puritan austere form of Islam, has for long, and not without just cause, been viewed as the nemesis by Sufi groups or what has been variously described as ’popular’ or ‘folk’ or ’low’ Islam and by modernist Muslims. The post 9/11 era, particularly with the alleged role of Saudi citizens in the events and the putative role that this religious approach has played in the theological formation of the alleged terrorists, have given a much more pronounced tone and energy to anti-Wahabism.

[17] Mahmood Mamdani refers to this essentialisation as ‘Culture Talk’; a kind of discourse that assumes that every culture has a tangible essence that defines it, and then explains politics as a consequence of that essence. Muslim cannot be any other way. This of course opens the way for the argument of Islam’s inherent incompatibility with modernity and, by extension, Western practice and thought. (Mamdani 2005: 17-18)

The 'moderate Muslim' is held up as the ideal. New slogans of '*wasatiyyah*' (moderation) are bandied about with little or no critique of what constitutes the center and peripheries and who defines these, as well as the historical-ideological moment and agenda that creates the urgency and need for moderate Muslims or a moderate Islam. Indeed the very raising of the question of agendas in relation to 'moderate Islam' makes one suspect. The foregrounding of the themes of pluralism, human rights, democracy, peace and non-violence[18], the framing of liberal responses to them as the new orthodox Islamic response, and the way the ‘good Muslim’ is constructed reflect the triumph, however temporary, of the liberal ideological moment at least in relation to the Study of Islam in the West. In a similar way, the concrete rapiers which dominate the entrance of the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg (‘Democracy’, ‘Equality’, ‘Reconciliation’ and ‘Diversity’) signify the triumph of a particular liberal vision of South African society, and through these symbolic structures which resemble swords, perhaps the willingness of a liberal society to also resort to violence to establish its hegemony.

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[18] In a challenging essay, Paul Salem critiques conventional notions of Western approaches to conflict resolution and points out that its 'theorists and practitioners operate within a macro-political context that they may overlook, but which colors their attitudes and values. This seems remarkably striking from an outsider's point of view and is largely related to the West's dominant position in the world. All successful 'empires' develop an inherent interest in peace. The ideology of peace reinforces a status quo that is favourable to the dominant power. The Romans, for example, preached a *Pax Romana*, the British favored a *Pax Britannica*, and the Americans today pursue – consciously or not – a *Pax Americana*. Conflict and bellicosity is useful – indeed essential – in building empires, but an ideology of peace and conflict resolution is clearly more appropriate for its maintenance (2003: 362-364).

Yoginder Sikand, an analyst of South Asian Islam, describes in his article, ‘”Civic, Democratic Islam”: America’s Desperate Search for the “Liberal” Muslim’, (2007: n.p.) the inconsistency of a United States which at one point supported some of the most extremist and fanatical Muslims in the world, the Taliban, to counter the growing popularity of secular nationalist and progressive forces, but now is devising a myriad strategies to create an America-friendly, moderate Islam:

> Today, America’s policy on Islamic movements has turned full circle. In order to counter the radical fringe of Islamism that it had so fervently courted till recently, America is desperately scouting around for ‘liberal’ Muslim allies who can sell an alternate vision and version of Islam that fits into the American scheme of things. This explains the sudden flurry of conferences and publications on ‘liberal Islam’ and the setting up of NGOs in Muslim countries with liberal American financial assistance. The underlying aim of these diverse activities appears to be the same: to promote an understanding of Islam that cheerfully accepts American hegemony, camouflaged as global modernity, as normative and, indeed, ‘normal’. This goal, is, of course, not stated openly. Rather, it is generally clothed in the garb of high-sounding slogans such as ‘democracy’, ‘human rights’, ‘liberalism’, and ‘pluralism’.

Irenic scholarship on contemporary Islam, other than an occasional and casual nod to Muslim sufferings and a lamentation of US foreign policy, lacks a critique of larger patterns of consumption, environmental or socio-economic justice, of modernity and liberalism as class projects which hugely impact – and not always positively – the peripheries. The urgings towards awareness of these usually come from those outside the Study of Islam such as anthropology (Talal Asad & Sabah Mahmood), critical theory (Salman Sayyid), political science (Mahmoud Mamdani) and literary criticism (Hamid Dabashi). The Study of Islam with the Study of Religion must be studied as social and cultural expressions within historical, geographical, political and economic contexts. I agree with Ninian Smart's polymethodical approach whereby we draw on 'the full range of human sciences to understand how traditions have been transmitted authoritatively in various societies and how these have been re-enforced in myths, rituals, doctrines, legal institutions, artistic expressions and in testimonies of believers, including states such as spirit possession and out of the body experiences.' (Cox 2003: 8). More important though, given the urgencies of the multiple crises facing humankind such as warfare, environmental and economic systems deeply wedded to systemic impoverisation, we desperately need to bring the insights of these post-colonial scholars and others who work on the peripheries into our work. Scholarship – like all of human life – is compromised. We have a choice between an uncritical embeddedness in the structures of power with accountability to armies, governments, empires, and a critical engagement with the margins – however shifting – for a more just world.

Re-Thinking Contexts for Contemporary Scholarship

Finally the question seems to be 'What is our context as engaged African Muslim scholars?' Where is our authenticity located when we uncritically embrace the constructed intellectual and political categories and urgencies of others as our own and seek to re-define a fourteen hundred year old tradition – albeit an ever-changing one – in the face of external demands (even if these demands were generated by a complex array of factors wherein that tradition is not entirely innocent)? Muslims too, have a conflicting relationship with both 'outsiders' and the tradition of Islam and its ideals. The tensions are palpable of being in a world in which the vast majority of Muslims feel trapped between the demands imposed on them existentially as subjects of the Empire on the one hand, and the violent convulsions of a fascist-like Islamic invoked response by some co-religionists. At every step of our encounter with our non-Muslim neighbours, colleagues, students and immigration officers, those of us – committed or nominal Muslim, confessional or cultural – living or working in the West, have to justify our existences, our faith, our humanness and our non-violent intentions.

Declarations that Muslim societies must 'come right' are fairly easy. In nearly all of the work that I have perused there is no shortage of argument against the idea that Muslim societies or Islam are inherently opposed to democracy or that Islam is compatible with democracy (Cf. Feldman 2003; Abou el-Fadl 2005; Mousalli 2002; Sachedina 2001; and An-Na'im 1990). The questions are what does 'come right' really mean, what does the cover of democracy and moderation really hide, and what are the historico-political reasons for the democracy and moderation deficit in the Muslim and Two Thirds World?

Questions of religious pluralism wedded to inter-religious solidarity against oppression, of gender justice, human rights, and democracy have for long been ones with which I have been engaged and with a sense of principled urgency that has its origins in a rather different context than the current dominant empire building one that only seeks to civilise the rebellious Muslim barbarian. My own engagement with the South African liberation struggle and that of my comrades, my work in the field of gender justice and my current work with Muslims who are living with HIV & AIDS has often inspired many Muslims by providing a sense that Muslims can be part of a vision larger than obscurantist fundamentalism. It is, ironically, precisely this location of my own scholarship within a principled vision of a just world that makes me so profoundly suspicious of the dominant urgency to re-think Islam in 'contemporary terms'.

I have spoken about our witnessing, - with many Islamicists participating - in an intense and even ruthless battle for the soul of Islam that often escapes many of us who are keen to nurture and imagine a faith that is peaceful and compatible with the values of dignity, democracy and human rights. For many non-Muslim Westerners who are driven by conservative ideological imperatives, Islam and Muslims have become the ultimate other. Many liberals, on the other hand, move from the assumption that 'global harmonies remain elusive because of cultural conflicts' (Majid 2000:3). Hence, the desperation to nudge Islam and Muslims into a more 'moderate' corner, to transform the Muslim other into a Muslim version of the accommodating and 'peaceful' self without in any way raising critical questions about that western self and the economic system that fuels the need for compliant subjects throughout the Empire.

I am not suggesting that issues of democracy, human rights, and moderation have not been dealt with in Islamic scholarship before Edward Said's Orientalism or 11th of September 2001. I am concerned that a teacher with a formidable cane has sent all of us into a corner after one of our classmates said something unspeakable about his favourite project. Discerning a lack of complete and unqualified remorse – even some rejoicing – the entire class is now subjected to collective punishment. And so, all of us now have to write a thousand times, 'I shall behave – I shall be democratic – I shall respect human rights – I shall be peaceful.' As it is, the class – Muslim societies – is a 'remedial one' for 'slow learners' and we are on probation. In the interim, children are literally dying in Africa and much of the Two Third World and a significant number of the world's population live in poor and inhuman conditions while the gap between the poorest and the wealthiest increases.

There are also other realities around me including coercion, the irony of violence being used to impose a language of peace, and the larger context of education and schooling which pretends not to be grounded in any particular ideology. Neither the elite nor the aspirant elites of our generation, so desperate to succeed within the system, have ever been too interested to engage the works of thinkers such as Paul Goodman, Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich. Too tantalising is the promise of entry into the domain of the establishment which is subject to turning a blind eye to its inherent injustice, the demand for uniformity, the moulding of human beings to serve a particular kind of society with particular economic needs and the transformation of *insan* (humanity) into *homo aeconomicus*.

In many ways, scholarly elites are represented by the student who is desperate to outdo his fellow students in appeasing the teacher. For these students, threats are unnecessary; the promise of acceptance by the teacher and the concomitant material advantages are sufficient incentives. Despite the protestations of benign objectives of advancing education and learning, the teacher is there as part of larger project – a project that is politically unwise to interrogate – in an authoritarian system where any moment spent on challenging teachers means losing marks As with the learners, the teacher is also not a disemboweled human being. There are larger civilisational and ideological issues at stake such as understandings of development and its price on the earth, the transformation of the earth as sacred in traditional cosmologies into simple real estate and our very understanding of what it means to be human, of culture, the commodity value attached to people and land. This includes the supremacy of supposedly rationalist forms of thinking. The issue of the teacher's sullied pet project represents only the sharper edge of the frustration, anger and agenda, the rise and march of the Reconstituted Empire. The larger context of this is globalisation for which we require the intellectual courage and political will to also historicise and unravel its implications when we consider issues of human rights, democracy and the moderate Muslim in relation to Islam today.

Conclusion

I have argued that an approach to the Study of Islam should challenge the imposition of Western analytic categories and should also foster dialogue. I also argue for the abandonment of a positivist epistemology both within Islam and outside that sustains a conception of understanding as discovering the objective and final truth. Instead I consider understanding to be the result of a dialogue between horizons of meaning none of which can claim a monopoly over truth. Here the demand is for a willingness to risk oneself into a transformative process in which the status of the self and the other are constantly renegotiated. Authentic dialogue is about entering the other's world while holding on to yours, with the willingness to be transformed. It is not a space of trade where deals are struck. One cannot speak of genuine political participation and integrity of communities, unless one can reach some kind of consensus on a shared system of ethics. The context of power in which the current drive for such conversation is driven by the Empire's agenda which makes it exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to have any kind of genuine conversation that holds within it an openness to mutual transformation.

I subscribe to the notion of the inexhaustibility of the meaning of texts and challenge the possibility of an objectively valid interpretation. At the same time, one should be deeply attentive to the radical inequality between the partners in the conversation and should also be conscious of the political, cultural and economic conditions that shape the terms of the dialogue. The ideal towards which we should strive for, and religious scholars especially, is not a scenario of culturally isolated factions but an ongoing dialogue for and commitment to radical social change.

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Does Comparative Theology have an Advantage over Religious Studies?

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Abstract

In this essay, I assess the prospects for Comparative Theology as some scholars proffered towards building a general theory of religion. I first acknowledge the relationship between the two disciplines; second, I examine the relationship between faith and religion which I believe is crucial to enter the discussion on Comparative Theology and Religious Studies; third I come to the crux of the matter by assessing the influence of theology on the study of religion; fourth, having problematized the method of Comparative Theology, I underscore the limits of theological method for comparative analysis in the study of religion. This above outline is consciously intended to take the general reader as well as specialists toward my conclusion, which is to suggest that Comparative Theology can only serve an internal theological purpose of one religious tradition but not for the purpose of a general theory of religion.

Keywords: Religion, Faith, Belief, Theology, Religious Studies, Comparative Theology, Comparative Religion, Social Scientific Study of Religion

Introduction: The Relationship between Theology and Religious Studies

> For the theologian, and most especially for comparative theologians, persons from other traditions are not of interest

> solely because they offer us data for the construction of a given theory of religion, but because what they have to say about the nature of the real might be true or at least worthy of contestation as an [sic] genuine alternative to one's own position. Theology can make possible what theory of religion cannot. By insisting that we must take the other seriously as other and not merely as an object of our theoretical scrutiny, theology can destabilize positions of power and privilege that theoreticians grant themselves (Thatamanil 2010: 1178).

In the light of the above claim, in order to address the issue whether or not Comparative Theology has an advantage over Religious Studies, we need to first understand the relationship between the two. Discussion about the complex relationship between Religious Studies and Theological Studies has been an on-going saga in the past several decades, largely in the western academia. From its humble beginnings in Theological Studies, study of religion went through many transformations before it eventually became settled largely as Religious Studies, also known in other places as Comparative Religions, Science of Religion, Phenomenology of Religion, and History of Religions. At one time, Phenomenology of Religion reigned supreme in the study of religion mainly in the search for an objective understanding of other religions, i.e., non-Christian ones. Of course, most of them were either practicing Christian theologians or trained in Theological Studies, but chose to be phenomenologists in order to distinguish their studies from the Theological Studies genre on methodological grounds. Their work had been characterized by a deep sense of religious experience. From Van der Leeuw to Mircea Eliade, a whole host of them could be listed in this sector. Ninian Smart, who established the first Religious Studies department in the UK (University of Lancaster) and later in the US (at University of California, Santa Barbara), pursued phenomenology, but often described himself as 'methodologically agnostic'. Some recent scholars have discussed the place of phenomenology in the scientific study of religion (cf. Ryba 1991).

It is important to understand this connection between the two disciplines in order to appreciate not only their distinct boundaries but also the issues that are often debated in this context. The extent to which

Religious Studies departed from Christian Theology has been debated by a number of scholars. Preus (1987) argued that since David Hume with the rise of naturalist arguments, study of religion departed from Christian Theology Preus. However, Balagangadhara (1994) contested that the shift towards naturalistic explanations in the study of religion was indeed not a break from Theology, but rather it had to do with the gradual secularization of Theology. Jakob de Roover (2003:615-635) after analyzing Balagangadhara's arguments concluded that even Feuerbach who despised Theology operated within theological framework, which makes the point that Religious Studies continues to operate with in a larger theological framework. I will return to the influence of theology on the study of religion later on. Furthemore, Balagangadhara's critique that secularization of Christian theology helped it to remain dominant in Religious Studies can be seen reinforced by periodical arguments as to why theology can be and should be studied in a secular university (Macdonald Jr. 2010: 991-1024).

While the relationship between Christian Theology and Religious Studies remains still an ongoing debate, it is also important to recognize the enormous influence from social sciences on the study of religion (e.g., Durkheim, Weber, Freud, Jung *inter alia*). Those who are rooted in the social scientific methods in the study of religion wish to see Religious Studies established on its own rather than continually implicated in the theological enterprise(cf. McCutcheon 2003a). At the same time, there is also some growing trend in recent years among scholars other than of Christianity (e.g. Hindu, Buddhist) who wish to approach their studies as insiders from a theological perspective. This is particularly true of those non-ethnic scholars who consider themselves as practicing Hindus or Buddhists. Some of them having been raised in previously Christian background desire to find some compatibility between their former Christian upbringing and their present study of Hinduism or Buddhism, or whatever the case may be, and hence their desire to use theological method to study religion as an insider. To this list one may add some Hindus who consider themselves theologically oriented, e.g., followers of International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISCKON) who have in recent times entered the mainstream academic study of religion, especially in North America. In other words, theological method has been appropriated within other religions such as Hinduism notwithstanding many distinct ways in which those religions might understand their metaphysical ideas. Popularization of the notion of God through the spread of Western Christianity around the world might have something to do with the pervasiveness of the appropriation of theological ideas in many cultures outside Christianity.

Categories 'Faith' and 'Religion'

In unpacking the issue of Comparative Theology in relation to Religious Studies we need to also examine briefly the relationship between 'faith' and 'religion' as two significant categories in this context. Because theology is deeply rooted in the category of faith it makes theological method limited by religious experience of the practitioners of a religion. As such, Religious experience is obviously the most important principle that underlies theological method. In other words, theology is founded on the principle of faith received through revelation. It is precisely on the basis of the conviction that 'religion' as a category has led to scholarly reification of religious traditions as systems that W.C. Smith (1963) argued against the category of 'religion' and any attempt at systematization of things. Instead, he viewed religious traditions as dynamic 'cumulative traditions' which are underpinned by individual religious experience based on faith. Therefore, he also rejected the cognate concept of religion, viz., 'belief' (cf. Smith 1987). If W.C. Smith wanted 'religion' as a category to disappear entirely, J.Z. Smith limited the category 'religion' to the scholar's analytical purposes. In his most oft quoted statement that 'religion' exists only for scholarly analysis and as such there is no religion independent of scholar's imagination J.Z. Smith (1982) too was critical of the category 'religion' in a different way[1]. In the period between the two Smiths a great deal has happened in the discourse on religion, especially in methodological debates that have particular significance for theology in general and Comparative Theology in particular.

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[1] Although J.Z. Smith sounded like he was reducing religion to merely scholarly analysis, and like W.C. Smith was interested in diversity of religious expression, he did not quite buy the conclusion of W.C. Smith (1963) that 'religion' as a category will disappear from scholarly attention. Instead, he reinforced it when he diametrically opposed Eliade's phenomenological vision of religious essence (see J.Z. Smith 2004).

J.Z. Smith's assertion that there is no religion except that it exists for scholar's analysis is of course different from the earlier Christian theological and missionary refusals to allow 'religion' as an universally applicable term for all cultures, albeit it was gradually extended to other religions. In this context, it is worth noting that several recent scholars have criticized such tendencies that have crept into the academic study of religion. For instance, Cabezón (2006: 21-38) criticizes the western scholarly tendency to deny in other cultures criticality, rigor, theoretical sophistication and self-awareness that characterized the notion of 'religion' in western academia. These principles that Cabezón refers to are rational principles that are deployed in the study of religion. But for a long time theology too has claimed these rational principles in its discourse. Placing the rationality of theology on a par with science, back in the early days of scientific discoveries, one earlier theologian put it boldly – 'The limits which science and ethics set for themselves temporarily theology consciously and deliberately transcends. Thereby it saves science and ethics from decay and death' (Cross 1922: 400). Such claims of theology about its rational discourse continued to the extent that theologically oriented scholars tended to tilt the academic study of religion toward theological approach.

In the 1970s, Schubert Ogden (1977: 6) while distinguishing Religious Studies and Theological Studies claimed that theology like Religious Studies complies 'fully with contemporary standards of reflection'. Privileging faith as the underlying element of religion, he defines religion as a fuller realization of human life. Therefore, Religious Studies for him stood for such a realization of life –

> Because religion exists, as I have argued, to give answer to the question of faith by expressing a comprehensive understanding of our existence in relation to ultimate mystery, the only study of religion as such, and, in that sense, religious study, is some way or other of reflectively understanding religion as an answer to that question of faith (Ogden 1977: 12).

In other words, the constitutive element of Religious Studies is supposed to be the meaning of the question of faith of the religion in question, according to him. The difference between Religious Studies and Theological Studies for him really is that the latter is based on what he calls – ‘Christian witness of faith’ (Ogden 1977: 15). In his view, like the study of religion theology asks the very same question of meaning of faith, but it (theology) goes further by relating that faith to Christian witness. Nonetheless the common denominator in both is faith. Like W.C. Smith, Ogden too distinguished between ‘faith’ and ‘religion’. But faith is the basis for the study of religion as it is the ‘substance of culture’ –

> Accordingly, on my usage, Paul Tillich's famous statement that religion is the substance of culture, while culture is the form of religion has to be reformulated so that it is *faith* which is the substance of culture, while religion is the particular cultural form in which that substance is first of all made explicit (Ogden 1977: 9; e.i.o.).

This Tillichian way of defining the study of religion on the one hand and theology on the other is pervasive in the academy, especially in North America as pointed out by J.Z. Smith (2010: 1139-1170). I believe this issue of the influence of Tillich is crucial for the epistemological issues between the study of religion and theology and for an assessment of Comparative Theology’s ability to deploy theological categories beyond the goal of inter-faith communication.

Continued Influence of Theology on the Study of Religion

This pervasive influence of Tillich is what J.Z. Smith called ‘the remains of Tillich’. J.Z. Smith (2010: 1139) calls Tillich the ‘unacknowledged theoretician of our enterprise’ in North America and everywhere. What Smith intended by this was a double critique –

> [f]irst, that the AAR (American Academy of Religion), and religious studies in North America more generally, themselves largely the beneficiaries of the expansion of programs in the study of religion in public institutions, should ground their enterprise in a Protestant Christian ‘apologetic’ theological project; second, that this influence should be largely unacknowledged (Smith 2010: 1140).

In other words, in Tillichian tradition study of religion must include issues of ‘ultimate concern’. He points out that although the term ‘ultimate concern’ is dropped from most lexical definitions of religion, its cognate term ‘symbol’ continued to dominate the discussions on religion (Smith 2010: 1153). For Tillich, a religious symbol is true ‘only if it participates in the power of the divine to which it points to’ (Smith 2010: 1155). It is here in a significant epistemological sense on the issue of symbol’s status – whether it has a status beyond merely ‘pointing to’ that Smith sees the most important distinction between Religious Studies and Theological Studies –

> From my perspective, this joins an even larger question as to whether knowledge and experience, of any sort, are always mediated or whether they can be immediate—a debate I have described elsewhere as being between re-presentation and presence. *This question divides the academic study of religion in ways that thoroughly cross-cut old, quasi political divisions such as the warfare of theology with the history of religions* (Smith 2010: 1156; e.a.).

Responding to Smith’s concern of Tillich’s influence in the study of religion, Thatamanil (2010: 1171-1181) disagrees. He says,

> [T]he trouble with this Tillichian fixation is twofold. First, Tillich’s influence remains unacknowledged and second, the uses to which Tillich has been put remain, at best, unhelpfully vague and diluted (Thatamanil 2010: 1173).

He explains that Smith limits Tillich to being a theoretician and ignores his theological significance. He also notes that like Smith, Tillich takes history seriously and accepts the limits of phenomenology. In other words, in his estimation what Smith is to Eliade, Tillich is to Rudolph Otto (Thatamanil 2010: 1175). He also suggests that,

> Tillich does not object to a secular and humanistic study of religion and theology and even commends the necessity of secular critiques

> of religion on theological grounds[2]. Secular reflection for Tillich can provide a rational and autonomous critique of religion because religion always runs the danger of becoming heteronomous and coercive. An autonomous secular critique can not only shed anthropological illumination on the nature of religion but can also provide a religiously important critique of religion. Tillich readily acknowledges that theological activity, like all religious activity, is a historical and cultural enterprise and so subject to humanistic interpretation (Thatamanil 2010: 1177).

Thatamanil’s (2010: 1176-1177) main objection to Smith seems to be that ‘theologians remain merely the objects of study while the theoretician of religion is alone privileged to serve as subject’. He further adds –

> By insisting that we must take the other seriously as other and not merely as an object of our theoretical scrutiny, theology can destabilize positions of power and privilege that theoreticians grant themselves (Thatamanil’s 2010: 1178).

I shall return to this statement of Thatamanil shortly.

Thatamanil’s sublime claim for theology might sound fine, except he either seems to miss or ignore the fundamental difference that J.Z. Smith in particular and theoreticians of religion in general make. While theologians require a faith commitment or theological commitment to an ontological position, grounded in historical investigation and being self-reflective of their analytical work, theoreticians of religion or scholars of religion can see the possibility of a fruitful study of religions in their cultural and historical contexts without such ontological commitment. It is not as if there is no religion or religions in historical and cultural contexts, but rather when I speak of imagining religion what I am calling for is a meta-analysis of what scholars pursue in their studies of various religious traditions. In a sense, it is the study of the study of religions. In this sense, in line with J.Z. Smith I take the category 'religion' as a meta-category and not as an empirical one. Not in the sense that it is not deployed empirically, but when it is done so, there is no unanimity on what it refers to other than being the nominative of the adjective religious. But what exactly is religious is determined within a culture by its adherents and not by outsiders, let alone theoreticians. And there is no necessary agreement across cultures on 'religious'. And even within a particular culture there is a great deal of diversity on how religious is determined[3]. While J.Z. Smith sees Tillich being largely responsible for sustained theological influence on the study of religion, he also alludes to religionists themselves who were to some extent responsible for quasi-theological influence from the back door as it were. In this regard, not only Smith, but other theologically oriented scholars too point out Eliade's work as being responsible for perpetuating theological moorings in the study of religion. For instance, Tyler Roberts (2009: 81) argued that,

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[2] I am unsure how secular critique is possible on theological grounds if secular society is not necessarily grounded on theological worldviews! Additionally, how can theological approach be the ideal way to develop a secular critique, if, as Thatamanil claims in the same breath (seemingly with approval), secular critique is autonomous? And why should the secular be subjugated to the religious and on what grounds?

> [M]any think that, after a century of confusion and intermingling between theology and the study of religion, scholars of religion are finally in a position to establish the study of religion on properly

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[3] Smith therefore alludes to two important statements made by two prominent theoreticians in the field. First he refers to Russell McCutcheon's point about religion's relationship to culture when he differentiates between the use of religion *and* culture (in particular with reference to frequent scholarly usage such as 'religion and the environment', 'religion and society' and so on) and 'religion *in* culture' – 'the preposition 'in' signifies that the area of human behavior we have come to know as 'religion' is but one element within human cultural systems' (Smith 2010: 1160; Smith quotes from McCutcheon 2006: 1). Second, Smith refers to Gary Lease's rather blunt statement – 'that, there can be no such thing as a history of religion 'for the simple reason that there is no religion, rather such a history can only trace how and why a culture or epoch allows certain experiences to count as 'religion' while excluding others' (Smith 2010: 1160, Smith quotes from Lease's 1994: 453-479).

> academic, theoretical foundations. In this story Eliade's antireductionist discourse of the 'sacred' becomes the epitome and, it is hoped, the last gasp of religious studies as a quasi-theological discourse. Yet despite their efforts to guide the study of religion away from Eliade, many remain Eliadan insofar as they accept Eliade's 'locative' approach to religion.

Comparative Theological Method and the Study of Religion

With the above background, it brings us to the assessment of comparative theological method. Application of theological method to study religions other than Christianity is not new. As mentioned above, early missionaries in various parts of the world commonly deployed theological concepts and vocabulary to describe in their missionary reports and later on in books written by them on religions that they had encountered in their missionary work. Many of them went on to become professors of religion in various western universities and pursued their teaching and research on other religions along theological lines. The cumulative effect of these trends is the gradual emergence of what is now called 'Comparative Theology'. Comparative theology has been practiced by many scholars in recent years and this must be distinguished from earlier Christian missionary studies studying non-Christian religions from a Christian theological perspective with a view to interpret other religions from a Christian fulfillment message that scholars, such as Raimundo Panikkar (1981) espoused in his earlier years, although it must be noted that Panikkar moved away from this position in his later years[4]. The present enterprise of Comparative Theology[5] is mainly to deploy theological concepts to interpret other religions and seems to go beyond inter-faith understanding and reflects an ambition to achieve what social scientific study could not For example, in describing Hindu traditions, many scholars began to deploy theological terms and concepts especially those traditions that are seemingly theistic – e.g., Vaishnavism and Shaivism. Scholars such as Frank Clooney (1993) have applied theological categories even to traditions that are generally not considered theistic – e.g., Non-dual philosophy (Advaita Vedanta) of Shankara. In this regard, three questions have become generally important—first, are theological categories and concepts compatible with other religious traditions? Second, are traditions that are described as 'theistic' essentially the same as how Christian tradition understands itself? Third, and perhaps more important from a methodological point of view, is whether theological method has the analytical rigor to be applied to any religion in its academic and scientific study. In other words, the issue is to establish on what epistemic level the theological method stands. In the rest of the essay, I shall pay more attention to the third question. That is, in order to answer the question that I have raised in the title of this essay, the epistemological issue is central to the appraisal whether or not Comparative Theology has an advantage over Religious Studies. Therefore, let me quickly dispense with the first two questions.

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[4] In his later years he claimed that he went from Europe to India as a Christian, became a Hindu and returned to Europe as a Buddhist.

[5] Smith's many books (1989; 1993; and 1998) on this subject of theological comparison signify this deep interest theologians have shown in comparative theological work. Smith and Panikkar were some of the early scholars who engaged in comparative theological work. However, both of them saw their work having the object of inter-religious dialogue (cf. Panikkar's 1981; 1998). Smith however went further to engage in what he called World Theology (Smith 1989).

To the extent there are traditions in other religions, such as Hinduism and Buddhism, aspects that are seen to fit the criteria of a deity, a doctrine about that deity based on textual sources (scripture), it might offer some possibility for the application of theological categories in the study of those traditions. For reasons of having these above elements, some traditions are indeed described as theistic. Examples of such studies are *Theology of Ramanuja* by John B. Carman (1974), *God and the Universe in the Vedantic Theology of Ramanuja* by Eric J. Lott (1976) just to mention a few among scores of others. These studies in effect offered, as indicated above, the prospect of Comparative Theology. However, for Comparative Theology to be considered a viable alternative to Religious Studies it must offer epistemological universality. That is to say, any epistemology for it to be considered useful for purposes of making generalizations should be available to believers and non-believers alike. In other words, the epistemological method that Comparative Theology uses cannot only be peculiar to a particular religion. It then means that we need to unpack the boundaries of theological method.

Limits of Theological Method

Responding to both Samuel Preus (1987) and Robert Segal (1989; cf. also Segal 1992), David Ray Griffin (2000:99-124) summarizes their joint position in three simple statements –

> 1) The academic study of religion should not avoid the task of explaining the origin and persistence of religion. 2) Any explanation, to be acceptable in the academy, must be a social scientific explanation. 3) Any explanation, to be considered a social scientific explanation, must be 'naturalistic' in their sense of the term (Griffin (2000:100).

Although he concurs with Preus and Segal that explanations cannot be avoided, he points out that some may dismiss the first claim by distinguishing two kinds of sciences—*Geisteswissenschaften* and *Naturwissenschaften* and thereby arguing that it is not appropriate to explain the religious by the natural as it may result in reductionism. However, he rejects the second and the third claims of Preus-Segal, viz., that explanations of religion must be social scientific and naturalistic. But before we examine Griffin's argument further, let's pause and examine the two kinds of sciences to which he makes reference. It is interesting that this above distinction is based on the nature of the two worlds, viz., the spiritual world and the natural world. But instead of making this distinction on the lines of epistemology,[6] it is distinguished on the basis of the nature of their existence and a further ritual distinction to which Griffin (2000:100) refers as 'sacrilegious'. Aside from the fact that something is 'sacrilegious' matters to the practitioners of a religion rather than to everyone neutrally, what is important to recognize here is that the two worlds are epistemologically distinct. While the spiritual world is known only to those who share in that worldview, the natural world is accessible to both those who affirm such a spiritual world as well as those who live in the natural world. In other words, the natural world is epistemologically shared by all while the spiritual world is only known by the select few and it is therefore problematic to build a rationale to compare things and explain on the basis of the limited access to a certain type of data. There is no sharable cognitive relationship between the two worlds.

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[6] It might be useful to note that the non-dualist philosopher Shankara makes the distinction on the basis of consciousness and hence, an epistemological one, that is, between transcendental world (Paramarthika) and the empirical world (Vyavaharika).

Let us consider the epistemic aspects that Griffin identifies in relation to the position held by Preus and by implication Segal. In view of my main attention to epistemic issues, I shall limit my reference to Griffin to the epistemic issues alone. 1. Griffin agrees with Preus [Segal] that theology should not attempt to explain things that belong to the natural world. He admits ‘Preus is surely right to say that the academic study of religion must be naturalistic in this sense, a contention that is no longer a matter for serious debate’ (Griffin 2000: 105). 2. ‘we should work towards a uniform set of explanatory categories for all features of the world’ (Griffin 2000: 105). However, he seeks the status of partial autonomy for religion instead of complete autonomy as some theologians would prefer (Griffin 2000: 105). That is, he wants to provide some space for ‘genuine religious experience’ in explaining religion (Griffin 2000:103). 3. He agrees with Preus that ‘any academic theory of religion should be experientially grounded’ but he qualifies it by seeking to find place for ‘theological theories’ (Griffin 2000: 107). 4. It is precisely because Griffin wants to give salience to religious experience, he disagrees with Preus’ form of naturalism which he refers to as ‘sensate empiricism’ (Griffin 2000: 107). He points out that while David Hume subscribed to the idea of ‘sensate empiricism’, William James used the idea of ‘non-sensate empiricism’. Preus’ rejection of religious experience in Griffin’s view does not take into account ‘non-sensate empiricism’ of William James (Griffin 2000: 108). However, it must be pointed out that Griffin does not take into account the difficulty involved in using ‘non-sensate empiricism’ as the basis to include religious experience in explaining religion. While the religious experience that is available through such extra sensory perception might be genuine and one does not need to doubt the veracity of the person who claims such religious experience, the difficulty is that it is known only to that person. Even those who accept his or her religious experience and act accordingly, do so only because they share in the worldview of that person and feel compelled to admit his or her religious experience as valid and not because they have any direct knowledge of it. And this is precisely the problem that one encounters in deploying theological method for comparative study. Our ability to compare data is central to the task of explaining religion. But we cannot compare data that is only available through someone's religious experience and is unavailable to public knowledge. Griffin sees his difference with explanations based on social scientific and naturalistic accounts as philosophical. In other words, which form of naturalism (the one based on sensate empiricism or the one based on non-sensate empiricism) is closer to the truth is a philosophical matter (Griffin 2000 113. He therefore argues –

> The only valid reason for advocating naturalism$_{sam}$ for the academic study of religion, in other words, would be the philosophical argument that this form of naturalism is superior to all other forms, providing a more adequate framework for interpreting all the evidence of human experience, including scientific experience. Otherwise, there would be no reason for an *a priori* rejection of theistic interpretations of religion, at least if they embody naturalism in the minimal sense (Griffin 2000 114).

As Griffin points out, for Segal however it is a social issue. Here, of course, both Griffin and Segal are concerned with the issue of origin of religion. In the end Griffin in his essay tries to demonstrate that social scientists are not antithetical to religion and that the issue is not between religionists and social scientists, but rather the issue is 'between religious and antireligious *philosophies*' (Griffin 2000: 116; e.i.o). He believes that the materialistic worldview continues to be dominant in scientific circles. He, therefore, argues,

> [T]he only valid reason for advocating naturalism$_{sam}$ for the academic study of religion, in other words, would be the philosophical argument that this form of naturalism is superior to all other forms, providing a more adequate framework for interpreting all the evidence of human experience, including scientific experience.

> Otherwise, there would be no reason for an *a priori* rejection of theistic interpretations of religion, at least if they embody naturalism in the minimal sense (Griffin 2000: 114).

He further believes that the motivation for secular causes of religious belief is ‘a prior philosophical conviction as to the falsity of religion’ (Griffin 2000: 116). He takes his point further by arguing that there is no empirical evidence to suggest that ‘religious beliefs are always shaped by psychosocial factors’ (Griffin 2000: 116). In other words, he seeks to reject the social scientific explanations on the basis of a philosophical disagreement, but at the same time demands sociological evidence for the social scientific view that religious beliefs are shaped by psychosocial factors. His argument relies on the fact that ‘sensate empiricism leaves us with no explanation of our apparent knowledge of causation and of the external world’ (Griffin 2000: 120). He also relies on the assumption that non-sensory perception such as intuition can result in genuine knowledge. What he does not, however, concede is that such knowledge could not be commonly shared outside the believing community. It is not so much that religious explanations cannot be proffered for religious experiences. Rather the fact that such explanations are limited by privacy of such religious experiences makes the access to such knowledge limited through faith, and no direct or perceptual apprehension is possible. This is what presents the difficulty in deploying the method of theology for comparative purposes in the study of religion. Even if on philosophical grounds one gives credence to the possibility of religious explanations through religious experience, in order for such method to be given a place in the study of religion, it must be available commonly to other scholars. It is highly problematic to require a non-believing scholar to accept an insider’s religious experience as the basis for comparing the data of a religion. Besides, religious experience is not uniform in any religion and therefore cannot have universal salience in comparative study.

While Griffin has been critical of social scientific study of religion on the basis that the practitioners of such studies cannot yet rule out non-sensory perception that is the basis of religious experience, Griffiths criticizes religionists (in particular Jonathan Z. Smith 2004; and Bruce Lincoln 1996: 225-227) for being normative about their methods much like the rule books, and not declare their overall commitments, whereas theologians are able to declare their commitment to a particular theological tradetion (Griffiths 2006: 74). It is not true that scholars of religion [or religionists as they are often referred to] cannot declare their overall commitments. For instance, Mark Wood understood Religious Studies as 'critical organic intelectual practice'. He elaborates this by suggesting that Religious Studies scholars need to mobilize critical theories in the service of human development and in the process need to question the 'anti-materialist' tendencies in religious traditions. He suggests that '[C]ritical theories enable students to develop a more fully human understanding of the multifaceted nature of religious ideas, institutions, and practices' (Wood 2001: 158). Russell McCutcheon (1997: 443-468) also affirmed the need for Religious Studies scholars to play active role in society as 'public intellectuals'. So, it is unfair to criticize Religious Studies scholars as having no commitment in society.

In an effort to rescue Theological Studies and Religious Studies from the impasse as it were, Gavin Hyman (2004 195-219) argued in favor of a postmodernist resolution. He argues,

> that just as certain forms of theology have adapted themselves to the new postmodern condition and have revitalized themselves as a result, so too religious studies may undergo a parallel process of transformation …. If religious studies were to transform itself in this way (and there are signs that it is already beginning to do so), then it would find itself fully cognizant of the postmodern context in which it now finds itself. Furthermore, the reading of postmodernism as an opportunity for the return of theology and death of religious studies would be replaced by an alternative reading in which postmodernism provides an opportunity for the revitalization of *both* theology *and* religious studies.

However, such postmodernist resolutions might simply limit the study of religion to the locative approach that Tyler Roberts (2009: 84) decried as being unhelpful. Thus, there seems to be no unanimity among theologians in their response to Religious Studies. Besides, Gavin Hyman's claim that theologians have taken advantage of postmodernist trend by emphasizing the particular is misleading as most Religious Studies scholars who are also specialists of particular religions have always given priority to the particular location of religion.[7] The difference, however, is that Religious Studies scholars are willing to place that particular in broader relation to the universal discourse on the particular religion in question as well as the larger discourse on religion in general. For instance, James B. Apple, in dealing with the narrative of the Buddha in Bodh Gaya follows a three step method to do precisely that. In his essay on 'Redescribing Mandalas: A Test Case in Bodh Gaya, India' Apple (2008: 41) explains his method as 'description, comparison, redescription, and rectification'. He explains it as follows – 'I will focus upon an initial structuring and presentation in a socio-historically accurate manner of the ethnographical and empirical data that I currently have on this circular stone object. I will follow with an identification and placement of this object in a category, comparing this data with previous information in the category. Then, I will present a redescription and rectification of the category in light of the envisioned evidence' (Apple 2008: 41). As such, for scholars of religion location matters, but at the same time the broader relation to the overall general framework in its universal relationship matters just as importantly.

Further Difficulties that Theology Faces

Theologians often make a distinction between 'secular' theories of religion and 'religious' theories of religion. For instance, Thatamanil speaks of 'normatively committed theory of religion' in his response to J.Z. Smith. It is one thing to critique that Religious Studies scholars are just as normatively situated as the Theological Studies scholars. But to speak of 'normatively committed theory of religion' defies any unity of the theory that is most likely proffered in this sense. If we tweek further Thatamanil's notion, it means in his own words –

> Just as Christian theologians offer readings of the human and of the religious from explicitly Christian theological commitments, we can just as readily envision Buddhist or Hindu theories of religion (Thatamanil 2010: 11780.

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[7] In recent times, religion scholars have examined the theoretical implications of focusing on the location of religion (cf. Knott 2005).

This makes theory subjective to each religious tradition and makes it most likely inappropriate or irrelevant for other religious theoreticians, for each of those is based on particular norms of those religions. This means there can be no general theory of religion. It is one thing to be sensitive to religious norms, but it is another to speak of theory of religion that regardless of religious commitments all scholars can share on observable data, methods of analysis and explanation and theoretical postulations.

Now, theologians have in recent times claimed that theology takes the other traditions more seriously than theoreticians of religion[8]. Note the claim of Thatamanil (2010: 1178) in this regard –

> Theology can make possible what theory of religion cannot. By insisting that we must take the other seriously as other and not merely as an object of our theoretical scrutiny, theology can destabilize positions of power and privilege that theoreticians grant themselves.

But if we read his statement made just before those lines –

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[8] Here I must also clarify the confusion that is often created. There is a general tendency to lump scholars who study non-Christian religions as religionists or scholars of religion, and those who study Christianity as theologians, although a fair number of them do Religious Studies. In my view, the scholar of religion is not the same as theoretician of religion. There are scholars of religion who do not engage in theoretical reflections with a view to develop a theory of religion. Likewise, study of religion must be distinguished for its theoretical work from the study of world religions in general. Study of any of the world’s religions does not automatically constitute a theoretical study. In order for theoretical study to be undertaken Max Muller’s dictum of ‘he who known one knows none’ still counts. I believe this distinction is important in order for us to separate the nature of data among different users. Thatamanil, I submit, correctly contrasts theologians and theoreticians of religion without conflating them with scholars of religion.

> For the theologian, and most especially for comparative theologians, persons from other traditions are not of interest solely because they offer us data for the construction of a given theory of religion, but because what they have to say about the nature of the real might be true or at least worthy of contestation as an [sic] genuine alternative to one's own position (Thatamanil 2010: 1178).

This then betrays the theological agenda. That is to say, the 'theological agnosticism', if I may call it, that Thatamanil alludes to here and which could be the position of a comparative theologian in dealing with other religious traditions, is really to examining the truth claims of those traditions to figure out whether it really offers an alternative to his own position, and I take this to mean an alternative religious position to the one that he/she currently possesses. In this sense, it reduces the theological method to an engagement of religious debate. One would have, in the first place, thought that Christian theology had moved far beyond such engagement in relation to other religions. The second problematical issue in such a statement is that 'real' is cast in some essentialist mode as if it is out there to be grasped and all that one needs to do is to see who is got the closest picture of it! This problem of essentialism in phenomenology has been addressed by numerous scholars in the study of religion before (e.g. McCutcheon 1997).

Underneath this quest for the 'real' or the 'ultimate concern' that theologians are seemingly concerned about, are the following issues, as expressed by Thatamanil (2010: 1179) – 'The work of imagining religion has to date remained a narrowly western project that has been globalized'; 'the category has been diffused by colonialism'; 'an inevitable part of the larger project of creating the *secular*'. By circumscribing the general theory of religion in this way, theologians such as Thatamanil continuously reject the possibility that knowledge is universal, and it can only be universal if it can be generalized. If the criticism of Thatamanil on behalf of theology against Religious Studies is valid, then it should equally apply to all disciplines of knowledge including natural sciences.

The study of religion stands apart from both theology and phenomenology in the above sense. Specifically, Comparative Theology and Comparative Religion or scientific study of religion may be criticized for using terms and concepts that may be foreign to religions that they either theologize (in the case of Comparative Theology) or theorize as in the case of the study of religion. The difference I see in theology deploying theological terms of Abrahamic family to read other religions is two fold—first, the theistic ideas that may be present in other religions are not necessarily similar, a condition that is necessary for a very basic comparison; second, as often claimed by comparative theologians that their purpose in looking through their comparative theological lens is really to point to their Christian theological colleagues the theological work done by 'theologians' in other religions, e.g., Ramanuja in the Srivaishnava tradition. But this is simply what I would refer to as self-reflection of what a Christian theologian is engaging in regarding the other as if the other is doing what Christian theologian is doing! The other might not be even thinking in the terms that a Christian theologian might be thinking.[9] Even though such theological comparisons have highlighted important differences between Christian theology and other 'theologies', to capture them under the rubric of theology might not serve well for those traditions for the simple reason that the object or purpose of such comparison is never clear. If the purpose[10] is to compare all theologies and arrive at a unified understanding of God (as W.C. Smith ambitiously outlined in his 1989 book), then who owns such understanding in the end? If there is no community owning that theology, then does it mean Comparative Theology is without a believing community? For it is hard to imagine a theology without a community sharing it. Or, is it for scholarly purposes? If so, then what is traded as Comparative Theology is really a backdoor approach to studying religion, or is it not! The only problem is it now lacks the credibility of both the theoretical scholar of religion as well as an absence of a community which owns it.

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[9] It is interesting to point out here the fascinating narrative that Thatamanil offers about his long engagement with his Advaita Swami in Madras (Chennai). After all that engagement, there seems no evidence of the Advaita Swami thinking along theological lines but rather Thatamanil progressed from being a strong committed Christian to acquiring a 'double religious identity' (Thatamanil 2000: 799). This makes it seem as if comparative theology is a peculiar Christian theologian's preoccupation!

[10] Clooney (1995) speaks of constructing a Comparative Theology based on multiple traditions or based on more than one foundation. He says it is a theology deeply changed by details of multiple traditions. But he does not clarify exactly what that theology is, and what its content is and if it is grounded in faith, who then owns it?! Likewise, Thatamanil too makes the point that comparative theologians 'aim to engage and be engaged by those theological claims so that they can undertake constructive reflection on ultimate realities after having taken seriously the insights of other traditions'. But he does not clarify the nature of that theology and who may subscribe to it, if it is rooted in 'more than one tradition', as he puts it (Thatamanil 2000: 794).

In any case, such an enterprise is too close to popular religious tendency to construct one's religious or spirituality from a garden variety of religions. Comparative Theology cannot, in this sense, avoid being trapped in proffering in the end some kind of universal religion of some sort (as much as even theologians with an interest in dialogue rejected such an outcome)! Or, as Thatamanil (2000: 799) looks at his engagement with an Advaita teacher, it could result in acquiring a 'double religious identity'. If it is done, on the other hand, for academic reasons, what theoretical value does it have other than most certainly a true appreciation of another tradition at best? This then moves such comparative theological engagements into nothing more than inter-religious dialogue. Such a task of theological comparison is certainly a noble one in creating harmony among religious groups. In my view, however, it does not count as theoretically rigorous task of producing theoretical knowledge on religion. If Comparative Theology wants to engage in comparative task, it needs to, in the first place, face the difficult choice of making its epistemology grounded in verifiable terms and not in faith claims. For as long as theological studies in general and Comparative Theology in particular are rooted in the 'ultimate concern' it cannot speak to people of no faith. For I believe even an agnostic, methodological or otherwise, should be able to study religion in the same way and with the same critical tools that are available to any scholar of religion.[11] In this sense, theological enterprise is seemingly exclusionary in its vision by placing religious as its qualification. It is in this sense, study of religion stands differently from the comparative theological engagement. In this regard, comparative theology may well have its reasons and its purposes for Christian Theology. It is positioned though in such a way that it cannot be enforced onto other religions – i.e. that they should be studied in similar ways[12].

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[11] For the non-religious study of Hinduism, cf. Kumar (2008).

An additional difficulty that theologians seem to have is their unwillingness to distinguish the category 'religion' when deployed in empirical sense in a loose way and in an analytical sense in which scholars of religion deploy. The difference is that in its empirical usage, it is vague and entirely determined subjectively by adherents in a culture. What may be religious in one culture may not be so in another, as alluded to earlier. However, it is only in its scholarly deployment it can acquire greater analytical clarity and precision. Scholarly analysis cannot afford to have any arbitrariness in its usage, meaning and intention. This can only be achieved if we follow the method explained by for instance, Apple (2008) as mentioned above. It is not as if theological study is not historical, but what distinguishes their historical consciousness is their commitment in the end to an ultimate concern. The historical consciousness of the historian of religions on the other hand is not limited by such concern, nor is it averse to it. In a sense[13], this may be referred to as, in Ninian Smart's terms, a methodological agnosticism. Both theologians and scholars of religion of necessity operate within history, albeit they may have different notions of what it entails.

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[12] I do not discount the importance of Christian theology in engaging in 'comparative theological' engagement for their, a) self-understanding and self-realization; b) to positively engage with other religions for establishing inter-religious communication, especially since Christian theology was extraordinarily harsh in their treatment of other religions in the past. And I do recognize the positive progress that Christian theologians have made in moving away from Christo-centric theological affirmations to a more genuine dialogue with other religious communities.

[13] Smart understood 'methodological agnosticism' as being open to the possibility that transcendence exists, albeit that he established Religious Studies in distinction from Theological Studies based on agnosticism rather than on faith. See, Ninian Smart. *The Phenomenon of Religion*. (London: Macmillan 1973). Here I do not necessarily disagree with Hyman's (2004: 200) point when he says, 'I need not resort to any supposed 'neutral' or 'agnostic' position to do so. I can be openly situated within my own worldview or tradition and be critical of Smart's position on the basis of that worldview without compromising the accuracy and empathy with which I convey Smart's thought'.

Concluding Remarks

From the above arguments that I have offered, I believe that Comparative Theology can only serve an internal theological purpose but not for the purpose of a general theory of religion. Unless generalizations are deemed unnecessary entirely, the academic study of religion cannot avoid the search for such theoretical framework. We may not have arrived at the satisfactory general theory of religion on all accounts, but I believe that we have arrived at the broader framework for it, in that it (such a framework) seeks a) data that can be shared by both insiders and outsiders; b) method of analysis is repeatable; c) interpretation and explanations do not depend on insider's intuition, but rather are not only available to outsiders but equally open to subsequent redescription and rectification as Apple (2008) suggested. In any scientific study, theory is always a work in progress, and in this regard Comparative Theology with its tendency to emphasize insider's perspective more than the non-believer's views can close the doors on a common quest for generalizations that both religious and non-religious, theists and atheists or agnostics alike can share. I am yet to hear or read a satisfactory argument as to why atheists and non-religious people cannot theorize religion.

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The Historical-Typological Phenomenology of Religion: Problems and Promises

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Abstract

The phenomenology of religion has been criticized for failure of identity and critical nerve. Scholars who use this approach are accused of taking a role that amounts to not more than a reporter, repeating the insiders' unsubstantiated claims while invoking methodological agnosticism as justification for doing so. This paper explores the problems and possibilities of balancing critic and caretakership by critically examining the aims and methods of a particular nuance of phenomenology of religion called historical-typological phenomenology of religion. The paper's finding is that by taking a critical stance on the aims and methods of the phenomenology of religion, religious studies scholars can be able to insist on the sui generis nature of religion and at the same time be able to move from caretakership to critics. This has great significance on the issue of the role of the scholar of religion as a public intellectual. The paper begins by raising the definitional problem concerning the phenomenology of religion. This is followed by isolating historical-typological phenomenology of religion and critically examines its aims and methods.

Keywords: phenomenology, empathetic understanding, epoché, evocative description, elucidative comparison

Introduction

There seems to be no conclusive debate about the question of what precisely is the phenomenology of religion and hence a phenomenological approach to the study of religion/religious phenomena. This seems to be frustrating for undergraduate teachers and students. The aim of this paper is not to answer this important perennial question. To do this would require a separate thesis. It intends to settle for a particular view of phenomenology of religion on which we can base introductory studies of religions. In order to settle for a particular phenomenology of religion I rely on the suggestion that Summer B. Twiss and Walter H. Conser give. Conser and Twiss propose that we can compare phenomenology of religion to a musical composition that contains three but related voices, namely essential, historical- typological and the existential hermeneutic phenomenology. Their view about this is that,

> The first voice begins with the publication of Rudolf Otto's The Idea of the Holy, which establishes the direction and overall tone of the composition. Subsequently, in the work of Gerardus van der Leeuw and others, the second voice appears, embellishing upon the first voice yet clearly projecting its own distinctive sound. Finally, the third voice, that of the existential phenomenology of religion, enters and new elements as well as established themes are audible (Twiss & Conser 1992: 1 -2).

The advantage of this model is that several different strands within the phenomenology of religion can interact and that it is sensitive to the different nuances of tone, which is audible in it (Arthur 1995:450). In the light of the three voices that Twiss and Conser suggest it is in the context of the historical-typological phenomenology of religion that I craft a particular understanding of the phenomenology of religion. I settle for this context because it emphasizes the main thread, which is a concern with, at least as the first necessary step, what religious phenomena mean from the viewpoints of the adherents.

Historical-Typological Phenomenology of Religion

Before I deal with this approach at length by considering its aims and methods I begin by taking a position regarding the first and the third voices in relation to the second voice that I argue for in this paper. As I have already indicated above Twiss and Conser in a bid to show the complexity of the history of the phenomenology of religion compare the phenomenology of religion to a musical composition with three separate but related voices. The first voice is the essential. It is basically concerned with the essence or true nature of the religious consciousness of the believing soul –the defining traits of his or her apprehensions, emotional states, and motivation for religious activities. An example of a scholar who represents this voice is Rudolf Otto (Twiss & Conser 1992: 7). The main aim that essentialist phenomenologists of religion share is aptly captured in the following words:

> The aim shared by all essentialist phenomenologists of religion is to describe and analyze those experiences and concepts uniquely characteristic of religious consciousness. That is, scholars working within this voice want to clarify for themselves as well as others those apprehensions, emotions, motivations, and activities distinctive to the believing soul who claims to live his or her life in full recognition of a transcendent or sacred dimension of human experience (Twiss & Conser 1992: 8).

Since the three voices interact this main aim of the essential voice acts as basis for the historical-typological phenomenology that I opt for. In doing this I am not therefore discarding the contribution of the essential phenomenology of religion. My only problem with the essential phenomenology of religion is its lack of emphasis on '… an historically contextualized understanding of a particular tradition's ethos and worldview' (Twiss & Conser 1992: 25). This is more so when we understand phenomenology in the following way:

> Another way of saying that phenomenology is driving at the heart of things, is to remind ourselves of its insistence to look at essences of things. For example probing the phenomenon of prayer, the phenomenologist is looking for the essential character of prayer, that without which prayer would no longer be prayer (Kruger 1982: 19).

This understanding implies looking for the ultimate nature of religious phenomena like metaphysicians. The idea of essence that we assume is related to seeking meaning of religious phenomena in terms of the meaning of religious phenomena for the believer. One of the aims of the study of religions is to, where possible; historically contextualize them.

The third voice is the existential-hermeneutical phenomenology of religion. In order to shed light on the concern of this approach I follow Twiss and Conser's explanation of the key terms 'existential' and hermeneutics. They qualify these terms in the following way:

> Existential refers to this voice's preoccupation with structures and problems of human existence in the world, including such broad themes as freedom, intersubjectivity, temporality, corporeality, finitude, and death as well as particular human experiences such as anxiety, hope, despair, guilt, caring. Hermeneutical refers to this voice's perception that all human experience is mediated by language (or more broadly symbolic systems) (Twiss & Conser 1992: 44 - 45).

The historical typological phenomenology will account for existential-phenomenology insights such as temporality, intersubjectivity and symbolic data as Twiss and Conser rightly point out when they write:

> By contrast, the method of historical-typological phenomenology of religion-despite its apparent adherence to the ideal of a detached, objective, and neutral phenomenological observer-does in fact take account of all three existential insights through those aspects of its method concerned with, for example, diachronic understanding, reference to data made available by other disciplines, and its focus on traditions and communities of ethos and worldview. Diachronic understanding picks up temporality; available data include linguistic and symbolic data; and traditions and communities fix intersubjectivity (Twiss & Conser 1992:52).

So once again even though I emphasize the historical-typological phenomenology of religion I acknowledge that there is a close relationship between this approach and the existential phenomenology of religion. This paper seeks to emphasize historical-typological phenomenology's ability to deal with religious phenomena in relation to a particular tradition’s ethos and worldview.

The Aims and Methods of the Historical-Typological Phenomenology of Religion

The first aim of this approach is

> … an emphasis on understanding in a qualitative manner the particular forms of life within a religious tradition and thereby recover a picture and a sense of what these elements (e.g. doctrinal, beliefs, ritual practices, codes of conduct) mean from the viewpoint of the adherents of particular religious traditions (Twiss & Conser 1992:24).

The second aim of this approach is ‘… an historically contextualized understanding of a particular tradition’s ethos and worldview’ (Twiss & Conser 1992:25). This approach also aims, in the context of the latter aim, to recover a dynamic picture of how an ethos and worldview develops over time, not simply how these appear at a given time. It therefore emphasizes a diachronic qualitative understanding focusing on the tradition’s own internal development. It however objects to the evolutionary theories that posit that some religions not only precede others temporarily but also ‘valuationally so that some traditions are conceived as being ‘more primitive’ and less developed than other ‘more advanced’ and ‘higher’ traditions’ (Twiss & Conser 1992: 25. This paper objects to this evolutionary view of religions, particularly when we conceive it to be based on ‘scant historical evidence’ (Twiss & Conser 1992: 25) and also render it a ‘type of reductive analysis’ (Twiss & Conser 1992: 25. Elzey captures the assumption of this aim, quoting Mircea Eliade, when he writes:

> In sum a religious phenomenon cannot be understood outside its ‘history’, that is outside its cultural and socioeconomic contexts. There is no such thing as a ‘pure’ religious datum, outside of history…. But admitting the historicity of religious experiences does

> not imply that they are reducible to non-religious forms of behavior. Stating that a religious datum is always a historical datum does not mean that it is reducible to a non-religious history, for example, to an economic, social or political (Elzey 1994: 87).

This paper also emphasizes this approach's third aim of 'carefully controlled comparative inquiry' (Elzey 1994: 26). This is a key aim since at the heart of religious studies is a systematic comparison of religions. This comparative analysis also shuns the kind of classification in evolutionary views of religion. I agree with Kristensen who argues that

> phenomenology makes use of comparison only in order to gain a deeper insight into the self-subsistent … meaning of each of the historical data … to understand the conception of believers themselves, who always ascribe an absolute value to their faith (Elzey 1994: 26).

The central view is that by comparing traditions we can gain a better understanding of any one religion. This has the advantage of seeing and appreciating what may be distinctive to the religion under scrutiny (Elzey 1994: 26).

The fourth aim involves an interest in types of religious phenomena that religions share. The paper once again follows Kristensen's view that 'phenomenology has set itself the task of grouping phenomena' (Elzey 1994: 27).

Overall in terms of the aims of the historical-typological phenomenology this paper therefore argues for qualitative understanding, historical sensitivity, comparison and typology. Although we have treated these aims separately for the purpose of analysis they are in fact integrally connected.

The Method

We can correlate the four aims we have considered with distinctive methodological orientations of historical-typological phenomenology (Elzey 1994: 30). The way Twiss and Conser illustrate the correlation is succinct.

They clearly show the type of method that particular aims imply. Their analysis is therefore worth quoting at length. They write,

> That is the four aims can be correlated with the distinctive steps or facets of the of this enterprise's phenomenological procedure. The aim of qualitative understanding of the forms of life of a religious tradition from that tradition's standpoint suggests immediately the propriety of **empathetic understanding** (imaginative experiencing and introspection), **epoché** (with respect to questions of truth, value and theoretic-explanatory commitments), and **evocative description** (conveying a sense of how particular holistic worldviews experience and see life in the world). The aim of **historical sensitivity and contextualization** suggests the propriety of temporally structuring this qualitative understanding and evocative description so as to chat the chronological development of a particular tradition's ethos and worldview. The comparative aim, in turn, suggests the step of **controlled elucidative comparison** of a particular holistic worldview with other worlds of religious meaning, and the first aspect of the typological aim suggests that this controlled comparison relies on the use of constantly refined typological categories (ideal types) of religious phenomena. Finally, the second aspect of the typological aim suggests the step of **elucidative interrogation**[1] of the standpoints of particular holistic traditions so that we may identify and clarify distinctly religious objectives and intentions that may constitute 'universally' or 'recurrent' features of all religious traditions (Elzey 1994: 30).

Out of this analysis we can isolate six methodological steps/attitudes of the historical-typological phenomenology. These are epoché, empathetic understanding, evocative description, diachronic understanding, controlled elucidative comparison, and elucidative interrogation. I examine these one by one.

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[1] The bolds in this citation are that of the author of this study.

Empathetic Understanding

This step involves ‘both imaginative re-experiencing and systematic introspection of the contents that are imaginatively experienced’ (Twiss & Conser 1992:31). This is important to religious studies’ concern to understand the particular ethos and worldview of the religions under study. Phenomenology focuses on the empathetic understanding on data related to the religions made available by other historical and social scientific inquiry. The empathetic inquiry into religious data is controlled by, and shaped by, and in constant conversation with the work of other disciplines. Twiss and Conser (1992:31 - 32) give a penetrating description of empathetic understanding. They write:

> Phenomenology so conceived provides a means of effectively ‘passing over’ into the religious situation which one wants to investigate and ‘coming back’ with a clearer understanding of it. It is a means of passing over to someone else’s religious world so that we may try to see how things appear when viewed through that perspective… Phenomenology viewed as such seeks to offer to its sufficiently competent practitioners as a non-secondhand and insight as it is possible to achieve into what animates different vitalities and movements of meaning within any particular religious outlook. Its basic motivating idea is quite straightforward; to try to apprehend someone else’s religions as it appears to them, rather than focusing attention on how their religion appears to us from a non-phenomenological viewpoint.

The method of empathy brings us into contact with the antireductionist thrust of the phenomenology of religion. For ‘In any case, it is accepted on all hands that an antireductionist thrust characterizes the phenomenology of religion, a thrust it shares with philosophical phenomenology’ (Sharma (1994:132). This points to the position that phenomenologists of religion approach religious data in a specific antireductionist manner (Sharma 1994: 132). In relation to the phenomenology of religion, ‘reductionism refers to a mode of explanation or interpretation in the study of religion which deviates from the believer’s understanding of it’ (Sharma 1994: 133). W.B. Kristensen captures the importance of this step:

> Let us never forget that there exists no other reality than the faith of the believer. If we really want to understand religion, we must refer exclusively to the believer's testimony. What we believe from our point of view, about the nature or value of other religions, is a reliable testimony to our own faith, or to our own understanding of religious faith; but if our opinion about another religion differs from the opinion and evaluations of the believers, then we are no longer talking about their religion. We have turned aside from historical reality, and are concerned only with ourselves (Sharma 1994: 133-134).

Rudolf Otto also shares this view. He emphasizes 'the numinous quality of religious experience per se' (Sharma 1994: 134). He is against the intellectualistic and rationalistic bias in the interpretation of religion and the reduction of religious phenomena to 'the interpretative schema of linguistic analysis, anthropology, sociology, psychology, and various historical approaches' (Sharma 1994: 134). M. Eliade is succinct on this issue. He writes:

> A religious phenomenon will only be recognized as such if it is grasped at its own level, that is to say, if it is studied as something religious. To try to grasp the essence of such a phenomenon by means of physiology, psychology, sociology, economics, linguistics, art or any other study is false (Eliade 1963: xiii).

The concerns that these citations raise for phenomenologists of religion is the danger of trying to reduce and trivialize, religious phenomena to purely sociological, psychological, economic or environmental terms. This for a phenomenologist is a fundamental mistake. The argument is that

> Such reductions ignore the complexity of the human experience, impose social values on transcendental issues, and ignore the unique intentionality of the religious participant (Moreau 2000: 4).

I take a critical stance concerning empathy. I insist on empathy as a central method in the phenomenology of religion. Empathy has value in ensuring that the scholarly descriptions of the insiders' behavior and claims are accurate. I do not however seek to relinquish critical evaluation of religious data. So the goal is not simply to report and repeat what informants tell us about their religions. We try to avoid a situation where the researcher becomes simply a passive documenter. So the basic assumption here is that

> although research on human institutions and beliefs begins with descriptive information, the overall goal is to develop a generalized theory of one's own making and testing that can be used to elucidate all sorts of human behavior (McCutcheon 1999: 18-19).

So overall I do not construe empathy as 'a magical intuition of the actor's stream of consciousness …' (Segal 1989: 22).

Epoché

The word epoché is 'derived from the Greek *epecho,* I hold back. In effect it means 'stoppage', suspension of judgment, the exclusion from one's mind of every possible presupposition' (Sharpe 1986: 224). Sharma observes a further dimension. He links epoché to empathy. He argues that epoché does not only involve suspension of one's belief but 'involves an active participation in the experience which is being encountered, unencumbered by preexisting or superimposed ideas, beliefs, presuppositions or suspicions' (Sharma 2001: 232). G. van der Leeuw succinctly explains epoché when he says:

> The term epoché is a technical expression employed in current phenomenology by Husserl and other philosophers. It implies that no judgment is expressed concerning the objective world, which is thus placed between brackets, as it were. All phenomena therefore are considered solely as they are presented to the mind, without any further aspects such as their real existence, or their value being taken into account; the observer restricts himself to pure description systematically pursued, himself adopting an attitude of complete

> intellectual suspense, or of abstention from all judgment regarding these controversial topics (Van der Leeuw 1963: 646).

I appreciates the value of epoché but with qualification. The reason for qualifying epoché is that it is beset by limitations. One of the most ardent critics of epoché is Segal. He writes:

> Phenomenologists invariably neglect to explain how to practice it. To prescribe the suspension of bias is one thing. To achieve it is another. Until the actual means of riding oneself of all biases gets explained, the epoché must remain only a forlorn ideal (Segal 1989: 19).

The import of this criticism is that a state of freedom from presupposition is not attainable. Desiring epoché itself may be construed as a judgment. It therefore means that a value free approach is simply unattainable (Sharpe 1978: 84). In the light of such criticisms the position about epoché that I take is consistent with M.F.C. Bourdillon's views. He argues, 'the exercise of epoché can be accepted only as an instruction to listen' (Bourdillon (1993:230).

So the position of this paper is that epoché aims to lay bare the religious phenomena so as to have first an, as far as possible, 'objective' description and second to allow well-informed and justified interpretation (Panikkar 1999: 79). In this way we are able to listen to believers and approach them with minimum presuppositions (Panikkar 1999: 79). This means that epoché has its place in the initial clarification of the religious phenomena, but not in the actual interpretation/explanation. J.S. Kruger (1982: 18) qualifies the role of epoché that I assume well when he says:

> … phenomenology would of course not demand that the researcher should simply black out his own input in perceiving a phenomenon. This would be impossible. To suspend our previous assumptions is not the same as to deny them. Rather we suspend them if we become radically conscious of them and we consciously declare these points of departure …. A student of religion will inevitably bring along with him a set of background assumptions: the more he is conscious

> of these, the more he will be able to keep his own preferences from distorting his observation of something.

The implication of this position is that the concept of epoché does not necessarily mean to recognize and dismiss. It means bracketing whatever may perchance give rise to inappropriate value judgments.

Taking such a position about epoché raises the question whether the phenomenology of religion that I argue for involves a rehabilitation of prejudice. G. Flood would argue that we are moving beyond phenomenology. I argue that we are involved in what we may call 'engaged phenomenology'/reflexive phenomenology. This paper therefore, places emphasis on reflexivity. It raises doubts concerning the possibility of a totally disinterested, objective and detached scholarship. The aim is to undertake engaged phenomenology of religion-a phenomenology that is aware of its presuppositions and agenda and pursues them with passion. The phenomenologist therefore makes judgements concerning what we might term good or bad religious practices.

We appeal to Gadamer's theory of understanding as historical and linguistic. This theory basically criticizes the Enlightenment thought's ideal of the objective interpreter who remains detached from all cultural influences that threaten to prejudice one's understanding. For Gadamer there is no such thing as unprejudiced understanding. Understanding always involves pre-understanding. We are always already historically situated, shaped by our culture and language, and that situatedness shapes our understandings of everything. We bring our own horizon, our own effective history, as a prejudice to any moment of understanding (Kruger 1982: 18).

This reflexive phenomenology is in direct conflict with some classical phenomenology of religion insofar as it suggests that there is no view from nowhere. This view also assumes that a religious community is always in some sense an interpretive community, and that its interpretations are always unique fusions of horizons. Received traditions are always being transformed, and religion is always a dynamic interpretation. So I emphasize with Gadamer that religion is dynamic, interpretive process rather than a fixed set of ideas and institutions.

Overall I take epoché in a critical way. I take epoché to represent a fundamental attitude but that researchers cannot fully rid themselves of their scholarly precommitments. There are many presuppositions that are so much part of our thinking that that we are not even aware of them (Cox 1998:11). This understanding of epoché is consistent with reflexive phenomenology. Its main thesis is that disinterest, or neutrality, is impossible in the study of religion[2]. One of the main methodological positions of this paper is an argument against the proclaimed value neutrality of traditional phenomenology. It agrees with Flood who argues that neutral critique is impossible and undesirable, 'but reflexive critique in dialogical relation with its object, what might be called "dialogical reflexivity"'. What becomes important is not so much the distinction between reductionists and nonreductionists, insiders and outsiders but between the critical and the non-critical (Flood 1999:226).

Evocative Description

This approach is crucial for attaining the goal/aim of qualitative understanding of religious data. I agree with Arthur's position that evocative description is absolutely crucial to the attainment of truly qualitative understanding (Twiss & Conser 1992:33). Phenomenology, therefore, in the first step does not seek evaluative judgements. It seeks accurate and appropriate descriptions and interpretations of the religious phenomena. So one of the goals of the phenomenologist is to allow each religion to speak for itself and temporarily suspend issues of external validity. Cox captures the import of this method well in his concept 'describing the phenomena.' He writes:

> In his observation of the activities of any religious group and by his getting inside them, the phenomenologists will encounter a wide variety of religious data. His first task in this process is to describe the data as accurately as possible, paying careful attention to the various aspects so as to avoid premature interpretations…Moreover the descriptions obtained must correspond as faithfully as possible to the believers' own testimony (Cox 1992:32).

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[2] For an extensive discussion of this thesis see Hufford (1999).

Overall the phenomenologist attempts as much as possible to describe as accurately as possible the religious data.

This approach is not immune from limitations. The phenomenologist acknowledges that no pure description is possible as there is a strong attitudinal component on the part of the researcher. There is an endeavor to describe accurately but let us never forget that the researcher is the one who observes, interviews, records and transmits the data. So although the phenomenologist tries to present the attitudes to nature as the believers would, the judgements of the writer will inevitably influence the descriptions. The phenomenologist therefore within limits attempts to follow the ideal of being faithful to the believers' point of view but not under the illusion that the study can produce pure objectivity. There is creative interaction by the writer with religious data (Cox 1992:32 - 33).

Diachronic Understanding

Phenomenology in this context aims to produce what Smart refers to as 'a moving' phenomenological picture of religious phenomena as the religions themselves change their self- understanding of various religious phenomena. As a result I emphasize the historical-typological phenomenological method of diachronic understanding. Twiss and Conser define this method as a '… temporally structured elucidation of a particular tradition's ethos and worldview and recording changes in that ethos and worldview' (Twiss & Conser 1992:34). In the case of phenomenologists we pay attention to the changes in ethos and worldview in relation to how these changes relate to religious phenomena. The phenomenologist intends to achieve diachronically qualitative understanding of religious data.

By taking this position we implicitly raise the question of the sensitivity of the phenomenology of religion to history. One view is that 'phenomenology knows nothing of any historical development of religion …' (Sharma 2001:54). Some phenomenologists of religion have flatly stated that their phenomenology of religion has nothing to do with the historical origin and development of religious facts (Sharma 2001:54). I do not admit this position because '… the essence of a religious fact is historically conditioned and one cannot overlook history in the manifestation of the religious fact, and the historical development of a fact does contribute to getting at new meanings or even to correct the older ones in the light of changing circumstances and contexts …' (Sharma 2001:54). I therefore agree with the view that phenomenology and history complement each other (Sharma 2001:54).

It is in this context that we come into contact with, as indicated earlier on, what Smart refers to as 'dialectical phenomenology' (Smart 1996:7). This is a reaction to some essentialist phenomenology's nuances that emphasizes the view that a given type of phenomena has a common essence (Smart 1996:7). The import of this view is that essential phenomenology of religion tends to be 'synchronic and static' (Smart 1996:7).

Smart argues that we should see religion as a structured whole, made up of seven mutually interdependent or dialectically related dimensions: ' myth, rituals, doctrines, ethics, social forms and organisations, emotions and experiences, and material or aesthetic elements' (Strenski 2006:192). The idea is that we have a religion when these dimensions 'are clustered into an interactive complex, we have what is usefully called a "religion"' (Strenski 2006:192). Smart is succinct on this when he says 'By dialectical phenomenology I mean more particularly the relationship between different dimensions of religions and worldviews' (Smart 1996:7).

Phenomenologists therefore not only focus on bringing out the meaning of particular religious data, but also on how religious data fit together with other religious phenomena in a particular religion. The question is how the religious phenomena are in each religious tradition related to, for example, myths, ritual, prayer, soteriology, sacrifice and so on. Overall I agree with Strenski's acknowledgement of the beauty of Smart's dimensional approach. Strenski says (2006: 194):

> The beauty of Smart's dimensional approach is that it can set up a perspective in which a whole series of 'why' questions can be addressed and answered. True to the ideal of autonomy or distinctiveness characteristic of the phenomenology of religion, these are questions and answers that do not pass outside the realm of religion itself. They are not efforts at explaining religion in nonreligious-reductionist-terms. They are efforts to account for how and why things happen in religion in terms of religious factors ….

In following this approach phenomenologists not therefore simply repeat what the believers may say. This is the context in which I stress on a certain kind of explanation that is not antagonistic to understanding. My position is that the phenomenological method is not restricted to perceiving religious phenomena from the point of view of the believer. There is a dimension of it that consists of identifying structures within religious phenomena which the believer may not be conscious of but which do not violate the self-understanding of the believer.

Controlled Elucidative Comparison

One of the long-standing assumptions of the phenomenology of religion is that it is indeed based upon comparative observation. Strenski rightly points out that we owe Max Muller a great deal of debt for his practice and promotion of comparative studies of religion. He was the first scholar prominently to show how useful it would be to study religions in relation to one another (Strenski 2006: 83). His popular dictum is that ‘He who knows one religion knows none’. Muller’s argument is that one cannot know one religion unless one knows several…, that is to say that a person who knows only about one religion can never be sure that they know more than just what may be peculiar to that particular religion, rather than something fundamental about religions (Strenski 2006: 83). In terms of the aim of comparison I agree with Muller’s position that ‘comparison makes us think, by suggesting analogies, similarities and differences we might not have entertained before that’ (Strenski 2006: 84).

In the light of this, I argue with Moreau for the position that the phenomenological study of religion is comparative in a limited sense. This paper divorces itself from the evolutionary approach to comparative studies in religion where there is a form of comparison that imply superiority or inferiority of religions (Moreau 2004:4). The phenomenologist therefore intends to identify both similarities and differences among religions in order to illuminate each religion’s belief and practices and reach general conclusions about the fundamental differences and similarities and possibilities for mutual fecundation.

This is what Twiss and Conser call controlled elucidative comparison. They refer, as one of the examples, to Kristensen’s use of this approach to the phenomenon of prayer in response to what exactly elucidative comparison involve. They make it clear when they say:

> Now what is interesting about all this is the way in which, through identification of both similarities and differences among the prayers from different traditions, Kristensen is able to illuminate each prayer as well as reach some more general conclusions about the fundamental recurrent types of attitudes and actions represented in them all. Thus he is able to see the unique ethos associated with each prayer, use the ethos of one to clarify the ethos of another, and reach a tentative conclusion about some apparently universal features. This is the process of comparative elucidation at work … (Twiss & Conser 1992: 36).

Elucidative Interrogation

This method is bi-polar. One pole deals,

> with distinguishing the distinctively religious objectives, intentions, and motivations operative in a given tradition from other nonreligious motivations that may also be operative in that tradition's ambient culture and may interact with the religious motivations (Twiss & Conser 1992: 37).

It aims at clarifying mixed motives that may be behind some religious phenomena in a given tradition. It focuses on gaining an understanding of the complexities that may be involved in a given tradition's ethos and worldview (Twiss & Conser 1992: 37). In the light of this the phenomenologist identifies both the religious/spiritual and mundane dimensions of religions. She/he assumes that the religious/spiritual dimensions are intermixed with mundane materialistic motives (Twiss & Conser 1992: 37).

The other pole involves clarifying of 'distinctively religious motivations for the purpose of identifying and illuminating structures and phenomena apparently universal to all religious traditions' (Twiss & Conser 1992: 37). This second aspect also assumes the concern with the intrinsic religious objectives and motives involved (Twiss & Conser 1992: 38).

Elucidative interrogation is what phenomenologists of religion commonly refer to as **eidetic intuition/ vision**. Its aim is to search for the **eidos,** which are the essentials of religious phenomena. The phenomenological goal is to decipher the true meaning of religious phenomena for the believer (Segal 1989:18).

Up to this point we now have the view of phenomenological approach suggested in this paper. Although the paper has dealt with weaknesses of particular facets of the approach it is important to bring them together under a general critique of the approach.

General Critique of the Phenomenological Approach

There are several areas in which the nuance of the phenomenological approach presented in this paper faces difficult questions. It is important that one considers them to become aware of its limitations and strength. Work in this section is eased somewhat by the fact that this paper has dealt with many of the criticisms in its discussion of particular methods of this approach.

One can identify six criticisms that appear to be shared by phenomenological approaches in general and a few charges against the phenomenological method of the historical typologist.

First one can criticize the phenomenological approach for the bias associated with a normative agenda (Twiss & Conser 1992: 39). This is a challenge to phenomenologists who prop up theological or philosophical missionary aims. This definitely can in fact distort. There is a danger of a tendency to identify religious consciousness with the consciousness of a classical Christian theistic believer (Twiss & Conser 1992: 16). For an example the danger may be that of couching Shona traditional religious consciousness into Judeo-Christian spectacles. The phenomenologist tries as far as possible to counterveil such problems of bias by employing the principle of epoché.

The second problem revolves around the principle of epoché itself. We have already dealt with problems related to epoché. At this point we need to highlight the problem of whether the phenomenological attitude itself-in its apparent neutrality about truth and value-is able to do justice to religious phenomena of ultimate commitment (faith) which are quite contrary of neutrality and suspended judgment (Twiss & Conser 1992: 17).

Concerning this problem one needs to note that, as already discussed above, that the phenomenological approach also employs empathetic reenactment of the religious consciousness. In this way it enables understanding at a distance. So the suspension of judgment (epoché) enhances empathy by putting out of play the investigator's own distorting prejudices and biases. This enables the investigator to be, as far as possible, empathetic to and resonant with the believing soul's experiences from its own standpoint (Twiss & Conser 1992: 17). I base this explanation on the assumption that there seems to be no contradiction between epoché and empathy. I therefore argue that epoché and empathy are interactive and mutually reinforcing. Epoché does not seem to be necessarily incompatible with empathetic understanding (Twiss & Conser 1992: 17).

A third problem relates to empathetic understanding itself. The claim is that the exact nature of the epistemic value of this process remains somewhat obscure in many phenomenological discussions (Twiss & Conser 1992: 17-16). This paper has dealt with this problem. It has emphasized the demand on empathetic approach, for the purposes of trying as far as possible to represent another's religious experience in a way that the other would affirm before subjecting it to a critical gaze. May be one needs to raise a further critical charge. In the search of empathy, how does one deal with the danger of identification to the extent that religious conversion occurs. (Moreau 2000:6). I find the possibility and relevance of empathy in the sense in which N. Smart explains it in relation to play-acting. Smart's explanation is therefore worth quoting at length;

> …the actor imaginatively rehearses the feelings and beliefs of a given character, while at the simultaneously bracketing issues of truth, value, and commitment – the actor after all does not actually become a character except imaginatively in a kind of epoché. So too the phenomenologists: he/she imaginatively rehearses the feelings and beliefs of the believing soul, while at the same simultaneously bracketing questions of truth, value and commitment (Smart quoted by Twiss & Conser 1992: 20).

I do not in the light of the above suggestion regard empathetic understanding as problematic for the phenomenologists of religion.

A fourth problem is whether the phenomenological attitude of the historical typologist is sufficiently suspicious of, and critical about, the factors involved in religious motivations, intentions and activities (Smart quoted by Twiss & Conser 1992: 39). The import of this criticism is that the phenomenological approach is naïve by failing to consider hidden nonreligious motives and factors influencing religious forms of life … (Smart quoted by Twiss & Conser 1992: 40). I have already dealt with this problem under the method of elucidative interrogation. The point once again is that the phenomenologist does not only focus on the consciously religious motives and intentions that relate to religious phenomena. It focuses on the intrinsically religious motives and intentions and at the same time is clearly cognizant of the fact that mixed motives may be at work in the religious phenomena.

A fifth charge concerns a perceived synchronic and anti-historic bias. This paper has raised this problem under diachronic understanding. In this section the I noted that the import of this charge is that phenomenology tends to look at religious phenomena as though they were set of slides rather than living videos rooted in a historical context. This involves excluding diachronic and developmental analysis. The net effect of this is the lack of ability to properly contextualize religious phenomena (Moreau 2000:5). Considering the paper's position under diachronic understanding the historical-typological phenomenology is explicitly concerned with features of historicity and diachronic analysis.

A sixth charge is that phenomenology's claims of pure description have been open to examination. I have acknowledged under evocative description that; 'no one is immune from the influence of culture, historical setting and social situation. Each of these areas lays assumptive claims on our world view' (Moreau 2000:5). To claim to be purely descriptive is impossible. Since the aim of the phenomenologist is to critically compare religions, it crosses the boundary from description to evaluation. This is what I termed creative interaction by the writer with the religious data among religions.

Conclusion

The aim of paper was to discuss a particular nuance of the phenomenological approach that acts as the theoretical framework for an introduction to the study of religions. This paper has settled for the historical- typological phenomenology of religion. This approach has four connected aims and six methodological facets. The four aims are first, an emphasis on, as a first necessary step, to understand religions from the viewpoint of the believers. The second aim involves attempting a historically contextualized understanding of religions. The third aim is about engaging in a carefully controlled comparative study. The fourth aim is about having an interest in types of religious phenomena.

These four aims are correlated to six methodological facets namely empathetic understanding, epoché, evocative description, historical sensitivity and contextualization, controlled elucidative comparison and elucidative interrogation. This paper has opted for these aims and methods because of religious studies' need for an insider perspective that attempts to establish the comparable data. One of the major assumptions of phenomenology of religion is that the insider perspective is indeed an essential aspect of the critical analytical comparative approach notwithstanding the fact that however the insider perspective may be limited to understanding (verstehen/data construction).

In the light of the limitations and the position that this paper takes on these limitations other scholars may probably provide alternative nuances of the phenomenological approach and select/emphasize different voices of the phenomenology of religion and aims and methods from the ones I have selected. I have settled for this nuance of the phenomenological approach because the main aim is to achieve what J.L. Cox, following W.B. Kristensen, refers to as 'informed comparison' (Cox 2006:113). I have, following, Kristensen, emphasized the practice of an informed comparison based on historical data. This method leads to understanding rather than judgment. The issue is at every stage in the description of religious phenomena, the phenomenologist attempts, as far as possible, to adhere to the overriding principle of phenomenology of religion which 'wishes to learn to understand the conception of the believer's themselves, who always ascribe an absolute value to their faith' (Cox 2006:113).

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Religion and Development in Zambia: The Role of the Roman Catholic Church in the Political Development of Zambia: 1890-1964

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Abstract

Studies on the public role of religion in Zambia have largely concentrated on the history of Christianity in the third republic when political expressions of religious beliefs became more apparent. Christianity was firmly embedded in the Zambian society at independence and its mission-educated leaders fully understood the importance of the consent and blessings of the churches (Ter Haar 1992) This article explores the role of the Roman Catholic Church in Zambia's political independence (1890 to 1964). This is because the impression that Christian missionaries (henceforth simply referred to as missionaries) in Africa supported colonial rule is pervasive and historians as well as students of mission history seem to have taken it for granted that missionaries were agents of colonialism. Using a qualitative document review approach that thematically analyzes the relevant data, the article shows that the Catholic Church, which from the 1990s to the present has been championing human rights and democracy in Africa, is not exempted from this 'charge'. As Haynes (1996:53) pointed out, 'mainstream Christian bodies were initially opposed to, then skeptical and finally won round to the idea of African independence'.

The article positions the Roman Catholic Church in the political affairs of Zambia amid its apolitical claims. The article advances the argument that the Church contributed to Zambia's political development (here taken to mean the emergence of national sovereignty) directly and indirectly through the provision of education, health and pastoral services and the publication of pastoral letters though not to say it never erred. The

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article further points out the lost opportunities for the Church and draws lessons for 21st century Zambia.

Keywords: Religion, Development, political development, independence, missionary work

Introduction

It has been widely acknowledged that religion can influence and enhance development. In this regard, the concern with religion and development is not new and restricted to the twenty first century scholarship. Development is a multi-dimensional concept and will refer to the improvement of the full human life in every aspect, in the context of the community (Sakala & Chanda 1999:5). This is not just an economic term, but it encompasses the whole person in an integral and sustainable manner. Development also has different dimensions and the focus in this article is the political dimension of development in Zambia from 1890 to 1964.

In the colonial era, the Roman Catholic Church was largely influenced by the principle of being apolitical. As O'loghlen notes, the apolitical stand the church had should be understood in the light of not being involved in partisan politics as in the period of violence when the United National Independence Party (UNIP) and African National Congress (ANC) clashed, the importance of being equally accessible to all people was very emphasized (2002). It was this realisation, which made the church to be involved in the political life of the people.

Politics is here taken to mean what it meant to the ancient Greeks - 'public affairs' (Mwaura in Magesa and Zablon 2003:54). Thus political development will relate to the emergence of national sovereignty and the attainment of political independence from British colonial rule. Since the inception of missionary works in Zambia, the Roman Catholic Church contributed to Zambia's independence amid claims that is was apolitical. Komakoma (2003:33) records that:

> ... recall the strong prohibition included in Can.139, with regard to

> the participation of the clergy in the political affairs of any country. Par.4 of this canon strictly forbids all members of the Catholic clergy to assume official functions in the Legislative body....

This stance of the church to be above politics has often given the impression that the Catholic missionaries and the Church as a whole never had any role in the political development of the country. Some missionaries however went against this law for the sake of human dignity and played a role in Zambia's nationalist politics.

Using document review, this article traces the contribution of the Roman Catholic Church in Zambia's nationalist politics from 1980 to 1964 when Zambia gained its independence. It is related to other studies on religion and its public role (Hinfelaar 2009; Cheyeka 2009; Phiri 2009; Hinfelaar 2003; Phiri 1992). Its uniqueness hinges on going back in time. This is because as Gerrie TerHaar acknowledges, studies on the public role of religion in Zambia have largely concentrated on the history of Christianity in the third republic when political expressions of religious beliefs became more apparent. But Christianity was firmly embedded in the Zambian society at the time of independence and its mission - educated leaders fully understood the importance of the consent and blessings of the churches.

The article utilized Paulo Freire's theory of conscientisation and dialogue whose thesis is that social change should come from the masses and not isolated individuals to explain the formation of political groups which led to the dislodge of colonial rule.

> Conscientisation is a change of mentality involving an accurate, realistic awareness of one's locus in nature and society; the capacity to analyze critically its causes and consequences, comparing it with other situations and possibilities; and action of a logical sort aimed at transformation. Psychologically it entails an awareness of one's dignity (Freire 1974).

One inevitable result of conscientisation is political participation and the formation of interest groups such as community organisations and labour unions. This theory explains the formation of political groups in colonial Zambia by people who were educated at the mission schools. This is because

Conscientisation leads to people organizing themselves to take action so as to change their social realities, points out Freire (1973), in this case political independence.

Thus Freire's literacy method whose key concepts are conscientization and dialogue has contributed to the understanding of the processes of education and social change as Freire's analysis of education and social change centres on his contention that education cannot be neutral (Freire 1974). By this, It can either be domesticating or liberating.

A Brief Political History of Zambia

The occupation of Northern Rhodesia by the British was a direct result of David Livingstone’s explorations in the territory. Following his death in 1873, eighteen missionary societies had by 1945 entered and established themselves in the area (Snelson 1974:10). A few more Protestant mission churches such as the Lutheran Church of Central Africa, Apostolic Faith Mission and Pentecostal Assemblies of God arrived afterwards in the 1950s and 1960s (Henkel 1989:39, 40).

The eventual colonial occupation of Northern Rhodesia is often attributed to John Cecil Rhodes whose ambitions resulted in the occupation of Barotseland.

In 1890, Francois Coillard of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS) had succeeded Frederick Stanley Arnot of the Plymouth Brethren, the first European to settle in Northern Rhodesia, and with their coming, Zambia was colonised when the Lochner Treaty was signed between Lewanika, King of the Lozi and the British South African Company (BSA Co) which gave exclusive rights to the BSA Co (Rotberg 1972). In 1890, the territory of Northern Rhodesia came under the control of the BSA Co whose administration lasted until 1924 when it handed over the territory to the British Colonial Office. Murphy (2003) describes the BSA Co state’s administrative structure (by 1924) as follows:

> The Territory Administrator at the capital and District Commissioners, Native Commissioners and Assistant Native Commissioners at district centres or towns and local centres or areas. There were also (District) Magistrates and Assistant Magistrates to

take care of legal and other matters in the territory.

Upon taking over the administration of the territory, the BSA Co introduced a foreign and different pattern of government. The country was divided into North - Eastern and North - Western Rhodesia in 1895 for administrative purposes. In 1911, the two artificial parts were merged to be called Northern Rhodesia under the British Administrator, Sir Lawrence Wallace. In 1924, the British Crown as agreed upon with the BSA Co, assumed the administration of the country in order to make it a protectorate, the first Governor being Sir Herbert James Stanley on 1st April 1924.

Unlike the BSA Co state, the British colonial state administration was more elaborate. Under the British Colonial Office in London was the Governor of Northern Rhodesia, who was assisted by the Secretary of State at the capital. There were Provincial Commissioners at Provincial headquarters and District Commissioners, District Officers and Assistant District Officers at district and sub - district centres. There was a High Court Judge assisted by other judges, Magistrates and Assistant Magistrates at lower levels to provide judicial services, and a Legislative Council (Legco) with European settler representatives and European representatives for Africans to ensure some checks and balances.

Additionally, there were Native Authorities built around chiefs through which the colonial state administered the people. Northern Rhodesia was thus administered through indirect rule whereby chiefs assumed subordinate roles in the colonial period. As such, there was a creation of western educated auxiliary elite and recourse to chiefs and other so called traditional authorities to help administer the colony (Chipungu 1992).

As a way of financing the administration of the territory, measures such as native taxation were introduced. However, taxation caused the greatest resentment and hardship as it forced Africans to work for cash (Weller and Linden 1984:192). It was this taxation, which the missionaries were later to speak against in the General Missionary Conferences.

Colonial rule was characterised by the domination of political, social, economic and all other spheres of life by British nationals from the metrople and European officials had a privileged position. This was based on the fact that the colonial rulers had the civilising mission of the Africans who were seen [as being] backward or uncivilised (Meebelo 1971; Boahen 1987).

This also explains why Africans were not given political and civil rights as society was divided into the rulers and subjects.

Colonial rule in Zambia was successfully established owing to many factors, among them the fact that the weaker ethnic groups sought protection from the Europeans, points out Larmer (2003) and in the process, the Europeans colonised them. Meebelo (1971) for instance, traces the beginning of colonial rule in Zambia to the desire of the weaker ethnic groups for protection against stronger ethnic groups. The Christian missionaries also had their share of the establishment of colonial rule. In any case, Africans were not passive in the colonial enterprise.

In 1953, Northern Rhodesia became part of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland by an Order in Council and Sir Roy Welensky, a Rhodesian politician, was very instrumental in the creation of the federation. The federation lasted for ten years with Zambia becoming independent in 1964 after its collapse. It is in this context that the Roman Catholic Church carried out its missionary work and directly and indirectly contributed to the political development of Zambia though not without shortcomings.

Advent of Roman Catholic Missionary Work in Zambia

The work of the Roman Catholic missionaries in Zambia traces its beginning to the work of David Livingstone, who was the first missionary to come to Zambia. He never established a mission station in Zambia until he died in Serenje. He influenced the coming of missionaries to Zambia through his publications on the travels he made, the speeches he made, his death, and the special call he made to the Christian World to continue the work he had began (Rotberg 1965:4-6).

David Livingstone had his own weaknesses as a missionary as evidenced in the letter, which he wrote to Professor Sedgewick of Cambridge University. The letter shows his intentions that the world should never know about his political and economic motives. These were his ‘ulterior objects’. Livingstone described his desires to Professor Sedgewick and said:

> That you may have a clear idea of my objects I may state that they have something more in them than meets the eye. They are not merely exploratory, for I go with the intention of benefiting both the

> African and my own countrymen. I take a practical mining geologist from the school of mines to tell us of the mineral resources of the country. Then an economic botanist to give a full report of the vegetable productions-the fibrous, gummy and medicinal substances together with the dyestuffs-everything which may be useful in commerce. An artist to give scenery. A naval officer to tell of the capacity of the river communications and a moral agent to lay a Christian foundation for anything that may follow. All this has for its ostensible object the development of African trade and the promotion of (African) civilization, but what I tell to none but such as you in whom I have confidence is this, I hope it may result in an English colony in the healthy highlands in Central Africa – (I have told it only to the Duke of Argyll). I believe that the highlands are healthy – the wild vine flourishes there. Europeans with a speedy transit to the coast would collect and transmit the produce to the sea. With this short statement you may perceive our ulterior objects. I want you to have an idea of them (Flecther 1974:312-313).

David Livingstone in any case planted the seeds of mission Christianity as many other missionary societies came to Zambia after his death. It can still be argued that Christianity was also a form of colonialisation as it often condemned the Indigenous religious beliefs. Tiberondwa (1978:xv) charges that missionaries actively participated in the political, economic and cultural exploitation of the African people and effectively paved the way for the initial occupation and formal colonisation.

Catholic Christianity was first introduced by the White Fathers (WF) in the north and east, and by Jesuits (SJ) in the south and centre [central] Zambia (Coyne, 1974). Other mission orders are the Franciscan Friars Minor Conventuals (OFMconv) and Friars Minor Capuchins (OFMcap) and other sister congregations.

The White Fathers and Jesuits entered Zambia in the missionary pioneering stage (1891, 1905), while the Franciscan Friars Minor Conventuals and Franciscan Friars Minor Capuchins came in the stage of missionary expansion (both in 1931). The missionary congregations of sisters who came to Zambia before 1940 were the White Sisters (1902), Dominican Sisters (1925), Holy Cross Sisters (1936) and between 1945 and 1959, eight

(8) other congregations of sisters came to Zambia after 1960 (Hinfelaaar, 2004). This entails that the Catholic Church in Zambia planted the seeds of Catholicism as orders unlike the Protestants who came as missionary societies.

The Coming of the Catholic Missionaries to Zambia

The White Fathers were the first Catholic congregation to work in Zambia, and arrived in 1891. Hinfelaar (2004:21) records that:

> These are also called Missionaries of Africa and had been founded by the French Cardinal, Charles MartilaLavigerie whose father was a liberal and anti-clerical senior Civil servant who had not approved of his son becoming a priest. Lavigerie worked in the Roman Curia in Vatican and had two doctorates and a professorship of Church history at Sorbone University in Paris. After realising that there was something wrong with the restrictive and centralising tendencies of the administration in the Vatican who forced all Christians to follow the Latin rite of Christian worship, he became a champion of inculturation. This was done by fighting for the right of churches to worship in their own languages. He needed an association of men, flexible and decentralised enough to move into Africa when he was assigned the task of opening up Africa for the Catholic Church in Algiers. And so in July 1868, he founded a society, which he called 'Missionaries of Our Lady of Africa.' The society recruited secular priests and lay brothers so as to open schools, model farms, orphanages, medical centres and homes for the elderly in Africa.

The arrival of the White Fathers was largely negotiated with local rulers and thus they founded the first European settlement in Bembaland under the direction of Bishop Joseph Dupont popularly called *Moto moto* (Hinfelaar 2004). This was after abandoning Mambwe Mwela, a place, which they had found deserted by the African Lakes Company and later used as their first station. The African Lakes Company was initially called Livingstonia Central Africa Company and commonly known as African Lakes Corporation and it was largely founded by the interests supporting the Livingstonia

Mission with the aim of following up missionary work with legitimate trade and opening up a route from the Indian Ocean to Lake Tanganyika.

From Mambwe Mwela, the White Fathers were allowed by Chief Makasa Mwilwa, Mukukawa Mipini to come into Lubemba at Kayambi. It is from here that the White Fathers expanded their work in Zambia. The Jesuit missionaries who also came to Zambia to spread Catholicism followed the White Fathers. The Jesuits came to Zambia at the beginning of the twentieth century (1905) and the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) was founded in 1530, more than three hundred years before the White Fathers were formed.

> The society was founded by a St Ignatius of Loyola who as a young man had served at the royal court and was trained to be a professional soldier. However, while defending a castle at Pamplong, he was wounded severely in both legs and read the lives of the saints in his depression and boredom. After a long retreat, he made a vow to denounce any worldly honour, but instead serve Jesus Christ. He therefore entered university and attracted some of his fellow students to follow the same ideals and later travelled to Rome to the Pope, obtained permission to found a new religious congregation and called it the Society of Jesus, popularly called the Jesuits. They adopted the new scientific discoveries of the time and worked in Catholic universities training young people in preparing for God’s work. Due to the success of their spirituality, structures and apostolic methods, many missionary societies including the White Fathers were modeled on the example of the Jesuits (Hinfelaar 2004:57).

Some years before 1879, the Jesuits had been entrusted with the responsibility for what was known as the Zambezi mission, which stretched from the Limpopo River northwards to Congo. In 1902, Monsignor Sykes, the superior of the Zambezi mission contacted Major Robert Codrington the BSA Co official at Kalomo and requested a site for a mission (Murphy 2003:144; Hinfelaar 2004). After forwarding the request to the London office of the BSA Co, the Jesuits were granted ten thousand acres of land in Chief Monze’s area.

Thereafter, two French Jesuits, Fr. Joseph Moreau and Jules Torrend arrived at Chikuni in 1905 and Fr. Torrend soon left Chikuni to set up Kasisi mission, which through his influence soon became the centre of the Jesuit missionary endeavour in the area. It is from these beginnings that the Jesuits established mission stations in Zambia and planted the seeds of Catholicism.

The coming of the White Fathers and Jesuit missionaries marked the end of the missionary pioneering stage and this gave way to the missionary expansion period, which saw the coming of the Franciscans. The Franciscan Friars belonged to an order, which was far much older than the missionary society of the White Fathers and even that of the Jesuits.

> The Franciscan society had been founded by St Francis, an Italian from Assisi in 1209.When young, he left all his possessions and assumed a life of poverty. Other young men then followed him and a new order called Friars Minor, humble brothers was founded. They had three major divisions with one for men, the Friars, one for women, the nuns, called poor Clares and one for lay people, the lay tertiaries who were called the third order. In their long history, the Friars divided themselves into three (3) distinct and independent branches and these are Friars Minor, Friars Minor Conventuals, and Friars Minor Capuchins (Hinfelaar 2004:126-127).

The Friars minor conventuals were the first Franciscans to come to Zambia in the 1930s and were often dressed in grey habits, thereby at times called grey Friars. They recited the Divine office together in choir, in Conventuals hence called the Conventuals (Hinfelaar 2004:126-127).

Friar minor capuchins also came to spread the Catholic faith in Zambia in the 1930s and settled in and around Livingstone. The name Capuchin came from the Italian word *Scappuccini*, hermits. They wore a brown habit, girded with a cord, a long pointed hood and sandals and followed a literal observance of the rule of St Francis (O’Shea 1975:268). The arrival of these congregations formed the foundation of missionary work in Zambia. Many other congregations came to Zambia to spread the gospel.

Nelly Mwale

The Role of the Roman Catholic Church in the Political Development of Zambia

The role of religion in colonial Zambia was somewhat complex because while being used as a tool of colonialism, it was also instrumental in dislodging colonial rule. As in the case of Malawi, Hastings (1994:428) observed that the Blantyre missionaries had done a great deal to bring the establishment of British rule over the Shire highlands, but when the rule came, there were several things about it which they did not like.

With few exceptions, missionaries in colonial Africa accepted a colonial take over as both inevitable and desirable, but they wanted it in large part precisely to protect Africans from the Arab slave traders, Boers, Portuguese, and Cecil Rhodes. They perceived their role as that of guiding the African society for its own good rather than for the good of Europe, hence caught up in the political web of colonial politics. However, this perception may entail that the missionaries had their own agenda too.

The Roman Catholic Church contributed to Zambia’s political independence through their missionary work. Like other mission churches, the establishment of mission stations characterized it. The Catholic missionaries had the propagation of their faith as one of their priorities. A mission station was therefore a common feature of missionary work and the majority of mission stations consisted of a church, school and a hospital or a small medical centre. The Catholic missionaries had mission stations planted all over the country both in rural and urban areas, which were about 62 by 1960 (Henkel 1987). What role did the church play towards Zambia’s independence?

The Catholic Church provided education. From the first arrival of the Catholic Church in Zambia as represented by the White Fathers in 1891 and later the Jesuits in 1905 followed by other missionary congregations, the Church provided education to the people. At almost every mission station, which the Church founded, and like the Protestant missionary societies, a school was established.

Initially these were village schools and they later transformed into primary, secondary and tertiary schools (Snelson 1974). The people were also offered skills training where they learnt carpentry, brick making, hygiene, agricultural practices and many other skills, which changed the quality of the life of the people and gave the local people the crucial practical skills needed for continued construction of more churches, schools and other mission projects (Simuchimba 2005).

Carmody notes that the Jesuits, for instance, at Chikuni provided higher education at a time when such facilities were severely restricted and this was very political (Carmody 1992:xix). Indirectly, as people got educated and converted, they were better placed to fight the ills of colonial rule. Through education the people were empowered and provided with what they most required in the struggle. Education thus proved to be a little more of a double-edged sword for the colonial administration.

The schools became places where the aspirations for independence were established and nurtured, as well as promoting colonial structures. They also encouraged critical thinking enabling students to contest the status quo ‘it was the mission centres that became the birth places of post-war African nationalism’ (Phiri 1992:14-36). This was despite the prime focus of education being on rural areas and the schools usually offering a rudimentary education in basic reading, Bible study and practical subjects.

Beyond this, it was felt the local population would have little use for higher education as it could lead to isolation from their communities (Snelson 1974). This was a concealed political role, which the Church in colonial Zambia played as it did not set out to offer such an education because the main aim of missionary education was conversion (Snelson 1974:269; Mwanakatwe 1974:11; Carmody 1992; Gadsden 1992: 99).

The Church also provided health care to the people, Hannercart (1992) remarks that long before clinics and hospitals were built, before trained doctors and nurses arrived on the scene, many people found relief for their aches and pains by going to the missionaries. People were treated when ill, and in times of epidemics, the missionaries gave out vaccinations.

This too was a tool of conversion and the church saw the provision of affordable healthcare as vital to a population that could not afford private medical treatment and this was motivated by the concern driven by Biblical principles of care for the incapacitated. Examples include the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke, 10:25-37, then Jesus’ encouragement in Matthew, 25:36 ‘I was sick and you looked after me,’ and many others. While the provision of health care weakened the indigenous medicinal knowledge, the service ensured the wellbeing of the people.

The Catholic Church further participated in the General Missionary Conferences and therefore played the ‘spokesperson role’ for the masses. The General Missionary Conferences had been organized as early as 1914 in a bid to bring together all missionaries in the country to the discussion as Christian co-workers (Weller & Linden 1984). The representatives were drawn from the Protestant and Catholic bodies as well as government officials and other guests.

The issues discussed in the conferences included among others watching over the interests of the Africans (1914), objection to the native reserves and native taxation (1922) and many others (Snelson 1974). These conferences went on from 1914 to 1944. Though the Roman Catholic missionaries last attended the 1931 General Missionary Conference because of theological reasons, they had played a role in safeguarding the interests of the Africans.

However, the Church lost an opportunity for ecumenical efforts towards the wellbeing of its people. The departure of the Catholic missionaries from the General Missionary Conferences was in the end to contribute to the spoiling of what had been a good record of standing for justice collectively (Weller & Linden 1984). This partly explains why nationalists felt more at home in Churches which openly fought colonial rule such as the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC). The AMEC became a spiritual home of Northern Rhodesian nationalism and Kenneth Kaunda joined it for a time (The Times Letter, 4th August, 1950).

The Church further published Pastoral Letters, which had an influence in overturning colonial rule. Of particular interest are the Pastoral Letters of 1953, 1958 and 1964, which were instrumental in the struggle against colonial rule directly and indirectly. The 1953 Pastoral Letter’s main emphasis was to guide the clergy in matters of colonial politics and thus pointed out that the church had to be above politics.

The colonial power was also reminded to respect the rights of the people and allow them to fully take part in decisions that would affect them (Komakoma 2003). As well as stressing the need that Africans had to access opportunities in education, health and employment, the Church through its Pastoral Letter accentuated that sound racial relations had to be based on fundamental recognition of human dignity of the people. These Pastoral Letters contributed to liberation because it recognized the voice of the

African in the political affairs of the country (Komakoma 2003:31).

The Bishops wanted the Africans to have the political right of being able to make decisions that concerned their land and this would lead to political development. The Church through the 1953 Pastoral Letter showed the concern the Church had in the political situation of the country (Komakoma 2003:31). It was felt that the federation would only worsen the conditions of the Africans. This explains why the Bishops expressed their concern with a deep sense of affection for the Africans, knowing well that the political situation was not favourable to the Africans.

Other than this, the Church through Pastoral Letters stressed the social rights of the Africans. Article one of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights (Human Rights Commission 2008:7). In the 1953 Pastoral Letter, the Bishops pointed out that man had special dignity and it was therefore important to recognise this fact irrespective of colour and race. All men, irrespective of race, are God’s beloved creatures, made in His own image, called to become God’s children through sanctifying grace, bound to one another by the same destiny of eternal life in heaven (Komakoma 2003:37).

In stressing this value of man, the Bishops called upon Africans and Europeans to respect the rights of every man according to the teachings of Saint Paul. In this way therefore, the rights of the Africans were fought for, and with these came the realization that the Africans needed to govern themselves.

Furthermore, the church as represented by the Bishops through the 1953 Pastoral Letter did not agree with the policy that would debar the Africans from evolving gradually towards full participation in the political, economic, industrial and cultural life of the Africans (federation). The Church may be seen to have worked in isolation on this matter as the General Missionary Conference (now succeeded by Christian Council) was also fighting against the imposition of the federation though in a divided manner (Weller & Linden 1984:196).

The Roman Catholic Church did not accept that the Africans should be stopped from reaching the same standards of education and living conditions. Africans as human beings had the fundamental right to all these and therefore, nothing was to be allowed to stand in their way of progress.

The Second Vatican Council teaches that the protection of rights of the person is, a necessary condition for citizens, individually and collectively, to play an active part in public life and administration (St Paul Communications 2003:14).

The 1958 Pastoral Letter, which was addressed to the Catholics of all races, is also a way in which the Catholic Church contributed to the political welfare of the people. The stress in this letter was on the need for unity and the Bishops pointed out that as a church, they have the right and duty to speak out on societal issues, as they are the guardians of the moral order in the society. The Bishops expressed the Church's desire to see Northern Rhodesia develop into a happy and prosperous nation (Komakoma 2003). This also confirms the fact that the early Catholic missionaries spoke on behalf of the Africans and tackled the many challenges, which the Africans faced. However, one might have expected an ecumenical voice as the winds of unity swept through the country through nationalism.

The Catholic missionaries' stress in 1958 Pastoral Letter on justice was also crucial in the fight for decolonisation. The Bishops stressed that every man had a duty to exercise the virtues of justice. Virtues of justice meant the need to respect and grant the rights of others. Indeed, as Gifford (1988:86) notes, the Catholic Church… has become aware of its role and consciously changed sides in a historic 'option for the poor' or commitment to the total welfare of the voiceless and oppressed. This is shown in the manner the Church through the bishops spoke on behalf of the oppressed who in this case were the Africans.

The contribution to Zambia's fight against colonial rule the Church made through this Pastoral Letter should be seen in the light of the effect it had on the Europeans, the government of the day. The Europeans were reminded of the need to respect and grant the rights of others, in this case, the Africans. The Colonial powers might not have taken this seriously, but time came when the situation could not allow them to go governing Northern Rhodesia and thus, through leaving the political office to the Africans, the Europeans respected the rights of the Africans. This shows that the message of the Church was not only directed to the Africans, but to the Europeans as well.

Individual Missionary Contribution to Zambia's Political Development

The Church also supported nationalist politics as individuals and as a group. Individuals include Bishop Rene' Pailloux (MAfr) who among other things showed a keen interest in opinions of the African leaders. He also gathered a group of educated young men and women and encouraged them to aspire to the responsibilities of a future independent nation. In this, he urged them to play important roles in the trade unions and political movements of the Copperbelt (Hinfelaar 2004:181).

Patrick Walsh SJ was involved in the creation of inter - racial dialogue between the Catholic members and the colonial administration. He thus founded the United Northern Rhodesia Association which was an inter-racial club cutting across denomination (Hinfelaar 2004:181). A suitable clubhouse was acquired from the Rhodesia Selection Trust in the new low-density area of Kabulonga. This became a moderate success and Fr. Walsh managed to introduce some members of the nascent African Congress, like Harry Nkumbula, Kenneth Kaunda, Arthur and Sikota Wina to liberal-minded Europeans (Murphy 2003:350).

Fr. Walsh also influenced the Bishops to publish a newspaper. 'The Leader' which started in 1961 and it offered a voice to the Africans especially when mistreated. Apart from this, the newspaper had articles on nationalist leaders and policies. Fr. Walsh became a family friend of the Kaunda family. It was through him that the Jesuits honoured Kaunda with an honorary doctorate. In May 1963, he and Kaunda travelled to the United States of America where Kaunda as President of UNIP and Minister of Local Government and Social Welfare, was awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws by the Jesuit Fordham University in New York (Hinfelaar 2004).

Fr. Jean-Jacques Corbeil and Fr. Van Rijthoven MAfr protected the Africans who were running away from the colonial authorities in their bid to flush out freedom fighters and offered them food. This was when Chinsali district became much politicised as the young men; members of the newly formed UNIP arrived from urban areas and encouraged the people to work against the federation and demand political independence. The missionaries decided to remain understanding and to get involved in the affairs of the Africans (Hinfelaar 2004:177).

Francis Mazzieri Conv Franciscan insisted on racial harmony, peace and mutual love and was happy to see independence come. President Kenneth Kaunda decorated Francis Mazzieri with the first division of the Order for Distinguished Service (ODS) in the area of Religious Education and the social field as well. Kaunda expressed appreciation and admiration for the Catholic Church and its representatives especially for their good support during the phase of acquiring independence (Frs. Cummings and Musonda 2003).

Though these and other Catholic missionaries and the Church stand out as having contributed to Zambia's independence, the Church will live to carry the blame for the role played by Bishop Joseph DuPont in the consolidation of colonial rule in Northern Rhodesia. Bishop Joseph DuPont marked the full-scale establishment of the White Fathers in Bembaland in 1898, and attempted to become Chief Mwamba due to his strong belief that control over the Bemba would give his Church many advantages.

Unfortunately, DuPont's attempts to become Chief Mwamba greatly facilitated the consolidation of British rule in North-eastern Rhodesia (Joseph DuPont, 15th March 1902). Hinfelaar (2003) points out that at the consecration ceremony of Bishop Elias Mutale in 1973, the royal drummers of Chief Makasa were summoned while the White Fathers handed him the relics of Bishop *Moto Moto*. Mutale proudly announced himself as successor of *Moto Moto*. The Church crossed its political boundary even after independence, as it is only to be a mirror of society.

When compared with other mainline churches in Zambia, the Roman Catholic Church were more involved in the political life of Northern Rhodesia. For instance, the Dutch Reformed Church supported racial segregation. Henkel (1989:60) notes that the ideology of Apartheid was applied even to their missionary work, justifying it theologically and refusing social contact with Africans whom they excluded from their homes.

The Christian Missions to Many Lands (CMML) and Seventh Day Adventists (SDA) preached the message of neutrality hence gave the impression that they were supporting colonialism. Missionaries also got involved in non-religious activities. Odinga (1967:66) cites how P.D. Snelson gave an account of the missionary involvement in non – religious activities:

> There was another context in which some of the societies become politically involved. Cecil Rhodes encouraged the societies to cross the Limpopo River and proceed into the two territories, which bore his name on the grounds that the missionaries contributed to the maintenance of law and order. ‘Missionaries’, he once remarked, ‘are better than policemen, and cheaper.’ The work of evangelism could go forward only in peaceful conditions and the views of the missionaries, therefore, coincided with those of the Administration concerning the desirability of establishing and maintaining law and order …. Where a society was closely identified in the public mind with the Administration, the missionaries were to be held responsible for repressive legislation or the imposition of taxes…An extreme example in Zambia is where the early missionaries of the London Missionary Societies found themselves fulfilling the roles of civil administrators and justices. In almost every sense of the term, they constituted the government of the area. They heard cases and imposed punishment, flogging those whose offences such as adultery or theft, were deemed to be serious.

Challenges of Catholic Missionary Work in Colonial Zambia

The Roman Catholic Church encountered problems in playing its role in the public sphere. The most notable was that of being closely associated with colonial rule. This was because the earlier missionaries had been known to have paved way for Zambia’s colonisation especially David Livingstone and Francois Coillard. Rotberg (1965) records that Francois Coillard belonged to the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS) and he was very influential in persuading King Lewanika to request the protection of Queen Victoria of England and later to accept a treaty giving Rhodes’ BSA Co virtually a free land in what became North-Western Rhodesia.

With the Lochner Treaty, which was concluded in June 1890, the Lozi were promised protection and subsidies and in return, the BSA Co had exclusive rights of settlement, mineral exploitation and ultimately control of the whole region. The treaty erroneously provided the basis for claims to the rich Copperbelt and within six months, Lewanika and his ***Kuta*** were regretting and regarded Coillard, a missionary, a traitor.

In 1924, the British Crown as agreed upon with the BSA Co, assumed the administration of the country, the first Governor being Sir Herbert James Stanley on 1st April. In addition, the Catholic missionaries also shared the same background with some colonial officials. As such, they were often seen together, visiting each other and shared light moments together and it was natural for people to see the Catholic missionaries as supporting colonial rule.

The way the missionaries had conducted themselves in other colonised states further led to the close association between Catholic missionary work and colonial rule in Zambia. Like other people of their time, missionaries shared the naivety of their contemporaries, and affirmed the values of liberal democracy and Western culture. Consequently, they lived in an uneasy tension with colonialism, having different goals.

Most missionaries supported colonialism even as they fought against its abuses. They recognized its achievements. For example, in Central Africa missionaries encouraged British control, believing it gave protection against the slave trade by Arabs, Portuguese, and others (Oliver 1952). One missionary wrote, ‘Gone is the slave trade and intertribal wars. A new era of civilization has dawned for Africa’. Such missionary support for colonial developments therefore explains why even in Zambia, Catholic missionary faced the challenge of seeming closely related to colonial rule.

Lessons for Today

It is undisputable that the work of the Roman Catholic Church was without errors in colonial Zambia. For this, widespread debate exists on whether the missionaries genuinely helped Africans fight for independence. It is still questionable whether Zambia as a country is independent in the real sense of the word. Zambia today is faced with new challenges away from the concerns of the colonial period even in the political arena. Other concerns like poverty, unequal distribution of wealth, limited access to education, health and employment opportunities, gender based violence, HIV and AIDS, corruption, alcohol abuse and many others have become a prominent feature of the Zambian society. The Church therefore has a new challenge and role to play. The argument is that the Church should play its public role because

The true gospel has to be responsive to the needs of the people.

From the inception of missionary work in Zambia, development was at the centre of the Christianisation process. Byrne (1983) shows that the church emphasised on integral development when he stated that:

> … we try to help them discover that they have a great power to make progress… Development should help people acquire attitudes of self - determination, self- reliance, dignity, achievement, unity and community building.

Therefore, the Church should continue to work towards the whole rounded development of the people. This is because it has a better position in as far as development is concerned. This is because among other attributes, the people trust the Church. However, this is not to say that the Church should take advantage of this trust by using the resources it can accumulate for its own personal use.

Again the Church should not get into extremes, as some preachers of prosperity gospel in the country have done by taking an exploitative dimension of development. Most people in Zambia live in poverty and thus they lack basic needs like shelter, education, health and water. This poverty creates in many people a desire to move out of their situations hence being vulnerable to any efforts that promise relief and fall prey for instance to some forms of prosperity gospel.

Most preachers of prosperity gospel preach a ‘gospel that promises prosperity to those who accept it as a reward, which is often measured by physical wealth (Saracco 2007). This takes away the abilities of people to work hard and this is more problematic in an age that is encouraging people to find sustainable ways of living.

The Church is often better placed to address some of the challenges Zambia faces today in the areas of education and health because from the beginning and to date, the church has been effective in reaching the most destitute. The Church can advocate for change by mobilising people to demand change. However, this role should be played with caution, lest the Church gets entangled in party politics at the expense of being a mirror of society. The Church should continually provide checks and balances on the government so as to promote social and economic justice in the nation. Most importantly, sustainable development should be at the core of the Church’s involvement in the nation's development.

Conclusion

The article has demonstrated how the Roman Catholic Church got involved in the political affairs of colonial Zambia. The article adopted a 'developmental' perspective in mission history, which appreciates the role the missionaries played in economic, social, political, and religious change in Zambia and Africa as a whole and departed from a kind of scholarship on mission history which is often anchored on harsh criticism of missionary work.

Despite the many mistakes the missionaries committed in their work, there exist something that is worth appreciating. Furthermore, the article has shown that while studies on the public role of religion in Zambia have largely concentrated on the history of Christianity in the third republic, Christianity has always had a political role since inception. The Church in colonial Zambia was very much involved in the political life of the people and therefore, acted as a mirror of society.

While recognizing the active roles in nationalistic politics played by individuals like Fr. Patrick Walsh, Bishop Rene' Pailloux, Fr. Jean-Jacques Corbeil and Fr. Van Rijthoven, Fr. Francis Mazzieri and many others, the Church provided social services which awakened nationalist feelings and the fight for dignity and sovereignty though more still has to be done to liberate the society. Therefore, the Catholic Church while claiming to be apolitical was directly and indirectly involved in the political transformation, which took place in Zambia from colonial to post-colonial Zambia.

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The Orion Cold Storage Saga: Debating 'Halaal' in South Africa

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Abstract

In November 2011, Cape Town meat importers Orion Cold Storage was accused, principally by the South African National Halaal Authority (SANHA) - a major halaal certifying body in the country- of deliberately mislabelling certain non-halaal meat products and then selling these off as halaal to its customers. Some of these products included pork which was then relabelled as sheep or veal. Since Orion had a large Muslim customer base, and because some of its products had been certified halaal by the another major halaal certifying body, namely the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC), there was a considerable public outcry amongst Muslims, which was exacerbated by national television coverage of the issue and social media. The issue rapidly extended beyond the initial court case against Orion and became a public debate about halaal procedures and standards in general and the legitimacy of the MJC as a halaal certifying body.

This article analyses reasons for why the saga unfolded in the way it did. Utilising an analytical framework developed by Shaheed Tayob in a seminal work on the halaal in South Africa, it argues that the positioning and public engagement of protagonists during the saga was importantly shaped by market considerations in a competitive halaal industry. But the article also argues an analysis of the relevant players' actions primarily in terms of such considerations does not take into account the theological dimension to this saga and so it seeks to illuminate this dimension by relating halaal to legal and methodological discourses within Islamic tradition.

Keywords: Halaal, S.A. National Halaal Agency, Muslim Judicial Council, Orion Cold Storage, Shaheed Tayob, halaal market, halaal discourses

Introduction

In November 2011, Cape Town meat importer Orion Cold Storage was publicly accused, most prominently by the South African National Halaal Authority (SANHA) - a major halaal certifying body in South Africa- of deliberately branding its non-halaal products as halaal[1] (or permitted to consume according to Islamic law). The specific accusations were as follows:

> 1. Importation of Irish and Belgian pork products and re-labelling them as Halaal sheep/veal products.
> 2. Importation of Australian Kangaroo meat and re-labelling it as Halaal beef trimmings.
> 3. Importation of Canadian dairy powder for animal feed and re-labelling it as Halaal skim milk powder.
> 4. Importation of ‘non Halaal’ Spanish poultry products and re-labelling them as Halaal (South African National Halaal Authority 2011).

For its part, Orion denied knowingly branding the products as halaal, denied some of the specific accusations, and claimed that it was a victim of an elaborate sabotage perpetrated by a former business associate (Gaertner, Press Releases 2011). Significantly, the accusations against Orion had implications for the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC), another major South Africa halaal certifying authority in South Africa, who were responsible for ensuring that the company met the requisite halaal standards.

The accusations gathered momentum through regular printed media coverage and exploded dramatically onto the national scene when Deborah Patta of Et-TV’s ‘Third Degree’ witheringly took certain key players in the drama to task. The ensuing publicity put the entire halaal industry under the spotlight, causing widespread outrage and distrust among the Muslim public and eventually lead the MJC to submit its halaal certification processes to independent review. The fracas threw into sharp focus the theological cleavages around halaal certifying procedures in South Africa, as well as the accompanying organizational rivalry, in a highly competitive industry.

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[1] Given the context of the discussion, the idiomatic South African spelling of ‘halaal’ is used instead of the more formal *ḥalāl*. In South Africa ‘halaal’ is also frequently spelt as ‘halal’.

How did a case of alleged sabotage or fraud at a specific company become a national debate about the halaal industry in general and the MJC in particular? And what analytical framework can help explain why the saga unfolded? These are the questions that addressed by this essay.

An analytical framework for the study of the halaal industry in South Africa has already been developed by Shaheed Tayob in his seminal research in this area.

Tayob has argued that the South African halaal authorities have used their position to both *service* consumer demand for halaal products as well as *create* that demand itself. They have produced a consumer that has become ‘fearful of the possibility of consuming impermissible products, and demands halal certification (Tayob 2012: 49). In addition, these authorities have tended to pursue rigid Islamic interpretations of what constitutes ‘halaal’, further embedding their role as indispensable functionaries for Muslims amidst the contemporary, technologically complex food industry. In turn, because in late modernity, consumption and identity go hand in hand, Muslim consumers desire the public consumption of certified products as a means by which they approach others and present themselves to the world (Tayob 2012: 49).

In creating that demand, halaal authorities act as ‘cultural intermediaries’- a term that Tayob takes from the work of Pierre Bourdieu. ‘Cultural intermediaries’ refer to occupations that are involved in symbolic presentation and representation of goods such as marketing, advertising, public relations, fashion and the like. The South African halaal authorities similarly provide symbolic goods to the halaal-conscious consumer while cultivating such consciousness through gazettes, road shows and radio media. They warn against the danger of involuntary non-halaal consumption, emphasize restraint and caution[2] and in the process create a consumer ‘eager to assert his identity through the purchase of halal-certified products’ (Tayob 2012: 49-50).

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[2] ‘When in doubt, leave it out’ is a well-known slogan employed by SANHA (South African National Halaal Authority) (Tayob 2012, 51)

The halaal authorities have leveraged the complexity of contemporary food production to project themselves as indispensable information allies for halaal conscious consumers. The widespread use of chemical additives (emulsifiers, preservatives, enzymes) in all sorts of foods has raised the question as to their source of origin, which may be animal as well. In addition, the actual manufacturing process also needs to be overseen. These considerations have been a major factor in the rise of halaal certification (Tayob 2012: 50). The increasing opacity of halaal has been effectively utilized by authorities such as SANHA to create a consumer who needs to be wary of potential dangers and so becomes reliant on halaal certification: 'This process of compelling people to rely on halal authorities, due to the opaque nature of halal was part of the demand creation that halal authorities have been engaged in' (Tayob 2012: 51).

Yet, Tayob suggests, a more liberal reading of Islamic law would undermine a number of the positions taken by the halaal authorities and would appear to render their functions largely superfluous. As such, in their role as cultural intermediaries, these authorities tend to converge on more rigid interpretations of Islamic law (or, at times, more liberal interpretations if it similarly consolidates this role as intermediary). It is this general rigidity of interpretation that reinforces 'the identity of the Muslim consumer while generating potential revenue for the halal certification industry' (Tayob 2012: 56).

Yet can this rigidity be explained purely or even mostly in terms of a market model? I would hesitate to agree at this point. Certainly, in looking at the unfolding of the saga, intense organizational rivalry in a very competitive industry was clearly evident and Tayob's analysis does shed considerable light on why the sequence of events took place in the way they did. But I would also like to argue that the mutation of the saga into one that ultimately focused on halaal standards underscores the continuing centrality of particular discursive attitudes to halaal in the Muslim community. Specifically, I would like to suggest that the various halaal organizations, while playing the role of cultural intermediaries, also represent certain competitive authorizing discourses within tradition that cultivate specific outlooks on halaal. For such discourses, not all readings of halaal in Islamic law are equal. It is within the internal logic of an authorizing discourse that we need to locate some of the other underlying factors that drive these organizations' approaches to matters halaal.

The Unfolding of the Saga

Orion claims that on the 24th October 2011, a former business associate attempted to extort 1.2 million rands from the company. He demanded the amount in return for 'silence' on Orion's alleged fraudulent mislabelling of certain meat or meat-derived products (Gaertner n.d.).

On the 9th of November, a court application by the South African Meat Industry Company (SAMIC), the Red Meat Industry Forum South Africa and a halaal certification body, the South African National Halaal Authority (SANHA), resulted in a search and seizure order against Orion, with computer files and documents being seized from its premises (Gaertner, Press Releases n.d.) (Lockhat 2011). The involvement of SANHA in bringing the matter to light was significant since it was the MCJ, specifically its halaal certifying arm, the Muslim Judicial Council Halaal Trust (MJCHT), that was responsible for overseeing Orion's halaal meat products. SANHA, in other words, muscled in on MJC territory.

The search and seizure order was granted after videotape evidence was presented showing irregularities and apparent fraud in the labelling processes at the company's plant.

On the 10th November, SANHA, SAMIC, the Red Meat Industry Forum and 14 others (including members of the *'ulamā'* associated with SANHA) applied for an interdict against Orion in the Cape High Court. Their Notice of Motion sought to prevent Orion from:

> - altering any information on products regarding its origin, nature or substance;
> - relabelling its imported products as halal;
> - relabelling non-food grade dairy products for animal feed as skimmed milk powder fit for human consumption;
> - selling pig hearts as sheep/lamp hearts;
> - relabelling and selling pig hearts as halal beef/veal hearts;
> - relabelling and selling kangaroo meat as halal beef cuts (chuck and blade);

- relabelling and selling water buffalo meat (from India) as beef;
- and removing expiry dates from any products (Karaan, Halal talks underway 2011).

In an answering affidavit, the company objected to the 'oppressive nature' of the search and seizure operation, undertook not to carry out any of the actions sought by the interdict, and re-iterated that it has not acted wrongfully in the manner described by the application. It asserted that the applicants' case was based on hearsay and hence inadmissible and that the allegations of fraud were orchestrated by former associates and was defamatory. In a letter to the applicants, the legal counsel for Orion called upon the applicants to offer a public apology to the company and to refrain from making further 'defamatory statements', failing which Orion would consider its legal options (Karaan, Orion denies allegations 2011).

It specifically denied that the skimmed milk powder was unfit for human consumption (Gaertner Group 2011) and its CEO Gaertner contested that the kangaroo meat was not relabelled and was sold as precisely that. In addition, buffalo was sold as beef that because it was also bovine (Karaan, Orion certification suspended 2011).

By this time, the story merited national coverage and came under intensive discussion in Muslim media. SANHA played a major role in bringing this issue under the media spotlight, frequently appearing on community Muslim radio stations to discuss the matter as well as actively writing on the issue. The primary issue of concern to the Muslim community was whether the MJCHT had been slack in its supervisory procedures at the company and how this affected the status of its halaal endorsements overall (see for example Karaan 2011).

Patrick Gaertner, Chief Executive Officer of Orion, speaking to local Muslim radio station, the Voice and of the Cape, sought to limit the damage to the company's reputation reminding consumers of its endorsement by the MJCHT:

> Most of our sales are to the Muslim community in Cape Town and all products sold to them are imported with strict certification from overseas halal suppliers. This is presented to the MJC who inspects and recertifies it. So we are deeply troubled by the offence that is

> being caused to all our Muslim clients who are our major client base and it has floundered us in a terrible way (Karaan, Ask the MJC: Orion 2011).

But the MJC was already seeking the salvage its own image amidst the saga and on the 11th November, 2011 it suspended its involvement with the company pending the outcome of the allegations. Meanwhile, the court battle and trading of accusations between Orion and its opponents continued with no clear victory for either side (Group 2011) (Karaan, Halaal Ruling welcomed 2011) (Bawa 2011) (Schroeder 2011).

Given the nature of the accusations, the focus of further public discussion had moved on to procedures for halaal certification, particularly with regard to imported meat. The MJC's Deputy President, Shaykh Ahmed Sedick, sought to assure the Muslim community that the MJCHT followed a tight system of checks and balances to ensure that the meat imported was halaal. These included flying their inspectors to abattoirs in Brazil, Denmark, China and elsewhere to ensure Muslim supervision was in place in these locations, as well as adhering to a process of double certification: a halaal certificate from the country of origin as well as re-certification of the consignments by the MJCHT once it is assured that relevant documents are in order. The consignments would then be sealed in the presence of MJCHT inspectors before being taken to cold storage. However, the MJCHT was aware that loopholes may have snuck into the system and would not clear any further consignments until the investigation had been completed (Karaan 2011).

Subsequently, various other organisations forayed into the dispute. The National Independent Halaal Trust (NIHT), another important halaal certifying body, called for a Meat Trader's Summit as a step towards finding common ground on halaal standards, especially with regard to imported meat.(M. Karaan, NIHT urges meat summit 2011). A consumer lobby group, the National Consumer Forum, supported a call for a 'Halal Bill' to regulate and standardise the industry.(M. Karaan, Call for a Halal Bill 2011)The Muslim political party, Al-Jama'ah, said it would lobby for an end to imported halaal meat products (Karaan, 'Halal monitoring inadequate' 2011). Another, hitherto little known organization, Darul Iftaa Western Cape, advertised an alternative halaal service that would ensure more 'stringent criteria' are met before certification is given (Kenny 2012)[3].

In the midst of such pressure, and the seemingly ineffective responses by Orion to the allegations made against it, the MJCHT formally withdrew its halaal certification of the company on the 20th December 2011(Karaan, MJC pulls Orion certification 2011).

But the intense community discussion around the issue brought it to the broader public focus. On the 18th January 2012 the saga became the subject matter on the nationally televised programme, '3rd Degree', aired on the channel ETv, and hosted by investigative journalist Deborah Patta.

The programme showed, amongst other things, video footage of how pork had been relabeled as sheep and veal products. It threw Orion's Patrick Gaertner's credibility into question and he came across as (or was portrayed) as fumbling on details and uninformed of what was taking place at his company. In contrast, those associates who had initially informed on Orion appeared on the programme as credible sources (3rd degree 2012). In the eyes of the public at least, this may have set the seal on Orion's alleged guilt. Patta also attempted to interview MJC representatives at their offices with regard to the issue. The MJC refused to grant such, but its representatives apparent dissembling with regard to who was at the offices at that time and its 'ducking and diving' caused a major furor (Nkomo 2012). They appeared to be evading the issue and as they were the certifying body for Orion, were guilty by association. There was a massive public outcry after the programme was broadcast and there were even calls to boycott the MJC as a halaal certifying authority.

Seasoned journalists commented that they have hardly ever experienced such an outburst of public anger directed against a specific organization – not doubt indicating the sensitivity around halaal, and pork in particular, in the Muslim public consciousness (Morton, MJC-Orion fraud halal crisis -'a real disgrace' 2012) (Karaan, When anger goes blind 2012).

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[3] Of course, the motivations behind these various groupings have historical roots. The Al-Jama'ah leader, Ganief Hendricks, was previously associated with the Islamic Unity Convention, an organization that had set itself up as a rival to the MJC's dominance in the Cape. The head of Darul Iftaa Western Cape is Mufti Ebrahim Smith who has strong affiliations with conservative Deobandi 'ulamā (and so generally SANHA sympathetic) in the north of the country, particularly Kwazulu Natal.

Despite the MJC's insistence that it was Orion, and not they, who was the guilty party, the furor undoubtedly dented the credibility of the organization and led to further calls for regulation of the industry and of halaal standards ('Excess' anger over 'PR mess', 2012) (Muslim Judicial Council (MJC) versus honesty and integrity, 2012).

In response to the outcry, the MJC launched a social media offensive in which it undertook to better communicate with the public on halaal and other matters (MJC South Africa launches its social media campaign, 2012). On the 25th January 2012, they also launched a series of weekly public information campaigns, called 'Halal Caravans' in the Western Cape, which went from mosque to mosque to explain their position and talk about halaal in general (Voice of the Cape 2012). These initiatives were a clear acknowledgment that it had lost the media battle to date.

They also pledged to do another interview with 3rd Degree's Patta, which aimed at giving their side of the case. On the 31st January 2012, the programme allowed the Muslim Judicial Council to present its case to the viewing public. However, the interrogative nature of the interviews proved daunting and they were deemed again to have performed poorly (Bawa, 'Answers not good enough' 2012).

On the 6th February 2012, amidst a continuing public outcry, the MJC agreed that an 'Independent Halal Review Panel' (IHRP) monitor its processes and procedures. The review panel consisted of 'Shariah law experts, business leaders and professionals' and undertook to examine and appraise MJCHT's oversight of 'the halaal supply chain', its processes of inspection and certification, and the cost structures associated with these processes (Voice of the Cape 2012).

What began as a local case of fraud (or sabotage), mutated into one of halaal standards, leading to a very public interrogation of a major halaal certifier.

Analysing the Saga

In the foregoing description, three factors stand out in shaping the unfolding of events: the wide media coverage; organizational rivalry in a highly competitive industry; and the public outcry. All these factors, we argue, resonate with Tayob's market model analysis of the halaal industry in South Africa. But while these factors are important, they are not sufficient. We also need to seriously take into consideration the theological reasons offered by halaal organizations for their involvement in the industry. Viewing halaal as a theological discourse, I believe, would help cultivate a more rounded and, possibly, more fundamental understanding of the saga.

(1) Engaging the media

A noteworthy feature of the saga was SANHA's deft handling of the media and, inversely, the MJC's apparent ineffectiveness in this sphere. Moulana Nakhlavi of SANHA appeared frequently on community radio stations to give voice to the argument against Orion, and implicitly to the MJC's halaal procedures. It also preferred to deal with the media directly rather than consulting directly with the MJC on its halaal certification procedures. In an interview, MJC media liaison, Nabeweyah Malick, said the organization felt disappointed by SANHA when it launched the initial court action against Orion (despite the MJC being the latter's certifying authority) - an action that was quickly highlighted in the media. The MJC was only given the alleged videotape evidence of the company's fraud less than 24 hours before the court application and so had insufficient time to formulate an appropriate response (Malick 2012). SANHA, though, denies that it attempted to bypass the MJC and claims that it tried to contact the organization a number of times before proceeding to court and even offered to pay for the latter's legal costs if they joined the action against Orion (Lockhat 2012). Whatever the truth, it is clear that SANHA preferred to deal with the issue in a very public manner.

For journalist, Shafiq Morton- who has written extensively about the halaal industry in South Africa- their publically prominent role in the saga was to be expected: the halaal industry is a highly competitive one and the action of SANHA was meant to show up the MJC as 'shoddy' and unprofessional, and incapable of dealing adequately with halaal issues (Morton 2012).

Crucially, though, it was the *image* of being shoddy and unprofessional that was being conveyed to the public, irrespective of the substance of the allegations. And so for MJC spokesperson, Malick, the main problem for the MJC was the need to counter that image. In her opinion, a random crime that could have taken place ‘anywhere’ was now portrayed (in the media) as a ‘failure’ by the MJCHT to properly monitor its halaal certifying processes. In the ensuing public outcry, the MJC’s case and explanation of its certifying procedures was not sufficiently heard (Malick 2012).

Of course, being sufficiently heard in the media is dependent upon a pre-existing media relations network and in this regard it appears that SANHA was better drilled than the MJC. Its ‘Halaal Gazette’, for example, has a national outreach while the MJCHT does not have any comparable publications of its own. Elsewhere Tayob makes the sustained argument that ‘the [media] communications of SANHA have significantly contributed to the development of the halal industry in general’ (Tayob 2012:107) and points out that ‘these SANHA communications have not been contested or matched by any of the competing halal authorities’ (Tayob 2012: 107). In contrast, Morton observes that the MJC demonstrated a lack of competency in dealing with the media and with ‘public space’. Its inadequate public comment and responses allowed the organization to be outflanked by SANHA in relations with the media (Morton 2012).

SANHA was clearly better poised, media-wise, to take advantage of the saga. As per Tayob’s framework, the situation presented them with an opportunity to increase their market share at the expense of an important rival.[4] And this they could do by presenting themselves as engaged and conscientious and, by implication, their rivals as less than that. And they were presenting to a public who were, in part, schooled by them to be ‘wary of dangers’ in regards to what constitutes halaal (Tayob 2012: 51).

(2) The Roots of a Rivalry

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[4] It appears that the MJCHT initially at least were fearful that was SANHA’s agenda behind raising the issue and that by using it they sought to encroach on the MJC’s territory. (M. Karaan, Interview with Munadia Karaan 2012)

The tensions between SANHA and the MJC are at least partially rooted in the lucrative nature of the halaal industry, estimated globally at $650 billion a year (Charles Rarick 2011).

The MJCHT is technically a division of the MJC, but is a legal entity in itself. The decision to legally separate it from its mother body took place in 1986 when the MJC was confronted by court action brought against it by the Ahmediyyah sect. The MJCHT, being the MJC's primary income generator, needed protection against any legal damages inflicted by the organisation (Morton 2012) (Muslim Judicial Council 2012). The official line on its founding is given as:

> The Muslim Judicial Council (M.J.C.) is a recognized non-governmental, Islamic Religious Authority and Judiciary based in Southern Africa and represents over 140 Mosques within the Western Cape region.
>
> The MJC, a body of Islamic Theological scholars, established in 1945, has been in the field of Halaal certification for over 50 years and was the first such authority in all Africa.
>
> The MJC is divided into various divisions and departments, namely, Administration, Arbitration/Mediation, Da'wah, Education, Fataawa, Finance, Halaal Certification & Monitoring, Muslim Personal Law, Presidency, Secretariat and Social Services.
>
> The Division responsible for Halaal Certification & Monitoring (MJC HALAAL TRUST) is registered as a Trust with the South African Government since 1986 (Registration No. T.975/92). ...The affairs of the MJC Halaal Trust is conducted by a Board of Trustees who are all members of the Muslim Judicial Council and are guided by the Fataawa department for religious criteria. The Trust is also supported by a group of Hygiene Specialists and Food Technologists…' (Muslim Judicial Council 2012).

It lists its functions as, amongst other things:

- catering for the dietary needs of Muslims both locally and internationally

- serving as the 'Halaal Conscience' of the Muslim Community by supervising & ensuring that all meat, poultry, etc. conforms to Halaal standards.
- monitoring abattoirs (focusing on Muslim slaughtermen, stunner voltages, line speeds, etc.) and food outlets (cafes, supermarkets, etc.), ensuring that edible consumer goods are prepared from slaughtering to consumption according to strict Halaal Standards (Muslim Judicial Council n.d.).

Up until the saga, the MJCHT notoriously did not issue public financial statements. It was, though, keen to emphasize that as a non-profit organization it is required to distribute 75% of its proceeds to charitable, religious and educational institutes (Muslim Judicial Council n.d.). However, as the saga unfolded and the public pressure mounted (particularly after the issue came into the national spotlight) the MJC was compelled to make its financial statements public. These showed its gross income for 2011 to be R8 078 893 while its expenditure was R7 647 383. Of the latter, R 4 306 191 was documented as 'Grants and donations' (Council, 2011).

SANHA was officially established in 1996. It claims that the rationale behind its founding was the following:

> Previously a number of small and largely regional organisations purported to certify products as Halaal. Many of these organisations had neither the resources nor the management capacity to adequately address the issue. They were, however, established with the sole object of generating income from the so-called Halaal certification process.
>
> Many products that bear Halaal certification marks have been discovered by the Muslim community to be deceptive in that the prescribed supervision and certification procedures have not been adhered to. This led to widespread confusion, suspicion and dissatisfaction at both industry and consumer level.
>
> Prior to the formation of SANHA, Halaal certification was a fragmented approach in which differences of policy between the certifying bodies were exploited, This led to the word 'Halaal' being abused at the expense of the Halaal-conscious consumer.

> As a result of the problems set out above, the only solution was to bring about an amalgamation of all role players in the monitoring and certification of Halaal. This arduous and momentous task reached fruition after almost two years of vigorous consultation and negotiation. 95% of stake holders embraced this noble national initiative and against all odds SANHA was finally launched on 20th October 1996 (South African National Halaal Authority n.d.).

While not entirely successful in amalgamating all players, it has established itself as the pre-eminent halaal powerhouse in the Gauteng and Kwazulu Natal provinces.

Unlike the MJCHT, SANHA's abridged financial statements are in the public domain- a fact it makes sure is not lost on the public (Lockhat, SANHA Financial Statements 2011). Their income as at the 28th February 2011 stood at approximately R11.4 million rand and their income at approximately R10.4 million. Their surplus for the year was R842 020 and their equity stood at R1 370 095 (Nknonki KZN 2011).

As is evident from these descriptions, the MJCHT locates itself in history, as the natural point of reference for Muslims of the Western Cape in relation to all halaal matters. SANHA also has a considerable pedigree, being in effect the halaal certifying body of the Jamiatul Ulama South Africa- an ulama body that holds considerable sway over the Muslims of Gauteng and Kwazulu Natal. However, it is not content with containing itself to its organic constituency but expressly makes its goal the bringing 'about an amalgamation of all role players in the monitoring and certification of Halaal'. It appears intent on colonizing the halaal industry in South Africa. To this end, it has repeatedly and aggressively expressed itself on halaal controversies through the intervening years.[5] Organizationally, it makes a play at being the transparent halaal certifying authority, whose procedures, costs and financial statements are standardized and open to public scrutiny. It also actively seeks to portray itself as the more conscientious of the two organizations.

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[5] See various issues of the South African National Halaal gazette produced by SANHA and available at (South African National Halaal Authority n.d.).

(3) Public Sensitivity

We have already noted the enormous public outcry at the alleged conduct of Orion and the MJC. We have also noted Tayob's argument that that the public's sensitivity to halaal matters is itself, in part at least, a product of the symbolic goods produced by halaal bodies acting as cultural intermediaries. And such public pressure in turn has significantly shaped the development of the saga.

But even if it is granted that such heightened public sensitivity regarding halaal has been cultivated by halaal bodies themselves, this does not adequately explain *why* the consumer may buy into the argument of a particular halaal body. To address such an issue, we need to take seriously the outward motivations provided by halaal bodies for their involvement in the industry since these are the ones used to appeal to the consumer. As we have seen, such motivations are inevitably centred on seeing themselves as guardians of halaal for South African Muslims. As such, they present *arguments* for their particular attitudes and views on halaal. These arguments stem from the legal discourse of Islam. But these arguments are also tied, in turn, to methodological discourses of halaal within the Islamic tradition since these bodies are not isolated entities but are tied to broader discursive formations within that tradition. While a particular legal argument may appeal to a narrow base of scholars, it is the broader discursive formations in which they take place that helps steer the public adopt particular attitudes to halaal.

My view of the relationship between tradition and discourse (and hence argument) has been significantly informed by the work of Talal Asad. Asad defines the relationship as follows:

> A tradition consists essentially of discourses that seek to instruct practitioners regarding the correct form and purpose of a given practice that, precisely because it is established, has a history. These discourses relate conceptually to a past (when the practice was instituted, and from which the knowledge of its point and proper performance has been transmitted) and a future (how the point of that practice can best be secured in the short or long term, or why it should be modified or abandoned), through a present (how it is

> linked to other practices, institutions, and social conditions) (Asad 1986: 14).

Similarly, in South Africa we find a variety of discourses, located in particular histories as we have already seen, that outwardly at least see their primary function as providing proper guidance on halaal to the consumer. What constitutes proper or correct guidance may vary from organization to organization precisely because their methodological approaches to halaal are rooted in specific interpretations offered by these historical discourses. And these organizations seek to secure the ethos of such interpretations in their ongoing formulations of halaal.

(4) Halaal as a Discourse

Tayob has investigated some of the arguments presented by halaal authorities for their positions on various issues such as the pronouncement of God's name (*tasmiyah*) when slaughtering an animal, the use of pig bristles, gelatine and shellac,the food-especially the meat- of Jews and Christians, and the issue of contamination. While there are a variety of traditional and modern Islamic opinions on these matters, halaal authorities in South Africa have tended towards the more conservative ones in seeking 'to define halal as a separately identifiable commodity' and hence create a demand for their services. And so, for example, all halaal authorities agree that the meat slaughtered by seeming Jews or Christians are not acceptable since their true beliefs cannot be ascertained. However, in certain cases the practical realities of modern food manufacture meant that liberal interpretations were also adopted in order to obtain certification contracts and promote Muslim consumption. And so for example, the MJC, ICSA and the NIHT were in favor of allowing gelatine from non-halaal sources since it enabled them to do precisely that. On the contrary, SANHA chose an opposing view on this issue but by doing so raised consumer awareness on the matter as well as further demand for halaal certification:

> On this issue, all of the authorities were therefore considering the revenue-generating and competitive implications of the certification

> industry when making their decisions (Tayob 2012: 66; see also pp. 52-72).

But can we reduce such interpretations to the laws of the market? I do not think so. The evidence simply does not bear this out. There is no causal relationship shown between market positioning and the formulation of a fatwa (legal opinion) on halaal. And neither is it clearly shown why an organization should be flexible in the face of practical constraints and adopt a more liberal position as opposed to it opting to demand halaal certification for a more conservative position. But, mostly, the fatwa itself is constructed according to certain internal criteria that have little to do with marketability. For example, Nasim Mitha, has made a fairly detailed study of how, in the 1990's, individual halaal organizations in South Africa approached the issue of gelatine from non-halaal sources. The central issue was whether these sources transform sufficiently in their becoming gelatine and thus acceptable under Islamic law. He summarized their procedures as follows:

> The general methodology of all the scholars in adducing the law was initially to go to the primary sources of Sharī'ah [namely, the Quran and Hadith]. Since no direct *nass* [textual evidence] is found either in the Quran or hadith, recourse is taken to the works of *fiqh* in which a principle can be identified. The first step is to ascertain the nature of the raw materials, i.e. whether the raw material is *halal* or *haram* (permissible or prohibited) or *tahir* or *najis* ([ritually] clean or unclean). The second step would be to identify a juristic principle, which could be used in the particular case. In the case of gelatine it is the principle of *istihalah* or *tabdil al-mahiyyah* or *inqilab al-mahhiyah* [all these terms denote the transformation of an original substance]. The next step is to elucidate the principle and check its compatibility with the problem. This is done by a thorough examination and understanding of the processes involved. Is it one of extraction or transformation? Then the utility of the product is examined. Is it one of operation essentiality or is it readily

> replaceable by other agents? Finally the verdict is issued (Mitha n.d, 296)[6].

Here there is a particular legal discourse that the 'ulama of the various groups need to follow, one that assesses the matter at hand in the light of the primary and secondary sources contained in the tradition. This assessment takes place in a manner organized by the internal structure of that discourse. For these jurists, this legal discourse forms an objective benchmark for the assessment of their views- and it is a benchmark that may allow more than one view on an issue, that is, a more 'liberal' or a more 'conservative' opinion as the case may be. Within the internal structure of these discourses, though, the term 'liberal' and 'conservative' do not feature: whether a view happens to be liberal or conservative depends on the internal argument generated by the discourse.

Yet there is another discourse that overlays this one- it is a discourse that informs an organization's *approach* to the legal discourse. This discourse is determined by an organization's historical trajectory and it is this discourse that may more properly determine whether an organization is liberal or conservative in its approach. It is in these methodological discourses where the theological differences between the MJC and SANHA mostly reside.

Traditionally, most Muslims in the Western Cape have followed the *Shafi'ī* legal school. However, the *'ulamā'* of the Western Cape, as represented in the MJC, have been rather eclectic in their approach to the issue of halaal, and have freely adopted from the *H□anafī* or other schools where they feel that such would be in the greater public interest. This eclecticism is, in a large measure, the product of a modern Middle Eastern approach to Islamic law since it is there that many of the MJC 'ulama have trained. This attitude has led to a greater leeway in matters halaal, with the more lenient opinion adopted for public consumption- in line with the legal maxim that 'there is no difficulty in religion'. And so, the Muslim Judicial Council adopts the *H□anafī* concept of *istih□ālah* in its approach to the use of gelatine. *Istih□ālah*, as indicated above, is the process whereby an originally legally impure substance (non-halaal) is made legally pure (halaal) due to a metamorphosis which renders it different from its original nature. And because the transformation undergone by the original substance is irreversible, the Muslim Judicial Council has declared the end product, gelatine, permitted to consume (Views on Gelatine 2006).

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[6] I have marginally adjusted some of the original transliteration in my quote.

In contradistinction, the traditional constituency of SANHA are *H□anafī* Muslims, and its *‘ulama’* appear keen to maintain its fidelity to that *madhhab* (school of law) as opposed to the more eclectic approach of the MJC. But they also emphasise significantly more caution in determining what constitutes halaal. ‘When in doubt leave it out’ is a motto that SANHA proclaims- in line with the Prophetic advice to avoid that which is doubtful (South African National Halaal Authority 2002). And so, even though *istih□ālah* is a concept found in their *madhab*, they do not believe that the processes involved in producing gelatine from non-halaal sources constitute metamorphosis. And so they continue to view such gelatine forbidden to consume. Additionally, they view the employment of the concept of *istih□ālah* amidst the abundance of ‘Halaal raw material’ equivalent to using a ‘technical loophole’ and should best be avoided (South African National Halaal Authority n.d.).

What explains these differing approaches to halaal? I believe that a fruitful way in exploring this issue is to explore the relationship between *fatwā*, the purely legal opinion on an issue, and *taqwā*, the more cautious course of action that may be dictated by an individual’s conscience. The primary reason for the MJC’s establishment in 1945 was as a body that would bring together the ‘ulama of Cape Town as they went about addressing issues of mutual concern and seeing to the religious needs of their community. In fact, the MJC still sees itself as a ‘bay-tul ‘ulama’- a home for all ‘ulama (Council, About us n.d.). As such, the MJC is not tied –or cannot tie itself- to specific ideological currents in the Islamic legal tradition. Given its broad based ‘ulama constituency, the MJC tends to veer towards the purely legal discourse of the issue at hand- a discourse that would be commonly agreed upon by its*’ulamā*. Yet this veering towards the purely legal discourse is itself a methodological stance: a methodology that self-consciously separates the legal from the ideological. *Fatwā* must be clearly separated from *taqwā* , a cautiousness that may be demanded by particular ideological currents in the construction of their Islamic discourse.

Such ideological cautiousness, we believe, is evident in SANHA's approach to halaal. Unlike the MJC, SANHA is tied- via the Jamiat Ulama South Africa- to such a specific current, namely, the Deobandi school. The prominence given to hadīth (Prophetic teaching) is a characteristic of this school (Tareen n.d.). It is no accident that SANHA that SANHA's motto 'when in doubt leave it out' is based on a hadith prominently quoted in issues of their gazette. As quoted by SANHA, the full hadith runs:

> The Halaal is clear and the Haraam [i.e. non-halaal] is clear; in between these two there are doubtful matters concerning which people do not know (whether they are Halaal or Haraam). One who avoids them, in order to safeguard his religion and his honour, is safe. Anyone who gets involved in any one of these doubtful items, may fall into the Haraam… (SANHA 2002).

Another Prophetic saying quoted by SANHA further cements a cautious approach to halaal matters:

> There will come a time upon my Ummah [Muslim nation] when people will not be concerned about what they consume. It will not matter to them whether it is Haraam or Halaal.

It is further reported,

> When such time appears, none of their du'aas [supplications] will be accepted (SANHA, The need to heed! Halaal cerification 2001).

There are other disadvantages as well. The Deobandi scholar, Shaykh Ahmed Abdul Mujeeb Qasmi Nadvi mentions them as follows, and I quote:

1. Haraam food extinguishes the light of Iman [faith], and the heart become dark.
2. It makes man dull, lethargic, and inactive.
3. It causes [him] to commit *Haraam* deeds and corrupts thoughts and action.
4. It kills conscience and puts a barrier between man and virtue.

Nadvi (n.d.) states:.

> The essence is that *Haraam* creates a distance between man and *Deen* [religion], ruins the Hereafter, the door of virtues is closed on him, and that of temptations and sin is flung wide open.

Sanha's views on halaal cannot be delinked from this wider discourse on the concept put forward by the Deobandi school. As a very self-conscious part of this school, they naturally integrate its concern with hadith and its particular spirituality into its approach to halaal. Halaal is not simply a matter of Islamic legal judgment but has to be linked to other elements of an integrated Deobandi discourse. Caution with regard to halaal is an inevitable consequence of this discourse. Such caution also informed its refusal to certify imported meat and its castigation of members (such as the MJC) which did do so since for SANHA the halaal status of such meat cannot be effectively monitored. The safeguards put into place by the MJC for such monitoring (discussed earlier) was clearly not sufficient by SANHA's standards (Navlakhi 2011). For SANHA, *taqwā* and *fatwā* are perhaps more closely linked than it is in the case of the MJC.

It is important to view these different emphases on the relationship between *fatwā* and *taqwā*, not as opposing viewpoints, but as locations on a spectrum[7] of differing approaches to this relationship. SANHA certainly still seeks to separate *fatwā* from *taqwā* and the MJC certainly does not believe that all Islamic legal opinions equally valid- some are closer to *taqwā* than others. But there is little doubt that the dynamics of the *fatwā*-*taqwā* relationship are shaped differently in each of these discourses.

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[7] There are other positions on this spectrum as well.A third major Halaal certifying authority, the National Independent Halaal Trust (NIHT), is also predominantly Hanafi in orientation, but finds its constituency among those following theBarelwi ('Sunni') school of thought, as distinct from SANHA's Deobandi adherence. The Barelwi/Deobandi debate is primarily a theological one and hardly features in the discussions relating to halaal issues. In fact, the NIHT also references Deobandi affiliated ulama in support of its positions.((National Independent Halaal Trust n.d.) In turn SANHA recognizes the NIHT as a legitimate role player on the South African Halaal scene. The NIHT agrees with the MJC with regard to the issue of gelatine, having conducted its own investigation in this regard. (Trust n.d.)However, with regard to the issue of imported meat it shares the same position as SANHA:'As a policy, the NIHT does not accept any halal certificate from a

There has historically been an attempt to get the four major certifying organizations, namely the MJC, SANHA, NIHT and ICSA (the Islamic Council of South Africa - who have been relatively quiet throughout the saga) to agree to a common set of halaal standards. In 2005, the National Halaal Forum (NHF), under the auspices Consumer Goods Council of South Africa, managed to get these parties to sign to a National Halaal Accord (NHA) in this regard. However, the differences on these standards proved telling and SANHA subsequently withdrew from the NHF and the accord ground to a halt in 2006. And in the wake of the saga such a call was revived (Karaan, Why no uniform halal standards? 2011). But in the light of such methodological differences, it is difficult to envisage such common halaal standards being agreed upon in a sustained fashion.

Conclusion

It was barely two decades that South African Muslims of an earlier generation used to rely on individual Muslims, Imams and disparate Islamic organizations to certify their consumables as halaal (Vahed 2000).

But the demands of globalization, the further freeing of markets in a postapartheid South Africa and the increasing complexity of food manufacture has necessitated a greater centralization and rationalization of the halaal industry worldwide, with countries like Indonesia taking the lead in this regard (Linzag 2010). It is under this broader impetus that South African Muslims too attempted to gain common accord and greater control in this area.

To an extent this has been successful. The MJC and Sanha (together with the NIHT and the Islamic Council of South Africa) are generally seen as

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foreign country "on face-value"; neither does it accept any halal standard less than what is implemented in South Africa. As such, it has strictly forbidden the usage of dubious imports by its members and certified outlets' (Karaan, NIHT urges meat summit 2011).

the authorized halaal certifying bodies in South Africa and have developed fairly sophisticated mechanisms for determining halaal. It is simply not possible any longer for an unaffiliated Imam or religious scholar to certify products as halaal. For various historical and theological reasons these organizations can claim particular constituencies but at the same time exist in mainly economic rivalry with one another. The rivalry between two of these organizations was sharply brought to the surface during the Orion saga.

A hermeneutic of suspicion, as employed by Tayob, is important on shedding light on the politics (media engagement, organizational positioning) of the saga's unfolding. These politics, as we have seen, are intimately tied to the competitive business aspect of halaal organizations, where they, like any other business, seek to increase their individual market share. Yet 'business' is not the outward purpose of halaal authorizing bodies. They see themselves as guardians of halaal in an increasing complex food manufacturing environment. We have suggested that these theological purposes need to be taken seriously by locating halaal as part of specific discourses within the Islamic tradition. As such, these organizations do not only relate halaal to elements which are 'outside' in the market but- and perhaps more fundamentally- to those that are 'inside' within the tradition. Most obviously, their formulation of halaal is inevitably bound by the legal discourse of the Islamic tradition. But their approach to halaal is also largely shaped and driven by the manner in which their methodological discourses organize halaal amidst other categories.

Yet the politics of the 'outside' can substantially affect takes place within that tradition. Quite clearly, the public pressure and the media spotlight prompted the MJC to take a more cautionary attitude to the issue of imported meat as well an inviting an inspection of its halaal procedures- in other words, a forced reconsideration of its internal halaal discourse. But the Independent Halaal Review Panel has largely vindicated the MJC's halaal procedures and so, for the current at least, a major review of that discourse has been staved off (Karaan, Voice of the Cape 2012).

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Frances Banks - Mystic and Educator: The Visionary Solipsist

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Abstract

This paper focuses on Frances Banks' spiritual life and her education career which has significance for the embellishment of both the historical landscapes in spirituality and progressive educational thought in South Africa. It argues three points: first; Frances Banks is an important figure in the history of South African spirituality and education; second her struggles with patriarchal authority have important repercussions for gender studies. Third, her leaving the Community of the Resurrection has implications for an understanding of orthodox spirituality

Keywords: Frances Banks, mysticism, holistic education, inclusive education, Religious Instruction, Christian education, Agreed Cape Syllabus for Religious Instruction, spirituality

Introduction

Frances Banks is today a mysterious and largely unknown figure in South African educational and spiritual history. Yet she had an important impact on both the historical landscapes in spirituality and progressive educational thought in South Africa. In this article I explore the development of Frances Banks' mystical thought and its influence on her educational writing as well as her twin roles as Principal of the Grahamstown Teacher Training College and Head of the Southern African Teachers' Association, culminating in her contribution to the rewriting of the Cape High School Syllabus for Religious

Instruction in 1944. In order to understand Banks' relationship to Religious Instruction in the Cape, my article focuses on her personal emotional, spiritual and psychological journey as a woman to give expression to her spiritual beliefs within orthodox religious and educational practice. There are four facets which contribute to the mystical influence on her educational thoughts. These are her reading of mystical literature, personal mystical experiences dating from early childhood into middle age, her decision to study education as a means to ensure her status as an independent woman separate from her father's agnosticism, then later, her study of child psychology and, paradoxically, her decision to enter the Community of the Resurrection Order in Grahamstown[1]. The four aspects coalesced into a struggle between her orthodox religious practice as an Anglican nun as a member of the Community of the Resurrection and her dynamic spiritual life. The conflict was expressed in an irrefragable paradox - the closer she moved to renouncing her vows, the more she invested in her mystical experiences. Her growing realization of the primacy of mystical experience led her to place the latter at the centre of educational writing and curriculum development and yet her progressive educational thought suffered due her inability to move away from a confessional approach in her religious educational writings.

I aver that Banks' mysticism was a specifically English brand of mysticism, derived from the *Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse* (1927), which she read copiously in her childhood and adolescence. This text, together with her reading of Victorian mystical literature, added to her appreciation of her spiritual mentors in England prior to leaving for South Africa. The female family figures in her youth who portrayed spirituality and missionary engagement with social inequalities also played a significant role in her spiritual development. All these spiritual influences informed the influence of her mysticism into her educational epistemology.

In contrast to her spiritual influences her father's agnosticism and Darwinism ruled her childhood home. Church attendance was discouraged besides weddings and funerals. As a consequence, her yearning mystical spirituality soon came into conflict with the forces of authority in her life. Authority, in the form of patriarchy, influenced her choice to study education and her choice to leave England for the Eastern Cape, thereby loosening the psychological hold of her father's agnosticism and affording her independence from his influence over her.

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[1] Banks's research into mysticism intensified in her middle to old age, after she left education. These writings therefore do not form part of the present research and will be explored in depth in a later article.

Her relationship with authority remained ambivalent. She had left her father's patronage and intellectual influence to enter the Community of the Resurrection Order, but this move in itself suggests a need to submit to a practical and spiritual social hierarchy. It was eventually supplanted by an all-absorbing interest in psychic mysticism when she left the Order in the late 1950s. But it is worthwhile posing the question why did Banks elect to become a nun if it did entail submitting to the practices and oaths of the Order, and significantly to the ultimate leadership of the male Bishop? Such a context does not offer the space for a woman to find her own spiritual voice[2].

Frances Banks is a distinctive educational figure who is worthy of consideration in that she did not slip totally into the clichéd thought-patterns of her day and, I will argue, her writings have relevance for curriculum design and education methodology today as marking a forgotten stage in the development of holistic and inclusive education in South Africa. This study also demonstrates the way educators' personal beliefs impact on teaching as implied by James' radical empiricism. This paper will show that Banks' personal spiritual struggles are reflected in her educational writing. Some aspects of her personal mystical journey add depth and dimension to her educational writing, whereas other personal influences collapse due to the incompatibility of her mystical ideas with Biblical and Christian orthodox education. Despite Banks' avowal that she accepted the theosophical writings of Alice Bailey (1962: 41), she could never fully embrace the theosophical belief in the truth of all religions. Her mysticism was a form of nature mysticism, akin to Teilhard de Chardin's notion of the Cosmic Christ (1955: 291). Nevertheless, as I will demonstrate, it was shot through with contradictions.

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[2] Significantly Banks choose not to join a contemplative order either in the Catholic or the Anglican traditions because certain speculative and alternative knowledge would be barred to her as a woman (1962: 15).

Theoretical Paradigm

William James' theory of radical empiricism provides a useful lens through which to read Banks' writings. For James, subjective and objective facets of experience are seen as related contexts of 'pure experience'. He does not perceive any dualism between subject and object[3]. All experiences, therefore, including mystical experiences, form part of human experience and contribute to personal identity, in addition to the meaning and sense made of observable reality. Banks' mystical approach to her educational writings is illuminated when read in the light of James' radical empiricism (2003:3). Banks' mystical experience forms part of her human experience, which informs and contributes to her sense of an observable reality because it falls into the same category as observable reality in that it is all part of her experience. I argue that, in Banks' mystical experience, the specific quality of interiority provided the psychological impetus for release from authoritative religious structures. Her mystical experiences tended to empty the orthodox formulaic religious rituals and instruction of substance. It also introduced a significant element of self-criticism, self-reflexivity and social awareness into her writing. A negative consequence of her mysticism was that it ensconced her in a form of spiritual solipsism, so that, while it released her into the spiritual freedom she sought, this was achieved at a high personal and social cost.

In terms of James' hermeneutic of pragmatic empiricism,

> real presence ... from which all our theoretical constructions are derived, and to which they must all return and reconnect themselves ... that real presence ... is homogenous, and not merely homogenous, but also numerically one, with a certain part of our inner life (2003: 112).

According to James' framework, the mystical experience needs to be placed in the context of her expatriation to South Africa and the significant relationship she shared with her unnamed friend. Banks' mysticism resonates noticeably with Virginia Woolf's essay, 'A room of one's own'. Woolf argues in this essay that the observing mind is undivided. The effort the mind takes to separate the world into categories is opposed to its natural state (Woolf 2013: ebook location 1410). I will explore Woolf's exploration of feminine identity in relation to Bank's spiritual exploration. The difference between Banks' and Woolf's struggle to find feminine identity is that Banks wanted to discover the relationship between her femininity and her spirituality, whereas in 'A room of one's own' Woolf explores the relationship between women and fiction apart from male elitism (Roe 1990: 82). Like Banks, it takes a mystical moment for the narrator in 'A room of one's own' – in this case the falling of a leaf, to enter the new order of things where all is infused by peace (1990: 83). In the essay the narrator discovers an androgynous writer's voice within a sequestered private space (1990: 83). For Banks, her desire for equitable human relations led to her partly sequestered life of service as a nun, but the significant friendship that began in Banks' mid-life provided the catalyst for her to explore her deepest spiritual impulses.

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[3] William James, in his lecture 'The Notion of Consciousness' (1906/ 1907), referred to the term 'pure experience' which seems to overcome the mistaken inference that James is referring to a substantial monism (2003: 119).

The Cape Religious Instruction Syllabus carries the imprint of Banks' preference for inner spirituality and the corresponding greater importance of deeper spirituality over external religious creed and form. Paradoxically, though, the Syllabus never succeeds in extending its reach beyond the Christian faith. This is an unexplained aspect of Banks's thought in the light of the fact that she elected to move away from orthodox Christian belief. It remains a point of speculation whether she left the Order because she realized the incongruity of working within orthodox Christianity when orthodox belief and practice held little value. But if she actually believed that Christian education held value in the broad curriculum, this points to an inherent contradiction in her thinking, rather than explaining why she left the Order.

Frances Banks: An Historical Outline

Frances Banks was born in 1895 into a middle-class family of five in England, where she was the third born. Her memories of her family from her pre-school days are that 'our chief distinction ... was my father's agnosticism which in those days bore some risk of social ostracism' (1962: 5). She identifies the basis of his rejection of Christianity as the incompatibility of Darwinian Theory with the 'acceptance of *Genesis* as literal truth' (1962:5, italics in original). Banks also experienced a tension in her life between dogma and sensory experience – one which she resolved in a radically different way from her father's agnosticism, by resorting to psychically grounded mysticism[4].

The agnosticism that gathered around her childhood home cast a repressive pall of silence around issues of spirituality, which extended to her experience of spiritually barren Biblical Studies at day-school. If it had not been for her father's sister, an evangelical missionary, her mother's 'gently devout' sister 'and her clergyman cousin in the habit of breaking a journey with us several times a year and loading us with missionary literature' she may have struggled to sustain her interest in spirituality, combined with the desire to apply her spiritual beliefs to social issues (1962: 5). Her oppressive experience in her home is acutely captured in the following description of a recurrent nightmare:

> The scene of the dream was always the same formless situation. Across my entire visual field there poured down a forceful rain of power beams beneath which I crouched alone, seeking to escape; but there was no way out, for those piercing beams filled all the space there was. As their downpour increased, I ran hither and thither at the bottom of one vast field of force, until, expecting instant annihilation, I awoke in a cold sweat screaming (1962: 6).

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[4] I have not been able to find any primary material on Frances Banks' life. The sources that do exist are her autobiography, *Frontiers of Revelation* (1962) and her educational writings which include transcripts for radio, essays, notes on the 1944 Agreed Cape Religious Instruction Syllabus and her MA dissertation. A full biographical sketch of Banks' life is beyond the scope of this article but will be researched in future articles. The existing historical data on her life is sketchy but offers rich material on her psychological and spiritual development. The outline of her life provided here is a result of inferences drawn from her own autobiographical writings.

When Frances and her sister left their home to attend boarding school in Southport, Frances, for the first time, experienced a deeper inner spirituality. She and her sister, boldly transgressing their father's wishes, secretly registered for Confirmation class and the Rector, whom Banks describes 'as an unusually spiritual man', introduced, as part of his class, conducted meditations in addition to direction for private meditation (1962: 6). During the Confirmation ceremony she experienced her first mystical experience of a 'great force descending upon me with over-powering intensity' (1962: 6). After school she worked as a young woman amongst poor dockyard communities in Liverpool and Portsmouth (1943: 17; 1962: 11) and this gave her a compassionate understanding of the inequities and hardships of disempowered people and ensured that, when she undertook her work in South Africa, she was no longer an ingénue. These combined experiences of spirituality and social injustice initiated her lifelong enquiry into both mysticism and social engagement.

Frances Banks worked in the Training College in Grahamstown for 25 years and was the Principal of the College for fourteen years. She focused on religious education and psychology, obtaining her Masters degree in the latter. During that time she increasingly experienced the strictures of the Order's life as inhibiting her spiritual growth. She did, however, find some relief in the time allotted to retreats in prayer and meditation away from her community responsibilities. During one significant retreat with a close friend she writes of witnessing her friend in her etheric body (1962: 27). This experience caused her to undergo a profound personal spiritual transformation, which involved establishing an inner centre of meaning in her life in a religious context that was becoming increasingly barren. At the time of undergoing her spiritual transformation and drafting the Cape Syllabus in Religious Instruction she was deciding to give up her vows as a nun in order to explore what she termed 'esoteric' Christianity (1962: 44). The deep reflexivity and probing of her own inner depths is reflected in the Syllabus, which invites reflexivity on the meaning of life in universal terms and the nature of the good in society and the world. The experience affected her so profoundly that it significantly influenced her teacher training and involvement in curriculum design in the Cape Province. As a direct result, she was moved to provide a spiritual map for young people entering what she perceived as a materialistically-dominated world. During the latter years at the College she visited alternative spiritual groups and meetings in Johannesburg as her interest in alternative spirituality grew (1962: 34).

In the late 1950s, South Africa’s growing entrenchment of racial animus led Banks to abominate the regressive policies of the Nationalist government when Europe was moving towards recognition of universal human rights and she was impelled to leave South Africa and return to England (1962: 50). There she continued to pursue her ideas of holistic education and the possibility of transformation through a soul-based education. She developed an English education curriculum for prison inmates (Banks 1958) and then she devoted nine years to developing the Institute of Psychic Christian research. She died in 1967 (1962: 52).

I contend that Banks’ decision to enter a religious community as a nun was motivated by her need for equitable relations with people irrespective of social and economic rank. She felt a mystically-based conviction that the soul of a person was deeper than any ephemeral transitory personality. Her soul-based value system emerged from her early reading about the immortality of the soul in certain key texts. Chief among these are Sir Oliver Lodge’s books concerning the afterlife and the immortality of the soul; articles in the Sunday papers by Reverend Vale Owens recording messages from his deceased wife; mystical poetry, by Francis Thompson, in particular; and the classic *The Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse* (1962: 7). The common themes that run through these texts and Banks’ mysticism concern the etheric realm that lies behind the veil of our senses and the reality of the soul’s immortal existence. Banks was strongly influenced by English mystic poets, in particular Francis Thompson, and she could recite his long poem *The Hound of Heaven*’ from memory. The poem concerns the inevitability of the spiritual path; the relief of finding a spiritual home; the idea of God as a divine lover and God’s desire for fellowship with people. The poem speaks of the purity of the soul veiled by earthly mortality:

> I dimly guessed what Time in mists confounds;
> Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds
> From the hid battlement of Eternity;
> Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then
> Round the half-glimpsèd turrets slowly washed again. But
> ere him who summoneth

> I first have seen, enwound
> With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned;
> His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.
> Whether man’s heart or life it be which yields
> Thee harvest, must Thy harvest-fields
> Be dunged with rotten death?
> (1965: 16)

Banks felt strongly how the soul was constricted in fuliginous earthly form, even when she decided to follow a spiritual life in a religious community. In the days before her ordination she experienced severe doubts concerning her decision. This doubt increased over the years of her involvement with the Community of the Resurrection Order as her ambivalence towards the strictures of belief grew. Yet she followed the guidance of the Order for 25 years, and accepted its rules and regulations (1962: 17). Despite her diligence and self-sacrifice, she felt bereft and spiritually exhausted. In the later years of her membership of the Order, when she was Principal of the Teacher Training College, she befriended an unnamed visiting lecturer and started reading alternative spiritual literature. This literature and new friendship provided her with inner strength and stability. Her search for inner spiritual strength and guidance had already led her to adapt her beliefs to the Biblical Education currency of the day in her contribution to the Agreed Cape Syllabus for Religious Instruction. At the same time, it led logically to her renouncing her vows, thus breaking her link to the Order and to conventional Christianity.

Associated with her mystical reading she describes, during her teacher training in Oxford, an incorporeal vision of light, power, love, amazing joy and lack of self-identity that ‘poured out into over whelming currents of intense energy’ (1962: 10) . She describes similar experiences ‘of powerful descending force with overpowering intensity’ after making her decision to enter the Community of the Resurrection Order (1962: 13). These non-physical experiences seemed, in her understanding, to relate to her soul’s journey and the life choices she was making to assist its development. Most significantly, they informed her decision not to follow a monastic life but, rather, to serve society through education.

Banks' Writings

Banks' writings are divided into three discrete categories: her South African writing, her English writings and 'channelled writings'. Although these three are distinct in content, there are definite thematic similarities that run through the texts – her emphasis on personal spiritual growth, her recognition of the whole person in terms of soul identity and her emphasis on inclusivity through acceptance of difference and the value of shared learning in groups. The most important decision I faced was whether to include the channelled writings as recorded by Helen Greaves (1969). There is enough consistency in the texts to warrant inclusion of all three categories in the research, but limitations of space dictate that the exploration of the channelled writings will take place in a later article. I do not presume a continuous consciousness throughout the three categories of texts. But the channelled texts do manifest a degree of consistency of themes and concepts with those written before Banks' death. I read Banks, then, primarily as a mystical woman educator, with a view to uncovering her role in the historical development of thinking about holistic and inclusive education in South Africa. Her writings express both her own struggles and the contours of a particular historical phase in South African educational writing. An area of particular interest is the tension in her writing between its highly progressive nature and its residual conservatism.

Description and Analysis of Banks' Mystical Experiences

Banks' mystical experiences played a significant role in giving her life purpose and direction. By drawing on James' radical empiricism, which I outlined previously, this section will focus on the development of her mystical thinking and the following sections will relate her mystical thought to her educational thought.

Banks' mysticism is atypical of mystical traditions, which focus on sequestered meditative activity, such as St. Teresa's 'Interior Castle' (2007) or the *Visuddhimagga*, which describe progressive stages of mystical realization. All her mystical experiences convey similar characteristics of impersonality and formlessness, but, as she grew older, the harshness of the mystical experience was replaced by love, inspiration and refreshment.

During her Confirmation in adolescence she describes an impersonal spiritual experience:

> There was some power, call it God, or call it Holy Spirit. But I knew no more of its nature; there was no form, content or vision, no light or sweetness; only a stark *force* which took possession of my being, entering as it were, through the crown of the head with shattering impetus (1962: 7).

By contrast, a mystical experience in her mid-life in retreat in Grahamstown is described as,

> Formless and unemotional, inspiring and immeasurably refreshing. It had a crystalline spiritual quality, unlike the heavy-laden down-pour of the early days (1962: 27).

Her mystical experiences provided guidance for her spiritual development and left an indelible imprint on her memory. Though she ruminates on the role of imagination in interpreting these experiences, she does not entertain the possibility of their speciousness (1962: 29). Nevertheless there is a noticeable correlation between her life experiences and the nature of the mystical experiences she describes. This is seen in her reading of Rudolph Otto's 'Holy Other', which resonates with her sense of a separate presence in mystical experiences. Most notably, when sitting on the Religious Instruction Syllabus Committee, she felt the presence of an invisible being beside her (1962: 25). In Grahamstown she borrowed mystical literature from a visiting lecturer, including a book entitled *God is my Adventure*, which contained a collection of chapters on various spiritual writers, including Krishnamurti and Rudolf Steiner. As I mentioned previously, during a retreat with the visiting lecturer, she witnessed her in an 'etheric vision' (1962: 27 and 28). On another occasion, after reading about the akasic records, she saw a vision of herself in ancient Egypt and, on yet another occasion, after reading Ramacharaka's *Light of the path*, she describes an illuminating glow that lit the path back to their rondavel while on holiday on the Transkei coast (1962: 29).

Banks' Educational Career

Banks' educational thinking can be divided into three categories: Inclusive education, holistic education and Christian education. These three categories are clearly demarcated in her writing, but Christian education is the weakest area. In the following section I will describe her work in terms of these three categories and then show the inconsistencies that occur in her thinking about Christian education in relation to the other two categories.

Inclusive Education

Banks worked as a social worker in the Portsmouth docks in 1922 in her early twenties (Banks 1962:11). Her experience of working with impoverished families, dependent on the declining shipping economy, led her to conclude that there could be no 'genuine human relationship' where property and differential standards of living act as barriers. Based on this painful experience she resolved to enter a religious community that would afford her the possibility of giving up a salary and possessions. Her desire to found her human experience on genuine human relationships was profoundly influenced by the egalitarian Sermon on the Mount model for society (Banks 1943: 17).

She interpreted the Sermon on Mount ethic educationally in terms of the principle of freedom that placed the student at the centre of the learning process (1943: 19). Children, she maintained, must be encouraged to be themselves and be accepted as such and teachers needed to 'release (themselves) from egocentricism (materialistic view of the self) and see self as a temporary instrument of permanent significance' Banks, 1943: 28). Anti-social behaviour should be sublimated through creative activity rather than repressed. The consistency in her thinking on this point is apparent in her 1936 publication of her MA thesis where she argues that 'writing on toilet doors should be sternly rebuked' but that a suitable time and place should be used to communicate with offenders so that the issue can be humanely investigated (1936: 145). Teachers should endeavour to 'teach the whole person, not in spite of it' (1943: 31). Banks offers a perspective on inclusive education that is often neglected in the contemporary South African understanding of holistic education, which stresses that the whole child must be developed, academically, culturally and physically. Banks contends that development of the whole person implies undivided or spiritual connectedness between self and other, expressed in the values of justice, caring, creativity and compassion. Banks lectured on her new philosophies in education as the Head of the South African Teachers' Association all over South Africa and in the then two Rhodesias (1962: 24).

In terms of learning being a shared experience based on acceptance and inclusivity, she espoused a visionary classroom methodology. As early as 1943 she advocated movable desks in classrooms and students working in groups comprising stronger and weaker students[5]. She argued that group dynamics in the classroom would lay the incentives for democracy in the larger society because they would lead students to learn consideration for others and lower the focus on self-centeredness (1943: 31-32).

Her child-centred learning focus is echoed in some forms of contemporary inclusive education theory. For example, Thomas and Loxley write that the central problem in understanding child behaviour is the 'sub-text that the real causes of difficult behaviour lie in deficit and deviance in the child' (2001: 49). By contrast, inclusive education reframes the question of needs by 'asking whose needs are being served - the school's needs or the child's needs?' (2001: 54). Rather than labelling students as successful and unsuccessful in the school system inclusive education encourages the employment of terms such as different and diverse intelligences (2001: 78).

Holistic Education

Banks' revolutionary approach to education is also displayed in her focus on holism. Her concept of holistic education was founded on the sublime verities of beauty, truth and goodness, which, she maintained, were deep requirements for the psyche. She maintained that social values had lost touch with the deeper structures of the human psyche and that along with Christianity the 'psyche needed to be rescued from private life'. All learning should be based on the need of the psyche for these three eternal values (1943: 10).

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[5] She was greatly influenced by the group techniques for spiritual development used by the Moral Rearmament group who visited the College and with whom she continued correspondence (1962: 23).

In terms of beauty, the whole person needed to be educated and this could be achieved through experiencing the spirit via creative and self-reflective activities, such as recording dreams and meaningful experiences. She also advocated employing nature mysticism through asking students to describe a nature experience (1943: 46).

The search for truth should also be evoked in the student; but here it is important to realize that Banks railed against the idea of relative truth. Rather, for her, truth had to be applicable to the lived experience, not merely confined to book knowledge. Truth as a lived experience should emphasise the thinking process over the final product of thought (1943: 52-54). She writes:

> We must, then, lead our pupils on a genuine acquisition of relevant knowledge, and follow up with a great cutting away of the dead wood of useless lumber, in every subject on the curriculum from Arithmetic onwards, making all acquisitions fit for their developing experience … of the young (1946: 54).

For Banks moral consciousness cannot be separated from truth. Goodness is related to the powerful influence of the Sermon on the Mount on her praxis. She believed that modern Christianity had 'lost touch with the deeper structures of the human psyche', being consigned to formulaic social utterances on morality. By contrast, she believed that Christianity needed to be employed to grapple with the abstract concepts of goodness, truth and beauty in daily life (Banks 1943: 55 - 56).

Banks' thought resonates with contemporary thinking in terms of holistic education. Johnson and Neagley write,

> (The) heart and spirit are deeply intertwined with mind and intellect and that education is most effective when it is based on a holistic understanding of human development, learning and education. Over the last decades, body of scientific literature has emerged that suggests that all learning is rooted in emotion, that emotion 'drives' both attention and rationally thinking. Without

> emotional connections, education becomes dry and meaningless. Human beings are most adept at learning remembering facts and concepts that are personally meaning full to them (2011: xxi).

Emotionally based education, for them, is understood as encapsulating intuitive and spiritual dimensions of the human psyche into the learning program (2011: xix).

Christian Education

Banks maintains that an inclusive and holistic education must be based in Christian education (1943: 57 and 61). Whereas her ideas concerning inclusive and holistic education were significantly advanced for her time, she was unable to provide a convincing argument for why Christian education should be central to this endeavour. Her Sermon on the Mount ethic, where she argues that 'life should be lived in acknowledgement of all (people)' (1943: 2) is salutary, but she is unable to show why linking with spirit must be done through teaching Biblical Studies. She contends that Christianity should be taught like any other subject and that, like other subjects, it requires study and practice (1943: 61). She opposes the idea that religion should be taught on a phenomenological basis, allowing students to decide for themselves which religion or faith to follow, because this was not the manner in which other subjects were taught. She did, however, concede that teaching other religions and faiths is applicable in the higher grades but only within a framework of 'progressive faith towards Christianity' (Banks 1943: 71).

In insisting on the centrality of Christian Education for inclusive and holistic education, Banks contradicts the central tenets of her educational thought; the principle of freedom which allows students to discover their own identity, her sense that truth should be applicable to individual daily experience and not extrinsically focused on texts (1943: 26 and 52). All the same, she contributed to the design of the Agreed Religious Instruction syllabus for the Cape Province as a member of the Committee for Religious Instruction for schools in the Cape Province by including reflexive existential and social issues regarding suffering. But, in providing a Christian framework to answer these questions, the principles of student-centeredness and freedom must be attenuated. This prejudice for Christian education reveals a narrow conservatism that is incongruous with her enlightened educational ideas. A good example of her prejudice for Christian Education is seen in her puritanical and, for the day, conventional criticism of the perfectly valid choice of agnosticism.

> Agnosticism ... caused by theft, dishonesty, misdemeanours such as masturbation or malicious action in quite early childhood (1946: 88).

Her attitude towards agnosticism seems to require psychological analysis. In the light of Banks' childhood experience of her father's agnosticism and the resultant repression of spirituality in her childhood home, her condemnation above may express her unresolved resentment of her father's decision. Her uncharacteristic remarks regarding agnosticism in terms of her views on acceptance and inclusivity may also be read in the light of her awareness of the conservative audience for which she was writing, although this is less likely since her writing on inclusive education and holistic education do not evince the same degree of audience sensitivity.

Banks' Mystical Influence in her Curriculum Development in Religious Education

As in Banks' general educational writing, her mystical influences are also apparent in the Religious Educational writing. For Banks the Agreed Cape Religious Instruction Syllabus (it was an agreed Syllabus because the Cape Churches approved it) needed to enhance the developing spirituality of the pupil (1943: 3). Religious education had to address the soul's search to find meaning. It therefore had to be age-appropriate and expressed in the idiom of children (1943: 26 and 1946: iii). Its content needed to develop 'right thinking that would lead to constructive living' (1946: iii). Although she was theistic, Banks believed the Syllabus should be relevant to all faiths and denominations by discussing the concrete problems of human relationships and the ethics of spiritual education (1946: iii). In addition teachers needed to engage in critical reflection on their own belief and emphasise

> the greater importance of becoming than of knowing, and of that inner development which opens the channels of awareness, creates right attitude, and gives meaning and purpose to life which can overcome circumstances and stand independent of exterior aids (1946: iii).

She sought to investigate the principles of religious education along the lines of perennial wisdom (1946: iv). Religious education, she argued, has been compartmentalized into a ‘corporate expression in the body politic’, resulting in religion being limited to codes of behaviour and agreed formulae compliant with the state (1946: 4).

Banks asserts that children are ‘live and growing beings’ (1946: 4). Therefore the knowledge they are taught must hold meaning both for them and for their growing contexts. It must neither be esoteric nor formulaic to the point of being ‘dead language’ to them (1946:4). This sentiment prefigures the work of Senge, Lucas; Smith; Dutton and Kleiner (2000: 20) on contextual knowledge and learning. They write:

> Fields of knowledge do not exist separately from each other, nor do they exist separately from the people who study them. Knowledge and learning – the processes by which people create knowledge – are living systems made up of often indivisible networks and interrelationships.

Banks’ predominantly English mystical influence of how inner spirit conspires with the spirit inherent in nature underpins the task she set for student teachers to write prose about the observations of nature (1943: 47). This had the effect of creating immediacy within learning and enhancing learners’ awareness of their own context and state of mind.

As mentioned earlier, as a young adult Banks could recite *The Hound of Heaven* and the following lines of the poem could have influenced her methodological approach.

> “your delicate fellowship;
> Let me greet you lip to lip,
> Let me twine you caresses,

Wantoning
With our lady's Mother's vagrant tresses,
Banqueting
With her in her mind-walled palace,
Underneath her azured daïs,
Quaffing, as your taintless way is,
From a chalice
Lucent-weeping out of the dayspring

So it was done:
I in their delicate fellowship was one –
Drew the bolt of nature's secrecies.

I knew all the swift importings
On the wilful face of skies;
I knew how the clouds arise
Spumèd of the wild sea-snortings;
All that's born dies
Rose and drooped with; made them shapers
Of mine own moods or wailful or divine;
With them joyed and was bereaven (1965: 13).

The strong influence of romantic poetry, replete with nature mysticism, panentheism and a sense of the divine residing in nature resonates through these lines. In Banks' writings, a similar English nature mysticism is noticeable. Here she describes an idea for lesson using nature poetry,

But if, for example, the idea of the transitoriness of beauty had arisen and been duly discussed, with its laments, consolations and so on, pupils could be set to pursue the idea by bringing poems on the subject ..., and explaining their meaning and probably after a while there would not be too high a proportion of 'Daffodils'! Similarly with love and love-lyrics, and many other subjects which link the child with the thoughts and aspirations of mankind throughout the ages (1943: 52).

Quotes like the above from her book, *Towards a Christian Society* (1943), reveal the tension between her developing inner mystical spirituality and the formal aspect of her social position as a nun and Christian educationalist. In the book she attempts to find a position where her mysticism can coexist with orthodox Christianity. But try as she might to adapt her mysticism to Christian education, the book's concluding chapters on 'Rearing Christians' and 'Christian collectivism' struggle to contain her developing view of education based on mysticism in that she is unable to bring her acceptance of difference and diversity into religious thought to the extent that she achieves in her general educational writing.

The Agreed Cape Syllabus for Religious Instruction

The Agreed Cape Syllabus for Religious Instruction deserves attention because it is a complex document with certain noteworthy innovations that prefigured contemporary values education ideas. My close analysis has revealed three levels of discourse in Banks' writing and the Agreed Cape Syllabus for Religious Education needs to be read with these three levels in mind due to her significant contribution to its content. The first concerns her reading in the fields of mysticism and psychology; the second regards the intentionality with which she set out to influence educational thought with mystically based notions, and the third is her attempt to frame her intentions and influential reading into Christian Education. In order to grasp the interplay of these three discourses it is necessary to appreciate the conditions of her writing. Banks was intentionally engaging with mystical ideas within material conditions in order bring about change in the way religion was taught in schools.

The writing of the Religious Instruction Syllabus in 1944 took place during Jan Smuts' second term as Prime Minister. The Second World War was drawing to a close. Afrikaner Nationalism was becoming a more cohesive resistant force to the United Party. In terms of education, Afrikaner nationalists were resistant to Smuts' continuing policy of Anglicization initiated by Milner, including education since the defeat of the Boers in 1902 (Kallaway 2002: 14). In addition, the end of the Second World War saw a massive increase in industrialization and urbanization in South Africa, which brought large numbers of black and white workers into the economy. The resultant politics, under the guidance of Jan Hofmeyr, was more open than it had been for the past decades, allowing for more political, social and economic freedoms (2002: 13). In four years' time, however, the National

Party would become the nation's ruling party and institute Christian National Education, which championed Boer history, Afrikaner religion, political and economic interest.

In 1944 the South Africa education system still had strong ties to English education and the Agreed Cape Syllabus was implemented in the same year as the 1944 Education Act in England and Wales. Section 28 of the Act stipulated that county authorities needed to agree on the content of religious instruction and that no central authority could dictate to local authorities on its agreed syllabus. The English Agreed Syllabus could not be denominational but the implied assumption was that religious education should 'nurture children in Christian religious culture and values' (Jackson 1999: 89). Its only central dictate was that every school day began with collective worship (Section 25). The Agreed Cape Syllabus, although not as democratically motivated, was also an agreed syllabus in that church bodies had to give their assent to it.

Robert Jackson (in Chidester *et al.* 1999) outlines the development of Religious Education in Britain following the1944 Education Act leading up to the 1988 law which stipulated the Religious education should be 'non-indoctrinatory and should cover Christianity and the other religions practiced in Great Britain' (1999: 89). But in the 1940s and 1950s, religious education in Britain was predominated by Biblical Studies (Jackson 1999: 89). The Agreed Cape Syllabus for Religious Instruction followed the same emphases of Christian values education derived from Biblical Studies. However the Agreed Cape Syllabus displays evidence of certain nascent insights into values-based education. This approach is being explored in contemporary curricula, where students are encouraged to develop their own values and religious understanding and extend their religious values into the social context (Jackson 1999: 96 & du Toit 1998; 69). This trajectory of values education is later expressed in 'The national policy on religion and education' (2003) in South Africa, which embeds the Constitution's values of citizenship, human rights, equality, freedom from discrimination, freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion in the education system where all religions and beliefs should be honoured within the democratic environment (Juta's Statutes Editors 2009: 289).

Banks' Influence on the Religious Instruction Syllabus (1944)

In contrast to the 1944 Education Act in England and Wales, which stipulated daily formal general worship, the Agreed Cape Religious Instruction Syllabus focused on the 'upward growth of man' and the 'spiritual cultivation of man [sic]' (1947: 7). Using the Bible as an historical narrative, the values, of prayer and meditation as a basis for spiritual faith were emphasized. In Banks' supplementary book to the Religious Instruction syllabus, *Give the living Bible: Notes on the Cape Provincial Syllabus for High Schools*, her suggestions for the content of the Syllabus reveal a clear mystical understanding of the stages of the soul's development. But it is interesting to note in the later Standards the inclusion of existential questions and values despite her homogenous Christian focus. Her intention is to build from a basis of personal development to collective awareness in later standards (1947: 8). A similar developmental model is, coincidentally, used in the current South African Life Orientation Curriculum, which begins with the focus on personal well-being in Learning Outcome 1, proceeds to issues of citizenship in Learning Outcome 2, then finally to responsible engagement with society through a chosen vocation in Learning Outcome Four (Learning Outcome Three provides knowledge, skills and values for physical health which supports all the other Learning Outcomes).

In Standard 7 the focus is on personal prayer and meditation and the insights gleaned from such spiritual activity. Examples of such activity are taken from the Old Testament, for instance – the vastness of the desert firmament, Jacob's ladder dream, Jacob's dream of wrestling with God and Joseph's dream of greatness (Banks 1947: 12).

In Standard 8 students learn about the structure of the kingdom of God from the nuclear to universal perspective: they investigate different contexts ranging from home, neighbour and church to the Kingdom of God (1947: 35-46).

In Standard 9 students are introduced to the rest of the Biblical narrative, with the Pauline letters predominant. A mystical influence is very apparent in Banks' use of terms such as 'boundless consciousness' and 'shrunken consciousness' to describe the unredeemed (1947: 75).

In Standard 10 the Syllabus focuses on thinking about critical issues in society, such as human suffering, sickness, poverty, child welfare, prisoners' rights and rehabilitation, the abolition of slavery and child welfare

(1947: 85-87). There is a also a return to the focal point of prayer and meditation in reflecting on these issues (1947: 92-95).

The Agreed Cape Religious Instruction Syllabus is striking for its day in its complete lack of Nationalist content, in contrast to the way religious instruction was utilized under Christian National Education. Banks' connection between spiritual development and engagement in social issues prefigures current values-based education where self-development is prioritized before social development, making her contribution significant. But, as I have already noted, in her essays on education and her curriculum development Banks was unable to extend the notion of 'boundless consciousness' to include other religions or beliefs. The Cape Syllabus she helped write remained fixed in a Christian framework. In the standard 7 syllabus she explicitly states that 'upward spiritual progress is contingent on differentiation against other beliefs. Her use of examples from the Old Testament of warnings against polytheism, idolatry, sorcerers, superstition and human sacrifice' underscores this point (1947: 9).

The recurring contradiction that occurs in Banks' Cape Religious Instruction Syllabus is that while the emphasis is on spiritual growth, the growth of consciousness is undermined by the limited scope of the content in Christian faith. This is similar to her educational writings, where inclusive and holistic education is limited and vitiated by Christian spirituality, which, she maintains must drive the growth of values-based learning.

I question whether Banks was able to achieve her agenda of instituting a mystically-based agenda for Religious Instruction in the Cape, which sought to develop personal spiritual growth together with critical reflection. Unfortunately, the short period of implementation makes it impossible to conjecture about its effectiveness, given that CNE became the authority for curriculum design in 1948.

Banks seems to have had a personal agenda in her educational writing and contribution to curriculum development. When she was unable to implement her ideas, she left South Africa. This view is apparently supported by the fact that when Banks returned to England in the mid-1950s, she developed a social reform education syllabus for prisoners and later helped develop the Institute for Christian Psychic Research, to which she contributed until her death in 1967. In her defence, though, it is evident that her personal journey focused on engaging with issues of social justice from a mystical standpoint from early adulthood. Her spirituality was governed by independent growth and not through religious structures and authority. The arrival of a strong nationalist agenda in Religious Instruction was anathema to Banks' principles of individual spiritual development and equality for all. Ultimately her life-long struggle with authority, while trying to develop her own spirituality, led her to leave the field of organized religion and education due to the contradictions with her mystical perspective.

Analysis of Banks' Mysticism via William James

As I have mentioned, James' radical empiricism provides a convincing argument for how sense data combine and interrelate to form meaning at the level of experience. His philosophy includes subjective and objective categories of experience and shows how meaning is derived from the interconnectedness between these two modes of experience. In terms of understanding how Banks' mystical beliefs impacted on her educational writing, James' radical empiricism is helpful in that it situates experience, rather than the objective world, as the basis of knowing. In this sense personal mystical knowledge becomes one of the varieties of knowledge along with knowledge of 'things' in the world that interrelate and provide meaning.

A criticism of James' radical empiricism is that it is always in danger of slipping into solipsism in that the object of intention is always a matter of experience or a 'state of mind' (James 2003: 1232)[6]. Banks' inability to shift from a Christian framework towards an equal acceptance of other religions and beliefs could be construed along these same solipsistic lines – her mysticism was always confined to her interior spirituality and therefore would always struggle to find a voice in the democratic equality of different beliefs and religions.

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[6] William James did write an essay defending his argument for radical empiricism against the charge of solipsism. The charge maintained that if consciousness pointed to an object (of consciousness) surely that implies transcendence of a state of mind. His defence relied on pragmatism in that he argued that the matter whether it was consciousness, pointing to' implied transcendence or whether it was a momentary foregrounded experience is a matter is matter of verbal dispute. Nevertheless he contends it is not the object of experience but the flow of experience that offers meaning value and not the object of experience itself (James 2003: 123-126). In Banks' mysticism, her mystical and educational experience still remained her own experience and therefore was not completely transferable into the public domain.

Nevertheless her mystical experiences enabled her to explore innovative ideas concerning holistic and inclusive education, ideas that are still under discussion in contemporary educational thought. For this reason, her contribution to the progressive educational thought in South Africa is important and deserves notice. Paradoxically, though, her insights into the values concerning holistic and inclusive education were arrived at via spiritual experience, which deepened her religious allegiance to Christianity, albeit to mystical Christianity. The solipsistic element of her mystical experiences ultimately undermined her ability to realize the full reach of what she aimed at in terms of her educational thought. Perhaps, with reference to Virginia Woolf, Frances Banks found her room of her own in mysticism. In doing so she resolved her issues with patriarchy and authoritative structures but that came at a cost to her own educational thinking.

Conclusion

In much the same way as human rights discourse focuses on the recognition of a universal human dignity, based on an abstract measure of equality, and gives expression to values in the South African Education Curriculum, Banks recognizes the need for education to be founded on universal abstractions, namely Goodness, Truth and Beauty and the spiritual need among students to experience these values in their education. The current South African Curriculum, specifically in Life Orientation and Religion Studies, is founded on the Human Rights-based principle of equality within diversity.[7] Banks sought to move away from a clichéd and formulaic educational lexicon and endeavoured to create her own register, which recognized personal responsibility for choices and challenged students to align their personal values and beliefs with issues of social justice in a similar way followed in the Life Orientation Curriculum Citizenship theme which teaches learners to develop their own mission statement at the FET level. In doing so, her educational thought foreshadows the intention of Religion Studies and Life Orientation in the current South African Curriculum to reflect more accurately the values of thoughtfulness and self-reflexivity needed in a world layered with materialism.

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[7] In the Life Orientation Curriculum equality is taught in terms of the Constitution’s Bill of Rights. This is expressed in the human rights education in Learning Outcome 2, for example in the form of gender equality, religion/belief equality and media freedom. The Religion Studies Curriculum is founded on the six Human Rights values that derive from the Constitution; equity, tolerance, diversity, openness and accountability.

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Frances Banks – Mystic and Educator

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Origin and Development of the 'New Apostolic Reformation' in South Africa: A Neo-Pentecostal Movement or a Post-Pentecostal Phenomenon?[1]

Irvin G. Chetty

Abstract

Within South African Pentecostal/Charismatic spheres, since 2000, a new configuration has surfaced that has been called the 'New Apostolic Reformation' (NAR). The adherents of this movement have sounded a call for the Pentecostal/Charismatic church, in particular, to return to what they describe as the 'Apostolicity' of the church.

The emergence of this New Apostolic Reformation is more than a South African phenomenon. C Peter Wagner, almost a decade and a half ago, in his book, Churchquake (1999: 5-8) contended that there were, at least forty thousand 'Apostolic' churches representing approximately eight to ten million members in the USA. He asserted that this New Apostolic Reformation is also rapidly growing in all of the six continents and is the 'greatest change in the way of doing church since the Protestant Reformation.'

In South Africa the following New Apostolic Reformation groupings have emerged, namely the New Covenant Ministries International (NCMI), Grace International (GI), Congress World Breakthrough Network (C-WBN),

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[1] An earlier version of this paper was read at the 2012 ASRSA Annual Conference in June 2012 at the Joint Conference of Religion and Theology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Pietermaritzburg. While the NAR has been introduced elsewhere, the special focus of this paper is on theories of the origin and development of the NAR.

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International Strategic Alliance of Apostolic Churches (ISAAC) and Judah Kingdom Alliance (JKA).

The paper will also contend with the nature and extent of their deviation from 'mainstream' Pentecostal doctrines and practices.

A number of theories have attempted to explain the emergence of new religious movements (NRMs), inter alia, deprivation, revitalisation, and brainwashing. This study focuses on one of these theories, namely, revitalisation, but also favours a holistic approach to an understanding of the NAR.

Keywords: New Apostolic Reformation, Pentecostalism, Revitalisation,

Introduction

Almost a decade and a half ago C. Peter Wagner, in his book, *Churchquake* (1999: 5) contended that 'The greatest change in the way of doing church since the Protestant Reformation is taking place before our very eyes'. He was referring to what has come to be known as the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR). According to Wagner (1999:5),

> The New Apostolic Reformation is an extraordinary work of God at the close of the twentieth century, which is, to a significant extent, changing the shape of Protestant Christianity around the world…new forms and operational procedures began to emerge in areas such as local church government, interchurch relationship, financing, evangelism, missions, prayer, leadership selection and training, the role of supernatural power, worship and other important aspects of church life…for the most part they are taking the form of loosely structured apostolic networks. In virtually every region of the world, these new apostolic churches constitute the fastest growing segment of Christianity.

Very often the call for the 'constant need for new wineskins' is heard (Wagner 1999: 15-17). It is adduced that the new wine of the NAR cannot be contained in the old wineskins of denominational structures and processes.

The Present State of the New Apostolic Reformation in the North

Wagner (1999:8) further claimed that there were, at least forty thousand ‘Apostolic‘ churches representing approximately eight to ten million members in the USA in 1999. Earlier in 1998 Wagner (1998:4-6) edited a book called *The New Apostolic Churches* where he listed 19 groupings as exponents of the NAR. Their leaders included: Professor C Peter Wagner, Apostle John P Kelly, Apostle John Eckhardt, Pastor Michael P Fletcher, Pastor Bill Hybels, Bishop Wellington Boone, Larry Kreider, Pastor Roberts Liardon, Rice Brooks, Bishop Bill Hamon, Pastor Billy Joe Daugherty, Pastor Dick Iverson, Pastor Ralph Moore, Dr David (Kwang Shin) Kim, Pastor Lawrence Khong, Pastor Paul Daniel, William F Kumuyi, Bishop Dr Eddie C Villanueva and Dr Joseph C Wongsak.

For all the proponents of the NAR, both in the North and the South, a reading of Ephesians chapter 4 verse 11 constrains them to call for the restoration of the fivefold ministry (of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) within the church as the agency of the kingdom. This call has been made before but the *modus operandi* of these ‘governmental gifts’ is different with the roles of the apostle and prophet dominating NAR ministry.

The Focus of the North

Elmer L Towns in the foreword to Wagner’s book (1998: 7-9) saw America

> … moving into postmodernism - a time when the Church no longer drives culture, nor does the Church have much influence on society. Our culture is going beyond its past Christian influence to the neutralization of Christianity. We have become open to all religions ….

He asks the critical question, why has the church become ineffective? Towns contends that some of the wrong things have been changed and some of the wrong things have been retained. Also, according to Towns loyalty to the scriptures has been confused with loyalty to ecclesiastical traditions.

Towns predicted churches emerging with new names, methods and worship expressions. New alliances would emerge where the glue that binds churches together would be the 'Great Commission, winning people to Christ, worshipping God, Small-group Bible studies, energetic worship, gifted leadership and strong personal relationships' (1998:8). These alliances of churches would be committed to the essentials of Christianity but with changed methods of evangelism, worship, Bible study and leadership.

Wagner (1998: 18-19) explained the motivation for the name of 'New Apostolic Reformation' for the new movement. The word 'reformation' is used because this movement appears to be, at the very least, as radical as the Protestant Reformation almost 500 years ago. The term 'apostolic' captures the strong focus on evangelism and a return to the apostolic ministries of the New Testament church. 'New' merely adds a contemporary dimension to the name. Apart from this new name, Wagner (1998:18-25) states that these NAR churches display eight distinguishing features which reflect novel authority structures, leadership training, ministry foci, worship style, prayer forms, financing, outreach or evangelism and power orientation.

The most distinctive characteristic of the NAR must be its constant reference to the seven mountain mandate.

The Seven Apostolic Spheres, Seven Mountains, Seven Gates of Society

According to C. Peter Wagner (1998: 25) the society 'to be transformed is not just one big conglomerate, but a unified whole that is made up of several vital pieces, each one of which must take its own path toward transformation. These segments of society should be seen as apostolic spheres'.

Wagner (2006: 113) outlines the 'strategy for war' for marketplace transformation, and makes an appeal for leaders to 'standardize our terminology' for the '7 spheres' or '7 mountains' or '7 gates' of society that must be transformed. Wagner's list embraces the home, church, school, government & politics, media, arts, entertainment & sports, commerce and science & technology.

These seven spheres of influence play a critical role in the shaping societies. Wagner writes further:

> … [Wallnau] calls them the seven mountains. The warfare strategy is

> that 'if the world is to be won, these are the mountains that mold the culture and the minds of men. Whoever controls these mountains controls the direction of the world and the harvest therein' (2006: 114).

These seven spheres or mountains are perceived as having 'principalities and powers that control' them. Wagner goes on to describe how each of these seven mountains or spheres will become an 'apostolic sphere.' Apostles 'are the only ones who will be able to change the power structure at the top of each mountain' (2006: 114). Wagner calls these 'extended church apostles' who 'will be able to lead the army of God into those strategic battlefields'. He then again refers to Wallnau:

> How do we go about reclaiming the mind molders of nations, and what does this have to do with you and your calling to the marketplace? Everything! You are about to be drafted into an elite unit of marketplace commandoes …. Look at your occupational field and see it as a mountain. What companies and people are at the top of that mountain? Why are they at the top? What skills, knowledge, and personal characteristics are needed to occupy that position? What would need to exist for you to occupy the top of that mountain?' (2006: 115).

While Lance Wallnau popularized the idea of seven mountains through his DVDs it was Johnny Enlow, who authored the book called 'The Seven Mountain Prophecy' (2008: 115).

The Present State of the New Apostolic Reformation in the South

Within the global south Pentecostal/Charismatic spheres a new configuration of churches, aligning themselves to the New Apostolic Reformation, has also appeared. They comprise the following groupings: Judah Kingdom Alliance (JKA), New Covenant Ministries International (NCMI), Grace International (GI), Congress World Breakthrough Network (C-WBN), and International Strategic Alliance of Apostolic Churches (ISAAC).

According to T.R. Naidoo (2009: 48-51), at an Apostolic School of

Ministry conducted in 2005, the idea of networking with alike-minded churches was discussed. A relational model as the one used by David at ‘Hebron’ of a seamless ‘alliance’ to galvanise the fragmented nation of Israel was tabled. Churches could achieve a common goal through such an alliance while maintaining their existing affiliation or independence. These and subsequent meetings eventually facilitated the emergence of the Judah Kingdom Alliance (JKA). Sagie Govender, Frans du Plessis, Thamo Naidoo, Eddy O’ Neill, Shaun Blignaut, Ben Kleynhans, Maxwel Ramashia, Alexander Chisango and Kobus Swart formed the core leadership structure of this alliance.

The Focus of the South

A comparable growing concern, like their NAR Northern counterparts, of the lack of efficacy of the church, especially in the post-*Apartheid* South Africa has been evident in the South. The Northern influences on the South are inescapable given the fact of our global village. Apart from easy access to information, the existence of satellite Christian television platforms allow for viewing in ‘real time’ rendering the influence instantaneous.

In the South there has also been a disquiet and restlessness. In some sectors a measure of disillusionment has appeared. The old pattern of ‘doing church’ has led to this stalemate. While proponents of the NAR are grateful to their denominations for being the vehicle that ‘led’ them to Christ, they do not feel obligated to propagate their church traditions within their communities. They view this as vestiges of ecclesiastical colonialism. They were previously often ‘prohibited’ from fraternising with their ministerial colleagues within the same *locale*. Their similar socio-political and economic context has now catalysed them to ‘even more zealously’ re-examine the scriptures through ‘postcolonial and post denominational eyes.’ There are now very few ‘Holy Cows,’ with little being untouchable and beyond scrutiny.

The earlier mentioned eight characteristics (of a new authority structure, new leadership training, new ministry focus, new worship style, new prayer forms, new financing, new outreach or evangelism and new power orientation) as outlined by Wagner (1998:18-25) continue to also play a decisive role in shaping the focus of the Southern NAR.

In addition to the opening references to the fivefold pattern of ministry of Ephesians 4:11, an important text for the NAR of the South is 1 Corinthians

12:28, ‘‘And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues’ (ASV). The primacy of the apostolic and prophetic offices within the NAR should be noted. The apostle also functions in the role of a teacher, by ‘accurately’ decoding God’s divine blueprint for this season.

This paper will use the example of the JKA to offer some insight into the NAR of the South. After their formation the JKA subscribed to the following objectives:

- ‘The JKA is a global apostolic alliance comprising of diverse autonomous ministries, churches and individuals who have covenanted to partnership in seamless relationships in order to advance the Kingdom of God in the earth. It was emphatically stated that the JKA will not be promoted but the ‘kingdom of God in every city and nation.

- The JKA was founded on the premise that the household of God is built on the foundation of Christ Jesus as laid by the apostles and prophets (1 Corinthians 3: 11, Ephesians 2: 20). The JKA is committed to the furthering of the apostle’s doctrine (Acts 2: 42), as entrenched within and revealed through the infallible word of God.

- The JKA represents an alliance of elders who are passionately dedicated to the re-establishing of ancient truths and lost principles (Isaiah 58: 12), ensuring the perpetuation of God’s divine order and technologies in the earth’ (Naidoo 2009:48-49).

Subsequent to the formation of the JKA there were a steady stream of enquiries by independent and denominational ministers about joining this alliance for fellowship and interaction with the NAR while remaining within their denominations.

NAR and Evangelism in the North

The NAR, as was noted earlier, is the fastest growing part of Christianity that is motivating non-denominational churches and leaders to fulfill the Great Commission. Aggressive outreach seems to be a common feature of this movement. According to Wagner (1999: 183) their evangelism involves four distinct tasks: '(1) expanding the local church, (2) planting new churches, (3) mercy ministries in the surrounding community and (4) cross-cultural missions'.

NAR and Evangelism in the South

The Great Commission of the gospels (now viewed by the proponents of the NAR as the second Great Commission) is an integral feature of Southern NAR practice. The earlier mentioned primacy of the apostolic office has an embedded connotation of evangelism from the Greek term *apostello* (literally meaning 'to send'). Using terminology from genetics, proponents of the NAR would often contend that evangelism is an integral component of apostolic DNA. It can be easily observed, especially in the South, that there is also a penchant for the use of computer terminology. References are replete with references of the need to change old operating systems, delete old hardware and old software, install new operating systems, new hardware and new software, format, change the ram, reconfiguration, migration, and the like.

Expanding the Local Church

The tendency with the NAR of the South has been to explore creative, innovating and cutting-edge strategies that 'capture the imagination' of those outside the sphere of the church. More recently the costs and efficacy of the erstwhile popular tent evangelistic campaigns has been re-examined.

This focus on expanding the influence of the local church constitutes the out-reach arm. This is complemented by an equally innovative in-reach programme that nurtures new Christians in the faith in a similar fashion to how children are socialized within families. The Bible calls this disciple-making (Buchan 2001:156). The biblical mandate is not to convert people but to make disciples. Also the Great Commission is deemed as mandatory for all Christians, not just the clergy. Elsewhere, Chetty (*Towards a Praxis Model for Ministry as a Family of Families,* 1988) and Chetty (Re-contextualisation of the Lukan *oikos*: A Social Scientific Approach, 2002) offers helpful perspectives for disciple-making from a family sociology and social scientific New Testament vantage points, respectively.

Planting New Churches

Here again, the South is 'in sink' with the North on the issue of the consuming demands of renewing or planting a church. Accurate Building School (ABS) which relates to the JKA has been in the forefront of planting new churches in Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe. The scope of missions to the nations (*ta ethna*) is a clarion call that has been heeded by the NAR of the South.

The three self formula (self-supporting, self-governing and self-extending) of Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson is being used with adaptations within NAR circles (Verkuyl 1978:184-185). Newly planted churches require support that these networks and alliances are providing. The NAR has noted the interdependent model of the early church. This is in keeping with so-called 'daughter' churches which assisted the 'mother' church in Jerusalem during the first century. Christian support should be viewed as multi-directional.

Mercy Ministries

The previous *Apartheid* context of South Africa has spawned a number of watershed documents: the *Kairos* Document by the ecumenicals, the Evangelical Witness by the evangelicals and the Relevant Pentecostal Witness by the Pentecostals (Chetty & de Kock 1996: 68-87). Pentecostals of the South, like their Latin American who grappled with liberation theology in their context, struggled with the imposed dichotomy between the sacred and the secular. A conception of God as being uninterested in the totality of their lives began to be interrogated. Within the NAR ethos the emergence of what has been termed as a 'Dominion' focus is a response to this false dichotomy.

It is therefore no surprise to discover that RivLife International, a section 21 Company of River of Life Christian Ministries (ROLCM), reflects this holistic perspective. RivLife International 'is a multi-faceted Community Centre representing the social reconstruction and development programme of ROLCM'. The brochure of RivLife asserts that

'Poverty is a historic problem resulting in destitution, disenfranchisement and the lack of access to economic and social privilege. Having identified that this is the case, RivLife aims at holistic community development, which will address spiritual, social, economic, emotional and physical issues'.

The six impact points of RivLife are: Health (HIV/AIDS), Social, Gender, Nutrition, Youth and Economics. It should be mentioned that such a comprehensive programme of reconstruction and development is not typical of either the JKA or the NAR of the South.

Cross-Cultural Missions

Global Pentecostalism has reflected a shift of gravity from the North to the South. More Pentecostals live outside of the range of the 'northern developed' nations. They occupy the so-called 'southern world.' It is commendable that missions are emanating from the South also. Given then that missions is mandatory for all Christians, its flow should be multi-directional. It is noteworthy that the NAR, by its practice of cross-cultural missions, is gradually challenging, the import mentality of the South and beginning to replace it with an export one.

A caution has been sounded by the NAR of the South to South Africans from either an Indian or African cultural background that to develop an 'urge' to 'send' missionaries only to India and Africa respectively, can become problematic. Given the recent *Apartheid* past of South Africa, the NAR takes care not to create an impression of a 'mono-cultural ethnic sending God'. They contend that God called Abraham out from his people. The NAR of the South is correct when it asserts that the God of the Bible transcends ethnicity.

The next focus of this paper will be upon the nature and extent of the deviation of the NAR from erstwhile Pentecostal doctrines and practices.

NAR as a Neo-Pentecostal Movement or Post-Pentecostal Phenomenon

The similarities of the NAR with the erstwhile dominion theology & the Restorationist Latter Day Saints Movement should be noted, especially in the South where the NAR is gaining ground. Proponents of the NAR, in both hemispheres have often made references to the necessity of new wineskins. Generally, the NAR does not see any elements of continuity between any old order and their new movement.

Deviation from Pre-Millennialism

For most Christians present actions largely determines the future. They believe they will ‘reap what they sow.’ In stark contrast, for most Pentecostals the future determines the present. Their view of eschatology governs their view of current events. Their interpretation of prophecy has had a very significant effect on their perception of world historical events and on their political and social response to those events. On a smaller scale their eschatological views have affected their own history by stimulating evangelistic and missionary endeavour (Wilson 1988: 264).

Major sectors of Christianity throughout church history have displayed little interest in developing an elaborate millennial eschatology. The passage of 1000 years is simply an indicator of Christianity's historical age. As with many other newer religious movements, the term millennium has a special meaning for Pentecostals, who have developed a set of theological categories which are both distinctive and controversial. Most of their forebears, deriving their doctrine from a fundamentalist interpretation of the Bible, declared themselves to be premillennialists who expected a second advent of Christ to occur prior to the establishment of a one-thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ described in Revelations 20:1-7. For many Pentecostals, this premillennial belief could be further described as pretribulation (rather than mid- or post-tribulation). Adherence to a pretribulation posture guarantees believers that the ‘rapture’ (sudden removal of Christians from the earth before the great Armageddon) will spare them of the terror and destruction destined to fill the earth before the promised thousand-year reign of Christ. In contrast to some premillennialists who view the fulfillment of biblical prophecies as gradually unfolding within the long history of the church, most Pentecostal (and fundamentalist) premillennialists are futurists who expect the major fulfillment of biblical prophecy to occur in the imminent future. This unique millennial eschatology was especially significant for early Pentecostals who focused on the second coming of Christ rather than creature comforts and this-worldly gain, using their limited resources to spread the Gospel in the ‘last hour’ of human history, as it was known.

The NAR, in contradistinction to this common premillennial view of Pentecostals, favour a postmillennial position. Is the NAR a post-Pentecostal movement with this deviation from a cardinal Pentecostal doctrine? According to the NAR only when the seven mountains are infiltrated, influenced and eventually dominated will the *parousia* occur.

A Renewed Focus on Prophecy versus Glossolalia

Early Pentecostals, records Pentecostal historian Edith Blumhoffer, 'intentionally ignored historical tradition, opting rather for biblical terminology and precedent'. Their leaders worked during the early decades of the 20th century to mobilize resources 'for a brief and intense spurt of activity they thought would usher Christ's return' (1993: 4). Although Pentecostals shared their restorationist worldview with other fundamentalists, they differed in their belief that the birth of Pentecostalism with the fresh outpouring of the Spirit was 'itself a fulfillment of end-time prophecy' (Wilson 1988: 264). As did the Apostle Peter (in the Acts of the Apostles 2:16-21) nearly two thousand years earlier on the Jewish feast of Pentecost, Christian Pentecostals have continued throughout the 20th century to proclaim that the words of the prophet Joel (Joel 2:28-32) are now being fulfilled:

> In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (NIV).

An appreciation of the meanings attached to and functioning of prophecy is an important key to understanding Pentecostalism at the onset of this third millennium. Although glossolalia, the often self-identified factor said to distinguish this rapidly growing world-wide Pentecostal movement from other approaches to Christianity, has been the subject of more scholarly studies, prophecy has always been an integral part of Pentecostalism's beliefs and practices. Different groups have emphasized different outward signs of the Spirit-baptism sought by Pentecostal believers. However, these diverse Pentecostal sects and denominations are agreed that such baptism will be accompanied by paranormal experiences, including glossolalia (speaking in tongues), healing, demonic deliverance, miracles and prophecy. As we enter into the second decade of the present millennium, it appears that the prophecy is increasing in importance. Theological nuances about prophecy continue to proliferate within the many streams of the Pentecostal movement.

The NAR, in the South, emphasizes prophecy at the expense of glossolalia. Is the NAR then a post-Pentecostal movement with this deviation from this important Pentecostal practice? The practice in most NAR formations both in the North and the South show a growing movement away from glossolalia.

A Selective Hermeneutic

Given the selective fundamentalist and allegorical interpretation of biblical passages, a comment on the hermeneutics of the NAR is warranted. In the history of hermeneutics the dangers of an unbridled allegorical interpretation as a license for a ‘wax-noise’ method is generally acknowledged. Extreme should therefore be taken not to subvert the *theopneustos* (God-breathed) meaning of scripture for any narrow, distorted *eisegesis* (reading in) of our own presuppositions and biases. The legacy of Pentecostal’s problematic fundamentalist interpretation of certain passages of scripture is still a rampant practice. The challenging goal of exegesis (drawing out) of the Holy Spirit-inspired meaning should remain an ardent pursuit of every adherent in vintage ‘Berean’ style. These Bereans were people who were characterised as those who ‘searched the scriptures daily’ (Acts 17: 11). Ironically, the NAR of the South often quote this text without any rigorous commensurate searching like these Bereans.

Theories to Explain the Emergence of the New Apostolic Reformation

A number of theories have attempted to explain the emergence of new religious movements (NRMs), *inter alia*, deprivation, revitalisation, and brainwashing (Glock 1964: 24-36; Turner 1979). This study focuses on one of these theories, namely, revitalisation, but also favours a holistic approach to an understanding of the NAR.

Revitalization Theories

NRMs can reflect a range from Utopian, reformist, messianic, revivalist to that of charismatic. Wallace proposes the term revitalization to designate all the nuances implied in these terms. He defines a 'revitalization movement' as a 'deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture' (1956: 265). The persons involved in this process feel that the cultural system in which they are living is unsatisfactory. This was the case with the NAR of the South. Mainline Pentecostalism was not addressing their concerns which led to a feeling of gross discontent. As a result, the emerging NAR tried to change it, not gradually, but immediately and radically. In tandem with the revivalist notion, the NAR also positions itself as a restorationist movement. It seeks to restore the pristine lost teachings and practices of the early church. In many parts of the world, NRMs have been explained according to this revitalization model. Here, we will focus on the messianic and millenarian, expressions of this theory.

Messianic movements 'crystallize around a single figure who is regarded as a new messiah' (Jules-Rosette 1987: 84). Those figures around whom these groups centre are leading personalities who claim to be a new Christ, or who claim to be his or her direct messenger and last prophet. The founders of the NAR are individuals who have a charismatic personality which enables them to create new religious answers or, at least, to restore the earlier discarded ones. In the case of the NAR of the South, claims emerge of being an apostle or a prophet, a type of 'set man' from God who accurately discerns this present *kairos* (season). This charismatic emissary, upon receipt of 'microns of grace' disseminates the divine strategy to its adherents.

Millenarian movements centre on the promise of life in a Golden Age, which is 'an ideal end point at which a new world will be established' (Jules-Rosette 1979: 19). These movements are not new. They were particularly active during the Middle Ages, when they functioned as a catalyst for the lower classes in times of disaster, poverty, sickness, and also as a response to authoritarian forms within the Church. The NAR of the South, with its new focus on the Seven Mountains Mandate, also predicts a golden era when these seven spheres are initially infiltrated, then influenced and eventually dominated. This essentially would imply that in the economic sphere there would be a wealth transfer from 'non-adherents' to adherents of the NAR.

Evaluation of the Theoretical Models

Deprivation theories give too much importance to the negative factors contributing to the origin of NRMs, whereas revitalization theories emphasize positive ones. There is a hope for better days, the longing for an era of plenty where no death or sickness will pervade, the desire for a time of peace and harmony. In the case of the NAR of the South these ideals and dreams are realised in the arrival of the charismatic apostle and / or prophet mobilising the ‘faithful’ to dominate the seven spheres of society.

Deprivation theories were used to explain the origin and development of the Pentecostal movement where the marginalised adherents moved from the periphery to the centre of society. Perhaps a modified understanding of deprivation could throw some light on the emergence of the NAR. There was a growing dissatisfaction of functioning as consumers of wealth with an ardent longing to become elevated as creators of wealth. Being at the centre of society was still a situation of deprivation. Adherents aspired to graduate to the status of owners and leaders. NAR adherents boldly proclaimed that they destined to be the ‘heads and not the tails’. Thus, the NAR, are an answer, among others, not only to particular problems, but to a whole set of desires, and dreams.

Both the deprivation and revitalisation theories contain insights which may be very useful for understanding NRMs. However, scholars now favour a holistic approach because there are no single causes. As La Barre (1971: 26) says, ‘in the study of crisis cults, the word 'and' serves better than the contentious word 'only’. NRMs should not be explained by a single cause, be it economic, political, military, social, or psychological. There is a need for a more holistic approach which can account for all the variety of phenomena.

The NAR of the South is a southern solution for the challenges of the South. They provide answers for misfortune and illness, for the waning of Pentecostal explanatory systems. A similar growing concern, like their NAR Northern counterparts, of the lack of efficacy of the church, especially in the post-*Apartheid* South Africa has been evident in the South. In the South there has also been a disquiet, restlessness and disillusionment. Old patterns of ‘doing church’ have proved to be irrelevant and ineffective. Proponents of the NAR do not feel obligated to perpetuate ecclesiastical colonialism within their communities. Their postmodern context has sparked a re-examination of the scriptures through ‘postcolonial and post denominational eyes,’ with very little being sacrosanct. This ‘holy discontent’ is viewed by many NAR adherents as 'divinely inspired.' God is an active participant in history, now also through the NAR. To explain the NAR as mere human activity through both the deprivation and revitalisation theories is to miss perennial divine strand.

Concluding Remarks

Based on our discussions of how the NAR has responded to certain cardinal Pentecostal issues, it reflects a neo-Pentecostal stance while on other beliefs and practices it show traces of major deviations from its Pentecostal traditions. The latter could well mean that the NAR is post-Pentecostal movement.

A number of theories have attempted to explain the emergence of new religious movements. This study while focusing on revitalisation theories favours a holistic approach.

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Religion and African Indigenous Knowledge Systems: Healing and Communal Reconstruction in African Communities

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Abstract

This article is of the view that current research and scholarship in pastoral theology in Africa is influenced by Western knowledge systems (WKS) and culture at the expense of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (AIKS) imbedded in African Traditional Religions (ATRs). ATRs are contextually relevant and can be valuable to pastoral care givers. The author argues that Christian pastoral care givers can benefit from objective research of AIKS embedded in ATR and culture as this will unearth African paradigms, worldviews and the Ubuntu/ botho traditional concepts. The author looks at current research in ATR being done by Christian theologians, the training of pastoral caregivers based on western paradigms and the resilience of ATR and African culture as treasure for social construction and state construction in Africa. Western knowledge systems are different from African knowledge systems therefore WKS cannot be pre-packaged as solutions for African challenges. This article seeks to propose research and teaching in pastoral theology that can be relevant and effective for African challenges. Instead of the Christocentric form of inculturation that we currently have, this paper proposes a dialogical approach that will treat the two religions objectively through research and teaching.

Keywords: Indigenous knowledge systems, African traditional religion, pastoral care, culture, research and teaching, Christianity and social construction

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Introduction

The importation of the Christian traditional cultural religion to Africa and continuing attempt by pastoral care givers to use sermons and western cultural practices to replace or kill the indigenous traditional cultural religion and worldview of the Africans has resulted in the development of religious conflicts and syncretism (See Moyo 1988:202; Sitshebo 2000; and Hilde Antsen 1997:47). Using the Ndebele speaking people of Matabo in Zimbabwe as a case study, this paper argues that research in pastoral care and religion in general has been biased towards the Christian culture thereby undermining the potential benefits from African Indigenous Knowledge Systems that are inherent in the indigenous African traditional cultural religion. In Matabo among the Ndebele, so far, all religious related research has been published by Christian theologians who have an inherent bias of wanting to promote and protect Christian doctrines by criticizing anything from the religions of the people. In fact in most cases Christian theologians who are in the majority of cases church ministers will not want to be seen to contradict the doctrines of their denominations hence their research findings are always favouring the perpetuation of the Christian culture. Other than Christianity, all monotheistic religions have the problem of being divisive by defining outsiders as the lost other since each view itself as THE religion (Aaseng 1992: 14-18). So Christianity, Islam and Judaism are religions that protect their space by demonizing[1] the other.

In addition to the above it can be argued that the social effects of the church can be seen in the social practices of the church. The religious practices of the church in a society are always in dialogue or contestation with other religions located in the context of practices (Seoka 1997:1-2). Within the ambit of religious practices, practical theology is manifested through pastoral care. I view pastoral care as a ministry by the church that seeks to keep believers in the fold through indoctrination and in a way condemning other religions to the benefit of Christianity. Pastoral care is also when the church responds to the socio-economic needs of society through material and non-material means (Harris 1990).

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[1] Often some Christian ministers label religious representations that do not meet their understanding of their form of Christianity, as satanic or demonic.

The thesis for this paper is that research in practical theology should focus on inculturation to develop contextual relevant religious practices that will be based on African indigenous knowledge systems that are inherent in the African cultural practices. Instead of research that seeks to discredit other religions, practical theologians should do research that seeks to promote positive dialogue amongst religions. Masoga in a paper on *The Role of African Intellectuals in the Reconstruction of the African Social Fabric* is of the view that,

> African intellectuals need to understand the past systems located in different regions of Africa. The challenge is to critically look at these systems and see how they had transformed the past into different forms and how they could currently be used for addressing the 'now' of African problems and challenges, or how they could be criticized because they have failed to assist African aspirations in the face of colonial and neo-colonial hegemonies (Masoga 2002:309).

African traditional societies are rich in indigenous knowledge systems that can contribute to communal social constructive values and practices which can enhance the reconstruction of a health society. Care from African religions, *sangomas,* extended family networks, fear of broken relations angering ancestors and ultimately God (Magesa 2002:197), communalism and care from traditional initiation schools can still be valuable indigenous knowledge that can contribute to the healing and communal reconstruction of the African communities.

It is my contention that there is need for new research by theological institutions on indigenization and inculturation of the pastoral care ministry of the church to unearth the valuable African indigenous knowledge systems that have been so far condemned by the church yet they can be constructive for the community. The paper will look at possible research in the broad area of pastoral care, training of pastors especially in the mainline churches, communalism and the role of religion and community reconstruction, religion and moral regeneration and environmental conservation. These tenants can only be achieved where there is inculturation and not acculturation as we see today. Acculturation refers to a system or social development where an inferior group adopts the cultural traits of a dominant powerful group through assimilation and coercion. In this article acculturation refers to directed and systematic controlled change. Acculturation links well with Ashley Crossman's understanding of forced cultural change when he says,

> directed change occurs when one group establishes dominance over another through military conquest or political control; thus, imperialism is the most common precursor to directed change. Like incorporation, directed change involves the selection and modification of cultural characteristics…The processes that operate under conditions of directed change include forced assimilation—the complete replacement of one culture by another (Ashley 2002: Website)[2].

Crossman's understanding seems to be the reality of the life of the church and academia in general. Civilization through formal education is the forced westernization of the African. The church is civilizing the pagan Africans hence the dominance of western culture in the life of the church.

On the other hand the meeting of cultures should see a mutual coming together of cultures where there is critical engagement of both the positive and negative aspects of each culture. This is what I see as inculturation. Inculturation is when two or more cultures influence each other without one dominating the other from a class perspective. Acculturation is very difficult to experience because society is usually in a continuous struggle for dominance. However inculturation is the ideal for the church where there is respect for the other as an equal creation of God.

Research and Teaching on Other Religions in Theological Institutions

This section argues that there is need for research to be done on the research being done in religious studies by Christian theologians or Christian ministers so as to be critical of their voice as they deliberate on religions that their faith criticizes and seeks to destroy. How do they speak on the positives of other religions but still remain faithful and doctrinal correct in their own denominational doctrines. Secondly, when Christian senior minsters teach their junior ministers in a seminary setting about other religions, what will be the motive, what do they want to achieve? Is it to promote or to criticize the other religions? One of the key challenges is that research and general scholarship in religion in theological institutions is done by Christian scholars the majority of whom are ordained minsters of their denominations. For example in Zimbabwe at the United Theological College students graduate with a certificate in theology and one of the modules that they do is Phenomenology of Religion. For many years now this has been taught by a practicing church Minister. This minister is a product of the same college. Yes, he furthered his education at the University of Zimbabwe but again his lecturers were Christian scholars. At the University of KwaZulu-Natal students can graduate with a bachelor in Theology having done only one religious studies module, that is, Religious Studies 101. In the cluster of theological institutions in Pietermaritzburg that include St Joseph’s Theological Institution, Lutheran Theological Institution, Seth Mokitimi Methodist Seminary, Evangelical Seminary of Southern Africa, the congregational Church House of Studies and the Anglican House of Studies all teach their trainee ministers a module on other religions. A survey in 2013 showed that all the lecturers in the above theological institutions are ministers of the church who are expected to produce good ministers of the church who can convert people to the church away from other religions.

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[2] Crossman, A. 2002. *Acculturation*. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/3083/acculturation (Accessed on 29/01/2013).

The end result of the above scenario is that pastors who are products of the above institutions are finally deployed to parishes and congregations with limited subjective knowledge of other religions. In such a case these pastors will avoid any meaningful dialogue with other religions. We have observed this in many instances where pastoral care givers conflict with their members who on specific instances especially on rites of passage such as birth of a child, marriage and death will introduce some practices that are foreign to the church such as carrying the spirit of the deceased using a branch of a tree form the point of death to the grave (Sitshebo 2000). Church leaders do not want these branches and the conversation between the deceased and the living in the church (Sitshebo 2000). However the minsters do not fully understand what will be happening and how this aids grieving. Ministers simply see this as paganism. The argument is that churches see traditional practices which are a wealth of indigenous knowledge as an enemy of the church yet they do not understand their enemy. Instead of pastoral caregivers learning about the cultural religious practices and use them to enhance grieving or counseling, depending on what ritual is at stake. A minister working in a variety of cultures should understand issues of cross cultural counseling for contextual relevance (Moila 1988; Msomi 1991; Nxumalo 1996;and Keteyi 1988). This will be discussed in detailed in the section on rituals and the pastoral care ministry of the church.

The second challenge based on research and teaching is basis of indigenization and inculturation. Christian theologians and pastoral care givers are the ones that determine what indigenization or inculturation means and how it should be defined and implemented. Inculturation is designed to benefit the church. In a way it is a ploy by the church to swallow African Traditional Religions instead of finding common ground for working together for the benefit of society at large. Research on inculturation should be objectively studied to see the flows of current literature biases if the teaching and research in pastoral care should be relevant to communal reconstruction in Africa.

The third challenge based on teaching is the use of language. Owomoyela as cited by Masoga asks

> What is the connection between language and cultural identity? What danger does the continued ascendency of European languages pose for the vitality of African languages (Owomoyela 1996:3 in Masoga 2002: 313)?

In response to Owomoyela, Masoga says,

> It is a fact that language is a technology of power—language becomes an instrument of power tied to class. Since every language has words full of ideological connotation and are value laden those who learn the language absorb and interiorize the ideology of the ruling class (Masoga 2002:313).

The reality described by Masoga is very evident in the life of the church. In Zimbabwe are churches that are in rural areas where people speak the same language with the pastor but sermons are delivered in English. If not, the pastor keeps on pointing to certain concepts in English without a substitute in the vernacular. English has become a symbol of success and civilization both in the church and the community. Another challenge that demonstrates that English has overcome local languages is that if an African person makes grammatical mistakes when speaking in English he/she is ridiculed by both blacks and whites whereas if a white person makes mistakes as they try to speak an African language people sympathize with them and appreciate their effort. In Zimbabwe English has become the basic language for communication with some Africans even changing their voice tone to sound very English or more English than the English themselves. Masoga cites More who bemoans that Europe

> has infiltrated Africa's secret corners: homes, meetings, social gatherings, literature, family and interpersonal relations. Europe becomes the mediator in the lives of Africans who use English—whether domesticated or not—as a medium of communication. The ubiquity of English arrests Africa's effort to overcome European power and tutelage (More 1999:343 in Masoga 2002:313).

The answer to this is for African ministers to be trained mainly in the African languages.

In the above cluster of theological institutions in Pietermaritzburg, theology is done in English yet the majority of the students have English as their second or third language. Edwina Ward notes the challenge of language in doing Clinical Pastoral Supervision in South Africa in Grey's Hospital in Pietermaritzburg. She says,

> …South Africans speak many different languages with eleven being recognized as official languages. An implication for pastoral ministers and supervision in a cross-cultural communication is the language difficulty experienced between supervisors and students and between pastoral counselors and clients (Ward 2003: 52).

In the teaching process students are taught in English acquiring skills and vital vocabulary in English yet they are to work in a predominantly non-English environment doing preaching and pastoral care counseling. Students can benefit from doing their training in vernacular.

UKZN needs to be commended on its language policy on teaching where the university encourages the use of English and IsiZulu. However this needs to be taken further to a level where students can have the privilege to write some of their assignments and exams in IsiZulu. Currently all theological exams are in English except translations of the bible in Greek and Hebrew. Further on the university can pilot a system where students doing isiZulu can learn in isiZulu and write their research dissertations in isiZulu unlike the current scenario where isiZulu research dissertations are written in English.

A case in point was in 2010 when I was teaching homiletics, liturgy and worship module at UKZN and LTI. I had two students who were failing to preach in English. I experimented and asked them to write and present their sermons in vernacular. The students wrote their sermons in IsiZulu. The sermons made a more sense than all the other sermons presented by Zulu and Xhosa students in English. The students are put under a lot of strain to learn English and then learn how to preach and then go back to their parishes and start struggling in translating what they would have learnt in English back to IsiZulu or any other vernacular. This is the same as what is happening at the United Theological College in Harare in that students are trained in English yet 99% of them will never be deployed in an English speaking congregation. Why can’t vernacular be the medium for learning when the recipients of the education will work in a vernacular environment. Going back to the LTI scenario, oral examiners who are 99% vernacular wanted the two students to be examined preaching in English for the benefit of the 2% examiners who could not follow sermons delivered in Zulu. Theologians need to seriously consider doing research in the teaching of theology in the local languages and language symbols. Edwina Ward in her experiences in the CPE supervision of pastoral students says,

> Pastoral supervision relies on the process and skills of listening and talking. The communication involves both the verbal and the non-verbal. We are placed in a predicament when the supervisor and the

> student can only communicate in English as many of the students come from a wide range of backgrounds and different cultures within Africa. An added complexity arises again when both the student of CPE and the person they visit are using English to communicate and neither has English as their first language (Ward 2003: 53).

So Ward is pointing out this exact disadvantage within the process of CPE. It cannot be over emphasized that there is need for transformation in the teaching of pastoral care practitioners for effectiveness.

In saying the above I am aware of the challenges that will face the theological institutions if they were to implement the UKZN language policy that in actual fact legalizes the teaching of different modules in the university in vernacular. Theology is interesting in that despite the challenges of local languages versus English, theologians think that you can be a good theologian if you do theology in Greek and Hebrew. In this case there is a tendency of drifting away from the local language. The second possible challenge is that many theological disciples are still staffed with experienced non-vernacular speaking professors who therefore cannot teach in vernacular as articulated by Ward. However language carries a lot of symbols and meanings that at times cannot be translated into another language and still carry the same meaning. We can also not unjustly benefit a few professors and senior lecturers at the expense of many students and the communities that they in turn go on to serve. However UKZN has offered lecturers who want to learn isiZulu for basic classroom communication a module that they can do at the expense of the university.

This means to say that pastoral care givers are trained in a western environment in order to work in an African environment. Mogomme Masoga bemoans the western laden intelligentsia of African Scholars. He says

> African intellectuals were trained within a context that does not take their cultural background into account. This then lead to a clash between ‘the perceived to be an intellectual thought’ for Africa and the ‘ought to be an intellectual thought’ for the continent … intellectuals at our universities find it difficult to relate to problems African communities face … (Masoga 2002:304).

What Masoga is describing befits many African pastors in that they have to be Europeanized to be good ministers of the church thereby losing vital contact with the cultural context of Africans whose intelligentsia is located in a western worldview while working in an African cultural context. Challenges faced by society are then misunderstood and misinterpreted resulting in a disconnection between pastors and the community. Masoga further castigates the African intellectual when he says,

> Their intellectual lives aim at the protection and support of the position, institutional function and discourse of their masters (Masoga 2002:3004).

Applied to the church, this means that the church is viewed as more important than the people; ministers would rather lose the people than lose the church and its teachings. The local culture and knowledge systems are baptized to match the teachings of the church.

Research and teaching in pastoral care should be transformed to contextualize their training environment. In fact the culture of training institutions is very different from the culture of the parish setting in most parts of Africa. Instead of wanting to understand the African traditions and culture at the level of training, trainee ministers are made to understand and experience the western cultural dynamics. I see the training of ministers as part of a bigger project by the church to kill African traditional religions and culture by using transformed sons and daughters of the same culture disguised as pastoral care givers. In agreement with the above argument Johannes Seoka argues that theological education is of western orientation, uses, western spirituality and worldview to convert Africans. He says the training of ministers

> … should be approached from the context of culture, if it is to make sense. The approach will emphasize culture of the people whom the gospel/Christianity reaches, thus making culture the primary factor in the method of doing African theology and spirituality. At the moment the teaching method is of Western orientation and engages African experience as an afterthought. This approach has to a very

> large degree handicapped the development of African theology and spirituality (Seoka 1997:1).

African theology and contextual theology currently uses WKS and research paradigms. In this way African theology will remain subordinate to Western grounded Christian theology.

The Problem of Christianity Failing to Understand African Traditional Religion

Society is losing out on indigenous knowledge systems imbedded in African Traditional Religions because of lack of objective scholarly research that seeks to understand ATRs without demonization or abuse by Christianity. Godwin Chavunduka, writing from Zimbabwean perspective says,

> There has never been any genuine dialogue between practitioners of the African religion and practitioners of other religions in Zimbabwe. In fact, for over one hundred years attempts were made by Christian missionaries to destroy the African religion. They viewed the African religions as a childish religion of fear, full of black magic, sorcery and witchcraft; full of superstition and senseless taboos; a religion that encouraged people to worship their ancestors instead of worshipping God (2001:3).

The lack of objective research by Christian theologians resulted in this attitude described by Chavunduka. This kind of attitude towards ATR leads to the fact that ATR and African culture’s contribution to social construction is being undermined by subjective research, yet I think there is a wealth of indigenous knowledge systems imbedded in African culture that can contribute to social construction and ultimately state formation in Africa. In agreement with Chavunduka, Christopher Grzelak in his book *The Inclusive Pluralism of Jacques Dupuis, Its Contribution to A Christian Theology of Religions, And Its Relevance to the South African Interreligious Contexts* raises interesting views of ATR and Africa in general as perceived by missionaries. Grzelak says,

> One may only speculate as to whether the first missionaries who came to South Africa from Portugal in the fifteenth century, ever expected to find God in this part of the world. They believed that they had brought God to the 'dark continent' AS Africa was generally regarded at that time. During those days a Christian attitude towards other religions and believers was considered hostile and the religions were seen as a threat to the Christian faith. This also applied to the African traditional religions which were regarded as 'pagan' in contrast to the true faith (2010:186).

This attitude of viewing ATRs as worshipping a wrong God whose name is written with a small letter 'G' as contrasted with the Christian God whose name is written with a capital letter 'G' continues to this day. The enmity between the church and ATR still exists and Grzelak is of the view that this antagonism is perpetuated by lack of knowledge and therefore understanding of other religions (2010:186). It is therefore imperative for pastoral care scholars to carry out objective research to unearth the rich foundations and values inherent in ATR for social construction.

As alluded to earlier on, Christian theologians seem to allow pastoral students to study very little about other religions that are viewed as enemies of Christianity and evangelization. The studies seem to be aimed at knowing the short comings of ATR so as to use those as entry points to attack it during sermons and bible studies. In other words studies are meant to show the primitivism of other religions for purposes of benefiting Christianity. Yet if ATR is objectively researched, pastoral care can benefit from the African indigenous knowledge Systems inherent in the religion and the African culture.

Christianity seems to continue to have good sermons because of the existence of its 'enemies'. I often think that if a miracle could happen that God takes away the devil from the world, Christianity will not have an enemy and therefore it will cease to exist! What else could it talk about? Christianity had labeled and named the practices of other religions at times with critical misconceptions. For example amongst the Ndebele people of Matabo there is a tendency of talking to the ancestors for a variety of reasons such as thanks giving, petitions or to make some enquiries. This act is called *ukuthethela* in *Isindebele*. *Ukuthethela* is not the same as *ukukhonza* which can be translated to English as to worship. However Christians have simply agreed to say people in ATRs worship ancestors (Chavunduka 2001) yet they do not, they simply *–thethela amadlozi*. The closest to this would be words such as evoke and venerate. This kind of deliberate ignorance that sounds like propaganda is perpetuated even by highly educated Christian theologians. However what is interesting is that Christians also evoke or venerate the dead almost every Sunday. If they have questions that they cannot answer they refer to the dead, for example from the bible, the apostles and everyone else who speaks in the Holy book, except may be Jesus who is said to have resurrected[3].

Seoka is of the view that,

> It could not have been the African people who coined the phrase ‘ancestor worship’, because they do not believe that ancestors can be worshiped at all. It must have been in someone’s interest to demonize African culture and Religion in order to promote In order to promote that which appealed to him or her (Seoka 1997:5).

In fact Seoka should also realize that what we all comfortably call African Traditional Religion was named by Christian theologians and not the adherents of this religion. The religion did not have a name because it is a way of life. People still go *ukuyothethela* rather than go to African Traditional Religion as you would hear people saying that they are going to church. This is a symptom of a misunderstanding of African traditions and culture by Christian theologians who have chosen to be a voice for ATR yet at the same time continue to preach against it.

The misunderstanding by Christianity, based on findings by Christian researchers resulted in enmity between Christianity and other religions. Chavunduka laments the fact that the church built its membership by destroying ATR and the African culture in people (2001:3). Chavunduka says that the whole project of the evangelization of Africa was premised on the conquest of ATR and African culture (2001:3). This aspect has been achieved and ultimately African indigenous Knowledge systems have been replaced by Eurocentric Western knowledge systems[4]. Chavunduka says missionaries would,

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[3] It is not the intention of this paper to interrogate rituals such as *ukubuyisa* (bringing the spirit of the dead person home) as a form of resurrection which is comparable to the Christian resurrection of Jesus.

> … transplant a Christian faith with all its European cultural background, imagery and orientation: They did not see any need for entering into any dialogue with the practitioners of the African religion and other community leaders (2001:3).

Failure to dialogue with the practitioners of ATR and African leaders, in my view is what resulted in misconceptions about ATR.

Chavunduka further argues that the war against ATR and African culture by missionaries was assisted by colonial masters who joined hands with the church. This is seen in the fact that;

> With the assistance of the colonial administrators it was decided that African shrines or places of worship were to be destroyed; their spirit mediums or religious leaders were to be ignored and where possible they were to be stopped from organizing and conducting their religious services; Christians were to be discouraged from consulting African traditional healers; Zimbabweans were told that participating in any traditional rituals of a religious nature was a sin (2001:3).

Africans are a religious people as can be seen in the next case study of the Ndebele people. The understanding of the ATR basis of Africans' faith can contribute to social health and community building. Any form of community and nation building that can be aligned to religion and the African world view is bound to fare better than the western founded African nations.

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[4] Professor Godwin Chavunduka was the former vice chancellor of the University of Zimbabwe. He was one of a few professors who was openly an African traditional healer and spirit medium who defied the church despite getting education through the church. Chavunduka also started a school for the training of African Traditional healers and herbalists in Bulawayo. Chavunduka is now resting with his ancestors.

Research by Pastoral Theologians on the Religiosity of Africans and the Resilience of ATR and African Culture

Pastoral theologians can benefit from understanding the sources of the resilience of ATR and African culture. Lan David says that the church and the colonial government failed to destroy ATR and African culture as evidenced by the fact that people still go to several shrines for worship around Zimbabwe, spirit mediums are very active conducting services, '… the detail of their ritual practice has remained consistent in a most remarkable way' (1985:227). So despite the onslaught against ATR by the church, ATR has survived the test of time. Africans are very religious and in their religiosity still seek solutions and guidance from ATR despite being Christian converts. Current research by African theologians has the urgent task of unearthing and preserving that which African Christians are seeking for which they are not able to get from Christianity. In this section I will use the example of the Ndebele people of Matabo in Zimbabwe.

Pastoral theologians can uncover through research the religiosity of the Ndebele and the depth of their resilient culture. I have argued elsewhere that the Ndebele people are religious beings[5] who find it difficult to make a distinction between their Ndebele culture and African Traditional Religion(s)[6]. The Ndebele are religious beings in that religion permeates one's life from the womb until life after death. There is no life outside the influence of religion. Religion '…is the total traditional world view with all the values and beliefs' (Gehman 1989:18). In most cases religion means the presence and the influence of God, ancestors and the spirit world. For the Ndebele it is difficult to pick out behavioural patterns which a Ndebele person can then say this is culture and this other one is religion. In fact what we have is a human being living their life in a particular way which makes them who they are. It is then up to those interested in categorising issues to say this is religion and this other is culture. This religion does not need to convert or proselytise, one is conceived and born into the religion (Bozongwana 1983). It does not wait for a person to grow up so that they can learn how to read about the religion from some kind of 'Holy Book'; its strength is that it is a lived religion.

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[5] This is true of many other tribes in Zimbabwe in particular and in Africa in general.

[6] The ATR(s) is difficult to be classified as a single religion amongst the Ndebele in that each family would have a family priest, usually (but not always) the male head of the family who performs family rituals and communicates with the ancestors who in turn convey the petitions and thanks giving to God. Families at times have a spirit medium (s) who does not necessarily deal with issues of the whole community. But there are also community leaders at different levels such as kraal heads and chiefs and kings who communicate with ancestors on behalf of people under their leadership.

The Ndebele cosmology is composed of both visible and invisible spirit beings which have influence on the living human beings which are appeased using rituals and living life according to acceptable social norms and values, which can be described as a cultural way of life or religious way of life of good relationships (Bozongwana 1983). Mbiti says that human life is composed of life forces that people constantly interact with influencing the course of human life for good and for evil (Mbiti 1970). In the Ndebele worldview the unborn, the living-living and the living-dead are all part of the constellation of the living spirits (Marova 1999). A Kenyan scholar, Ndeti argues that the community

> ... extends beyond the living members of the clan and tribe. It incorporates those who have died and those who are yet unborn. (The individual) is a physical representative of the dead, living and unborn. Thus (the individual) is a community incorporating three principles - life, spirit and immortality (Ndeti 1972:114).

Masamba says,

> By virtue of being part of the extended family and living in the proximity of God the creator, the ancestors are endowed with special powers. Therefore they enable the birth of children and protect the living family members from attack by malevolent spirits. As those who sanction the moral life of both individuals and community, the ancestors punish, exonerate, or reward. Thus the health of the living

> depends to a great extent on their relationships within the extended family and with their ancestors... (Masamba ma Mpolo 1981:24).

Life amongst the Ndebele is highly rooted in this kind of cosmology and worldview, making it very difficult to separate culture from religion and god. Laleye (1981) is of the view that the African traditional cosmology is dynamic. It recognises and integrates the duality of the mind and body, magic and rationality, order and disorder, negative and positive powers, and individual and communal consciousness (1981). All this is lost in Christianity because western trained ministers just like university intellectuals being described by Masoga

> … find the African symbolic universe and cosmology limited to pre-scientific thinking. There is no significant recognition of the fact that all science needs to depart from and infuse local culture and that these perspectives on the scientific enterprise are indissoluble. For instance, they fail to recognise that their usage of western concepts and instruments of learning and research derive from and implicate western culture. They do not see any relevance in pursuing 'African things'. Research skills are monopolised and the definition of African science is raped. Africa is deprived of its science and prevented from having her knowledge(s) recognised in the public scientific domain (2002:304-305).

Family relationships, communal relationships and relationships with strangers are part of the religious observances to continual appease the spirit world. When things do not work out in life one is forced to seek an understanding of their relationship with the spirit world. This understanding of God and ancestors borders around theology of retribution. God and ancestors are happy and they bless those who relate well to others and the environment. On the contrary those who do not relate well will be cursed through misfortune and ill-health. The church has failed to take away this worldview from the people of Matabo or it can be argued that the European (Western) cultural/religious captivity of the African church has failed in Matabo. Instead, for example, the Lutheran church in Zimbabwe, we have the Lutheran Church of Zimbabwe.

Research on Christianity by Adherents and Sympathisers of ATR and African Culture

Another challenge related to the castigation of ATR by the church is that the few adherents of ATR who can do research are also seeking revenge against Christianity by centering their research on the short comings of Christianity. This kind of research is not helpful to society but is very vital for the church to realize that others can see its short comings.

The first point of note is that research by some ATR scholars (Chavunduka 2001; Dolamo 2008; Mbiti 1969; Mugambi 1976; Berglund 1976; Nsibande 1992; and Aaseng 1992) brag of the fact that Christianity has failed to kill ATR despite resolute attacks through sermons, Christian education and collaboration with colonial governments in banning some ATR shrines and practices. Chavunduka says, '… the church and government leaders failed to destroy the African religion and culture completely during the last century' (2001:1). As noted earlier, Africans are very religious and still adhere to their culture, Chavunduka argues that,

> … many Zimbabweans who became Christians did not resign from the African Religion nor did they abandon African Culture completely; they have maintained dual membership. Many Christians in Zimbabwe continue to participate in traditional religious rituals; they continue to consult traditional healers; many Christians believe in witch craft, some even practice it or attempt to practice witchcraft (2001:4).

This kind of research exposes the fact that Christianity is not able through its western based pastoral care systems to respond to the care needs of an African whose challenges are at times based on African paradigms as witchcraft. Christianity is still being serviced by ATR with regard to healing and care. What kind of pastoral needs and healing can the pastoral care ministry of the church learn from ATR and African culture? Why are Christians still going back to ATR for care and healing? What is it that Christianity does not have that ATR offers those in need of care and healing? This calls for research on the AIKS used by ATR in care and healing.

Chavunduka (2001) also argues that ATR is a hospitable religion which does not fight other religions and that is a value for community construction. One can build a nation and a state through hospitality rather than fighting others. Christians who participate in ATR care and support systems are welcomed by ATR care givers while the same are ridiculed by the church for worshiping idols and ancestors. Chavunduka postulates that

> Dual membership is made possible by the nature of the African Religion and the African culture itself. The African religion is a hospitable religion which accepts the fact that other religious systems are equally valid, or even more so. The African Religion is prepared to embrace other beliefs and practices as long as the necessary cultural adjustments are made to accommodate them (2001:4).

If ATR is accommodative as described by Chavunduka then Christian theologians can learn from these how to do inculturation where both religions benefit instead of a situation whereby one religion seeks to swallow another. There is need for research that can lead to mutual dialogue between Christianity and ATR.

My own observation is that the militancy of the church is not only against other religions such as ATR. The sermons of the church are also directed against other denominations. There is serious war between denominations. Each denomination views itself as THE Church and the best against all others. One no longer sees conversions of people from other religions but transfers of people from one denomination to another. So the church is not tolerant of a different view hence Chavunduka’s argument that the church is divisive and therefore it is not good for social construction and thinks that ‘The African Religion can, therefore, facilitate inter-religious dialogue’ (2001:4) better than Christianity.

Research has also shown that Christianity is not a communal religion (Aaseng 1992; and Chavunduka 2001) as it separates the believers from the non-believers despite the fact that it is based on building a kingdom – which is a community. Emphasis on individual conversions and a personal saviour separates believers from the community. Aaseng says,

> the practice of many early missionaries to concentrate on individual

> conversions, drawing individuals away from their society, was counterproductive. It cast the missionaries in the role of disturbers of the community or as interested only in misfits or outcasts (1992:15-16).

When one believes, then one is no longer like the heathen members of one's family. In some cases you can see members of the same family going to different denominations. Sunday is one of the most segregated days because of the church. The church is interested in building itself, at times at the expense of the community but ATR is not interested in building itself, it builds communities. ATR encourages adherence to the family as the basis for the worship of God through family ancestors, then the immediate community and the rest of society. This connectedness is being fragmented by the church through denominations fighting for membership. ATR does not fight for membership; it builds families and communities (Chavunduka 2001:5). Pastoral care for the community can learn how to build communities by using some of the values inherent in this African value of community connectedness. This connectedness is helpful when people experience suffering and trauma as will be shown in the next section.

Research on Suffering and Trauma in African Communities

Suffering and trauma in Africa is a reality that cannot be denied. There is so much poverty, disease, wars, unemployment and crime. In such contexts, instead of religious cold wars, religious care systems should join forces in trauma counseling and care. Pastoral care theologians and practitioners cannot ignore the care approaches used in ATR. Motsi and Masango have come to a conclusion that,

> Trauma issues and trauma treatment have become topical in Africa as a result of the political, social and economic instabilities that are common in the region. From a pastoral care perspective there is need to review and raise the philosophical argument about the relevance of humanitarian intervention, specifically in regard to the approach and treatment used. The Western medical and psychiatry fields view a person on the basis of an egocentric approach, but their African counterparts do so from a socio-centric perspective (2012:1).

The argument by Motsi and Masango bemoans that unilateral use of western approaches to trauma counseling among Africans. The church is the main culprit as it equates western paradigms to gospel holiness and African paradigms to sinfulness and paganism. Individuals are part of a whole; they find meaning in the bigger whole. If such issues as poverty, suffering and crime could be viewed from a communal perspective they could bring about contextual meaning to Africans.

In the African concept of being community the success of one member of the community is the success of the whole community. The poverty and suffering of one person is a communal issue and solutions usually come from the whole community. In some communities in Zimbabwe especial amongst the Karanga of Mberengwa, crime is also a communal issue in that if one member of a given community commits a crime, the whole community is ostracized. For example if a family member commits murder the whole extended family participates in paying for the deceased in fear of the avenging spirit of the deceased which will attack the whole extended family (Sitshebo 2000: 30-36). In most instances the whole village amongst the Karanga will be related in one way or the other thereby forming a huge extended family system. I such a case the whole community is concerned about the welfare of each other as well as guarding each other from committing criminal acts that can put the whole community into trouble.

The gap between the rich and the poor, the extremely happy and the extremely sad can be bridged. Tinyiko Maluleke is of the view that, '… theology retains a unique role to play in (a) acknowledging, (b) valorizing, (c) interpreting and (d) enhancing the agency of African Christians in their daily struggles against the cultural, religious and the economic forces of death which seek to marginalize them (2000:22)' resulting in suffering and trauma. Research can enable pastoral care and counseling to capitalize on AIKS that can unearth the old ways for social construction. From an African perspective pastoral theology can begin to enable people to understand that any individual challenge is equally a community challenge.

The above understanding is completely divorced from the western culture as observed by Motsi and Masango.

> Western philosophy, on the other hand, says a person is simply composed of soul and body and that trauma is a thing of the mind.

> Therefore, redefining trauma in light of this African worldview is critical and will enhance our caring of the many traumatized millions who desperately need help on this continent (Motsi and Masango 2000:1).

The concept of the individual and the community is further elaborated by Dolamo who says, ‘African culture and religion emphasizes the importance of community but also the indispensability of its individual members’ (Dolamo 2008:234). The community is a communion of individuals who are willing to be in experiential communion, be it in joy or in suffering. For example among the Ndebele if a family member kills a person, the reparations are not faced directly by the individual murderer but by the whole family. Similarly when one is getting married the whole family participates to the extent of contributing financial, material and emotional. Mbiti captures this very well when he says, ‘I am because we are and since we are, therefore I am’ (Mbiti 1969:11). This is where the church can learn not to lift the individual over the community.

Communal responsibility has the potential for community members positively guiding each other to avoid communal punishment. This is part of the AIKS that pastoral theological research and teaching should unearth and promote. In fact ‘pre-packed universal interpretations, definitions and approaches to psychological suffering do not bring the necessary help’ (Motsi and Masango 2000:2). Losi has come to the conclusion that, ‘the belief in science and in the power of the international scientific community is so strong that it tends to marginalize local knowledge’ (2000:10). Losi has a point in saying that AIKS is being overshadowed by western knowledge systems that are the basis for church based counseling yet AIKS can be more contextual relevant to African needs. For the Christian pastoral theology which is individual based counseling (Ward 2003:54) to benefit Africans there is need to understand that in the African worldview,

> we cannot understand a person as an individual, and we cannot have personal identity without reference to other persons … the notion of being together is intended to emphasize that life is the actuality of living in the present together with people (Sindima in Magesa 1997:53).

For Africans life, sickness, misfortune, trauma, happiness and death is a,

> continuum of social, cosmic, personal and communal events. When one breaks the moral codes of society then the ties between oneself and community are also fragmented. Thus in the case of illness, it is not the individual who is seen as needing healing but the broken relationships which need to be healed (Ward 2003:55).

There is richness in the above understanding which needs to be exploited for the benefit of society if the above networks can be reawakened society can be healed of many ills and communities can be redefined and reconstructed. In ATR and African culture there is a history of care conducted by spirit mediums, priests, elders, community traditional leadership, *izinyanga* and diviners. Knowledge imbedded in this history is yet to be tapped. This calls for research in IAKS embedded in the African care systems, religious systems and cultural systems for the training of pastoral care givers. The individual to be *umuntu* should be imbedded in community. Community connectedness builds *Ubuntu/botho*. A community with people with Ubuntu is what both Christianity and ATRs are aiming for. Dolamo thinks that if the African community and in turn the state and the constitution could be grounded in the concept of community African countries can overcome some of its challenges.

Dolamo further says that the project of moral regeneration will have to be carried out in the African paradigm of community and '*Ubuntu/botho* as its organizing principle' (Dolamo 2008:235). In agreement with Dolamo, Teffo says,

> The cycle of violence and criminality, which has plagued South Africa during the past few years, could be drastically reduced if we were to restore our moral fibre. To this end, the philosophy of *Ubuntu/botho* could assist us. A cohesive moral value that is inherent in all mankind (sic), one revitalized in our hearts and minds it would go a long way towards alleviating moral decay (1999:149).

Pastoral care and counseling can be able to contribute to fight against moral decay, corruption, self-centredism, violence and crime if pastoral care through counseling and sermons could use African paradigms of being community and Ubuntu/botho.

Research on Indigenization and Inculturation: Challenges and Possibilities

Research so far seeks to fit African Culture and Traditional practices into the broader Christian agenda. Christianity cannot change as it is based on revealed truth therefore other religions have to fit into Christianity and Christian theology and not the other way round. So far pastoral care and counseling theological research is seeking for doctrinal gaps where African Traditional Religious practices can be accommodated without adulterating doctrines. In fact the ideal is when the church will manage to destroy all other movements and win all people to itself as articulated in the great commission of the disciples by Jesus,

> Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age’ (Matt 28:16-20 -RSV).

The Christian theological paradigm of indigenization and inculturation is in dire need for transformation to allow for a new approach that does not seek to benefit Christianity at the expense of ATR, instead one which allows Christianity to die so that it can resurrect with a new paradigm. A Christian paradigm that can value human beings of all cultures over and against religious ideologies. In this case Christianity will not be more important than people, instead it is a means for growth and transformation of both the individual and the community without westernizing its converts. Aaseng (1992:15) says that the inculturation has to start with the African person and the African culture as gifts from God instead of the current scenario where they are viewed as paganism.

For good inculturation to take place there is need for both religions to expose themselves to each other fully. There is need for objective research by both Christianity and ATR on the other to identify benefits for a dialogical approach to social care and counseling. Pastoral theologians need to research and teach their pastoral care students the realities of ATR rather than studying it for the sake of castigating it. I like Simon Kofi Appiah's definition of Inculturation when he says '… as a general and basic principle of all religious experience, we can describe the phenomenon of inculturation as the process by which religion assumes cultural embodiment' (2012:254). This means to say that Christianity in this case should be able to embody African culture. Such things as rituals, language and symbols should be directly linked to the local culture. Unlike the current situation where training of pastoral care givers is done in English. The language carries symbols and nuances that are at times very difficult to translate to a local language meaning to say Christianity is not able to communicate in the local language. Appiah says,

> Some elements of culture that help to make religion a lived (human) experience are myths, signs and symbols, language and ideas, historical accidents, and behavioral patterns, intuitions and institutions about the origins and purpose of life, death and hereafter language (2012:255).

In agreement with Appiah, Bate says

> every culture has its way of explaining the way the world is and of determining the fundamental powers or forces in the creation and substance of life. The myth gives the symbolic narrative or story about these truths. So myths tell us about the realities within a culture: like ancestors, sin, demons, or witchcraft depending on which culture we are part of…Part of identifying and describing a culture is identifying these symbols, rituals and myths (2002:23).

If the identified elements are to be understood by pastoral theologians there is need to understand them from their cultural perspective and this call for the retrieving of AIKS. The challenge of current research in Christianity and inculturation is that it is based mainly in missiology. The church seeks to convert people and their cultures. Appiah argues that, ‘The culture concerned is challenged and renewed by the values of the gospel’ (2012:255). This is the bias of current research by pastoral care theologians; they want to transform culture so that it suits the Christian gospel. There should be room for the gospel or Christian tradition (which is in most cases Western culture than gospel) to be challenged and renewed by the local culture. This calls for an objective dialogical approach between Christian theologians and ATR specialists in a given culture to do research and allow the two to objectively influence each other.

Conclusion

This article argues for the centrality of an African worldview in pastoral care and counseling. This can only be achieved if pastoral care theologians can participate in an objective dialogue with specialist in ATR and African culture. If this dialogue between Christian Pastoral Theologians and ATR is to be fruitful for society, it must be bilateral.

Pastoral care and counseling is yet to benefit society fully through understanding AIKS imbedded in ATR and African culture. The training of ministers will be richer if it is developed through using personnel equipped with objective knowledge of ATR. Adherents of ATR can offer seminars to students of pastoral care instead of biased senior pastors. At UKZN students of pastoral theology doing a B.Th. can be exposed to at least three modules at every level of religious studies to equip them with deep knowledge about ATR and African culture. This can alternatively be applied in the envisaged

Bachelor of Arts in theology degree to respond to challenges of restructuring the current B.Th. which might require an extra year to fit in the extra modules. In the process these would be pastors may realize the positive aspects of ATR and African culture which can enhance their pastoral care and counseling. They may as well attack ATR, as ministers tend to do, from an informed perspective.

In view of this paper one realizes that there is room for partnership in the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics between theology and religious studies. There is a possibility for cross teaching in areas of care. There is need for the study of care systems in ATR and African culture to be taught together with care systems from the Christian culture. Both forms of care are needed in our communities today. Good individual care, family care and community care systems can help to create a healthy nation which can ultimately result in good state formation.

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Training Pastoral Counsellors for HIV/AIDS Care and Support in South Africa: Perspectives from Post Foundationalism, Contextual and Narrative Therapy

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Abstract

This article describes part of a doctoral study that developed a training programme for pastoral counselors for assisting persons infected with and affected by HIV and AIDS. The Intervention and Research Intervention Research Model (IRM) as developed by Rothman and Thomas (in De Vos *et al.* 2001) was used as the research paradigm and followed the steps of review of pertinent literature that served to inform the development of and implementation of the product (the training programme).

This article is thus based on these two steps: firstly the literature that was considered relevant in guiding the development of the training programme, in this instance, post foundationlism, contextual and narrative therapy and secondly, the pilot programme itself which used Muller's (2003) post foundational framework, to accommodate its refinement and ongoing development as a product.

Keywords: Pastoral counselling, HIV/AIDS support, Post foundationalism, Contextual therapy, Narrative therapy

Introduction

In order to win the war against HIV and AIDS, all possible role players and strategies need inclusion (Kasiram 2011). Church leaders and lay counsellors need to develop skills in family therapy that they can use with affected and infected families and communities (den Hollander, 2001; 2009). In order to provide such skills, research was undertaken to guide the development of a training programme in family therapy, using an integration of narrative and contextual theory. The theoretical basis for this integration was embedded in the post-foundational paradigm, which has proven effective in theological studies (van Huyssteen 2006).

The article reports on a 'state of the art review' of literature (discussed by Rothman and Thomas in de Vos *et al.* 2001) pertaining to the topic, in developing a training programme for pastoral counsellors working with people affected by and infected with HIV and AIDS. The article reports on the pilot programme content and its implementation only and not the outcome of research that preceded the development of the training programme since this data was rich, unique, and considered by the authors as significant for dissemination. However, it is important to note that the state of the art review is necessary to include in this article, as it provides the backdrop for appreciating this phase of the study results.

In accord with the research methodology used in the study of 'development' of a product after evaluation and review, the article aims at inviting comment for ongoing review. In addition, ongoing evaluation and development is important for ensuring relevancy as the landscape of HIV and AIDS and the communities in which care and service is provided, are ever changing (Kasiram *et al.* 2013). To this end, Muller's (2003) post foundational theology provided a useful frame of reference against which the programme was tested for further development.

Research Methodology

Within a qualitative paradigm, the Intervention Research Model (IRM) as developed by Rothman and Thomas (in De Vos *et al.* 2001) provided an overall framework for the study, its structure and for the analysis of key components that needed consideration before finalizing the 'product'. The IRM model is a combined qualitative-quantitative method and considered best suited to the study since the researcher-authors wished to apply knowledge gleaned through the earlier steps of the study towards developing a new product, in this instance the training programme (den Hollander 2009).

In this article, the authors report on the training programme that was piloted with three target samples, before finalization of the product could take place. The samples were based on purposive and accessibility sampling in that they satisfied criteria of the group members being interested in offering family counselling to individuals and families infected with and affected by HIV and AIDS. They were also easily accessible in that the researcher (first author) had a working relation with them (Terre Blanche *et al.* 2006).These three target groups were adequate in allowing for data saturation, where no further new information was forthcoming (Durrheim 2006). The samples were: a group of final year Bible school students, a group of lay counsellors and church leaders, representing different communities and a group of representatives of community based organisations.

The locale of these groups was KwaZulu-Natal, using semi-urban communities, the communities typifying a semi-urban lifestyle where HIV, AIDS and poverty are key concerns.

The research instruments used in this phase of the study were a state of the art review culminating in a product (the training programme) and evaluation of the programme.

Content data analysis, employing the IRM frame of reference was used to appreciate the rich variety of responses received from participants.

Trustworthiness

This being a qualitative study, issues of trustworthiness were considered important (Lincoln & Guba 1985). Credibility was achieved by prolonged engagement in the field that involved building relationships before, during and after the training, keeping comprehensive field notes, triangulation in using different data sources and through the state of the art comprehensive review.

Transferability was achieved by densely describing data that respected participants as intelligent and experts offering valuable subjective input.

Dependability was achieved by describing which data was used in formulating the programme and how data was comprehensively interpreted using Muller’s (2003) model.

Conformability was secured by submitting the research protocol and process to an audit through participant review (member checks), through supervision and examination.

State of the Art Review of Relevant Literature

Literature and theory frames considered relevant to the study are presented hereunder.

Contextual Family Therapy

Contextual family therapy is a comprehensive and enduring approach (Flaskas 2010) to working with families, which allows for the inclusion of other therapeutic approaches and addresses the four interlocking dimensions of (1) facts, (2) individual psychology, (3) behavioural transactions and (4) relational ethics. Interventions are aimed at personal healing and symptom relief as well as addressing relational and intergenerational problems (den Hollander 2001; 2009). Contextual therapy focuses on ethical issues in relationships, such as trust and fairness and the multilateral process of achieving an equitable balance of fairness among family members. Contextual therapy is relevant to the South African context since it appreciates the history of social injustice. In this study, issues of injustice were important to consider, in understanding and then addressing HIV/AIDS which oft times, becomes linked to many socio-political concerns (Kasiram 2011). This is also important in appreciating the family's view of debts and entitlements from the perspective of past injustice suffered by marginalized groups. Contextual therapy mentions the resources of care, concern and connection as the family's 'own immune system' and uses the term 'distributive justice' for the allocation of the family's resources and availability of resources in the community. Loyalty and intimacy are viewed as resources of relationships. Exploitation, split-loyalty, 'parentification', and other dysfunctional patterns are discussed in relational ethical terms. Therapeutic intervention would result in the relational resource of self-validation which family members receive through giving or caring. Dealing with realistic guilt (a core concern with HIV-affected persons) becomes a relational resource whereby family members become more accountable and trustworthy. Relational resources provide healthy functioning for both current and future generations and therapeutic intervention is therefore aimed at prevention (Boszormenyi-Nagy *et al.* 1991) and is a very useful concept for inclusion in this study.

Contextual therapy places dominant stories in a multi- generational context (Flaskas 2010) and helps the person living with HIV/AIDS to depict the influence of these stories in the life of the extended family. Through careful questioning, the therapist and the client discover how these dominant stories were kept in place and fuelled, an important consideration for training and management of the pandemic. Contextual concepts as entitlement, loyalty, indebtedness, and legacies are explored throughout the life of the family. Contextual therapy would also look for alternate stories and focus on purposeful identity, an awareness of who one is and would like to become (van de Kemp 1991. These are important considerations for the development of a training model where hope for a changed future is paramount. The counselling relationship would adhere to the relational ethic of mutuality and trustworthiness in relationships. ‘Relational ethics do not have specific moral content, but rather is concerned with a balance of equitable fairness between people’ (Boszormenyi-Nagy *et al.* 1991:160). Morgan (2000) refers to this aspect of the counselling relationship as engaging in expressions of experience and meaning. It exposes and critiques a person’s identity and belief system, without looking at it as right or wrong. Such a non judgemental stance is crucial in supporting persons infected with or affected by HIV and AIDS (Kasiram *et al.* 2013) and has relevance for the training programme.

The context of grandparents as caregivers, the need for children to be heard and economic want in an era of HIV and AIDS (Nyasi *et al.* 2009) are additional issues to be considered under context and included in the training programme.

Contextual family therapy with its interpersonal and intergenerational approach and its unique focus on the ethical dimension of relationships is relevant to the life world of families living with HIV/AIDS. Because poor families live in a multi-generational setup and because there is help across the generations as in the example of grandparent-headed households (Raniga & Simpson 2010) contextual therapy is deemed relevant to the training programme.

Narrative Family Therapy

arrative family therapy provides an individual, group and community approach to family therapy, embracing a multi-dimensional stance that is generally advocated in community family therapy (Kasiram 2009; Rojano 2010) and complements contextual family therapy

Aspects of narrative ways of working are: how the stories of our lives shape our lives, externalizing conversations, exploring the effects of problems, finding unique outcomes, historical explorations and the (community) creation of new stories, the naming of injustice, questioning of culture, acknowledging the political nature of the topics discussed in therapy and finding ways for therapy to be mutually enriching through the technique of re-membering and inviting outsider witnesses to stories and ceremonies (Morgan 2000). These may themselves unleash a wealth of support in beating the 'sorrow of chronic illness' (Jacobs & Seaburn 2013), this having relevance for training in respect of HIV/AIDS work.

Michael White and his associates introduced postmodern thinking into the field of family therapy (White 1995) and has remained influential in current family therapy practice (Kasiram & Thaver 2013). White suggested that dominant discourses would serve to maintain the status quo in problem families. Therapy should assist the person to separate from the problem behaviour and look for unique outcomes by escaping the tyranny of the dominant discourse that defined him or her as the problem. The importance of separating the problem and the person, and escaping past tyrannies, is well recognized in South African communities where poverty and HIV/AIDS as problems have superior hold on life (Kasiram 2011). White (1995) recognized that people have many 'selves' and have lived and owned many life stories. Parry and Doan (1994) stressed another unique implication of working with families: all members of the family, through participation in the stories and sensibilities of the other family members, and through legitimizing their own stories by telling them in their own words, would be entitled to be part of and subjected to the influences of different worlds, different languages and different selves. This has relevance for South African families as we struggle to knit our various life worlds together whilst striving to appreciate our differences as well as our similarities (Kasiram & Thaver 2013).

Narrative therapy would set out to help people living with HIV/AIDS to live their 'preferred stories' and reveal some of the discourses that may be dominating their lives, e.g. patriarchy and domestic violence and through a process of deconstructing the power of these discourses, families living with HIV/AIDS are helped to deal with these injustices through connective understanding and participatory consciousness (Kotze & Kotze 2001). Narrative therapy with its emphasis on story-telling, de-stigmatization and empowerment of people to find and live their preferred stories is relevant to the rich context in which individuals, families and communities exist in South Africa, and pertinent to the training programme.

Post Foundationalism

In post foundationalism, people's life stories are a description of their reality, informed by societal beliefs. Therefore identity (how people see themselves) and rationality (what people believe) are social constructs (Muller 2003). 'These beliefs occur as a groundless web of interrelated beliefs, which mutually reinforce each other, and there is no single foundational truth on which this system of beliefs is based' (van Huyssteen 1997:3-4). But this does not imply that just anything can be believed. Only those beliefs are justified which are held by a rational person. A rational person is capable of making responsible judgments, using their cognitive, evaluative, and pragmatic contexts as resources of rationality. This requires that the person can speak with authority (experience and expertise) as well as that the person must resign his/her beliefs to the community of those who share relevant experience and knowledge (van Huyssteen 1998). Herein, the power of individual experience is accorded respect, a consideration taken seriously in this study in securing individual life stories and experiences before arriving at a homogenous product (the training programme). The reciprocal relationships between individual and society are thus deeply respected and important for inclusion in a training programme.

These shared resources of human rationality enable dialogue between different contexts, cultures and disciplines (van Huyssteen 1997). In the study, multiple positions were invited, both representing individuals and the community, culminating in a training programme that connects with or has meaning for several contexts and targets simultaneously.

Post foundationalism considers rationality to be socially constructed, as people are living together in concrete situations and contexts, but it also recognizes the construction of rationality and identity based on a person's 'own experience', which is interpreted experience. Alternative interpretations would be perceived as complementary understanding of reality, emphasizing tradition, culture and cultural discourses (Van Huyssteen 1998). This explanation also points to why post foundationalism was complementary to narrative therapy and considered relevant for the training programme.

Post Foundationalist Practical Theology

Deconstructive postmodernists have argued that the meaning of God and beliefs only exist within constructed distinctions in language and therefore religion and spirituality do not exist (Moules 2000). Eskens (2003) criticises the meta-narratives or grand belief systems as they contain a universal acceptance of reality. Bediako (2001) however, describes the meta-narrative of Scripture as constructed through the activity of God in building up a community of His people throughout history, which includes their particular language (mother tongue), traditions, history and culture. A shared family likeness is thus created through communal shared knowledge from ancient and modern times, whereby other Christian stories illuminate our personal stories. The programme being one undertaken by pastoral counsellors needed a Christian philosophy, which post foundationalist practical theology provided.

Three distinct forms of narratives are to be found in narrative theology, namely the canonical stories, which focus on Biblical materials, life stories, which focus on human experience and community stories, which focus on the classical Christian tradition (Fackre 1996). Narrative theology emphasizes the centrality of communal experience to the life of the church where God tells His story through the Church. Jacobs (2003) explains that the narrative integrity and wholeness of a given single life still needs to be acknowledged even though there is influence of the larger (Christian) group, and important for consideration in a training programme that addresses both group and individual perspectives.

Muller's Post Foundational Practical Theology Model

Muller merged concepts of post foundational theology and narrative theology into a research process for practical theology. This was significant for the study since, core concepts discussed in the review above, are made relevant for the South African context, using Muller's model. Muller qualified that the African approach to practical theology and science is 'holistic, circular and narrative' (Muller 2003:294), this being a key rationale for adopting Muller's approach in pilot testing the training programme. Circularity and holistic engagement are important to the IRM model, and to this study in that they ensure reflection and evaluation, which are important in ensuring relevancy of the training programme. Muller's (2003) model is hereunder used in the programme layout and in discussing key concepts attributed to his model.

The Training Programme

The above-mentioned theoretical review informed the training programme/model which is presented hereunder.

Objectives of the Programme

1. To provide students with a practical understanding of contextual and narrative family therapy skills.
2. To equip students with theoretical concepts and methods to practice family counselling.
3. To introduce students to psycho-social counselling.
4. To mainstream HIV/AIDS and poverty in pastoral family practice.
5. To equip students for a multicultural and non-discriminatory context (including genogram work).
6. To integrate spirituality in family counselling (post foundational theology).

Training Activities

Theory on contextual and narrative family therapy was provided in lectures and practical application took place in personal genogram work. Family counselling skills were taught through lectures, case studies and role plays (co-developed with participants) to enhance teaching and learning.

The students were expected to do individual work, preparatory work, take account of their own family history, prepare in teams, partake in debates and discussions, prepare for devotions involving prayer with and for persons with HIV/AIDS and practice skills. Personal problems or issues that surfaced during teaching and learning were used (with permission) as ‘material’ to promote personal growth and development.

Report writing was viewed as important because this is an underdeveloped area, not always being practised as a requirement in pastoral counselling (Wheeler 1996) and because of the need for constant review of the programme via reporting (Shaw 2011). Church leaders may also lack confidence in publishing their work, thereby risking poor academic engagement and theory development in the area.

Duration

The course was held for 10 full days.

Implementation of the pilot programme and its evaluation was conducted using Muller’s (2003:300) model of post foundationalist practical theology as follows.

The Context and Interpreted Experience

Here, the researcher focused on the life world of the participants since participants’ personal and family life experiences and their work as assistant church leaders in various communities added valuable information to the design of the training programme. The participants gained skills in contextualizing and interpreting their own life experiences, and through that process arrived at shared understandings.

Descriptions were encouraged of participants’ life world and discourses of families living with HIV in the (church) community in South Africa, the family’s level of involvement in the churches, and the church’s discourses and involvement in the life world of these families. The participants also described their context of action, all of which was guided by contextual and narrative constructs.

During case study discussion and role plays, participants expressed concern about being able to practice multi partiality and this was critically discussed in the groups, as expressed in the following quote:

> *we are able to portray the roles we've designed and discussed with the complexity of the family dynamics?*

Appreciating contexts (using contextual and narrative therapy) allowed for an understanding of the culture that informed clients thinking and behaviour. One participant identified a pattern of '*wife battering and promiscuity*' in his family of origin. The men were expected to maintain this lifestyle and the women condoned it. The participant realised that this was not what he wanted in marriage and decided to live his preferred story. He discussed the relational ethical considerations and implications (from Nagy's contextual therapy) with the group, this being an important deviation from expected roles that were affirmed through the group encounter (using narrative therapy constructs of affirmation and developing alternate stories).

To ensure that counselling was not compromised by unresolved personal issues, in-context interpretation of experiences were made, described and developed in collaboration with participants. To this end self assessment, group debriefing and the researcher's evaluation of each participant proved useful. Strategies and tools used were the personal genogram to facilitate engagement with the participant's family stories (Macvean *et al.* 2001), a spiritual genogram to help understand the role of spirituality in participants' (multigenerational) family of origin (Frame 2000) and sculpting (Deacon & Piercy 2000) to depict understandings and interpretations graphically.

Traditions of Interpretation

This aspect encouraged participants to acknowledge voices, discourses and traditions in their families of origin and in society that informed and guided them in interpreting their life experiences. Specific discourses/traditions in families and (church) communities and within the churches inform people's perceptions and behaviour. The researcher and participants acknowledged related literature and the culture and theological traditions of different contexts. The genogram supplied rich data for interpretation.

Participants varied in their responses to genogram work. For some, it was enlightening and for others complex or painful. However, all agreed on its value in helping them see themselves in the context of their family of origin. Using contextual and narrative perspectives, participants discussed issues in their families such as:

> *split-loyalties*
> *not pleasing their parents*
> *illness or substance abuse*

They discussed dominant stories of being rejected by their family of origin, yet finding strength and hope in memories of childhood resilience and engaging in trustworthy relationships. A dominant theme was that many participants were themselves affected by HIV/AIDS in their own homes and communities and thus bereavement counselling was necessary and transforming during this part of the training. Using the narrative approach, issues of pain and personal involvement with HIV/AIDS, were necessary to address and were included in the training programme with participants.

God's Presence

This step related to the direct experience of God's Presence as the Other Person in the life world of the participants and their capacity to acknowledge such Presence in the life world of families living with HIV/AIDS and their (church) communities. This step helped participants to appreciate and respect the uniqueness of other people's experience and evolving story with God (Griffiths 2003; Ngcobo 2011). Some of the responses describing God's presence were:

> *Sharing scriptures and God's love and hope*
> *HIV/AIDS is not a punishment from God*

The researcher and participants listened to and reflected on religious and spiritual understandings and experiences of God's presence in participants' own lives and in the lives of families living with HIV/AIDS.

Thickened through Interdisciplinary Investigation

In the study, interdisciplinary engagement, considered important in the helping professions (ANA 2010) occurred with social work, family therapy, psychology, anthropology and theology. To develop the training programme and training materials using 'interdisciplinarity', participants were invited to 'look at the issues that blocked their understanding or communication with others' (Wheeler 1996:83). This meant thickening both the investigative process and resultant understanding by using various tools and therapeutic interventions from different disciplines: genograms (family therapy, anthropology, social work and psychology), groupwork and group therapy (psychology and social work), contextual therapy (theology, anthropology) and narrative therapy (psychology and family therapy).

Tradition, culture and cultural discourses (anthropology, contextual therapy) were also invited and enhanced understanding, diagnosis and support (ANA 2010).

Interpretations that Point beyond the Local Community

Through triangular reflexivity with participants, a collective understanding was developed as the 'preliminary training material' to be used in future training programmes relevant to similar contexts. Triangular reflexivity increases the likelihood of the programme having increased applicability (Muller 2005:9).

Reflexivity included not only discursive reflections among group members themselves but also case managers for quality control and family discussion, feedback from which is included in the final refinement of the training programme. Quality control via supervision is a core function in social work and in family therapy and is included in the training programme through evaluation criteria suggested by Flemons *et al.* (1996) and Esposito and Getz (2005).

Evaluative feedback on the value of the pilot programme revealed the following with the words of participants cited in parentheses and italics:

- Participants gained new self perspectives (*I now know the story about me),* the programme helped them to introspect.
- Participants better understood the impact of family *(... I have insight into my own family background*) and learned to work with people contextually which allows for honest engagement *(there is now transparency and truthfulness*).
- Participants gained information on social issues/problems and how to better serve and/or counsel clients and their families.
- Participants felt better equipped and more competent in helping/counselling families (because this is an *intensive educational and awareness programme).*

Conclusions

Muller's post foundational practical theology model was useful in designing the training material and programme. It allowed for integration of theory and practice and reflection thereof by the participants as facilitated by the researcher.

The steps in the model were relevant for both the personal life experience and meaning-giving of individuals (as participants and clients), their contextual interaction and the role and experience of God's working and meaning-giving in our world. The model invited God's presence as a relational Partner, which was highly appreciated by all participants.

Genogram work, use of case studies and role plays were appreciated as learning, teaching and assessment tools. In addition, using Muller's model, an interdisciplinary stance of linking pastoral counselling and theology with family therapy, social and community work, anthropology and contextual and narrative therapy proved valuable in developing the training programme. Culture and language were also considered in arriving at best practice possibilities (Moules 2000).

Since HIV/AIDS and poverty formed the context within which training occurred, bereavement counselling and trauma work were included as essential ingredients in the training programme.

Theoretically, both narrative and contextual pastoral family therapy are well placed within post foundationalism to inform training to pastoral counsellors. Post foundationalism, being both contextual and engaged in interdisciplinary conversation, acknowledges the individual's narratives and their preferred truths. Training then included respect for the integrity and vulnerability of families going through a process of truth finding, in which they are guided to seek unique outcomes of inner strength and resilience.

It is hoped that practitioners and researchers would examine the programme presented in this article and consider adoption after adaptation, disseminate the information, to result in co-producing a good product.

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Life Skills for Positive Living in the Face of HIV and AIDS

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Abstract

This article is based on a research project involving three related studies on challenges and adjustments made in the face of HIV/AIDS. The authors were interested in establishing how findings of these studies could inform life skills education, this being the backdrop against which recommendations are made for positive living.

Keywords: life skills, HIV/AIDS, positive living

Introduction

The article commences with a description of the context and background related to the topic, this being divided into HIV/AIDS as it occurs in South Africa followed by a literature review of life skills education. Following on from this, the authors proceed to discuss the three research studies, results thereof and recommendations for positive living using life skills as a frame of reference and theoretical grounding.

Context

HIV/AIDS in South Africa

HIV and AIDS in South Africa is embedded in a complex context of poverty, family disintegration, food insecurity (Ahmed *et al.* 2009; Kasiram 2011), non adherence to treatment, sexual violence and cultural complexities that appear to promote risky sexual conduct (Kelly 2002).

Cultural complexities in themselves are difficult to attribute to sexual risk taking as they are largely intertwined with religion, spirituality, morality and values (Smith, 2002). Moral 'regeneration' was popular at its inception as a movement in 2003 (PMG, Parliamentary Monitoring Group 2010) and included both Life Orientation to address HIV/AIDS in South African schools as well as related concerns such as violence against women, which this article addresses. On the identified need for 'Life Orientation', the document: Challenges Facing the Moral Regeneration campaign (Chapter 6, www.iss.co.za/pubs/monographs/N0114) cites nation building as key to addressing decreasing morality levels in the country, this perhaps promoting community conscientizing about HIV and AIDS. Clearly then, HIV/AIDS has a complex context within which it must be understood and within which related concerns must be addressed alongside the obvious ones of health promotion and sexual empowerment (Ngcobo 2011, Mulqueeny & Kasiram 2013).

Two of the three studies in this paper focused on women because women are more vulnerable to HIV and AIDS than their male counterparts (Ngcobo 2011). Statistics between 1997 and 2004 in South Africa reveal that death rates to AIDS among men aged 30-39 more than doubled, while among women aged 25-34, it more than quadrupled (Statistics South Africa 2006). In 2009, it was found that almost 1 in 3 South African women aged 25-29 as compared to 1 in 4 men aged 30 – 34 were living with HIV (HSRC 2009). HIV among pregnant women is also a concern with antenatal clinics run by the Department of Health showing an increase from 25.8% in 2001 to 29.4% in 2009 (Avert 2010). Thus it is apparent that the context of increased risk of HIV and AIDS among women needs to be addressed.

The third study focused on sexuality, dating and intimacy concerns among men and women with HIV/AIDS. In South Africa, sexuality and intimacy are both taboo topics, more so when there is HIV and AIDS (Schiltz & Sandfort 2000). Kasiram *et al.* (2003) and Mulqueeny and Kasiram (2013) highlight interaction and intimacy among HIV positive persons as a neglected area that warrants research, and Painter (2001), that couple relationships for infected persons have been insufficiently attended. The article (and the studies) addresses this gap of sexuality and dating among

HIV positive persons, with a view to recommending changes for positive living through life skills.

HIV/AIDS in women and sexuality and dating among HIV positive men and women, are concerns that may be addressed timeously through life skills for youngsters at school.

Life Skills

Since HIV and AIDS has reached epidemic proportions in South Africa, with far reaching consequences to the individual, family, community and country, it has become necessary for multiple stakeholders to offer prevention, remedy and support (Den Hollander 2009). Life skills, the subject of this article is one such programme offered by the education sector in South Africa and was aimed at preventing HIV and AIDS since 1995 (Visser 2005).

Research studies on these programmes have demonstrated that although knowledge levels have increased, behavior change with regards to sexual risk taking did not follow (James *et al*. 2006; Kelly, 2002; Visser, 2005). Magnani *et al*. (2005) however found in their study of 2222 youth in KwaZulu-Natal, that there was modest change in self efficacy and increased condom use amongst their participants. Differences in these results are attributed to poor and inconsistent implementation of the programme (Magnani *et al*. 2005; Visser 2005) and real long term benefits being too early to gauge.

Literature reviewed on effective life skills education suggests meticulous planning and implementation that must consider the following components (divided by authors into categories where some overlap is inevitable):

Policy and Planning: Top-down policies on life skills for sexual risk taking do not work, even with the best intentions and committees that plan these programmes (Kelly 2002; Visser, 2005). The suggestion is to include parents as well as young people themselves (Kelly 2002) and then to co-ordinate and market the programme well (Visser 2005). In addition, the school management team should harness community support, ensure funding, adequate space and time for the programme (Visser 2005; James *et al*. 2006).

Who: Life skills education in schools should be implemented by educators who are thoroughly prepared and trained (Pick *et al.* 2007; Ahmed *et al.* 2009) skilled, committed, good role models, understand which related cultural norms are controversial and address these (Kelly 2002). Again the suggestion is to include young people themselves in presenting the programme in addition to audience members (Visser *et al.* 2004), community members (Visser 2005), traditional healers, faith-based organizations (Den Hollander 2009), untrained teachers and senior students (Coombe & Kelly, 2001). However, a good relationship with these stakeholders is important as it is the vehicle through which sensitive information is taught and learnt in a climate of trust and respect (Visser 2005).

What: James *et al.* (2006) review the Life Skills and HIV/AIDS Education Programme of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (2000) that did not result in behavior change. The programme included: **facts** about HIV and AIDS, modes of transmission, the immune system, progression of HIV to AIDS and how to keep the body safe and healthy. This was followed by **skills** on preventing HIV and AIDS that included attitudes to condom use, gender norms and sexual behavior. James *et al.* (2006) lament the absence of specific information on attitudes that need change and how improvement in self efficacy and control and re-negotiating sexual identity may be accomplished (Visser *et al.* 2004).

What is needed is: high level engagement with learners, use of multiple and creative communication channels and media (Coates *et al.* 2008) interrogating meanings and beliefs surrounding HIV and AIDS, beliefs about change, critical assessment of personal risk, self awareness, decision making, assertiveness and developing a positive, non judgmental attitude towards persons with HIV and AIDS (Visser *et al.* 2004; Den Hollander 2009). In addition to this, the learner's own developing sexuality and beliefs about witchcraft, sorcery and black magic (Coombe & Kelly 2002; Kelly 2002; Visser 2005; James *et al.* 2006) must be addressed via the programme.

Other wider socio-political considerations for the programme include unemployment and financial constraints impacting women's risk taking behavior (Kasiram *et al.* 2011; Ngcobo 2011), gender-based violence (Kelly 2002) and the female condom to give women greater personal control in sexual relationships (Mitchell & Smith 2001).

What is also necessary is for abstinence to be marketed as ‘cool’ (Kelly, 2002) and condom use popular (Visser 2005). Such marketing needs to be large-scale, involve multiple role players such as the school, faith-based organization, family, community and government, to have the desired impact. Kelly (2002), Pick *et al.* (2007) and Ahmed *et al.* (2009) suggest that life skills be included in larger programmes on health care and promotion (Ahmed *et al.* 2009), targeting younger learners first and be incrementally made complex to embrace age-appropriate understanding (Visser 2005; Ahmed *et al.* 2009).

How: Coates *et al.* (2008) and James *et al.* (2006) advocate best practice in life skills education to include a combination of methods and multi-level approaches**:** didactic, role plays, interactive discussion and groupwork employing a range of people, institutions and networks. Participatory methods, using non formal education are suggested by Kelly (2002) and Ahmed *et al.* (2009). Visser (2005) discusses the importance of using the group process and dynamics of group pressure for facilitating a leaner-centred pedagogy (Bozalek 2007) to change beliefs and behavior. Entertainment education (Mitchell & Smith 2001) is also considered essential to penetrate the ‘AIDS fatigue barrier’ so that the life skills package is made attractive for recipients. Finally, Magnani *et al.* (2005) and James *et al.* (2006) suggest full and consistent implementation in schools by a committed and varied team of educators.

Research Methodology

The overall research project sought to understand the experiences (challenges and survival) of women who were HIV positive and to explore the sexual and intimacy issues confronting both men and women who were HIV positive.

All three studies in the project utilized the qualitative paradigm as this allowed us to glean rich, in depth and new understandings of experiences of HIV and AIDS (Rubin & Babbie 2005). The research designs used were a combination of exploratory and descriptive designs (Terre Blanche *et al.* 2006) as some of the data was new such as exploring survival, sexuality and dating and richly described in the in depth interviews (Royse 2004).

The research instrument was the semi-structured individual interview in all three instances with themes to guide the interview (Terre Blanche *et al.* 2006). Having this guide to structure the interview was essential since the topic was sensitive and sometimes painful, necessitating fieldworker input, therapy and referral that could have derailed the research component of the interview.

The samples used in the project were as follows.

Project 1: survival stories of HIV positive women, using a convenience sample of women who received therapy at the University-based family therapy service learning unit where the authors offered services. Altogether seven women participated in this study, the authors-researchers having reached data saturation (Terre Blanche *et al.* 2006) after interviewing these seven women

Project 2: challenges and survival stories of HIV positive women, using convenience and availability sampling, at the health centre where one of the authors was employed. The first 15 women with HIV/AIDS who were willing to share their experiences with the researcher participated in this study.

Project 3: sexuality and intimacy experiences of HIV positive men and women, using available and then snowball sampling procedures until a sample of 12 participants was secured and until data saturation was reached. The initial sample was known to the researcher (available, convenience sample) but thereafter snowballing had to be used to reach the remaining number.

Since this was a qualitative project, reliability was less of a concern than was trustworthiness. Data had to be credible, with researchers ensuring that participants did not offer socially acceptable responses or responses that would compromise their status as clients receiving social work services. Hence, social work skills in assuring them of confidentiality, a non judgmental attitude, discussing termination of the interview without penalty were some of the measures used in promoting credibility of data. Data was also dependable, in that themes were derived from a thorough literature search, along with allowing for open discussion so that authentic, comprehensive accounts were received from participants. Tape recorders were also used after securing participant permission, ensuring confirmability of data.

Ethical issues such as confidentiality, anonymity, explanation of the research project, securing informed consent and offering ongoing services or referring participants for further assistance was respected in all three projects. Further, all three projects secured ethical clearance from the University under whose auspices they were undertaken.

Results and Discussion

Results of the three studies are discussed using the literature reviewed on life skills programmes. The distinction between findings in each of the studies is not considered important in furthering the discussion on life skills education, hence only partial reference is made to the different study results.

Study 1 and 2 results are jointly presented since they both dealt with women and a common focus (challenges and survival) whilst study 3 results on sexuality and dating are presented separately thereafter. In all instances themes which emerged after data analysis (Terre Blanche *et al.* 2006) are offered alongside pertinent life skills that derive from the earlier literature review.

Life skills are initially presented in detail, but as they become relevant to other findings and responses, the authors refer to them briefly to avoid undue repetition.

Study 1 and 2: Challenges and Survival of HIV Positive Women

Results of seven (7) HIV positive women's survival stories and fifteen (15) HIV positive women's stories of challenge and survival are presented hereunder.

Theme 1: Non Acceptance/ Acceptance: Allocate Finite Time

Denial, Guilt, Loss, Grief and Shock mainly accompanied a positive diagnosis. However, when the women allocated a finite time for grieving, recognizing that life has to continue '*for the sake of the children*', they could forward plan and live positively. Life skills that directly or indirectly address this theme include:

a. Strengths based work to improve self esteem (women said they were '*devastated, depressed*'). Improving self esteem is suggested by Pick *et al.* 2007) to improve confidence and address some of the related negative emotional responses shared by participants, upon receipt of a positive diagnosis.

b. Interrogate and adjust dysfunctional socio-cultural beliefs (Coombe & Kelly 2001; Kelly 2002) as women were riddled with guilt believing that they carried the responsibility for bringing the disease into the home.

c. Trauma, death and dying education- to appreciate stages of grieving and realize that crossing these stages brings one closer to the acceptance stage. This is related to participants suggesting '*finite periods for grieving*', perhaps realizing that stages of grief have to be passed with some professional help.

d. Externalizing- the need is to separate the problem from the person ('*I am not AIDS*; *I am bigger than AIDS'*) as discussed by narrative theorists (Morgan 2000) so that the identity of the individual is not infused with being only HIV positive. This will facilitate the development of healthier, alternate identities (Visser *et al.* 2004).

e. Assertiveness and problem solving- to help women address the many responses of non acceptance of a positive diagnosis (one participant referred to '*giving others for your own growth*' as part of her assertiveness and taking charge of her life). Assertiveness and problem solving skills will also help women negotiate safe sex as advocated by James *et al.* (2006) and Visser *et al.* (2004).

f. Value living optimally/positively ('*I have to look forward*') to commence early as part of a wider programme on health promotion in schools as discussed by Pick *et al.* (2007) and Ahmed *et al.* (2009).

Theme 2: Disclosure / Non Disclosure/ Selective Disclosure

There were varying responses in relation to disclosure, with some women feeling '*completely liberated*' upon disclosure whilst others were '*scared*', fearing reprisal and censure from partners (who may have infected them in the first place), family members and their children. To better manage disclosure, the following life skills are indicated:

a. Negotiation and refusal skills as outlined from in the words of a participant in study '*1 need to bring my husband so that he can hear from the counsellor*'- necessary where women wish to prevent re-infection (also see 1e).

b. Assertive training and problem solving as discussed by a participant in '*doing motivational talks to teach others*' and living authentically-essential for honest disclosure and dealing with consequences of disclosure (also see 1e).

c. Right and righteous living as women often felt *'judged, guilty and afraid*' to disclose to family and friends- this promotes honesty in relationships (compare 1f).

d. Trust building-instead of women fearing their partners ('*after I told my husband, he said nothing will change, he still loves me'*). Women could be helped to build trusting relationships, achievable through early life orientation and health promotion programmes in school (also see 1f).

Theme 3: Loss of Self, Loss of Sexual Intimacy

Women often bemoaned '*loss of identity*', believing they were '*worthless*' and did not deserve love and intimacy. Their identities were inseparable from that of being an HIV positive person. To this end, the life skills programme could include:

a. Strengths based work, to help identify the multiple identities ('*I ask – who is in charge today- the AIDS or me*') and strengths that reside in us all, to be nurtured from childhood. In addition, because identity loss is largely prompted by socio-cultural determinants, addressing these factors (see 1a) via the school which allows access to the neighbourhood and community, is necessary.

b. Externalization which is supported by strength-based work (see 1d).

Theme 4: Rejection, Stigma and Isolation

These emotional responses were very similar to the reactions discussed under theme 1, except that here, women did not discuss ever '*coming to terms with societal prejudices*'. Hence many of the life skills suggested under theme 1 are relevant here as well. In addition, the following life skills would help accommodate responses mentioned in this theme:

a. Value social connection and wrap around networking- (one said: '*I serve in my church*'; another the women in her neighbourhood) - this life skill may be also be taught early to the child with the aim of developing a sense of community connection (Rojano 2005).

b. Promoting spiritual regeneration, prayer, meditation and appreciation of nature *('I walk'; 'I enjoy nature'; 'I pray 3 times a day'*).

c. E networking – today e communication makes connection so simple, but it is important to remember that just as we may rely on faceless networking, we must also nurture face to face relations, to experience the full benefit of 'wrap around networking'. These suggestions were not found in the literature review, but may have been implied in suggestions to use the 'group' dynamic (Visser 2005) in goal setting and risk reducing behaviour.

Theme 5: Empowerment via Knowledge and Understanding of Rape, HIV/AIDS, Treatment, Re-infection

Factual understanding about the disease, its transmission and preventing re-infection was often limited among most participants and contributed to further risk taking such as having '*neviropine babies*' since women did not transfer the virus to their babies because of treatment at antenatal clinics. Only a few of the women were well informed, so much so that they were able to become ‘AIDS Counselors’ themselves, serving others in their community. Life skills indicated for this result include:

a. Update/improve knowledge, attitude, skills by accessing/ synthesizing knowledge from multiple sources (‘*don’t take what the Doctor says for granted’; ‘find out as much as possible yourself’*) to help make informed decisions (James *et al.* 2006). However, synthesizing the information and making informed choices has to happen outside the boundaries of didactic teaching, in small groups where interaction and groupwork may allow issues to be openly and liberally interrogated (Visser 2005; Ahmed *et al.* 2009).

b. Address myths about male supremacy, gender-based violence (‘*both my daughters were raped-there is much violent crime in my area’*) and correction rape- also see 1b.

c. Address issues of witchcraft, sorcery, curses, black magic (‘*I must beat this curse of AIDS*’) – also see 1b.

d. Assertive skills-refer to 5a,1e and 2b.

Theme 6: Ensuring Financial Security

More than being HIV positive was the fear of not being financially able to provide for themselves and their families. This concern was all consuming for most of the women. Many of the women had food gardens that gave them ‘*daily exercise, food for themselves and families and a little extra for selling*’. However, when they were ill, it was difficult to maintain their gardens, suggesting the dire need for other sources to be tapped for everyday survival, in the form of the following life skills:

a. Handwork, sewing, gardening, baking, craftwork- could be taught as part of a larger skills initiative drive to change the focus from pure academics to alternate but necessary creative arts. These could later be used to source an income or could re-instill a sense of accomplishment in women (and men). This suggestion is also made by Pick *et al.* (2007).

b. Instil value for education/qualification- in a context where money is scarce, it is not always possible to promote education as this may take away potential earnings, albeit meager. However, it is necessary for young learners to know the value of education, ongoing education and qualification. These self same values for education must also be instilled in the community, since without such community backup (Coombe & Kelly 2001; Visser *et al.* 2004), such ideals will not come to fruition.

Theme 7: 'UBUNTU'

This theme formed a circle of comfort, offering many women respite from the knowledge of having a positive diagnosis, whilst also promoting the notion of helping and serving others. The term '*ubuntu*' a South African word meaning '*we are who we are because of others*' was an apt summary to the survival stories of many women in the studies. Life skills emanating from this result include promoting a culture of service ('*you grow when you give*') with Kelly (2002) even suggesting that this aspect become examinable, to ensure that it is afforded seriousness.

Study 3: Sexuality and Intimacy Experiences of HIV Positive Men and Women

Six men and six women participated in this study on sexuality, dating and intimacy. Overlap with results from the first and second study with women, was evident. Accordingly, life skills discussed earlier were also relevant here, and reference is made to these to avoid undue repetition.

Theme 1: Poor Self Esteem, Fear of Rejection upon Disclosure, Guilt at Living

This finding highlights the sense of worthlessness as discussed in studies 1 and 2 and acutely experienced in relation to disclosure. Participants did not believe that they deserved intimacy ('*I stopped having sex after my* *diagnosis*'), pleasure or happiness. Life skills pertinent to these findings overlap with those from studies 1 and 2 and include externalization in order to develop a strong self identity that is separate from a positive diagnosis, nurturing strengths and creativity and using youth-popular media.

Theme 2: Poor Relationships and Fearing the Future

Fear and poor relationships seem to be related to each other (*'I decided not to have sex with my wife, for fear of infecting her...I think she was scared of being infected too')* and is linked to participants' negative mind set. Life skills pertinent to these results again show similarity to earlier results. Being positive, looking to the future, nurturing communication skills and being able to problem solve about relationships must commence early, in general life orientation programmes at school, with sensitive topics such as intimacy being added later as and when appropriate.

Theme 3: 'I can't have children'

This theme is very similar to the afore-mentioned regarding concerns for the future. Here it is specifically related to unborn children, and originates from inadequate knowledge about HIV, transmission, infection and re-infection, all of which could be addressed through knowledge acquisition. However, in order to result in behavior change, teaching/learning must be learner-centred, age-appropriate and culture and context specific through interactive teaching/learning means as outlined in the literature (Kelly 2002; Visser *et al.* 2004; James *et al.* 2006; Bozalek 2007).

Theme 4: ARV's Make People Reckless

This result referred to HIV positive persons not caring about infecting others and about their own re-infection. In the case of women, there was a sense that they could behave in any way, and even if they became pregnant, ARV's would prevent transmission to the children ('*I will have my neviropene baby*'). Again, updating knowledge about HIV, treatment, STI's, pregnancy and contraception is imperative.

Summary and Recommendations

Results pointed to a wide range of life skills that could be included in the school curriculum to prepare youngsters for HIV and AIDS prevention, management and positive living. Not only is it important to consider planning the **content** of the programme with care, but the socio-cultural **context** within which the programme will be implemented must also be afforded attention.

Life skills should include empowerment through knowledge, attitude and skill acquisition, for both males and females, for personal and sexual identities to be delinked from having a positive diagnosis and for dominant societal discourses such as females being responsible for bringing the virus to the family to be challenged through the programme. For women who are at greater HIV risk than their male counterparts, the female condom is advocated to claim locus of control during sexual encounters. This contraceptive and HIV prevention device being expensive, needs governmental support and funding, and its use promoted in life skills programmes. Faith-based organizations could also support this initiative, alongside their efforts to promote sex within the institution of marriage.

Life skills for empowering youth with **knowledge** about a range of issues surrounding HIV such as infection, transmission, re-infection, STI's and safe sex and myths related to these topics such as 'correction rape' were also deemed necessary. Related to this knowledge about the disease, is **understanding** and **attitude change and skills** for building relationships, building trust, communication and assertiveness skills, problem-solving and negotiation skills, identity and self esteem building, self care and healing, healthy living, morality, right living, serving others, being positive, value of connection, trauma, death and dying education and the creative arts. These skills may be nurtured early in the family, being based on values/culture/religion and then further developed at schools and in communities. In addition, together with talent building, accountancy and profit-loss understanding should be included to address food insecurity and poverty later in life.

In addition, the programme should be part of an ongoing one that promotes healthy and responsible living; it should also focus on highlighting the importance of community service and '*ubuntu*'. Small group teaching and learning using a creative range of 'educators', a variety of educational sources that include traditional healers, faith-based organizations and youth-popular media (such as e networks and entertainment education-Mitchell & Smith, 2001) should be employed to penetrate the problem of AIDS saturation. In addition, in countries such as South Africa where the community may not backup plans for such life skills programmes, community engagement is essential, in preparing for a context that embraces rather than opposes/fights changes.

Finally, the programme needs to be supported by policy and funding and should be continuously evaluated and adjusted to suit the changing landscape within which HIV and AIDS thrives.

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Does Spirituality Play a Role in Smoking Cessation? A Case Study Report of a Smoking Cessation Programme on Service Users with Schizophrenia

Peter Sandy

Abstract

Nicotine addiction is a public health problem that increases medical morbidity and mortality. Individuals with mental distress have higher rates of smoking and poorer cessation outcomes than those without mental distress. Individuals with schizophrenia tend to smoke more that those with other diagnostic categories. They are also more likely to smoke high-tar cigarettes than individuals with other forms of mental distress. They are therefore not only more likely to be addicted to nicotine, but they are also at an increased risk of developing serious health complications. Despite these factors, individuals with schizophrenia are generally unlikely to seek help to quit smoking, a function of decreased level of motivation and inability to do so. They are rarely involved in smoking cessation activities.

Against this background, The aim of this study was to explore the effectiveness of an integrated smoking cessation programme in enabling service users to stop smoking. This article describes the application of this programme on service users with schizophrenia and nicotine addiction. It also describes roles played by its components in smoking cessation.

Keywords: motivational interviewing, nicotine replacement therapy, schizophrenia, spirituality, smoking cessation

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Introduction

Epidemiological studies have consistently revealed that tobacco consumption is a worldwide epidemic, as it continues to claim the lives of millions of people globally each year (World Health Organisation, WHO 2009). In 2004, the WHO predicted 58.8 million deaths to occur worldwide and attributed 5.4 millions of these deaths to tobacco related diseases (WHO 2009). This estimate of tobacco related deaths is predicted 15 years ago to reach 10 million in the year 2030 (WHO 1998). Taking the United Kingdom (UK) as an example, the region where this study was conducted, it was recognised in 2009 that about 86% of its national deaths were mainly attributable to diseases associated with tobacco use, such as cancers (Secretan *et al.* 2009). These tragic consequences are functions of the high prevalence of people using tobacco globally and the highly addictive nature of nicotine in this substance, which makes smoking cessation so difficult.

The WHO reiterates in a number of its documents that approximately 1.2 billion people in the world use tobacco. A wide range of tobacco products are available today, and cigarette smoking is the most common form or means of consumption of this substance (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC, 2009). In general, the prevalence of smoking has declined and continues to do so in developed countries like the United States of America, Germany, United Kingdom and other European countries (Shafey *et al.* 2010). Such a decline is in part due to stringent tobacco control measures implemented in these states, and in part due to increase awareness of health consequences associated with the use of this substance (Shafey *et al.* 2010). In contrast, an increase in prevalence of smoking and general use of tobacco products is noted in developing countries, in other words, less wealthy states, such as those in the African Continent and Asia (Shafey *et al.* 2010). This increase is in part a function of lack of adequate tobacco control strategies.

The global prevalence pattern described indicates higher tobacco related morbidity and corresponding higher mortality rates in low income countries relative to developed countries. Taking this into account, Hammond (2009) predicted that over the next two decades, 70% of tobacco deaths will be in developing countries, as 80% of the world's smokers now live in the same. Certainly, this is a public health concern that requires attention. Although a general decline in smoking rates is noted in developed countries, similar concerns are expressed in these states because of the disproportionately high smoking prevalence noted among specific populations, like the homeless and people with mental distress (Kurdyak *et al.* 2008). This study focuses on the latter population and seeks to explore the effects of a smoking cessation programme, particularly its spiritual element in a mental health setting because of a range of reasons. People with mental distress are generally more likely to smoke than those without this problem (Kurdyak *et al.* 2008). The cumulative incidence and prevalence of smoking of members of this population are particularly high among those with diagnostic categories of severe mental distress, like major depression and schizophrenia (Kisely & Campbell 2008; Siru *et al.* 2010). This study focuses on schizophrenia because all service users of the smoking cessation programme examined were at the time living with this mental distress.

Individuals with schizophrenia are three times more likely to be smokers and 13 times more likely to smoke high-tar cigarettes than service users of other categories of mental distress (Mathews *et al.* 2011). While these smoking characteristics point to a close relationship between individuals with schizophrenia and smoking, they also indicate that high exposure to nicotine contributes to reduced smoking cessation rates in this population. Acknowledging such exposure to nicotine, it is not surprising to note a significantly high smoking prevalence and medical comorbidities among service users living with schizophrenia (Keizer & Eytan 2005; Miller *et al.* 2006; Chapman *et al.* 2009). Despite this, mental health professionals do not often offer smoking cessation services to individuals with mental distress, including schizophrenia. However, although not often trained to do so, mental health nurses infrequently offer general advice to quit smoking to service users (Banham & Gilbody 2010). This is a concern, as cigarette smoking among people with schizophrenia is a serious health problem that needs to be addressed by mental health services.

Background

People with schizophrenia are claimed to be at a greater risk of developing respiratory disorders, coronary heart diseases, stroke and death than individuals in the general population (Miller *et al.* 2006; Takeuchi *et al.*

2010). This risk of developing these disorders and eventual death is attributable to poorer dietary intake and smoking, with the latter considered as the primary contributory factor (Banham & Gilbody 2010). Even though this is the case, this service user group rarely engages in help-seeking behaviour to quit smoking, as its members are claimed to have limited knowledge and skills to do so (Solty *et al.* 2009). Even though this is the case, there are data now to support that individual of this user group have interest in quitting, a motivation that is often impaired by loss of confidence and ability caused by their illness (Kisely & Campbell 2008). Acknowledging such an interest, it is not surprising to observe in the literature increasing evidence of successful smoking cessation interventions in mental health settings (Solty *et al.* 2009). However, smoking cessation activities, including counselling, are still not frequently provided to service users of these settings, particularly those with a diagnosis of schizophrenia. This is because healthcare professionals, including nurses often assume that individuals with this diagnosis generally have great difficulties with quitting smoking (Hurt *et al.* 2007), and may therefore only expend little or no energy in engaging them in cessation programmes.

Given that nurses form the bulk of healthcare professionals supporting service users in mental health settings, they are critical in cessation programmes. There is sufficient evidence to indicate that nurses who offer even brief encouragement to quit smoking can have a massive impact on a service user quitting, although those with schizophrenia may require intensive interventions because of the severity of their addiction (Bao *et al.* 2006). The severity of addiction is a function of heaviness of smoking of these service users, which in turn is reinforced by positive effects of nicotine on their negative and positive symptoms, cognitive function and extrapyramidal side effects caused by antipsychotic medication (Barnes *et al.* 2006). These positive effects of smoking and heaviness of the behaviour make cessation an extremely difficult activity for these service users. So, it is important that people with schizophrenia are offered assistance with smoking cessation as they may need more attempts to quit.

There is currently no specific protocol available in the United Kingdom to guide smoking cessation activities for people with severe mental distress. This is because treatment approaches that are deemed to be effective for the general population are also perceived as useful strategies for enabling individuals with severe mental distress to quit smoking. These views are also incorporated in public health strategies of other countries like Canada and Australia where mental health services are encouraged to implement smoking cessation programmes similar to those that are effective in the general population (Kurdyak *et al.* 2008; Siru *et al.* 2010). Given the heavy nicotine dependence and low quit rates in people with schizophrenia, cessation interventions may require some adjustment, for example, in treatment duration, to achieve their aims (Hitsman *et al.* 2009).

It is becoming an accepted view that combining pharmacological and psychological treatment approaches may optimise outcomes. A commonly used combination of treatments in smoking cessation programmes includes nicotine replacement therapies (NRTs) or bupropion and cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) (National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence, NICE, 2007). NRTs are available in gum, inhaler, spray, lozenge and nicotine patch. Inhalers and patches are the main forms of NRTs used in in-patient settings. CBT focuses generally on enabling individuals to develop cognitive skills of managing urges to smoke and changing habits to anticipate and avoid temptations to smoke (Hitsman *et al.* 2009). Temptation to continue smoking does not only undermine quit attempts, but it also indicates the degree of addiction. People with schizophrenia who are addicted to nicotine generally encounter intense motivation to continue with their behaviour (Difranza 2010). In other words, they have low motivation to quit. These low-motivation service users need support, hope and information to help them quit. Motivation enhancement therapies, such as motivational interviewing would therefore play useful and significant roles in supporting these service users in cessation programmes. Knowing the severity of nicotine dependence would ensure appropriate cessation support.

The most commonly used tests of nicotine dependence are the eight-item Fagerström Tolerance Questionnaire (FTQ) (Fagerström & Schneider, 1989), the six-item Fagerström Test for Nicotine Dependence (FTND) (Heatherton *et al.* 1991), and the Heaviness of Smoking Index (HSI) (Heatherton *et al.* 1989). The HSI was developed in 1989 using two questions from the FTQ and FTND measures; time to first cigarette after waking up and the number of cigarettes smoked per day (Heatherton *et al.* 1989). The HSI is a two-item easy to use instrument that is acknowledged to be a reliable and valid test of nicotine dependence (De Leon *et al.* 2003). It is thus used in this study to examine service users` degree of nicotine dependence and addictive behaviour.

Historically, addictive behaviour is intertwined with religion and spirituality, as the use of psychoactive substances has always been proscribed by certain religious traditions, such as Islam and prescribed in other religions (Borras *et al.* 2010).. This implies that people`s spirituality, meaning their religious and spiritual practices may or may not precipitate and maintain substance use. Such a relationship is usually clearer in religious traditions with stronger norms against substance use as well as in instances where people`s spirituality strongly opposes the use of the same. Thus, incorporating service users` spirituality (religious and spiritual beliefs and practices) into a cessation treatment may significantly increase its efficacy, particularly in circumstances where these practices and beliefs forbid substance use. In clinical practice, most users of substances, including cigarette, welcome the integration of spirituality into their attempts to quit their health-risk behaviours. Yet, there has been little attention given by researchers on the incorporation of spirituality in the treatment of addiction. This study is among the few that incorporated spirituality into a smoking cessation programme. It is the first to include spirituality, NRTs and MI in a smoking cessation treatment for patients with schizophrenia.

Components of the Integrated Programme: A Review

This programme is made up of three elements, nicotine replacement therapy, discussions of spirituality and motivational interviewing.

Motivational Interviewing (MI)

MI is a directive service user-centred counselling technique for eliciting behaviour change by helping people to explore and resolve ambivalence or uncertainties about their behaviour (Miller & Rollnick 2002). This approach is underpinned by the assumption that people`s motivation to engage in a behaviour is fluid; meaning it can change between situations or circumstances (Miller & Rollnick 2002). Acknowledging this, therapists using this approach are required to adopt the view that people`s motivation can be influenced to change in specific directions. Hence, lack of motivation to engage in behaviours, often described as resistance to change, should perhaps be perceived as something that can be changed. The use of aggressive or confrontational styles in MI can strengthen resistance to change (Miller & Rollnick 2002). Noting this, MI involves the application of carefully selected sets of techniques for addressing difficulties people may experience about making behaviour changes. Examples of these include assessing service users` readiness for change, ambivalence about changing behaviours, eliciting change talk or self-motivational statements, reflecting service users` self-motivating statements, summarising and highlighting desire for change (Nock & Kazdin 2005). The implementation of these techniques within a MI process is guided by four principles; expressing empathy, developing discrepancy and rolling with resistance (Miller & Rollnick 2002). MI is a brief psychotherapeutic intervention, applied in this case as a multi-session course of treatment.

MI has enjoyed strong empirical evidence over the years in treating addictive behaviours, particularly alcohol and substance abuse (Miller & Rollnick 2002). It has demonstrated efficacy in treating medication adherence, safe sex and exercise practices, and treatment engagement (Hetteman *et al.* 2005). In relation to nicotine addiction, a recent meta-analysis, using 31 control trials, illustrates the efficacy of MI as a treatment option for this behaviour (Hettema & Hendricks 2010). These studies demonstrate that MI is an effective approach for treating nicotine dependence among pregnant and non-pregnant populations. Whilst MI has been extensively and successful applied in smoking cessation programmes for a wide range of clinical populations, there is a dearth of literature of its use on smokers with schizophrenia. To the author`s knowledge there is only one control trial on the use of smoking cessation programme for people living with schizophrenia. The study in question relates to the application of MI with personalised feedback to enable patients with schizophrenia to seek treatment for nicotine dependence (Steinberg *et al.* 2004). MI emerged from this study as both an effective and superior strategy over psycho-education for motivating service users to quit smoking (Steinberg *et al.* 2004). MI is therefore used by this author as part of a smoking cessation programme, as it is well suited to motivate, engage and enable people to change health-risk behaviours (Burke *et al.* 2003). Although substantial progress has been made in the treatment of smoking behaviour and nicotine dependence, treatments that combine psychological and pharmacological approaches have shown the greatest efficacy.

Nicotine Replacement Therapies (NRTs)

The recommended first-line smoking cessation therapies include NRTs and bupropion. This is because of their use of nicotine as a drug to minimise nicotine withdrawal symptoms in people making attempts to quit (Ashton *et al.* 2010). Added to this, both of these therapies have the potential of increasing the odds of quitting about two-fold relative to other approaches (Hitsman *et al.* 2009). The focus of this study is on NRTs. There are different forms of NRTs, and the types used in the integrated programme were nicotine patches, which are most often called patches. This form of NRTs, sometimes referred to as transdermal nicotine systems, provides a measured dose of nicotine through the skin. Patches have different strengths or doses of nicotine. The general trend is that individuals, particularly heavy smokers are commenced on high doses of patches (e.g. 22mg of nicotine) and subsequently weaned of nicotine by gradually changing, over a course of treatment, to lower dose patches (e.g. 5-14mg nicotine) (Banham & Gilbody 2010). Although such an approach has been reported to be successful in reducing smoking rates, it has been highlighted that individuals using nicotine patches occasionally get addicted to them, and may experience serious side effects, such as cardiovascular diseases (Joseph *et al.* 1996). As a result of this, the use of NRTs should be carefully monitored to prevent the possibility of health problems. Another problem that relates to nicotine patches is that using the same over a prolonged period of time could result in another addiction.

Religion and Spirituality

There is increasing professional interest in the relationship of spirituality and religion to health in general, and in the linkage of addiction, religion and spirituality in particular (Ganga & Kutty 2012). While some researchers perceive religion and spirituality as conceptually distinct constructs, others refer to them as multi-dimensional constructs that overlap (Geppert *et al.* 2007). These constructs therefore deserve explanations.

Religion refers to an organised system of beliefs, rituals and practices intended to mediate an individual`s relationship to the community, and to the sacred (Josephson & Dell 2004). Sacred refers to the supernatural or God, and in Eastern religions, to the Ultimate Truth or Reality. This implies that religion can also involve beliefs about spirits, angels, or demons. The view that religion is an organised system suggests that it can be conceived to have specific beliefs about, for example, life after death and rules of how individuals who practice it are expected to behave within a social group. Apparently this is the case, as Koenig (2009:284) explains: "central to its definition, religion is rooted in an established tradition that arises out of a group of people with common beliefs and practices concerning the scared". Some of these practices, which include church attendance and personal devotion, provide some social structures that may prevent humans from engaging in self-destructive behaviours, such as drug and alcohol abuse (Koenig 2009). Religion is a form of social control and most traditional practices discourage the use and abuse of substances that may jeopardise people`s health (Dew *et al.* 2008). For example, Muslim and Mormon faiths totally proscribe the use of alcohol, an action referred to in the literature as religious injunction (Delaney *et al.* 2009). This injunction has also been extended to some Christians, such as the Seven-Day Adventists (Borras *et al.* 2010). This protective function of religion is a well-know phenomenon in mental health services. Besides offering protection from alcohol and substance use and abuse, religion can help people recover from addictions and mental disorders (Delaney *et al.* 2009).

In contrast to religion, spirituality is considered more subjective, as it relates to something people define for themselves that is in the main not associated with the rules, regulations and responsibilities of religious traditions (Ganga & Kutty 2012). Thus, an individual can be referred to as spiritual if his or her life and lifestyle reflected the teachings of his or her religious tradition without necessarily following all ritual practices. This suggests that spiritual individuals are a subset of religious people whose lifestyles are based on their faith tradition. Taking this into account, it could be safely stated that a person can be spiritual but not religious, and spirituality can add meaning to the practice of religion and the practice of religion can deepen spirituality. Acknowledging the discussions of spirituality and religion thus far, these constructs are related but not synonymous.

In mental health practice, the term spirituality is broadly defined to capture the needs of both religious and non-religious people. Spirituality is about having a positive sense of meaning and purpose in life, connection with others, peacefulness, comfort and joy (Koenig 2009). Given that there is no agreed universal definition of spirituality, this study uses this definition because of its inclusiveness and connectedness to the construct of religion. The term religion is increasingly associated today with conflicts and wars. It is therefore not surprising to note an increasing popularity in the use of the concepts of spirituality in discussions of people`s beliefs, relationships and health issues. In fact it noted to be frequently used in the 21st Century in the place of religion in in-faith and between faith discussions of meaning and purpose of life in relation to addiction (Geppert *et al.* 2007). Acknowledging this, the term spirituality is used in this report to include the concept of religion and discussions associated with it. Fankl`s (1978: 26) hypothesis put forward several decades ago supports this choice of terminology: “addiction is at least partially to be traced back to feelings of meaninglessness”. The point for clinicians is therefore to explore ways of enabling services to develop their spirituality, in other words to enable them to find meaning or purpose in their lives.

Service users receiving mental health services often use spirituality to cope with their distress and other life difficulties. It is repeatedly mentioned in the literature that people with schizophrenia consider engagement in spiritual activities, such as church attendance, the most beneficial alternative to health practice (Russinova *et al.* 2002). Perhaps, this is a function of the view that spirituality is available to anyone at any time, irrespective of people`s experiences. It can therefore be relied upon to offer resilience, coupled with a sense of meaning and purpose even during adverse life circumstances (Dew *et al.* 2008). In relation to depression and anxiety disorders, a large number of studies revealed an inverse relationship between spiritual involvement and experiences of symptoms (Koening *et al.* 2001). Simply, this means that people with these disorders may experience symptom improvement when actively engage in spiritual activities. This is consistent with outcomes of a range of controlled trails which indicate that incorporation of service users` spiritual themes into treatment can significantly increase the efficacy of psychological therapies (Borras *et al.* 2010). In contrast, there has been relatively little attention given by researchers on the incorporation of spirituality in the treatment of addictions. This lack of attention represents a considerable gap given the posited protective roles of spirituality with regard to addiction (Dew *et al.* 2008).

Methodology

Participants

Service users who were felt to be psychiatrically stable and expressed willingness for participation were referred by their psychiatrist to take part in the integrated smoking programme. A total of 30 service users were referred by their consultant psychiatrist, but only 15 of them met the eligibility criteria for participation, which include being a smoker and a male with a diagnosis of schizophrenia. All participants provided voluntary verbal and written informed consent prior to their inclusion in the study. They were hospitalised on male-only wards of a large secure mental health hospital in the United Kingdom. Service user were randomly allocated into three groups with five users (participants) per group. Each group of participants was offered the integrated smoking programme study by an experienced group facilitator. Each group of participants was offered the treatment separately once per week. All participants were over 40 years old and began smoking when they were between 20 and 25 years old. This means participants had been smoking for approximately 20 years. Permission to conduct the study was sought and gained from the Trust`s Research Ethics Service.

Application of the Integrated Smoking Cessation Programme

This is a 10-week programme that commenced with a comprehensive assessment of all service users involved (n=15). This was carried out by the service users` psychiatrist two weeks before starting the cessation treatment. This was to develop an understanding of the service users` medical and psychiatric histories, including smoking behaviour, dependence and motivation to quit. The Heaviness of Smoking Index (HSI), a two-item scale was used to establish service users` nicotine dependence. All participants reported to smoke an average of 24 cigarettes per day, and their reported time to first cigarette was between 6 and 30 minutes. The mean HS1 score for participants was 4 (HSI=4). This score indicates severe nicotine dependence. Despite this, all participants expressed a desire to quit smoking but acknowledged limited confidence in their ability to do so. According to them, their intention to quit smoking was mainly driven by health concerns, as most of them had respiratory disorders, such as chronic bronchitis and emphysema.

Given the severity of nicotine dependence observed among the participants, they were commenced on NRTs (patches). Participants were clearly instructed on how to use the patches. A reducing regime in the context of nicotine patch strength was adopted over the course of the programme. Dosing began at 22mg/day for six weeks and was then switched to lower doses of 14mg/day and 7mg/day for two weeks each. Patches were provided in conjunction with group motivational interviewing.

Group motivational interviewing (MI) was offered to all participants on a weekly basis for a period of 10 weeks. Each MI session lasted for approximately 70 minutes. The sessions were facilitated by the author of this report who is a mental health practitioner as well as a certified facilitator in smoking cessation programmes. The sessions focused on enhancing participants` motivation and commitment to change, identifying triggers to smoke and developing coping strategies to manage identified triggers. Participants` motivations were assessed by exploring their perceptions of confidence and importance of change. This was achieved by asking questions using a scale with graduations from 0 to 10 for each of the dimensions. The participants were asked, for example, the following questions on importance: on a scale of 0 to 10, how important do you think it is for you to quit smoking? On this scale, 0 is not at all important and 10 is extremely important, where would you say you are? Similar questions were asked about confidence: on a scale of 0 to 10, how confident do you think that you can quit smoking? On the same scale, 0 is not at all confident and 10 is extremely confident, where would you say you are? This strategy enabled the participants to verbalise and process their ambivalence further.

Motivation for change was further explored by examining participants’ perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of smoking. In this context, they were initially asked to make a list of their likes and dislikes about smoking, as a preface to listing and talking about the likes and dislikes of abstaining from smoking. This strategy enabled the participants to clarify both sides of their ambivalence. This was generally followed by the use of double sided reflections on the benefits and costs of smoking with the view of strengthening change discussions. For example, it is important for you to smoke in order to deal with the stresses of the ward, but you also wish you could quit in the interest of your health. This approach enabled participants to focus discussions on their need for change. Discussions relating to coping with stress were held. In this context, participants were asked to make a list of factors on the ward that caused them stress and how they addressed them. This strategy generated discussions of situations, such as feelings of boredom participants perceived to be stressful and alternatives ways of coping without the use of cigarette.

At the end of the 10-week programme, 5 out of the 15 participants experienced difficulties with quitting smoking. The 5 participants were provided an additional 6-week integrated programme that included spiritual discussions and all the elements of the original version, which were nicotine patches and MI. The participants were on 7mg/day nicotine patch. Group MI sessions were offered to the participants, and each of the sessions ran for about 70 minutes. These sessions focused on eliciting participants` own self-motivational statements and affirming that change is always possible but can sometimes be difficult to achieve. The sessions also concentrated on enabling participants to consider the advantages and disadvantages of continued smoking versus smoking cessation and to formulate a realistic and acceptable individualised change plan. Towards the end of the second session, three of the participants talked about attending church and the need for them to adhere to the practices of their faith. The other two participants joined the discussion. The third MI session was commenced with a summary of the previous session and this included issues of spirituality talked about in the same. All participants (n=5) requested during the session for the hospital to organise a regular visit from a Chaplin. Facilitator promised to raise this issue with the hospital managers. Participants also discussed their need for regular church attendance and for spiritual discussions to be part of the remaining MI sessions. Spiritual beliefs were discussed during MI sessions only when raised by participants. The participants claimed their beliefs about well-being, meaning and purpose of life proscribe or discourage cigarette smoking, illicit substance and alcohol use

Results and Discussion

This study adopted an integrated approach to smoking cessation that mainly utilised NRTs and motivational interviewing. The cessation programme also included discussions of spirituality with five participants who experienced some difficulties with quitting smoking. All participants were observed to be severely addicted to cigarette, in other words dependent on nicotine, a chemical (alkaloid) in cigarette that causes dependence. The severity of nicotine dependence was indicated by participants' average HSI score of 4, which was part of an outcome of assessments conducted before the commencement of the programme. The HSI has two items which are implicated in smoking cessation. The first item relates to the time to first cigarette after a smoker wakes up. This is claimed to be the most informative item related to smoking cessation, as there is consistent relationship between the number of cigarettes smoked per day and urgency to smoke. The second and final item is the number of cigarettes a smoker consumes per day. This has also been a useful index for measuring the efficacy of cessation programmes. Participants reported to smoke an average of 24 cigarettes per day, and their reported time to first cigarette was between 6 and 30 minutes. Added to this, participants also reported to have smoked for an average of 20 years. This account reflects not only the chronicity of the behaviour, but it also indicates the degree of nicotine dependence. Acknowledging this, participants` need for nicotine replacement was expected. They were therefore commenced on high doses of nicotine patches, with dosing strengths gradually reduced as treatment progressed. The approach was adopted to gradually wean participants from their dependence on nicotine, as individuals who are heavily dependent on this substance may find it difficult to abstain from smoking (El-Guebaly *et al.* 2002).

Generally, such difficulties are a function of high nicotine dependence, caused by long duration of smoking and large amounts of daily cigarette consumption (Kisely & Campbell 2008). This was the case for the participants of this study, and it was reported that their frequent cigarette smoking was attributable to boredom and stresses associated with institutionalisation. Experiences of feelings of boredom and being controlled and loss of control of some activities of daily living, such as when to retire to bed, were acknowledged by participants to generate stress, which they claimed sometimes made them feel angry and frustrated. In such a heightened emotional state, customary ways of coping, which may include social interaction, may be ineffective in restoring emotional calmness. This was apparently the case for participants of this study who employed cigarette smoking as an approach to regain emotional control. Despite this, it is claimed that group or individual counselling can facilitate cessation and improve rates of abstinence even in heavily nicotine dependent individuals (Hall *et al.* 1998). It is believed that abstinence rates can be improved when people are offered integrated psychological and pharmacological therapies (Evins *et al.* 2005). On the basis of this, participants were also offered weekly group MI sessions that facilitated discussions of smoking cessation, which in turn offered emotional support to group members.

All the participants (n=15) completed a 10-week programme. 10 participants (67%) quitted smoking and remained completely abstinent (verified using carbon monoxide technique) when followed-up at six months after the programme. The motivation for these participants to quit smoking and their commitment partake in the cessation programme was influenced by health concerns. Although this was the case, participants expressed limited confidence and ability to stop smoking. This is an indication of low self-efficacy to quit. Hence, one of the key tasks during the application of motivational interviewing was to enhance participants` confidence, motivation and coping skills that would enable them to engage in behaviour change. Motivation for change was enhanced by enabling participants to explore the advantages and disadvantages of quitting smoking. In addition to saving money, all participants reported that quitting save their lives as it would help minimise the risk of developing health problems. At the end of the 10th MI session, all participants spoke about how they disliked tobacco odour. This was a significant motivation noted among participants to engage in quit attempts despite expressed lack of confidence to do so.

Feedback was used to address the issue of confidence. Provision of personalised feedback using normative data, such as time to first cigarette in the morning and amount of cigarettes smoked per day, was significant in raising participants` confidence and motivation to quit. Other MI strategies were used to strengthen participants` need to quit smoking. Examples of these include eliciting participants` own self-motivating statements and strengthening their confidence. With regard to the latter, this was achieved by exploring with participants their personal strengths and support for change. So, questions, such as what is there about you that would help you quit smoking? Are there others that could help you to make this happen? 10 out of 15 participants quitted smoking. This shows that people with schizophrenia also have the ability to quit smoking. Therefore, quitting should not be considered impossible for individuals suffering from this disorder. However, it is critical to note that some service users with schizophrenia may find it difficult to stop smoking.

The participants who failed to stop smoking reduced the number of cigarettes smoked per day as observed at the end of the programme. This finding indicates not only the chronicity of participants' smoking behaviour, but it also indicates the need to offer more support as well as stress that change is possible. The efficacy of interventions for some service users can be increased by extending their duration (Miller & Rollnick 2002). This was noted in this study as some participants only quitted smoking when offered an additional cessation treatment that included elements of spiritual discussions. This outcome suggests that smoking cessation is possible for individuals with schizophrenia when treatment is tailor-made to incorporate their wishes. These participants` motivation to stop smoking was significantly influenced by their spirituality that was mainly related to their religious beliefs and practices, such as church attendance. They also stated that smoking is not good for their well-being.

The discussions so far presented indicate that spiritual involvement is protective against substance use and abuse as well as promotes people`s recovery from the same (Delaney *et al.* 2009). Noting this, it critical for healthcare professionals to be committed and prepared to enable service users explore their beliefs about substance use. Although health professionals may not be experts in service users` religious traditions, they occupy a unique position to generate spiritual discussions. Not engaging with service users does not only indicate disregard for this important aspect of diversity, but it may also prevent assessment and identification of spiritual their needs. Thus, it is critical for assessments during admissions and even during in-patient stay to include discussions of service users' spiritual beliefs. Doing so may result in referral to appropriate spiritual leaders for in-depth in-faith discussions. Hence, it is helpful for mental health professionals to have knowledge of local spiritual leaders for referral and consultation purposes, and to encourage them to make regular visits to clinical areas. Mental health services should therefore create multi-faith environments for spiritual discussions or meetings.

This study has some limitations as it was carried out in a single Trust in England as well as utilised a small sample of services users with schizophrenia. Thus, its findings cannot be generalised to smokers with this disorder across secure settings as a whole. However, they are transferable across these settings, as they provide valuable insights and context for understanding smoking cessation with this service user group.

Conclusions

Nicotine dependence is the most common dual diagnosis for individuals with schizophrenia. The study demonstrates that service users with this disorder are motivated to quit smoking, seek support with cessation and are receptive to cessation interventions. Smoking cessation treatment can be effective for service users with mental distress, including those with a diagnosis of schizophrenia. However, because service users with schizophrenia do experience severe nicotine dependence, as they consume many cigarettes, say an average of 20 per day, cessation can be challenging for this service user group. So, the intensity of interventions, including its elements may have to exceed the traditional smoking cessation programmes.

However, integrated smoking cessation programmes can be effective for treating people with high nicotine addiction. The effectiveness of such programmes can be enhanced by healthcare professionals` willingness and commitment to engage with service users. These professional attributes are essential as the duration of programmes may be extended to accommodate the chronicity of smoking behaviour, severity of dependence of this population and institutional barriers, such as boredom and feelings of loss of control to cessation. Taking these issues into account, progress along the path of cessation must be determined by service users` ability and readiness for change. Service users should therefore not be coerced to stop smoking as taking this stance may generate resistance from the same, which can be manifested in a number of ways, such as unwillingness to change and reluctance to engage.

This study explored the impact of an integrated smoking programme of service users smoking. The experience was that the combined treatment of

NRTs, MI and discussions of spirituality was effective in enabling service users to quit smoking. It was noted that spiritual beliefs can influence people`s smoking behaviour. This was reflected in this study as service quitted smoking because of their spiritual beliefs. Hence, healthcare professionals should identify at the outset during admission whether service users embrace the norms of abstinence or have negative reactions against them. When faced with the latter, the advice is not to confront but to roll with resistance, as shifting focus in this case may be perceived as disrespectful.

Spiritual discussions may sometimes fall outside the remit of healthcare professions. So, they may encounter some difficulties with commencing and engaging in spiritual discussions with service users. The advice is to use open questions, as they are good place to start. An example could be what do you believe in or have faith in? In sum, healthcare professionals need to be aware of the spiritual beliefs of their service users, appreciate their value as a resource for addressing problems of addiction.

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